



Testimony of

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A project of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Before the

Senate Special Committee on Aging

Hearing on

**Justice for All: Ending Elder Abuse, Neglect and
Financial Exploitation**

March 2, 2011

Chairman Kohl, Senator Corker, distinguished Committee members: Thank you for inviting me to testify today to address the GAO report on Adult Protective Services and the growing needs of older victims of elder abuse, neglect and financial exploitation. Thank you also for the Committee's continuing leadership and focus on issues of elder justice.

My name is Bonnie Brandl. I am the Director of the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL), a project of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence. I have worked with older victims of abuse, neglect and financial exploitation for more than 20 years. NCALL's mission is to eliminate abuse in later life. Through advocacy and education, NCALL strives to challenge and change the beliefs, policies, practices, and systems that allow abuse to occur and continue. NCALL also aims to improve victim safety by increasing the quality and availability of victim services and support.

I. Miss Mary

The poster portrays a picture of Miss Mary. As Miss Mary describes in this short video segment, she was 96 years old and living with her grandson and his wife in a trailer in Florida. During the five years she was living with them, they increasingly expected her to take care of the cooking and the cleaning. They also began to financially exploit her by taking the money she was trying to set aside to pay for her funeral expenses.

One night Miss Mary called 911 saying that she was hurt and that she needed two or three law enforcement officers to come to the house. When law enforcement arrived, they found a bloody and battered Miss Mary, who had been beaten and sexually assaulted by her grandson for hours. After raping his grandmother, Miss Mary's grandson fell asleep in her bed.

Paramedics transported Miss Mary to the hospital where she received health care. Law enforcement thoroughly investigated the case and arrested her grandson. Adult Protective Services helped Miss Mary find a nursing home to live in after she left the hospital. Prosecutors prosecuted her grandson, who is currently in prison. Sexual assault advocates provided emotional support for Miss Mary during the trial and throughout the rest of her life.

II. Elder Abuse, Neglect and Financial Exploitation – The Need for a Collaborative Response

Although the harm Miss Mary experienced was horrific, this case example illustrates the ideal collaborative response from the health, social service, criminal justice, and advocacy systems which were involved. Unfortunately, not every victim experiences a similar response. In many communities across the United States, the responses of these systems are imperfect and allow many victims to suffer in silence. Factors contributing to this inadequate response include insufficient resources, training, and information geared towards older adults who are victims of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Elder abuse is a growing epidemic. By conservative estimates, at least 2 million cases are reported each year. We know that many victims do not report for a variety of reasons, including fear, concern for the perpetrator, a lack of power, social isolation, ageism, cultural issues and financial barriers.

Miss Mary’s case also illustrates what we know to be true in cases of elder abuse: Many older adults are physically, sexually or emotionally abused, neglected or exploited by persons known to them. Perpetrators include spouses, partners, family members, caregivers and others in positions of trust. Offenders are all ages and from all backgrounds.

A significant percentage of elder abuse is intimate partner violence, or violence by a spouse or partner, that may have been occurring for years. One older victim said, “I just learned to work around it. What else could I do? I loved him, for the most part, and divorce was too scandalous to consider. I was a good wife.” I once met with a woman in a support group for older abused women in Wisconsin who was discussing her upcoming wedding anniversary. She described how she had been married and abused for 60 years. Some older adults may be in a new relationship and being harmed. In other cases, the abuse starts later in life and may be the result of a medical condition with an outcome that includes aggressive behavior. Victims often say “I always thought it would get better.”

Older victims are from various racial, ethnic, religious and economic backgrounds. Victims are male and female. Some victims are healthy and active individuals; others have significant health concerns, loss of cognitive

abilities, physical disabilities or otherwise lack capacity to make decisions in their lives.

In the cases we are aware of, when there is one form of abuse, other forms of abuse often co-occur. The abuse, neglect and financial exploitation of older adults occurs in private in their own homes, in public, and in regulated residential health care settings. The harm experienced by older victims contributes to increased health issues and premature death. Due to age-related physiological changes, older victims of sexual assault tend to sustain more serious physical and psychosocial injuries during an assault than younger victims.

