



Elder Abuse Prevention and Intervention: A Public Health Approach

Elder Abuse Prevention and Intervention: A Public Health Approach

**Presented to MGS
Brooklyn Center, MN– April 12, 2019**

Welcome!

Today, we will:

- › Review definitions and statistics
- › Discuss why elder abuse is a public health issue
- › Discuss Minnesota's role
- › Explore themes and gaps
- › Introduce the Elder Justice Center
- › Share additional resources

Questions for you to consider

- › What would/could a state-wide public-health response to elder abuse look like?
- › What policy changes/additions are needed to support a state-wide public health response to elder abuse?

Elder Abuse: toward a definition...

- › **Knowing, intentional or negligent act**
- › **Causes harm or serious risk of harm to an older or vulnerable adult**

Elder Abuse: toward a definition...

- › **Defined by age, relationship, type of abuse**
- › **Victims are often on a continuum from active to having various medical, cognitive, mobility issues**
- › **2/3 of perpetrators of elder abuse are family members, trusted individuals and/or caregivers**

Prevalence

- › **1,000,000 – 2,000,000 adults in later life in U.S. are victims of abuse¹**
- › **1 in 10 persons over the age 60 are victims of elder abuse²**
- › **Victims of elder financial abuse in U.S. lose close to \$3 Billion each year³**

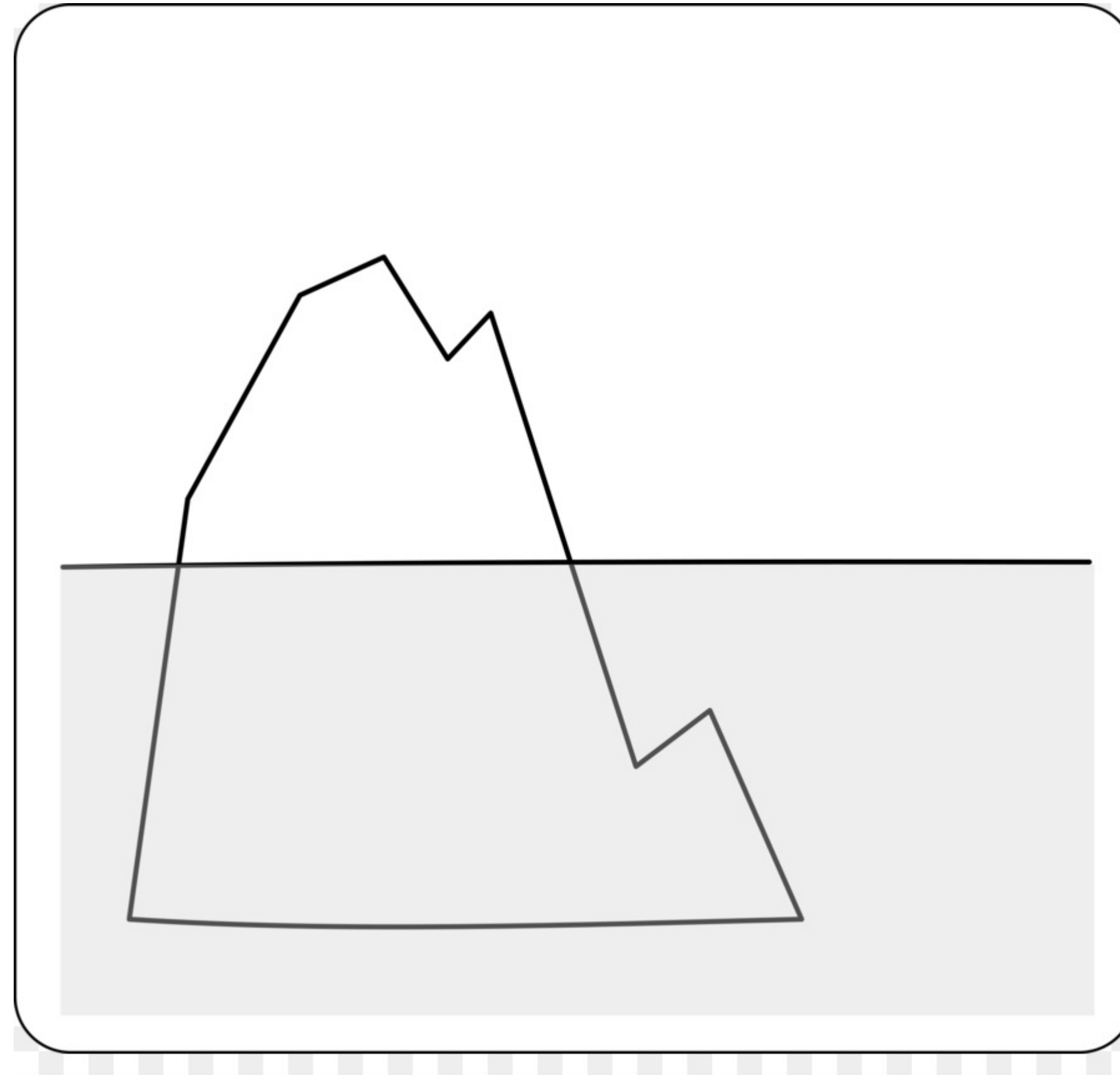
¹National Center of Elder Abuse:2005 Elder Abuse Prevalence and Incidence

