

Elder abuse in our communities will not be tolerated

Domestic violence happens to men and women of all ages, even our elders. I would like to increase awareness on elder abuse. It happens in our community more often than we think.

While a number of reported cases are increasing, there are still a number that go unreported. For every one case reported five go unreported. (NCEA, 1998).

Elder abuse is when an older adult experience one or more of the following:

Physical abuse is inflicting, or threatening to inflict physical pain or injury to on a vulnerable elder or depriving them of basic need.

Sexual abuse is infliction of non-consensual sexual contact of any kind.

Emotional or psychological abuse is the infliction of mental or emotional anguish or distress on an elder person through verbal or non verbal acts.

Financial or material exploitation is the illegal taking, misuse or concealment of funds or property, or assets of a vulnerable elder.

Self neglect is characterized as the behavior of an elderly person that threatens his or her own safety

Abandonment-The desertion of a vulnerable elder by anyone who has assumed responsibility for the care of that person.

Like domestic violence, elder abuse occurs and persists because the abuser is trying to gain power and control of the elder victim by using abusive and coercive behavior. In most cases, the victim is dependent on the care of the abuser(s).

Abusers often lie, manipulate, charm and justify their behavior so they will not be accountable and are able to create sympathy for themselves.

The abuser could a caregiver or any other person that causes serious risk or harm to an elder or vulnerable adult.

The number one thing we can do is listen to what our elders are trying to tell us and watch out for any signs of any type of abuse. And do not assume there is anything mentally wrong, take them serious.

To talk with someone about concerns you may have about Elder Abuse or for more information, call the White Earth DOVE office at (218) 983-4656 or our 24-hour crisis line at 1-877-830-3683

You can also contact The National Center for Elder Abuse @1-800-677-1116 for more information.