Older victims of abuse often face unique obstacles. They may fear losing their independence or being placed in a nursing home by the perpetrator or others. Older victims may risk losing access to resources or end up living in poverty if they leave an abuser. Many older victims live independently and are active in the community but may be unaware of existing services. Some older victims may experience poorer mental and physical health conditions, physical disabilities or cognitive limitations that may contribute to their isolation, dependence on others, or otherwise impact the information about and availability of options, resources and services available to them. One victim stated, “I thought I was the only one living like this.” Like many younger victims of abuse, older victims may also be afraid to reach out for help because of fear of retaliation by the offender. One older victim explained, “I tried not to think of it (the abuse). He told me he was just keepin’ me in line, that I’d best not get uppity about it.”

The varied relationships between offenders and victims, locations where abuse occurs, forms of harm, and other factors contributing to abuse makes elder abuse cases more complex in nature than domestic violence against younger victims. Each case may call for a different strategy, response or intervention, presenting challenges to agencies and organizations working with victims of elder abuse.

III. The Office on Violence Against Women Abuse in Later Life Program

As the GAO report describes, the federal response to elder abuse is woefully inadequate. As the population ages, local professionals on the frontlines are struggling to meet the growing demand for intervention and victim services.

To prevent further harm to this unique and growing population, we should be scaling up current responses and leveraging existing resources and expertise to develop cost-effective prevention strategies.

One small federal program that is making a difference is funded by the Violence Against Women Act. The Abuse in Later Life program is the smallest discretionary program at the Office on Violence Against Women, with only about \$3 million dollars being distributed throughout the country. Yet, this is one of the largest federal initiatives dedicated to elder abuse education, intervention and prevention strategies.

The Office on Violence Against Women's Abuse in Later Life program requires a multidisciplinary response to abuse and has four major components. First, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, court personnel and victim services providers receive training on identifying and responding to elder abuse, neglect and exploitation. Second, cross-training encourages and promotes cost-effective collaboration. Third, grantees create coordinated community response teams that examine and improve policies and protocols for responding to elder abuse cases to enhance victim safety and hold offenders accountable. Finally, a fraction of the funding can be utilized for direct victim services.

The Abuse in Later Life program is a highly competitive grant program. Each year only 9 – 11 communities are funded, each receiving approximately \$400,000 over a three year period. Since 2006, 41 grant programs and 8 continuation grants have been administered by the Abuse in Later Life program. Please direct your attention to the map which shows where current and recent grantee communities are located. The grantees represent large urban communities, small rural communities, tribes, counties, states and collaboration among agencies within a community.

Reports from current grantees indicate that the program has contributed to significant improvements in communication among agencies responding to elder abuse cases, improved arrest and prosecution rates, and an increase in referrals and services available to older victims. Examples include the following:

- From Colorado (2008): APS was contacted by [an officer from Code Enforcement] to help respond with an at-risk adult who lived with his father. The officer was at the home because of unsafe conditions and a critical problem with the furnace. The father,

who appeared intoxicated, was attempting to leave the scene in his car with his son. APS responded and upon arrival met law enforcement officers who were present and trying to sort out the situation. One officer met APS end of the driveway to provide information about the situation. He said he was excited to meet [the APS worker] and to "see the system work." He explained that he and the other responding officer had recently attended the elder abuse training for law enforcement. He stated that he felt like he knew what to do and who to call and was appreciative of my quick response. He also stated that he keeps a Yellow Book [our local senior resource guide] in his car and has been utilizing it frequently. He felt empowered to help himself before calling APS. Through teamwork, they were able to resolve the situation, including finding appropriate shelter, services and support for the father and son in a swift and timely manner. The APS worker concluded in her report, "Because of the cooperation with the officers ..., I was able to do my job successfully and effectively. It was one of the highlights in my three years with Adult Protective Services."

- From Michigan (2008): Two judges attended judicial training and, upon their return, they expressed interest in creating new protocols for their courts to better accommodate older witnesses and victims.
- From Colorado (2008): Officers no longer look at an incident purely from a 'is there a crime and is there someone I can arrest.' standpoint. They think about connecting victims with community partners and they have a better understanding of the resources
- From Colorado (2010): Our DA's office has prosecuted 26% more cases when victims 65 and older in 2009 than they did in 2008.
- From Kentucky (2009): Police departments are encouraging their officers to look for possible signs of abuse and exploitation in routine calls. Recently two cases in one department were opened that would have been overlooked had it not been for the trainings.
- From Kentucky (2009): There have been two high profile cases of abuse and financial exploitation in our area. In both of these cases the exploitation resulted in the death of the victims, one of natural causes and the other as a result of abuse. The prosecutors attended the 2008 Prosecutors Training and have indicated that the training was very helpful in preparing the above cases.

