

PREVENTION

Session 9: Root causes of violence

Materials for this session³⁷

- Sign-in sheet
- Participant Manual, one for each participant
OR copy of Module 9 for each participant (Manual pages 112-121)
- Trainer Notes
- PowerPoint
- Handout
- Participant Evaluation Form #1
- Compilation and Summary of Data Collected with Evaluation Form #1

Key points in Module 9

Why does violence against older persons happen?

- Violence is the improper treatment of a person that causes harm and violates the rights of that person.
- Violence is an abuse of power and control, and is rooted in inequality.
- Violence against older persons occurs because:
 - It is part of the cycle of violence within the family;
 - It is a symptom of society's devaluing and marginalization of older persons;
 - Older persons who are physically or socially isolated may be more likely to experience violence, since they may not have access to helpful resources; and/or,
 - It is intimate partner violence that continues into old age.

Control tactics:

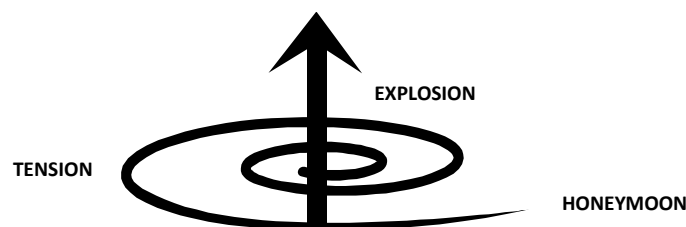
- Physical violence;

³⁷ See pages 28-29 in this Guide for a Training Checklist and a list of materials, supplies and equipment for each training session.

- Humiliation, causing fear, jealousy;
- Claiming superiority over another;
- Intimidation, coercion, isolation;
- Emotional blackmail, i.e. silent treatment or threatening suicide;
- Threats of something bad if demands are not followed;
- Minimizing or denying violence;
- Creating dependency:
 - Isolating the older person;
 - Blocking access to the phone or visitors;
 - Not allowing the older person to leave the home; and,
 - Emotional violence or verbal abuse:
 - “You can’t leave because you have no money of your own!”
 - “You know you’ll never get along without me!”
- Surveillance, monitoring of visitors;
- Portraying the older person as unstable, frail, depressed, troubled; and,
- Threatening to make a scene, staying in control by appearing to lose control.

The Cycle of Violence

- A pattern or process that occurs in relationships where there is violence.
- Four phases:
 1. Honeymoon phase;
 2. Tension build-up phase;
 3. Explosion phase; and,
 4. Honeymoon or reconciliation phase.



The myth of caregiver stress as a primary cause of violence

- Caregiver stress is often described as a primary cause of violence against older persons. This theory asserts that caregivers want to be caring, but lose control under stress.
- Caregiving can be difficult and stressful. The work is often hard, and the hours are long. Many caregivers work for low pay.
- Many people believe that stressed caregivers sometimes snap. They may become violent or abusive. They may say or do things they would not do normally.
- However, stress does *not* justify violence.
 - We all experience stress.
 - We all find ourselves in positions of power over others at some point in our lives.
 - Most people do not relieve stress or exert power by hitting or emotionally abusing others.
 - Each of us needs to make conscious choices about how to deal with stress and use our power.

For helping professionals, caregivers and volunteers who work with older victims of violence

- Be aware of the power imbalance in the helping relationship.
- Acknowledge this difference in power.
- Provide information about choices and options.
- See the older person as an active participant in the helping process.
- Tell the older person that she or he has choices, and can choose to opt out, proceed at her or his own pace, or take the lead on numerous decisions or actions.
- Tools:
 - Power and Control in Later Life Wheel; and,
 - Advocacy and Empowerment Wheel.

Restoring power and control to the older person

- Violence *removes power and control* from an older person. *Empowerment* of the older person should be the focus of any intervention.
- Empowerment restores decision-making and control to victims. This perspective builds on peoples' strengths, skills and resourcefulness.
- Empowering older persons means giving them information and helping them learn about their rights and their options.
- Involving older persons in planning for their safety helps them to be prepared.