²National Institute of Justice: Elder Abuse as a Criminal Problem

³Blancato, Robert: Violence Against Older Women and The Elder Justice Act; 3/04/12

Elder Abuse: Under the Radar

For every **1** case of elder abuse that comes to the attention of a responsible entity...



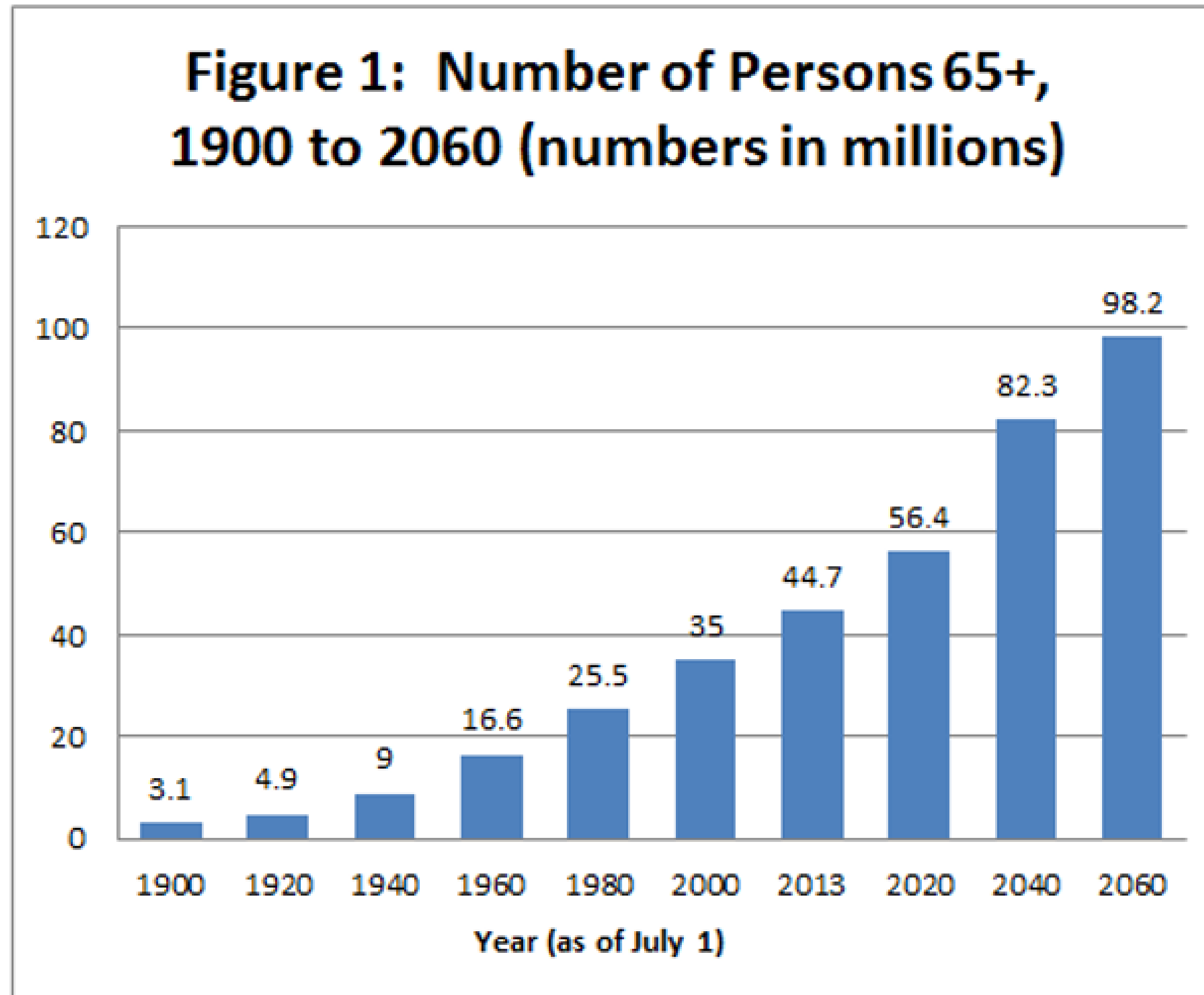
...another **23** cases never come to light.

