

GDASS BITESIZE

**FAMILIAL
DOMESTIC ABUSE
& OLDER PEOPLE**

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GDASS
BITESIZE

HOUSEKEEPING – ONLINE

The session will
not be recorded

Mute
microphones

Cameras optional

Breaks

Tech issues

Questions

Materials and
follow up

Accessibility

IMPACT WARNING

Domestic abuse is a challenging topic.

You may have personal or professional experience which unexpectedly brings up some memories or feelings for you during this session.

Your wellbeing is more important than completing the session.

If you need a break or need to step away, please do so.

If you need support after the session please reach out to a trusted friend, your line manager or GDASS.





LEARNING AIMS

- Understand the definition of domestic abuse and familial domestic abuse (FDA)
- Understand key tactics that familial abusers may use in abuse of an older person
- Understand the barriers older victims face to reporting their family members or seeking safety.
- Understand the role care and support needs can play in FDA
- Understand how the co-existence of domestic abuse and dementia can affect risk.
- Have a basic awareness of LPA and how it can be used in abuse.
- Recognise the limitations of the DASH and how to adapt it to accurately capture risk.
- Consider safety planning options for older victims of FDA

KEY INFORMATION

'Older person' is defined by the WHO as anyone age 60 years and over.

44% of victims over 60 experience domestic abuse by a family member

79% of older victims have a disability or health condition.

Familial abuse may involve multiple perpetrators, and multiple victims or potential victims

It is highly gendered and accounts for more than a quarter of all domestic abuse related deaths

DOMESTIC ABUSE DEFINITION

Domestic Abuse Act 2021:

"Behaviour of a person ("A") towards another person ("B") is "domestic abuse" if -

(a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and

(b) the behaviour is abusive."

AND it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

"Personally connected" means:

- they are, or have been, married to each other;
- they are, or have been, civil partners of each other;
- they have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- they have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other;
- they each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child;
- **they are relatives.**

AGE-RELATED ABUSE TACTICS

- Financial control and exploitation (pensions, savings, property)
- Carer coercion and dependency-building
- Isolation from friends, and community
- Gaslighting and undermining memory/confidence
- Health-related control (medication, appointments, symptoms)
- Threats around independence or residential care
- Control of communication (phone, post, access to services)
- Abuse disguised as “helping”, or “family duty”
- Controlling when the victim eats, sleeps, or gets medical attention.

BARRIERS TO SAFETY

Familial victims

- Blame themselves
- Fear of damaging the relationship with the family
- Don't want to 'criminalise' the abuser
- Shared housing
- Not able to identify it as Domestic Abuse

Older victims

- Generational attitudes
- Care and support needs
- Lack of specialist support services
- Social isolation
- Digital exclusion
- Stereotypes and media portrayals of DA

VICTIMS WITH DEMENTIA

- Victims with dementia may experience targeted abuse tactics.
- Perpetrators may deliberately act to cause confusion or disorientation.
- Signs of abuse can often be mistaken for, or disguised as, dementia-related.
- Victims are likely to become more dependent on perpetrators
- Perpetrators may present as very caring and attentive to the outside world.
- It is important to document the source of any information relating to the victim's capability or capacity.
- A person with dementia may not recognise risk indicators or may struggle to implement safety plans.
- 'More than one' – increasing social connections.

Find out more: [Domestic Abuse and the Co-existence of Dementia – Dewis Choice, 2022](#)

LASTING POWER OF ATTORNEY

A Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) is when someone appoints another person(s) (attorney) to make decisions on their behalf.

Economic or financial abuse could be used by someone with **LPA for Property and Finance** to:

Get property or belongings signed over to them

Control access to benefits, pensions and any other money the victim has

Predatory Marriage

A **Health and Welfare LPA** can be used to make decisions around daily care, medical care, and where the subject lives. Tactics might include:

Withholding access to care

Medical care

Where the subject lives

SUPPORTING OLDER VICTIMS OF FDA

Routine enquiry

Create space
for action

Use simple,
accessible
language

Ask about
specific abusive
behaviours

Give LOTS of
reassurance

Assess risk
using the DASH

Consider respite
and assessment
for carers

ASSESSING RISK

“Are you very frightened?”

“Are you frightened about what they might do?” or “Do you ever feel scared of them, or worried about how they might react?”

“Have you separated or tried to separate from (...)?”

“Has anything changed recently in your relationship with them — for example moving out, limiting contact, challenging them, or trying to set boundaries?”

“Is there conflict around child contact?”

“Are there any issues or conflicts involving children in the family, such as contact, care arrangements, or who they spend time with?”

Other relevant information (from victim or professional) which may alter risk levels

Consider: Care and support (in either direction), neglect,

SAFETY PLANNING

Things to consider within a safety plan:

- Calling for help – access to phones and devices, contact numbers written down, who to call and when.
- Access to e.g. care call alarms, falls detection etc.
- Identifying safe rooms – consider security items such as door wedges, and access to communication devices
- Support with digital literacy (DAISI, Age UK, Libraries)
- Identifying options for increasing social connectedness
- Explore LPA and consider removing
- Support to make and/or update a will.
- Referrals to adult social care
- Information sharing
- Exploring alternative care arrangements to reduce dependence
- Community transport options
- Safeguarding of grandchildren or wider family members.



REFERRALS TO GDASS

GDASS – Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service

Provides support for all victims aged 16+ regardless of gender or background

Support includes:

- Safety planning
- Advocacy work
- Practical support
- A qualified Older Persons Violence Advocate (OPVA) for high-risk victims

Referral Routes:

- **Self-referral:** via www.gdass.org.uk
- **Professional referral:** secure email or online form
- **MARAC referral:** for high-risk cases

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT



Gloucestershire Carers Hub

Support and advice for unpaid carers, including resources, assessments, respite, peer support and contingency planning.

www.gloucestershirecarershub.co.uk



Hourglass

Confidential support for older people experiencing abuse or neglect or who are worried about someone experiencing abuse, including a free 24/7 helpline.

www.wearehourglass.org/hourglass-services



Adult social care

<https://forms.gloucestershire.gov.uk/AdultSocialCareEnquiry>

01452 426 868

FEEDBACK AND QUESTIONS

Thank you for joining us.

If you need any further support:

GDASS Helpline: 01452 726570

GDASS professional's advice line: 01452 726561

Web: www.gdass.org.uk