- From Wyoming (2009): Trained professionals now have a “go to” person in each agency (for cases of elder abuse, neglect and financial exploitation).
- From Florida (2009): Following training, 72% more referrals (to APS) from law enforcement than in prior year.
- From Minnesota (2009): St. Paul City Attorney’s office has designated two attorneys to focus on elder abuse cases; Ramsey County Attorney has established an Elder Abuse Unit after two of their staff attended the Prosecutor’s Training.
- From Michigan (2010): “We are seeing concrete results from this project and we have had our first successful wraparound holistic response because of the trainings that the stakeholders have attended. Last month, an elderly man was beaten by a young waitress and her boyfriend and coerced into signing [his] home over to this couple. The local prosecutor called me, and with the client’s permission, we have gotten him supportive services and in home help, I am litigating a quiet title action to undo the deed, and the Prosecutor has charged the couple under Michigan's vulnerable adult law – the first such action our county has ever taken! None of which would have happened before we began the project!”

These examples illustrate the significant impact the Abuse in Later Life program – with its emphasis on education, training, multi-disciplinary collaboration and victim services – has had on communities across the country since 2006.

IV. Legislative Initiatives

Legislation such as the Violence Against Women Act, Older American’s Act, and Elder Justice Act present opportunities to make a difference in the lives of older victims. Despite these initiatives and efforts, the GAO report describes how far we have to go.

Additional resources are needed to create and enhance victim services and to hold offenders accountable. Collaborative efforts must include participation by domestic violence and sexual assault programs, adult protective services, health care providers, the aging network, the justice system, the faith community and others.

This year the Violence Against Women Act is up for reauthorization. I would like to thank Senator Kohl and Representatives Baldwin and Poe for being outspoken champions for the Abuse in Later Life program and I look forward to their continued support as the process moves forward.

Conclusion

As members of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, you are in a unique position to raise awareness about elder abuse, neglect and financial exploitation and look for opportunities for additional resources for those who are combating and responding to elder abuse. I encourage all members of Congress to support legislative responses that empower older Americans, protect individuals across their lifespan, and ensure that all older victims have access to emergency services and resources in an environment in which they feel safe.

Older victims like Miss Mary deserve to live their lives with dignity and respect. Thank you for focusing this hearing on the needs of older victims.



Elder Abuse in Wisconsin

Prepared by the National Clearinghouse for Abuse in Later Life (NCALL), 2010

The following data was obtained from the 2009 Annual Elder Abuse and Neglect Report published by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources, August 2010. The full report is available at:

http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/P0/p00124_2009.pdf.

- **Numbers:** In 2009, **5,316 cases** of suspected abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation involving older adults were reported. This represents an **increase of 8.5%** over the reports received in 2008.
 - **One in 14** incidents reported involved a **life-threatening** (371) or **fatal** situation (28).
 - The increased number of reports signals improved communication about elder abuse between law enforcement, health care professionals, and social service agencies.

- **Types of Abuse Reported:** Of the reports received:
 - 49.4% involved self-neglect,
 - 18.4% involved financial exploitation,
 - 11.6% involved neglect by others,
 - 7.3% involved emotional abuse,
 - 5.9% involved physical abuse,
 - 0.6% involved sexual abuse,
 - 0.4% involved unreasonable confinement/restraint, and
 - 6.4% involved other (information only or other).

- **Where the Abuse Occurred:** **90.6%** of the reports involved incidents that occurred in the elder **victim's home**: In 85.8% of the incidents, the individual resided in the community and in 14.2% of the incidents, the individual resided in a regulated, long-term care residential setting (nursing home, assisted living, etc.) or other settings.

- **The Elder Victim's Age:** The ages of the elder victims of the reported incidents were as follows:
 - 22% were ages 60-69,
 - 30% were ages 70-79,
 - 37% were ages 80-89, and
 - 11% were 90 and older.