Source: NYS Elder Abuse Prevalence Study; Weill Cornell Medical College, NYC Department for the Aging; Lifespan; (2011)
Slide courtesy of Life Long Justice

Growth of Older Adults

The Administration on Aging expects that by 2030, the U.S. population over age 65 will have doubled from 2000, with older adults representing 19% of the population.

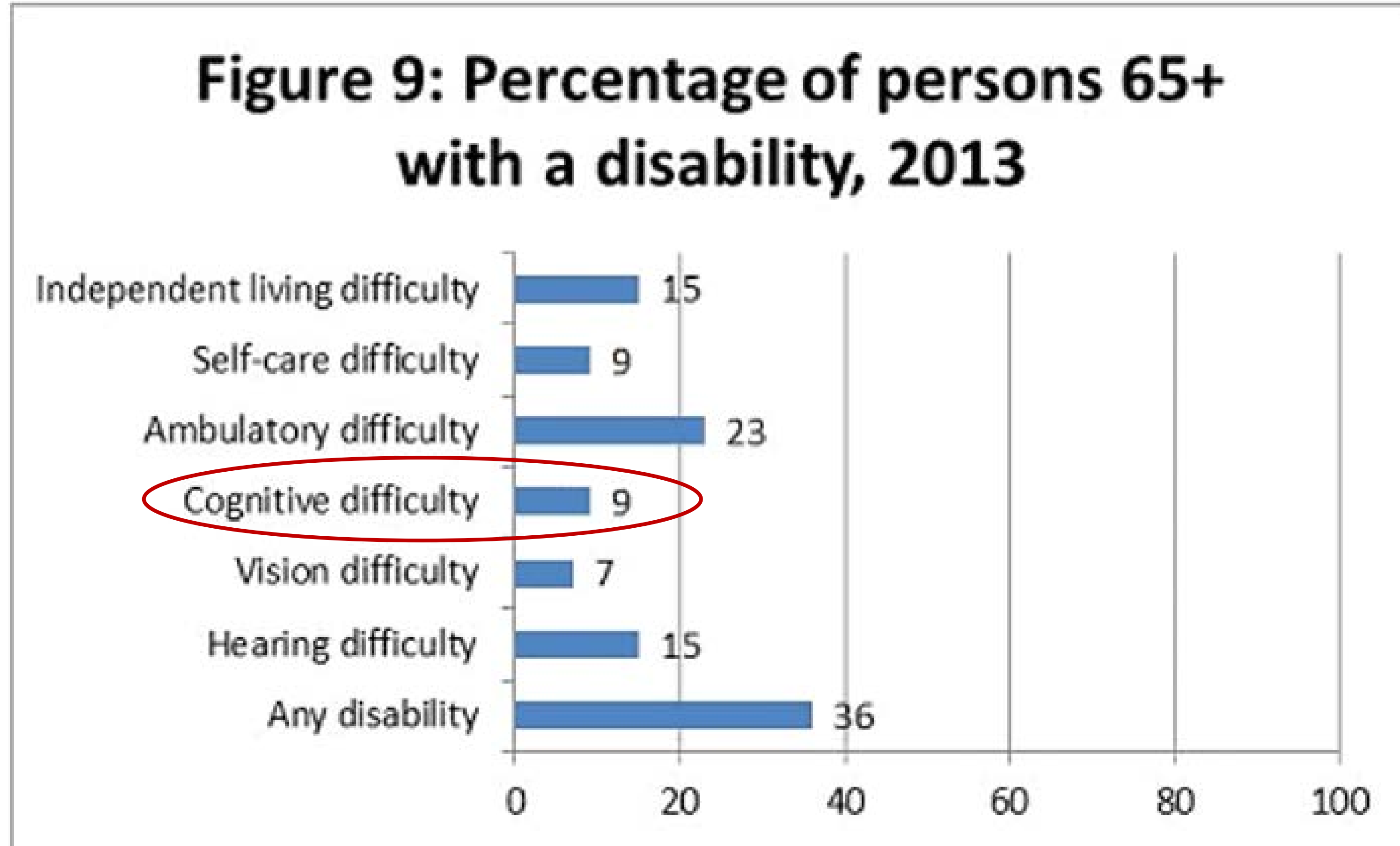
Figure 1: Number of Persons 65+: 1900-2060 (numbers in millions)