PREVENTION
Session 9: Root causes of violence

AGENDA

| Activity # | Activity | 1.5 Hour session | Materials |
|------------|---|------------------|--|
| 1 | <p>Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome participants. • Introduce yourself if necessary. • Participant introductions, if necessary. • Make relevant housekeeping announcements <p>Guidelines for being together (See some examples on p.14)</p> <p>Today's topic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefly explain that this is Session 9 in the <i>Respect Aging</i> training program. Today's topic is <i>Root causes of violence</i>. <p>Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Agenda. • If participants do not have their own copies of the Participant Manual, hand out copies of Module 9. | 10 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint slides 1-2 • <i>Participant Manual</i> • OR one copy of Module 9 for each participant |
| 2 | <p>Group activity <i>Brainstorming</i></p> | 15 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flipchart • Markers • Masking tape |
| 3 | <p>Learning together <i>Root causes of violence</i></p> | 20 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint slides 3-13 |

| | | | |
|-------------------|--|-------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show the slides; refer to the Notes pages of the slides for more information. | | |
| 4 | <p>Small group activity <i>Cycle of Violence Create-a-Story</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show slide 7 on screen. | 35 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PowerPoint slide 7 Handout Flipchart Markers |
| 5 | <p>Wrap-up / Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute <i>Participant Evaluation Form #1</i> and ask participants to complete them. Do a final go-round. Ask participants to briefly share how the session was for them. Ask them how they will use what they have learned in their work or interactions with older persons. Thank participants for their input, sharing and time. Collect <i>Participant Evaluation Form #1</i>. | 10 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Participant Evaluation Forms</i> |
| <i>Total time</i> | | 90 minutes | |

IMPORTANT!

After facilitating this session, please complete the form titled **Compilation and Summary of Data Collected with Evaluation Form #1** (page 221). Your feedback will help us keep project materials relevant, useful and up-to-date. Mail or fax within one week of the session to:

Provincial Training Coordinator
Women's Policy Office/Violence Prevention Initiative
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
Confederation Building, 4th floor, West Block
St. John's, NL
A1B 4J6

PHONE: (709) 729-5009

FAX: (709) 729-1418

EMAIL: vpi@gov.nl.ca

PREVENTION – SESSION 9 ACTIVITIES

Activity 2: Brainstorming

Note: This activity should be carried out at a quick pace.

1. Divide the group into two groups. Ask each group to appoint a recorder and reporter.
2. Ask one group to brainstorm *root causes of violence in society*. Ask the second group to brainstorm *root causes of violence against older persons*. Ask the recorders to list the responses on flip chart paper. (5 minutes)
3. Bring both groups back together.
4. Have reporter from first group present responses.
5. Have reporter from second group present responses.
6. Discussion: ask whole group, “What do you notice?” Note similarities, differences in the two lists.
 - A key point here is that violence against older persons should be seen as part of the continuum of violence throughout the lifespan and not as a separate case of “elder abuse”. There should be many similarities between the two lists. (5-10 minutes)

Activity 4: The Cycle of Violence Create-a-Story

This activity allows participants to work together to create a story about violence against older persons. The story will illustrate the Cycle of Violence and the use of power and control. This activity draws on the collective experiences of all participants. It provides a learning context that promotes the transfer of knowledge. Encourage everyone to contribute a detail for the story. Ask people who have already made several contributions to hold back and allow others to take part.

1. Display Slide 7 which shows the Cycle of Violence model.
2. Hand out the Power and Control Wheel to participants. Ask the group to use the Wheel to help them imagine a situation involving violence against an older person. Give the group a few moments to think.
3. Begin by saying, “Let’s decide on a beginning for our story.”
4. As you ask questions, tell participants to call out suggestions. Write key story elements on a flipchart. The idea is to develop a story that effectively illustrates the Cycle of Violence.
5. These are some questions you can ask to get started:
 - How did we first meet the person who was harmed?
 - How did you hear about this situation? (Or: How did it come to your attention?)
6. Now develop the characters:
 - What is the name of the person who has been harmed?
 - Is the person male or female?
 - What is the person’s age? Marital status? Living situation?
 - Any medical concerns?
 - Any other relevant concerns?
 - What is the perpetrator’s name?
 - Is the perpetrator male or female? Age?
 - Other relevant information about the perpetrator?

7. Now identify the kinds of **tensions** that are building up. How do you know the tension is building?
8. Describe the “**explosion**”, the incident of violence.
9. Describe the perpetrator’s behaviour after the explosion – the “**honeymoon period**”.
10. When the group has finished constructing the story, ask for their reactions, feelings, concerns. Ask if the group thinks the case reflects the Cycle of Violence. If not, what needs to change?
11. Do not get into solving the problem, or intervention or treatment plans. The point of this activity is to illustrate the Cycle of Violence.
12. Ask participants if there are any closing comments or reflections. Offer to stay behind after the workshop to talk about this activity and any uncomfortable feelings that may have come up.

PREVENTION – SESSION 9 HANDOUT

HANDOUT: POWER AND CONTROL IN LATER LIFE WHEEL³⁸



³⁸ Adapted from Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth, Minnesota.