ABUSE IN LATER LIFE EDUCATION SERIES FOR ADVOCATES:
SUPPORT GROUPS FOR OLDER SURVIVORS

Office on Violence Against Women
Abuse in Later Life Program

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As a Result of This Training, Participants Will Be Better Able to:

- Identify why support groups are important for older survivors
- Apply survivor centered practices when planning & designing support group practices
- Develop an effective outreach plan to encourage attendance

Why Focus on Older Victims of Abuse

Gina Bower
Elders who experienced abuse, even modest abuse, had a 300% higher risk of death when compared to those who had not been abused. 


Studies have shown that social support can reduce the effects of abuse, particularly in terms of depression and generalized symptoms of anxiety and poor health.

Benefits of Support Group

- Breaks isolation by providing social connections
- Promotes healing and recovery from trauma
- Prevents further abuse

Starting a Support Group

Sue Hall Dreher
Consultant
Former Director, Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine
Planning

- Talk to older survivors to determine interest
- Who will attend
- Find a safe and accessible location
- Determine facilitator(s)

Support Group Design

- Therapy vs peer support
- Open or closed
- Determine if the group be for all genders or gender specific
- Determine how often the group will meet
- Provide time for check-in, educational component and opportunity to support each other
- Build on survivor’s strengths
Encouraging Attendance

Alice Ghareib
Director, DOVES Program, Area Agency on Aging, Region One, Arizona

Effective Outreach

- Name of support group
- Avoid language such as abuse, abuser, perpetrator
- Materials should be done in contrasting colors with larger font
  (14)
- Focus on safety
- Follow-up contact
Challenges

- Mandatory reporting
- Assuring confidentiality
- Screening in instead of out

Survivors Stories

Survivors Share Their Support Group Experiences
Special Appreciation

Many thanks to Lois, Ruth, Lova, JoAnne, and Thelma for the courage to tell your story so others may benefit.

Summary

- Provide social connections to older survivors of abuse to assist with healing and safety for older survivors of abuse
- Practice survivor-centered practices when planning & designing your support
- Design an outreach plan to promote attendance and participation of older adults
Video Presenters

- Sue Hall Dreher, Consultant, former Director of Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine
- Alice Ghareib, Director of the DOVES Program with the Area Agency on Aging in Arizona
- LaTrice Hogan, Consultant, former Director of the Milwaukee Women’s Center in Wisconsin

Thank You

- Special thanks to Terra Nova Films for the ongoing working partnership with NCALL and the beautiful video production
  - www.terranova.org
Staying Connected to NCALL and Other Advocates

- Sign up for our enewsletter: [http://oi.vresp.com/?fid=03fcc93262](http://oi.vresp.com/?fid=03fcc93262)
- Join our listserv for advocates serving older survivors: [ncall@ncall.us](mailto:ncall@ncall.us)
- Join us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ncall.us](http://www.facebook.com/ncall.us)
- Join us on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/ncall_us](http://www.twitter.com/ncall_us)

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National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL)

National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life, a project of End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin: (Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence)

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