Note: Increments in years are uneven.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates and Projections.

Figure 9: Percentage of persons 65+ with a disability, 2013



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

Why is Elder Abuse a Public Health Issue?

- › **Health outcomes as consequences of elder abuse:**
 - › Increased Morbidity
 - › Increased Mortality
 - › Years of Potential Life Lost (YPLL)
 - › Quality of Life (QOL)

Quality of Life

- › **Declining functional ability**
- › **Increased dependency and sense of helplessness**
- › **Increased depression and psychological decline**

Costs to Society

- › **Survivors of elder abuse have higher rates of hospitalization and institutionalization**
 - › ~\$5.3 Billion
- › **Survivors have increased reliance on other public programs**
 - › ~\$10 Billion

Types of Abuse

- › **Domestic Violence
Late in Life**
- › **Physical abuse**
- › **Emotional abuse**
- › **Sexual abuse**
- › **Spiritual abuse**
- › **Financial Exploitation**
- › **Neglect**
- › **Self Neglect**

Poly-victimization

- › **“Poly-victimization” refers to different forms of abuse occurring at the same time.**
- › **Between 10% and 40% of older adults experience polyvictimization.***

* Dong, X., Simon, M. A., & Gorbien, M. Elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation: Risk factors and prevention strategies. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 33, 5-25. (2007).

Warning Signs

- › **Isolation**
- › **Hints at being alone or afraid**
- › **Repeated “accidental” injuries**
- › **Presents as “difficult”**
- › **Vague, chronic complaints**
- › **Unable to follow-through on treatment plans; missed appointments***

*<http://www.ncall.us/sites/ncall.us/files/resources/Victim%20Centered%20Safety%20Planning-2014.pdf>

Warning Signs

- › **Say they are “walking on eggshells”**
- › **Characterizes a loved one as “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde”**
- › **Makes veiled disclosures, e.g. “my son has a temper” or “I have to ask my daughter’s permission for everything”**

Someone who might be an abuser

- › **Verbally abusive to the older adult while charming to others**
- › **Says things like, “she’s clumsy” “he’s just stubborn” “she doesn’t listen” or “he’s so stupid”**
- › **Overly attentive to older person**
- › **Talks about the person as if they aren’t there**

**Someone
who might
be an abuser**

- › **Controls activities and contacts of the older adult**
- › **Portrays self as victim**
- › **Sabotages efforts to attend services, meetings, events and appointments**
- › **Threatens to harm themselves or the older adult or both**

Is it abuse?