National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL)

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- **The Elder Victim's Gender:** 60.2% of the victims were Female; 39.8% were Male.
- **The Elder Victim's Race:** 78.3% of the reported incidents involved white victims; 7.2% involved people of color. (In 14.5% of the reported cases, the victim's race was unknown or not reported.)
- **The Elder Victim's Capacity:** **54.5%** of the victims were their **own decision-maker**; 32.6% had substitute decision-makers. Of those, 23.9% of the abusers were the activated POA-Health Care or POA-Finances for the elder victim and 6.4% were the guardian of the person or the estate, the temporary guardian or the representative payee.
- **The Profile of the Abuser:** The majority of the abusers were between the ages of 45 and 79 years of age (49.5%). In cases where the abuser's gender was identified: 47.9% were Male and 48.8% were Female. 50.5% of the abusers lived with the elder victim; in 95.2% of the incidents, only 1 abuser was identified for each victim. The relationship of the abuser to the victim was as follows:
 - 40.6% were the victim's adult children,
 - 14.2% were the victim's spouse,
 - 13.4% were another of the victim's relative, including grandchildren,
 - 11.5% were the victim's friend or neighbor,
 - 3.8% were a service provider, and
 - 16.4% were unknown or other than listed above.

Resources for Elder Abuse Victims

- **Shelters:** As of 2008, 4 shelters existed for elder victims of abuse in the following locations: The District of Columbia, New Jersey, New York and Tennessee.
- **Support Groups:** As of 2008, there were 29 support groups tailored to older women victims. Of those, one-third (10) were in Wisconsin. The remaining groups were in 12 states around the country.

In Their Own Words

- "I thought I was the only one living like this."
- "I was isolated before. Now I have true friends."
- "When I hear the stories, I think we were all married to the same man."
- "I always thought it would get better."
- "I tried not to think of it (the abuse). He told me he was just keepin' me in line, that I'd best not get uppity about it."
- "I just learned to work around it. What else could I do? I loved him, for the most part, and divorce was too scandalous to consider. I was a good wife."



Abuse in Later Life—Advocacy Across the Lifespan

Prepared by the National Clearinghouse for Abuse in Later Life (NCALL), 2010

The Case of Verbalee T.: Between 1999 and 2006, Verbalee T.¹ was repeatedly verbally, sexually, and physically abused by her husband in Wisconsin. Despite interventions and actions throughout that time by the county's Adult Protective Services System, the civil and criminal justice systems, her children, her medical care providers (physicians, emergency rooms, and hospitals), intermittent long term care services, home health services and others, Verbalee did not receive the protection from her husband that she desired or deserved. Many systems intervened, but let her down – in large part because each system had some, but not all, of the information available. The local domestic abuse program was never contacted to work with Verbalee. Decisions that were intended to aid her ended up leading to her further harm. If there had been a coordinated effort in the community's response to the abuse, perhaps the end of Verbalee's life would have been more peaceful.

- **The Aging of America**

- The number of persons **over 65** in the United States will approximately **double** in the next two decades. Persons age 65 and older will represent roughly **one in five** Americans; compared with one in eight today. Currently, **25% of adult women are age 60 or older**. Persons **85 and older are the fastest growing population** group in the United States. The life expectancy of individuals is growing; it is likely that the average lifespan of our children will be 100. (U.S. DHHS, Area on Aging, 2009.)

- **Abuse in Later Life--Prevalence**

- **11% of individuals 60 and older reported experiencing abuse within the last year.** (Acierno, 2009, p. 13.)
- Elder abuse victims are at **more than twice the risk to die prematurely** than older adults who are not victims of abuse. (Dong, et.al., 2009.)
- Although each year the number of reported incidents of abuse in later life grows, approximately **84% of elder abuse incidents are not reported.** (NCEA, 2004.)
- Forms of abuse include: **physical, psychological, emotional, sexual, neglect, and financial exploitation.** (NCEA, 2004.)
- Family members were the alleged abusers in over **76%** of the incidents reported to researchers. (Acierno, 2009, p. 8) **57%** of reported physical abuse was **perpetrated**

¹ The name and other identifying information have been changed to protect the victim's privacy.

