

First Call Exercise:

An Exercise for Multidisciplinary Audiences Illustrating the Barriers and Limited Options Available for Many Older Victims of Abuse

Purpose	This exercise will enhance participants' ability to describe the complicated choices and limited options for older victims while increasing empathy and compassion for survivors. This exercise also illustrates how an older victim's choice may change depending on many factors including gender, age, and severity of abuse.
Time Needed	Approximately 20 minutes – depending audience and the time allocated for debrief discussion.
Target Audience	This exercise was created for a multidisciplinary audience such as with professionals from: domestic violence/sexual assault; elder abuse/adult protective services; aging services; social services; justice system; health care; and others.
Audience Size	Since this exercise involves inviting participants to move around the room to various posters, the ideal audience size is between 10–50 participants (depending on the size of the room).
Pre-Training Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a copy of the script. • Print eight First Call posters, • Copy map of locations for participants who are choose not to move about the room.
Equipment Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tape or some method to display the posters • Script, posters, map of locations • Microphone
Room Arrangement	Put up the posters in different areas of the room far enough apart so people can gather in front of them. If possible, arrange the

	furniture in the room so participants can move freely to each location.
Slides	Slides of the directions and key messages can be found at www.ncall.us .
Variations	None.

Overview of this Exercise

This activity will illustrate the limited options available to many older victims and how help seeking behavior may change as survivors' age and life circumstances change. The facilitator will read different scenarios for a victim of abuse in later life as she grows older. After each scenario, participants will be asked to move to the poster that represents who they would call for help.

Prior to Running the Exercise

Put up the First Call posters in different areas of the room far enough apart so people can gather in front of them. If possible, arrange the furniture in the room so participants can move freely to each location. Place maps on the tables so participants can choose to participate from their seats rather than moving to the posters.

Setting Up the Exercise for the Audience

Let participants know that they can take part by getting up and moving around the room to the posters or staying in their seats and using the First Call map.

Facilitating the Exercise

Give the directions below before beginning.

We are now going to do an activity titled "First Call." In this activity, each of you will be in the role of an older victim. For purposes of this exercise, make decisions about what to do or how you personally would respond in each situation at the given age from your experiences and your ethnic background, gender, and values.

During the exercise, I will tell you how old you are and what has happened to you over time. After I have described the circumstances,

I will ask you who you would call first. You have the choice of calling the domestic violence program, sexual assault agency, adult protective services, criminal justice system, aging services, family member or friends, other, or no one. There may be times you want to contact more than one agency or person for help. Choose the agency that you would contact first for assistance in the given scenario. The text of the scenarios is on the slides.

For those who are willing and able to participate by moving around the room, I will ask you to move to stand by the poster describing who you would call first. If you choose to remain at your seat, use the First Call map in your handouts and mark where you would go.

We will discuss the exercise after we are done with all the scenarios. Please remain silent during the exercise so everyone can hear the directions. Are there any questions?

Have everyone stand and push in their chairs. Facilitator will read the scenario and give people time to move about the room. Consider using the slides describing each scenario so visual learners can see the text while you are reading.

After the exercise has been completed, thank the audience for participating and let them know they can return to their seats. Facilitate a large group debrief. Sample questions can be found after the script.

First Call Exercise:

Script

Scenario 1

You are 58 years old. Your partner calls you “fat and stupid.” Your partner takes your paycheck, puts you on an allowance, and monitors your phone calls. Who would you call first?

Scenario 2

Ten years have passed. You are now 68 years old. Your partner has broken your wrist and threatened to kill you if you leave. Who would you call first?

Scenario 3

You are now 73 years old. Your partner had cancer and died last year. Your adult son has moved into your house and is stealing your Social Security and pension checks.

Scenario 4

You are now age 75. Your adult son forces you to watch pornography. Who do you call first?

Scenario 5

You are now 80 years old. You have a heart condition and need assistance with activities of daily living. Your son is not giving you your medications properly. He does not assist with bathing and feeding. He has fired the home health aides and others who try to help you. Who do you call first?

Thank you for participating. Please return to your seats. We will have a discussion about your experience.

First Call Exercise:

Potential Discussion Questions/Talking Points

Encourage participants to discuss their choices of who they contacted for help with the following discussion.

- How did you feel about the choices available to you?

Sample answers:

- Confused – I wasn't clear on what each option had to offer
- Frustrated – I didn't feel like there was anything there for me

- Who went to the "Other" poster? Who was other for you?

Sample answers:

- Health care provider
- Faith community
- Culturally specific program

- Who went to the "No One" poster? Why? What could have been done so you would reach out for services?

Sample answers:

- More outreach and information about programs
- Nothing – I don't believe in asking for help

Male Victims

- For men, how were your choices influenced by being a male victim? For women, how would your answers have been different if you were a male victim?

Sample answers:

- May have felt they had fewer options
- May have felt service providers would not understand their situation
- May have felt more shame or embarrassed ("men must always be strong" myths)

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, or Transgender Older Victims

- Note that this case used the language “partner” as a reminder that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender older adults may also be abused and reaching out for services. How might your answers differ if you were gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender?

Sample answers:

- May have felt they had fewer options
- May have felt that services were not for them
- May have feared having their sexual identity exposed (being outed)

Immigrant Victims

- If you had been an immigrant, how would your answers have changed?

Sample answers:

- May depend on how long someone has been in this country, whether they speak English and what their status is
- May have felt like they have no options
- If undocumented, may fear deportation of self or of perpetrator

Many of the feelings and thoughts you had during this exercise may also be felt by the victims we are trying to serve. In order to provide victim-centered services, programs need to be familiar with other services agencies in our community and what they offer to victims of abuse.