- › **You may not be able to observe any of these red flags or the indicators could be explained by other causes.**
- › **Look for patterns or clusters of indicators that suggest a problem**

Common Abuser Justifications

- › **Blames the victim:**
 - › *“She’s clumsy”*
 - › *“He didn’t do what I wanted.”* (victim’s behavior)
 - › *“She started it”* (mutual abuse)
 - › *“He hit me when I was a child”* (learned behavior)

Common Abuser Justifications

- › *“I have an anger management problem.”*
- › *“I was drunk,” or “I was high”*
- › *“I’m sick; it’s not my fault”*
(physical or mental health issue)
- › *“In my culture, elders share their resources”*
- › *“He is too difficult for me to care for”*

Reframing Caregiver Stress and Abuse

- › **Everyone experiences stress. But most do not abuse**
- › **Abusers only target the older adult- not others**
- › **Abusers tend to use caregiver stress as an excuse to create sympathy for themselves**

Minnesota's Statutory Protections

- › **Definition of “Vulnerable Adult”**
- › **Criminal Neglect**
- › **Financial Exploitation**



Vulnerable Adult: Minn. Stat. 626.5572

Categorical Definitions

- › Inpatient at a Facility
- › Receives services at or from a facility
- › Receives services from a home care provider, or person that acts as a personal care/medical assistant

Functional Definition

- › Possesses a physical, mental, or emotional infirmity/dysfunction

Criminal Neglect: Minn. Stat. 609.233

- › **Intentionally permit conditions that allow abuse/neglect**
- › **Knowingly fail to provide food, clothing, shelter, health care, supervision**
- › **Felony: substantial harm; or extended time**

Financial Exploitation: Minn. Stat. 609.2335

- › **Breach of fiduciary duty – i.e. Power of Attorney**
- › **Use of property for something other than the benefit of the vulnerable adult**
- › **Failure to use a vulnerable adult's money or property for their benefit**
- › **Deprives vulnerable adult of their own financial resources**

What is Supported Decision Making?

- › **Supported Decision Making (SDM) is a philosophy that acknowledges that people are happier and safer when exercising the most autonomy of which they're capable.**
- › **It's an approach that maximizes individual agency, and minimizes external decision-making whenever possible.**

Why don't victims report?