- by a partner/spouse; 19% by adult children, grandchildren, or other family members.** (Acierno, 2009, p. 44.)
 - As compared with younger victims of domestic abuse, victims of abuse in later life may be **less likely to report** abuse due to factors such as fear of retaliation; fear and shame; reluctance to implicate member of family; power differential between older victim and partner, child, family member, caregiver – who are or are perceived to be more powerful; cultural issues; isolation; loss of social network; language barriers; financial barriers, concerns about being removed from their own home (to a nursing home) and ageism. (Brandl, et. al, 2007, pp 52-58.)
 - Victims of one form of elder abuse (e.g., financial exploitation) are at highest risk for **other, co-occurring forms of abuse** (e.g., neglect, physical abuse, psychological abuse). (Bonnie & Wallace, 2003; Lachs, et al, JAMA, 1998; Quinn and Tomita, 1997.)
 - As compared with younger victims, older victims have **less information about services and resources and less access to them.** (Wilke and Vinton, Affilia, 2005.)
 - 85% of older adults who experience sexual abuse **did not report to police or other authorities.** (Acierno, 2009. p. 10)
- **Resources**
 - **Support Groups:** As of 2008, there were 29 support groups tailored to older women victims in the United States.
 - **Specialized Services:** As of 2008, 56 direct service programs has created specialized services for older victims of abuse including crisis intervention, legal and systems advocacy, counseling, emergency shelter and transitional housing.
 - **Assisted Living and Long Term Care Options:** Some abuse in later programs have working agreements with assisted living facilities to provide temporary, emergency shelter for older victims needing assistance or care, illustrating the importance of collaboration among those who care for and provide services to older victims.
 - **Abuse in Later Life Interdisciplinary Teams:** The purpose of an Interdisciplinary Team (I-Team) is to work collaboratively within and across a community or county to assure safety and coordinated services for victims of abuse in later life. The strength of each I-Team depends on the range of professionals involved with the I-Team. Professionals from law enforcement, clergy, APS, health care, disability and aging systems and domestic abuse and sexual assault programs are involved with their I-Team to provide better services and safety for victims of abuse in later life.
 - **Coordinated Community Response Teams:** Local Coordinated Community Response (CCR) Teams include a variety of professionals working to improve a community's systems' responses to end violence and improve safety. Professionals from law enforcement, faith communities, APS, health care, domestic abuse and sexual assault advocacy programs, civil and criminal justice systems, and the aging and disability systems participate as members of a CCR.

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What is Abuse in Later Life?

AGE: The victim is 60 years or older. This is the approximate age when women begin to be noticeably under-represented in domestic abuse service data.

FORMS OF ABUSE: The types of abuse may include: physical, sexual, and emotional abuse; financial exploitation; neglect; stalking; and dating violence. Domestic and sexual abuse in later life are a subset of elder abuse.

GENDER: Victims are usually women, but can be older men.

RELATIONSHIP: Many victims have ongoing, trusting relationships with abusers, such as spouse/life partner, adult children, other family members, caregivers, and fiduciaries.

LOCATION: The abuse occurs in the person's home (a private dwelling in the community or an institution, such as a nursing home).

DYNAMICS: Often abuse is a pattern of coercive tactics to gain and maintain power and control in the relationship.

How to Reach Us:

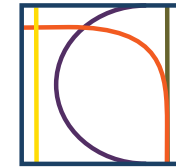
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Tactics Used by Abusive Family Members

- Threatens to leave, divorce, commit suicide, or institutionalize the victim
- Slaps, hits, punches, burns, chokes, and throws things
- Is rough with intimate body parts during caregiving
- Takes walker, wheelchair, glasses, and/or dentures
- Ignores or ridicules religious and/or cultural traditions
- Humiliates, demeans, and/or ridicules
- Misleads other family members about the extent and nature of illnesses and/or conditions
- Controls what you do, who you see, and where you go
- Steals money, titles, or possessions

These are just some of the abusive behaviors victims might suffer. Often, abusers will use combinations of various behaviors.

What You Can Expect From NCALL

Technical Assistance/ Consultation

The National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL) provides technical assistance on abuse in later life. Staff respond to questions by phone, email, or in person and are also available to review materials and participate on state and national advisory committees. NCALL provides information on programming, outreach, collaboration, and policy development.

