



Oregon Coalition
Against Domestic & Sexual Violence

FACTSHEET: Child and elder abuse

Elder abuse

Due to mandatory reporting laws and other major differences in DHS, law enforcement and other institutions' responses, cases in which an elderly person is the primary victim of abuse may be beyond the scope of our work.

Elder Abuse affects people of every social, economic, and religious background impacting both men and women. It is similar to other forms of domestic violence and may include physical violence, sexual assault, emotional, and psychological. Elder survivors also face fear of abandonment, financial exploitation, and neglect.

The movement to research and better understand elder abuse is still relatively new. And while there has been some progress in understanding, there is still much to learn, specifically in the areas of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Unique barriers faced by elderly survivors

Social isolation, mental impairment, and physical limitations may make an elder survivor more vulnerable to abuse and less able to seek safety.

Survivors may be totally or partially dependent on the abuser for daily care needs, including meals, daily hygiene care, mobility, and access to medication.

Survivors may depend on abuser for basic survival needs such as shelter, access to funds, and food.

Survivors of elder abuse may experience shame, fear, embarrassment, anxiety, confusion, and guilt.

Due to grief and life losses, elder survivors may experience increased depression and withdrawal.

Types of elder abuse

Physical abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- Physical force that results in injury, impairment, or pain.
- Shaking, hitting, slapping, pulling hair, or pushing.
- Spitting, burning, force-feeding, or kicking.
- Physical punishment, restraining, refusing physical assistance, and refusing food.
- Inappropriate use of drugs and physical restraints.
- Rough handling during care giving.
- Emotional & psychological abuse includes, but is not limited to:
- Verbal or nonverbal act that inflicts emotional pain or distress.
- Ignoring and isolating the survivor.
- Name-calling, ridiculing, scapegoating or blaming.
- Threatening to punish or deprive, intimidating.
- Yelling and screaming.
- Isolating from family, friends, or regular activities.
- Inappropriate joking and teasing.
- Stealing or withholding valuables.
- Withholding needed assistance.

Sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexual contact with an elder without that person's consent.
- Coerced nudity.
- Fondling, touching, or kissing.
- Forcing elder to witness sexual acts.
- Spying on the elder in the bathroom or bedroom.
- Touching without notification or consent.
- Sexual assault of any type.
- Showing pornographic material.
- Coercion to perform sexual acts.
- Photographing the elder in sexually explicit ways.

External links

Oregon Department of Human Services: Elder Abuse (link is external)

Child abuse

Our resources and those of most of our member programs are designed with adult and adolescent survivors in mind (though some may offer services for children who have witnessed domestic violence). Due to mandatory reporting laws and other major differences in DHS, law enforcement and other institutions' responses, cases in which the primary victim is a child may be beyond the scope of our work.

For more information on child abuse, visit:

- Children's Trust Fund of Oregon (<http://ctfo.org/>)
- CARES NW (<http://www.caresnw.org/>)
- OAASIS: Oregon Abuse Advocates & Survivors in Service (<http://oaasisoregon.org/>)
- Oregon Department of Human Services: Child Abuse and Neglect (<http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/children/pages/abuse/index.aspx>)