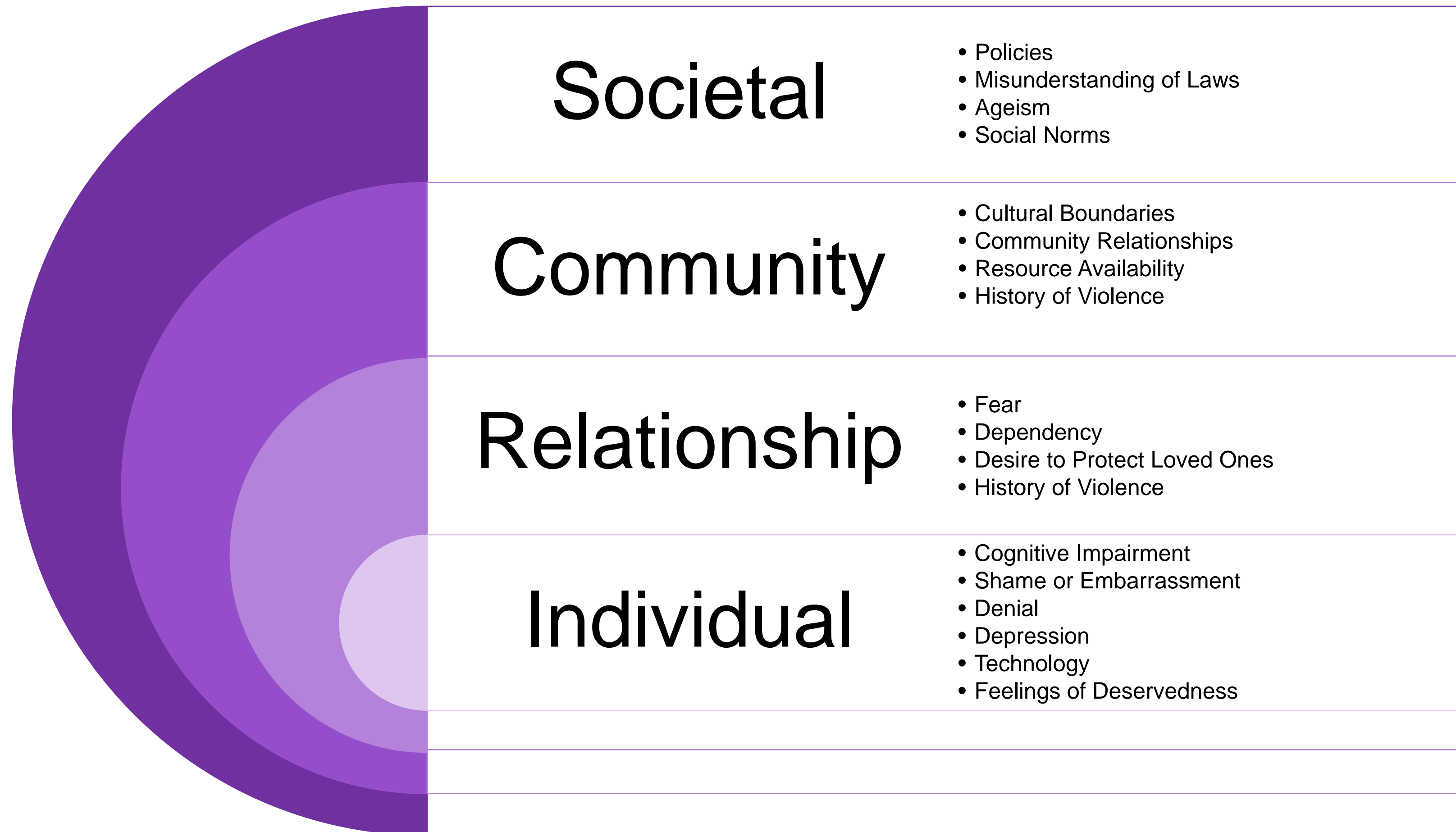
- › **Cognitive Impairment**
- › **Denial**
- › **Fear**
- › **Incredulity of others**
- › **Pride and desire to maintain autonomy**
- › **Shame or embarrassment**

Why don't victims report?

- › **Desire to protect loved ones**
- › **Cultural boundaries**
- › **Belief that institutional care is only alternative**
- › **Depression and/or grief**
- › **Feelings of deservedness**