Training

NCALL trainers provide training to many audiences, including domestic violence and sexual assault programs, aging bureaus, adult protective services, criminal and civil justice system agencies and representatives, health care providers, and other legal personnel. For more information about speaker availability and speakers' fees, contact NCALL staff.

The History of NCALL

In 1999, Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence created the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL) with funding from the Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women. Today, NCALL is a nationally-recognized leader on program development, policy and technical assistance, and training that addresses the nexus between domestic violence, sexual assault, and elder abuse and neglect.

The Mission and Goals of NCALL

NCALL's mission is to eliminate abuse in later life. Through advocacy and education, NCALL strives to challenge and change the beliefs, policies, practices, and systems that allow abuse to occur and continue. NCALL also aims to improve victim safety by increasing the quality and availability of victim services and support.



SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN LATER LIFE

Fact Sheet

Sexual violence can affect individuals across the lifespan, including people in later life. Many older victims have survived multiple victimizations over the course of their lives. Recognition of sexual violence against people in later life is hindered by misconceptions that older adults are not sexual beings or sexually desirable and that rape is a crime of passion.

A high percentage of victims experience significant health problems and disabilities that increase vulnerability and reduce help seeking (Eckert & Sugar, 2008; Teaster & Roberto, 2004). Advanced age does not protect one from sexual assault, but rather increases risk in many ways.

The National Center on Elder Abuse (2007) defines sexual abuse as “non-consenting sexual contact of any kind” including unwanted touching; sexual assault or battery, such as rape, sodomy, and coerced nudity; sexually explicit photographing; and sexual contact with any person incapable of giving consent. Jurisdictions and agencies define “elder” differently but typically as commencing at age 60 or 65.¹

Injuries

Due to age-related physiological changes, older victims tend to sustain more serious physical and psychosocial injuries during an assault than younger victims. Some of the signs and symptoms of sexual violence against people in later life include:

- Genital injuries, human bite marks, imprint injuries, and bruising on thighs, buttocks, breasts, face, neck, and other areas

- Fear, anxiety, mistrust, and dramatic changes in victims’ behavior
- Eyewitness reports and disclosures by victims
- Observed suspicious behavior of perpetrators by others

Barriers to response and prevention

It is likely that sexual violence against people in later life is highly underreported. Many barriers impede the effective response and prevention of sexual abuse against older victims including:

- Social stigma and barriers preventing individuals from discussing sexual activities or sexual violence openly
- Disabling conditions that interfere with making reports
- Victim’s fear of further harm
- Victim’s reluctance to report, especially if perpetrator is a family member
- Misinterpretation of disclosure as part of dementia and of physical evidence as “normal” markings on an older body (Burgess & Clements, 2006)
- Delayed medical and police assistance and contamination of physical evidence

¹Various jurisdictions and agencies define the “elder” portion of life differently, but typically as commencing at age 60 or 65. In contrast, the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL) considers older victims to be those over age 50.



Victims

- Most identified older victims are female; however male victims have been reported in almost every study (Burgess, Ramsey-Klawnsnik, & Gregorian, 2008; Ramsey-Klawnsnik, Teaster, Mendiondo, Marcum, & Abner, 2008).
- In addition, genital injuries occur with more frequency and severity in post-menopausal women than younger rape victims (Poulos & Sheridan, 2008).
- Older victims are also more likely to be admitted to a hospital following assault (Eckert & Sugar, 2008).
- Victims, ranging from age 60 to 100, experienced psychosocial trauma whether or not they could discuss the sexual assault. There was no significant difference between those with and without dementia in post-abuse distress symptoms (Burgess et al., 2008).

Perpetrators

- Perpetrators of sexual violence against people in later life span a wide range in age and can be juveniles as well as other older adults (Burgess et al., 2008).
- Most perpetrators of sexual abuse against people in later life have special access to victims as family members, intimate partners, fellow residents, or care providers.
- Most identified offenders are male, however, female offenders have also been identified (Burgess et al., 2008; Ramsey-Klawnsnik et al., 2008).
- Persons who sexually offend older adults within their families exhibit characteristics of mental illness, substance abuse, domineering or sadistic personalities, sexual deviancy, and sexist views of wives as property (Ramsey-Klawnsnik, 2003).
- Sexual offenders who are older adults are typically not held accountable. National Institute for Justice Research demonstrated that the older a victim, the less likely the offender was found guilty. (Schofield, 2006).

