The Role of Males as Victims and Advocates in Elder Abuse Cases-

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

Brian K. Payne, PhD
Professor of Sociology and Criminal Justice

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Learning Objectives

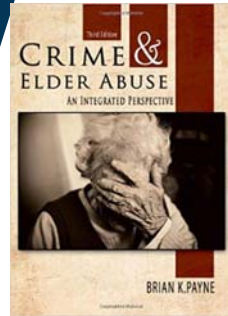After this presentation, you will be able to:

- Identify four misconceptions about elder abuse
- Describe the patterns of elder abuse involving older male victims
- Explain how males respond to elder abuse differently than females
- Develop collaborative responses to elder abuse.

2

Momma, they forgot the baby

Pop Quiz...

CRIME & ELDER ABUSE
AN INTEGRATED PERSPECTIVE

BRIAN K. PAYNE

Getting to know one another...

Raise your hand if you...
- Grew up in another state
- Have more than five siblings
- Have more than five children
- Would prefer to be in traffic over the woods
- Are a police officer
- Are a social worker
- Are an attorney
- Are an advocate

Elder Abuse: Fact and Fiction

FICTION
- Most crimes against seniors are violent street crimes.
- The consequences of victimization are the same for older and younger victims.
- Elder abuse is similar to child abuse.

FACTS
- Financial offenses are more common among older persons.
- Some types of consequences are more severe as we grow older and more vulnerable.
- It's more similar to spouse abuse.

Fact and Fiction continued

FICTION
- The best way to deal with elder abuse is to pass laws.
- Abusive adult offspring were abused as children.
- Adult offspring are abusive because of their parent's dependency on them.

FACTS
- Many laws are ineffective, biased, and not based on research.
- Child abuse victims may become child abusers.
- Abusive adult offspring more likely dependent on parent.

Fact and Fiction Continued

FICTION
- Many older victims are victims because they were in the wrong place at wrong time.
- Crimes against elderly persons are not a big problem.
- The CJS should declare a war on elder abuse.

FACTS
- Most older victims are victimized at or near their homes.
- Statistics are misleading
- Integrated and interdisciplinary approach is needed.

Defining Elder Abuse

"Abuse, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder" – Eleazer.

- No universal definition
- Elder abuse can be described as:
  - social harm
  - social construction
  - crime
  - violations of natural law
  - white-collar crime
  - domestic violence
- -definitions influence responses

9

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KEXJuUIE4AE

10

Elder Abuse is Ignored

- Conceptual ambiguity
- Magnitude issues
- Funding issues
- Societal issues

11

Male victims ignored even more

"Unheard gender"
Most social workers are females
Not trained to work with males
-(Baum)

- Fewer older men than women
- Negative stereotypes (Grumpy)
- Less advocacy
- Seen as more powerful
- Few advocating on their behalf
- "Erroneously believed to enjoy a better quality of life" (Kosberg and Mangnum)
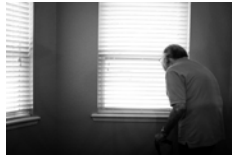- "Invisible social problem" (Kosberg)

12

Male Victims

- "Taboo subject" (Pritchard)
- Experience financial abuse and neglect most often
- Treated differently than female victims
- Reports not seen as serious
- Cognitive difficulties increase risk
- Different physical needs
- Different psychosocial needs
- Less likely to seek support or be familiar with community supports
- May experience alienation from adult children
  - Fractured relations can increase likelihood of abuse
  - Psychological and emotional abuse

13

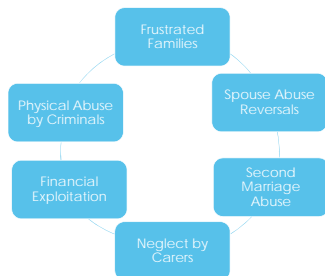## National Elder Mistreatment Study (Amstadter et al., 2011)

- Did not find higher rates of victimization among older women
- Males physically victimized by "deviant" offenders rather than family members
- Female victims 2x more likely to be physically abused by offender they lived with
- Physical abuse perpetrators against male victims more likely to have
  - Substance abuse problems
  - Legal problems
  - Employment issues

Isolation increases risk for all older victims

14

A typology describing older male victims

- Frustrated Families
- Spouse Abuse Reversals
- Physical Abuse by Criminals
- Second Marriage Abuse
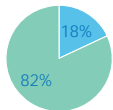- Financial Exploitation
- Neglect by Carers

15

What older male victims need

- "Advice and practical help, especially in managing finances and deciding on appropriate accommodation.
- A place of safety and the achievement of personal safety.
- The opportunity and encouragement to talk about present/past abuse and other difficulties.
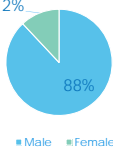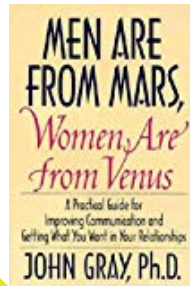- Consistent and ongoing support."
  - Source: Jacki Pritchard (2002)

- To be heard
- Not to be blamed
- Not to be humiliated
- To be protected
- Compassion

16

Gender-based Professions

Social Worker Genders

18%

82%

- Male - Female

Police Officer Genders

12%

88%

- Male - Female

MEN ARE FROM MARS, Women Are from Venus

A Practical Guide for Improving Communication and Getting What You Want in Your Relationships

JOHN GRAY, Ph.D.