http://elderabuse.Stanford.edu/screening/pt_barriers

Reporting Barriers: Social-Ecological Model



Abuse Intervention Model: Risk of Elder Mistreatment



Mosqueda, et al; J Am Geriatr Soc 2016

Abuse Intervention Model: Risk of Elder Mistreatment

The Spectrum of Prevention



Primary, Secondary, Tertiary Prevention

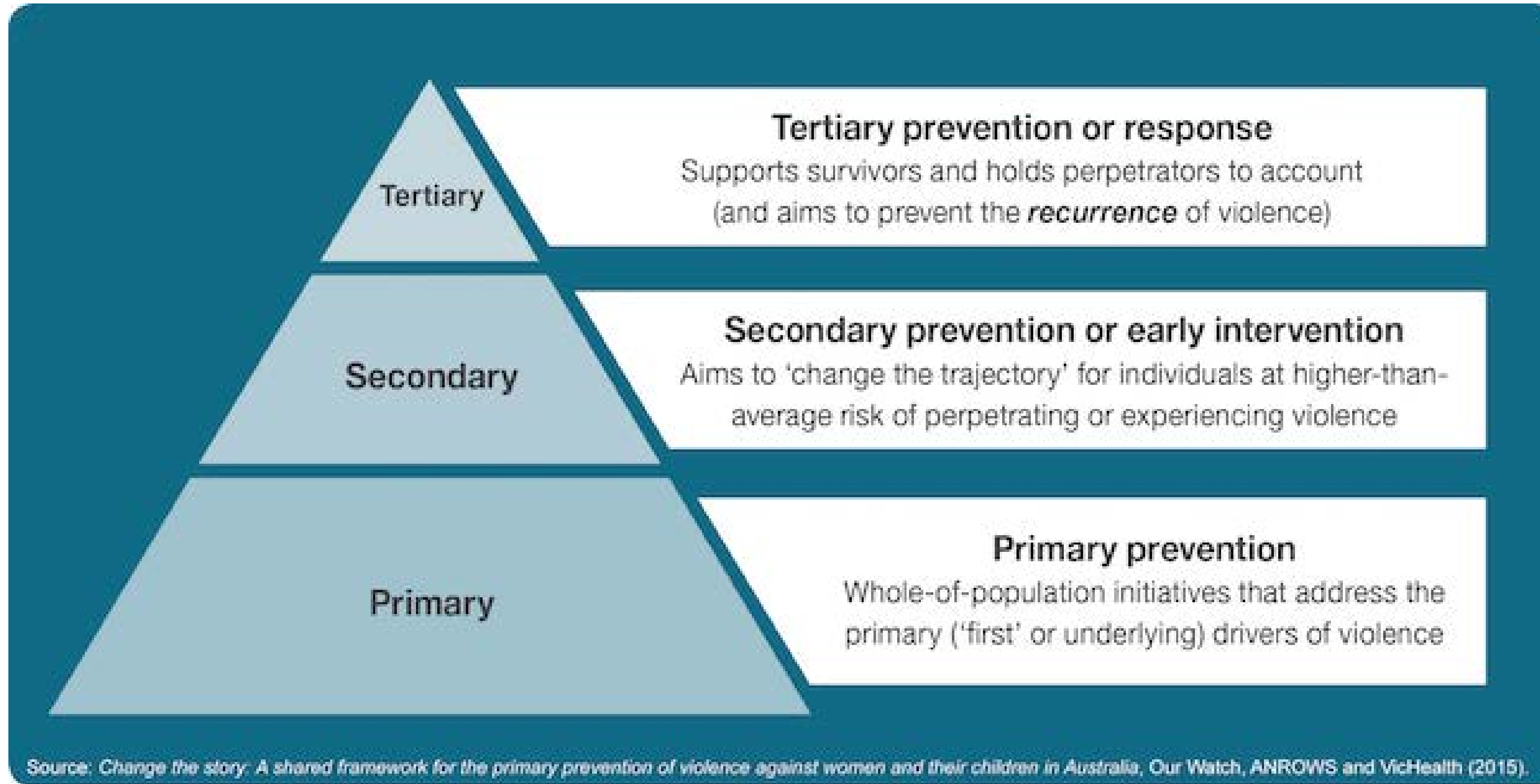


Figure 2 The relationship between primary prevention and other work to address violence against women

Elder Justice: Gaps in PH Response

- › **CDC, NIH, private entities have spent billions to develop public health responses to child abuse and domestic violence compared to elder abuse**
- › **Shortage of workforce trained to identify, address, prevent, and study elder abuse**

Elder Justice: Gaps in PH Response

- › **10x number of pediatricians v. geriatricians (2013)**
 - › Number of geriatricians declining
 - › Most pediatricians trained on recognizing child abuse
 - › Very few geriatricians are trained in recognizing elder abuse

Needs

- › **Data Collection/Research**
 - › Elder abuse research*:
 - › NIA, \$1.1 million (.0001% of budget)
 - › CDC, \$50,000 (.0008% of budget)
 - › NIJ, \$450,000 (+\$1.2 million of DOJ funds)
- › **Prevention and Intervention Programs**
 - › Evidence-based
- › **Supportive Policy Infrastructure**

Elder Justice Themes

Ageism

- › **Elder + Abuse**
- › **Deterioration and paternalism**
- › **Spotlight on individual perpetrators and victims**
- › **Modern life is the problem**
- › **Everyone's responsible/No one's responsible**
- › **Surveillance and education**
- › **Other themes?**

Elder Justice Policy Themes

Older adults and poverty

- › Marketplace and cost-of-care
- › Financial Exploitation
- › Access to justice
- › Aging, race and disparities in QOL
- › Other themes?