For more information on how you can work to address and prevent sexual violence against people in later life, please contact your state, territory, or tribal coalition against sexual assault and/or the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (resources@nsvrc.org, 877-739-3895, <http://www.nsvrc.org>).

This fact sheet was developed by Holly Ramsey-Klawnsnik, Ph.D., and is part of a Sexual Violence in Later Life Information Packet.

Resources

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U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women Enhanced Training and Services to End Violence Against and Abuse of Women in Later Life

Overview of the OVW Abuse in Later Life Program: Since 2006, the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) has administered 29 grant programs and seven continuation grant programs authorized by the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 and subsequent legislation. The discretionary grant program is designed to provide funds for local communities to develop services for older victims, create or enhance a coordinated community response and organize training for professionals on elder abuse, neglect and financial exploitation, including domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking against victims who are 50 years of age or older. The National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL), a project of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence, has provided technical assistance and training to OVW Abuse in Later Life grantees since 2006.

Eligible applicants are states, units of local government, Indian tribal governments or tribal organizations; and non-profit, non-governmental victim services organizations with demonstrated experience in assisting elderly women or demonstrated experience in addressing domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking, including faith- and community-based organizations.

Program requirements include the following elements: (1) Establishing collaborative relationships among law enforcement, prosecutors, non-profit, non-governmental domestic violence victim services programs or sexual assault victim services programs and a non-profit program that serves elder victims; (2) Providing training to criminal justice professionals, governmental agencies and victim assistants to enhance their ability to address elder abuse, neglect and financial exploitation in their communities; (3) Providing cross training to professionals working with older victims; (4) Developing or enhancing a coordinated community response to abuse in later life; and (5) Providing enhanced services for victims who are 50 years of age or older.

Overview of Grant Recipients: The attached map shows the location of the grant recipients since 2006. The recipients represent a cross-section of communities, from large, urban communities, e.g. Seattle and Denver, to small, rural areas, e.g. East Prairie, Missouri. They *include two tribes and* represent the four corners of the United States.

Outcomes: Below find feedback from grant recipients for the years 2006 through 2008 on the outcomes of the grant programs:

National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL)

A Project of Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence
307 S. Paterson St., Suite 1, Madison, Wisconsin 53703-3517

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2006:

- Improved cooperation and communication among law enforcement, prosecutors and Adult Protective Services (APS). Specified persons within each agency have been identified as resources for elder abuse.
- Improved thoroughness of investigations by law enforcement of incidents of abuse, neglect and financial exploitation of older victims.
- Heightened awareness of elder abuse among law enforcement officers who are encouraging others to look for signs of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation in routine calls.
- Expanded coordinated community responses to include other stakeholders who had not previously been involved within communities and across counties within a state.
- Increased convictions in elder abuse cases following training for prosecutors and law enforcement officers;

2007:

- Increased specialized training of others, including judges, law enforcement, prosecutors, APS, others leading to increased awareness of elder abuse, neglect and financial exploitation.
- Policies and procedures revised to reflect improved multi-disciplinary responses to elder abuse, neglect and exploitation cases
- Increased communication and collaboration between law enforcement and APS. Increased number of calls for assistance from law enforcement to APS regarding cases of elder abuse, neglect and financial exploitation.
- Improved awareness and responsiveness by Judges overseeing cases of actual or potential elder abuse, neglect and financial exploitation in civil or criminal matters following Judges' training.

2008 to Present:

- Creation of multi-disciplinary elder abuse coordinated community response and protection teams to focus on systems responses to elder abuse, neglect and financial exploitation.
- Increased arrests and convictions for financial exploitation of elder victims.
- Increased communication and collaboration between law enforcement and APS. Increased number of calls for assistance from law enforcement to APS regarding cases of elder abuse, neglect and financial exploitation.
- Increased requests for additional training by law enforcement, prosecutors, APS, and others working collaboratively on elder abuse cases.
- Established specialized elder abuse units in the prosecutor's offices, including assigning a special investigator to the prosecutor's office to assist with the investigation and prosecution of elder abuse cases.
- Review and revise state laws to enhance the protection and services provided to vulnerable, older adults.