17

A tale of two conferences…

- These are photos of two professional conferences. Which one is a police conference and which is a social worker conference?

18

Different Professional Response

- Law Enforcement
  - Enforce the law
  - Maintain public order
  - Provide services
- In elder abuse cases:
  - Investigate
  - Arrest
  - Refer
  - Support APS

SOCIAL SERVICE RESPONSE
- Social Worker Role
  - Investigate allegations to determine service needs
  - Intervene
  - Help and support victims
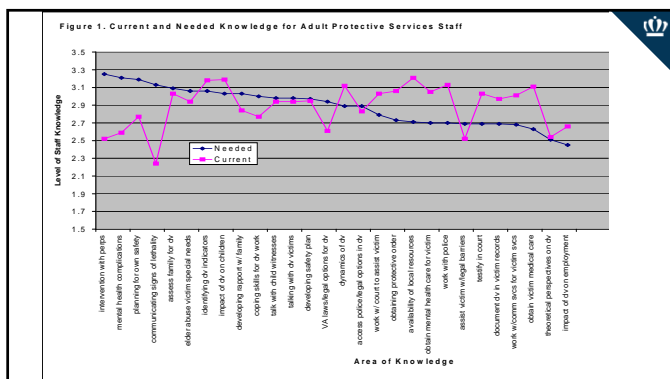 - Search for least restrictive alternative
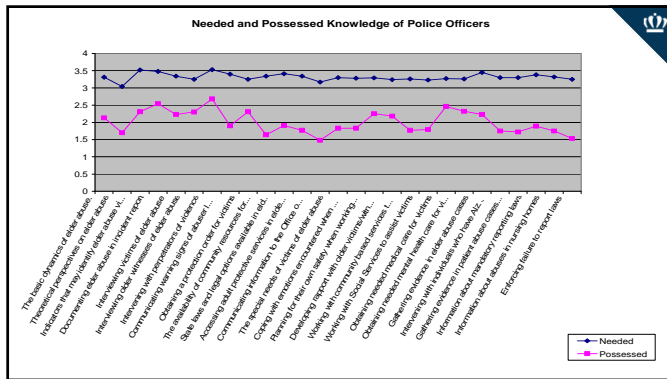
19

Traits Assigned to Social Workers

- Compassionate
- Altruistic
- Empathetic
- Non-judgmental

Traits Assigned to Police Officers

- Authoritarian
- Distrustful
- Cynical
- Suspicious
- Physical

20

Figure 1. Current and Needed Knowledge for Adult Protective Services Staff
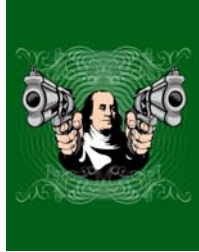
Needed and Possessed Knowledge of Police Officers

Barriers to Working with Older Victims

- Goal confusion
- Norm confusion
- Role confusion
- Ignorance about dynamics
- Lack of understanding about elder abuse
- Lack of understanding about other groups
- Lack of focus on victim
- Aggressive responses
- Strain on workers
- Strain on victims
- Lack of training
- Ageism
- Unclear laws

Addressing the Barriers

- Communication
- Training (all involved)
- Written protocol
- Leadership support
- Broad conceptualizations of harm
- Legal advocacy
- Research
- Coursework

Responding to Elder Abuse

- Training implications:
- It's needed
- Should consider subcultural influences
- Collaborative or integrated training
- Training is not enough
- Commitment to collaboration

Why Collaborate?

- Responsive to real experiences of victims
- Synergy
- Fiscally responsive
- Prevention
- Intervention
- Responsive to causes
- Empowering
- Advocacy

- A
- D
- V
- O
- C
- A
- C
- Y

Who Collaborates?

- Social services
- Medical professionals
- Adult protective services
- DV advocates
- Sexual assault
- Financial exploitation teams
- Police
- Prosecutors
- Judges
- Restorative justice
- Researchers/Academics
- Older persons

Principles of Collaboration

(1) communication, (2) objectivity, (3) leadership, (4) listening, (5) awareness (6) boundary flexibility, (7) objectives, (8) research, (9) advocacy, (10) trust, (11) improvement, (12) openness, and (13) new strategies. (Payne and DeMichele, 2009; Payne and Gainey, 2009)

Speaking of New Strategies:

Communication
Objectivity
Leadership
Listening
Awareness
Boundary flexibility
Objectives
Research
Advocacy
Trust
Improved relationships should be goal
Openness
New strategies

Start collaborating and advocating!

- Labels matter – name your collaboration!
- Goals matter!
- It's not personal, it's personnel.
- "You can't have everything, where would you put it?"
- Money follows ideas.

- Enjoy your collaborations.
- There is no "I" in team, but there is an "I" in collaboration.
- Punishment should not be the goal of advocacy.
- There's no business like the news business – use the media.

30

What will happen in the future?

- More older persons equals more older victims.
- Cyber victimization will increase.
- More use of technology/cameras to prevent elder abuse is likely.
- With more understanding, better training will follow.
- Collaboration will make a difference.
- It starts with you!

31

Collaboration: Leveraging our strengths

We can do more together than we can separately.

32

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33