Elder Justice Policy Themes

Criminal Justice Policy and Older Adults

- › System navigation and interaction between civil and criminal justice systems
- › Investigations, responses, and court accessibility
- › Multi-disciplinary responses
- › Primary prevention and training
- › Other themes?

Elder Justice Policy Themes

Criminal Justice Policy and Older Adults

- › System navigation and interaction between civil and criminal justice systems
- › Investigations, responses, and court accessibility
- › Multi-disciplinary responses
- › Primary prevention and training
- › Other themes?

VAA Through the Lens of Prevention

MN Vulnerable Adult Act focuses on secondary prevention

Questions for you!

- › What would/could a state-wide public-health response to elder abuse look like?
- › What policy changes/additions are needed to support a state-wide public health response to elder abuse?

MN Adult Abuse Reporting Center (MAARC)

1-844-880-1574

- › **24-hour, toll free, state-wide**
- › **MAARC routes to appropriate investigative agency**
- › **Voluntary reports can be made anonymously**

MN Adult Abuse Reporting Center (MAARC)

2018 Data

- › Reports: 57,246
- › Allegations: 72,021
 - › Caregiver Neglect 32%
 - › Self Neglect 19%
 - › Financial Exploitation 18%
 - › Emotional Abuse 16%
 - › Physical Abuse 12%
 - › Sexual Abuse 3%

Data Source: MN DHS Data Warehouse

The Minnesota Elder Justice Center

Mobilizing communities to prevent and alleviate abuse, neglect and financial exploitation of older and vulnerable adults.

- › Public Awareness
- › Professional Education
- › Public Policy
- › Direct Service

The Minnesota Elder Justice Center

- › **We gave 130 different professional presentations across the state Minnesota in 2018**, from Thief River Falls to Worthington, and many places in between. We reached close to 6,000 people in these professional and community education efforts.
 - › Social Work, Health Professions, Law Enforcement, Judicial Branch, Financial Institutions, Students
 - › Community Education

The Minnesota Elder Justice Center

- › **We provided assistance to at least 600 victims of elder abuse in 2018**, offering support, advocacy, systems navigation, guidance, links to services and legal referrals. This represents a **100% increase** in victims served in 2017.



Save the Date!

- › **MN World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Conference**
- › **June 5, 2019**
- › **Earle Brown Heritage Center, Brooklyn Park, MN**

The Minnesota Elder Justice Center

2019 Policy Priorities

- › **Licensing Assisted Living Settings**
- › **Rights of Residents in LTC Settings**
- › **Funding Adult Protection Systems**


Additional Resources

Minnesota Resources

- Senior LinkAge:
www.mnaging.net
- Minnesota Department of Commerce:
www.mn.gov/commerce
- Minnesota Office of the Ombudsman:
<https://mn.gov/omhdd/>
- Cornerstone Minnesota:
www.cornerstonemn.org

National Resources

- National Center on Elder Abuse: www.ncea.acl.gov
- Consumer Financial Protection Bureau:
www.cfpb.gov
- National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life:
www.ncall.us
- Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3): www.ic3.gov

A vertical illustration on the left side of the slide shows a classical column. The column is supported by several silhouettes of people of various ages and heights, symbolizing the collective support of society. The background is a light yellow color.

Society is like a building, we can improve it with support beams working together that keep everyone safe!

- › **Adult Protective Services**
- › **Advocacy Organizations**
- › **Law Enforcement**
- › **Financial Institutions**
- › **Medical Staff**
- › **Facility Staff**
- › **Concerned Citizens**

Thank you!

Questions?

Katie.Behrens@elderjusticemn.org

Sean.Burke@elderjusticemn.org

Marit.Peterson@elderjusticemn.org

651-440-9300