



Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence

## Intimate Partner Violence in Later Life



*“Over one in 10 women over the age of 50 in the United States suffers from physical, sexual or verbal abuse perpetrated by a significant other.”*

Source: Melissa M. Batt, University of Texas  
School of Public Health, 2010

To learn more about intimate partner violence in later life,  
contact the NNADV office or visit our website at  
[www.nnadv.org](http://www.nnadv.org) to view a list of annotated resources  
in the NNADV Lending Library.

## Intimate Partner Violence in Later Life

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is one form of elder abuse. Every day an elderly person faces abuse by someone they know well and with whom they have an ongoing relationship—a spouse, ex-spouse, or companion (current or ex-boyfriend/girlfriend). IPV may affect older persons of either sex, any income level, race, cultural or ethnic group, sexual orientation, religion, persons in good health, or those persons with a disability, but older women are likelier than younger women to experience violence for a longer time, to be in current violent relationships and to have health and mental health problems (Wilke, D. & L. Vinton, 2005).

### **Intimate Partner Violence and Elder Abuse are Crimes.**

Abusers are apt to blame their victims, make excuses for their behavior, or deny wrongdoing. But their behavior can never be justified.

Education and support are vital to older women's safety. Secrecy is an abuser's best protection (National Center on Elder Abuse [www.ncea.aoa.gov](http://www.ncea.aoa.gov), 2005.)

If elder abuse is suspected, some professions are required by state law to report abuse to the Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD) ([www.nvaging.net/protective\\_svc.htm](http://www.nvaging.net/protective_svc.htm)), or to local law enforcement agencies. Visit the ADSD website for additional information.

*As defined by Nevada Law (NRS 200.5092), "Elder Abuse" is the willful and unjustified infliction of pain, injury or mental anguish; or deprivation of food, shelter, clothing, or services which are necessary to maintain the physical or mental health of an older person.*

*"Elder Exploitation" is the wrongful use of an older person or their money, assets, or property to the advantage of another.*

For the purposes of the law an "older person" is defined as a person 60 years of age or older.

## **How common is IPV in later life?**

- “Women are far more likely than men to be IPV victims and to be injured or murdered by an intimate partner” (Leigh Kimberg, MD, *Intimate Partner Violence*, 2006).
- IPV among elders “...is primarily family abuse. Studies repeatedly show that the overwhelming majority of confirmed cases occur in domestic settings” (NCEA, 2005).
- “Abuse of elderly women by their spouses is increasing among the growing ‘over 60’ demographic in the U.S. Women suffer a higher percentage of physical, emotional, and financial abuse than men do” (Melissa Batt, 2010).

## **With the intention of gaining power and control, does an intimate partner...**

- Belittle you or call you names, privately or in the presence of others?
- Withhold medications, medical care and food necessary to maintain your health?
- Manipulate or exploit you by misusing your money, assets, and/or property?
- Make threats which cause you to fear for your safety and/or for the safety of other people or your pets living in your household?
- Push, shove, hit, kick, burn, or bite you? Restrain you against your will?
- Destroy or steal your personal property or sentimental items?
- Look at or touch you sexually in ways that make you feel uncomfortable? Rape you?
- Isolate you by preventing you from seeing friends, family, visitors, or prevent you from reading mail or talking on the phone?

**If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you have experienced abuse.**

## What can I do if I am being abused?

Many cases are not reported because seniors are afraid to tell police, friends, or other family members about the abuse. Your safety and your well-being are important. No one deserves to be abused. It is not your fault and you are not alone. There are people in your community that will listen and believe you, help you plan for your safety and offer resources to support you.

### Things you can do to receive help:

- If you are in immediate danger, call 9-1-1 and get medical care for any injuries.
- For emergency safety services, support and shelter, call the Nevada Statewide or National Hotline ([www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org)) and speak with an advocate to locate a program in your area. Services are premised on safety, support, empowerment and options. All services are free and confidential. For a complete list of programs in Nevada, visit the NNADV website ([www.nnadv.org](http://www.nnadv.org).)
- If you are planning to report the abuse by calling Elder Protective Services ([www.nvaging.net/protective\\_svc.htm](http://www.nvaging.net/protective_svc.htm)) or leaving the abusive relationship, be aware that doing so may increase your risk for elevated abuse. Whether you decide to report or not report, stay or leave the relationship for your own safety, call a hotline listed in this brochure to reach an advocate who can help you create a personalized safety plan.



*"Among our greatest challenges as a nation today is making America a safe place to grow old."*

- Lisa Nerenberg

**If you need help, please call...**

**Nevada Statewide Hotline**

1.800.500.1556

**National Domestic Violence Hotline**

1.800.799.SAFE or 1.800.799.7233

1.800.787.3224 (TTY)

[www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org)

Hotlines provide crisis intervention, information, referrals and safety planning. Both hotlines are toll-free, confidential, anonymous and operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

**Elder Abuse is a Crime!**

To report suspected elder abuse in Nevada, call 702.486.6930 for Las Vegas/Clark County; 888.729.0571 statewide/all other areas, or the local police department, or sheriff's office.

For more information on reporting, visit [www.nvaging.net](http://www.nvaging.net) or Nevada Elder Protective Services ([www.nvaging.net/protective\\_svc.htm](http://www.nvaging.net/protective_svc.htm).)

**Se habla Español**



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## **The Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence (NNADV)...**

...is a statewide organization that was formed in 1980 to work toward the elimination of domestic and sexual violence against all persons and the empowerment of women and children.

NNADV helps Nevada's communities respond creatively and effectively to the needs of domestic violence victims by providing information to service providers in the fields of domestic and sexual violence. In addition, NNADV provides education and advocacy to the general public and actively educates legislators on issues of concern to Nevada families.



### **Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence**

220 South Rock Blvd. Suite 7  
Reno Nevada 89502

Phone: 775.828.1115 or  
800.230.1955 statewide

Fax: 775.828.9911

Website: [www.nnadv.org](http://www.nnadv.org)

**A program in your area:**