For more information, contact:

National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL)

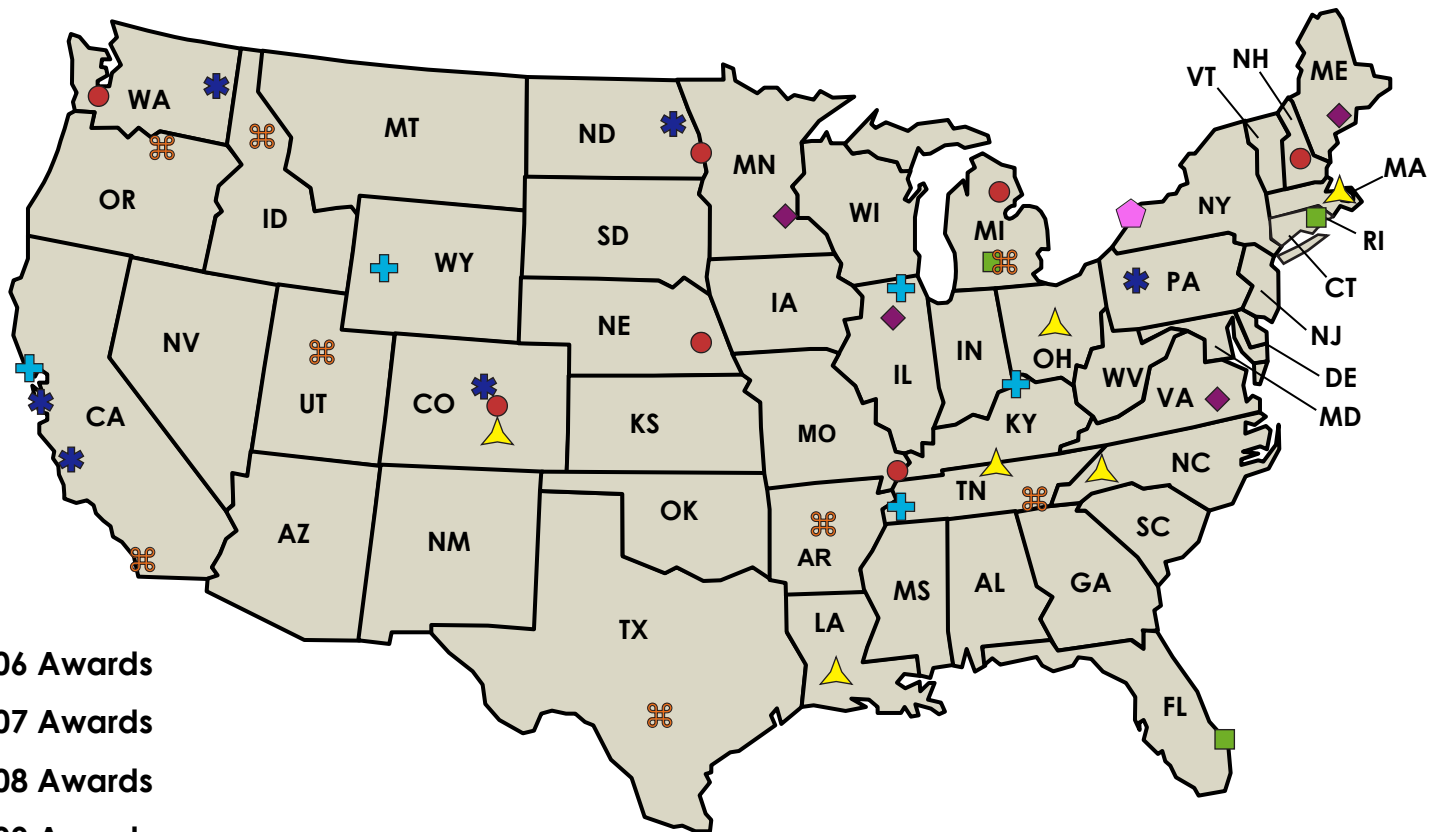
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Office on Violence Against Women Abuse in Later Life Projects



-  FY 2006 Awards
-  FY 2007 Awards
-  FY 2008 Awards
-  FY 2009 Awards
-  FY 2010 Awards
-  FY 2006+2008 Continuation Awards
-  FY 2006+2009 Continuation Awards
-  FY 2007+2009 Continuation Awards



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