As I navigate this new role as Executive Director at End Abuse, I think of those who have encouraged, invigorated, and motivated me with offerings of wisdom and words of support, and those folks have often been my elders. Mothers of the movement. This is one of the reasons that I am excited about the work my colleagues here at End Abuse have put into this much needed edition of the Coalition Chronicles.

We talked often over this past year about the disproportionate impact that Covid-19 had on folks and how it revealed where we were falling short and where we were doing harm. One of the societal ills laid bare was ageism, made clear by a resurgence of harmful dialogue around aging, disease, and disposability. While I have been lucky to witness intergenerational solidarity during this difficult time, we still have much to learn and further to go.

Over the past year we were also reminded not to underestimate youth. I am encouraged by the power of our young people who fill my heart with hope and fire; they are not to be ignored and we must do what we can to uplift their voices and get out of their way at times because they are here, and they are carving out a vision for the future that will serve us all.

Domestic violence is a community issue and viewing it through this lens allows us to take a comprehensive approach, as we think outside of ourselves and leave no one behind. Ageism effects everyone and can compound trauma and harm when it comes to domestic violence. Centering the realities and needs of marginalized survivors enables us to reach all survivors of violence and create an effective, sustainable movement toward ending DV and other forms of oppression.

This issue of the Chronicles further connects the dots, moving us as a community to ending violence and toward liberation.
Introduction: End Ageism, End Abuse
– Colleen Cox, Editor

In this issue of the Chronicles, we explore the intersection of ageism and violence, including domestic abuse. We draw attention to ageism because it is one of the “-isms” that is often ignored, yet it is dehumanizing; ageism is embedded in our culture, contributing to a climate in which people across the lifespan are marginalized, and in which violence against them can thrive.

Our focus on ageism coincides with the start of the United Nation’s Decade of Healthy Ageing, an initiative to address four areas of action: age-friendly environments, combatting ageism, integrated care, and long-term care. In conjunction with this initiative, the World Health Organization (WHO) launched its Global Campaign to Combat Ageism, which includes the release of a Global Report on Ageism identifying ageism as a universal barrier to everyone’s health, safety, dignity, and well-being. It is universal because unlike other -isms, ageism may affect any person at any time during their life.¹

With the focus on ending ageism, we will explore language and note existing End Abuse publications that examine topics in which age, and ageism, play a role. This issue combines multiple End Abuse initiatives that each recognize ageism as a barrier along different points of the age spectrum, aiming to illustrate how ending ageism can be embedded in our work.

(Continued on page 3)


What is Ageism?

Ageism is stereotyping and discrimination on the basis of a person’s age. Influenced by social movements that were challenging racism and sexism, Dr. Robert Butler coined the word “ageism” in 1968. It is the last socially sanctioned prejudice.

– from “‘Who Me, Ageist?’ How to start a consciousness-raising group” booklet by Ashton Applewhite

(Link to the booklet.)
Consider the language that we use to talk about abuse and violence in the discussion of ageism. Common terms that have been used to describe the work we do as a movement, sheds light on the ways language can limit how we think about people of different ages who are harmed and who do harm.

Language has evolved as the movement to end domestic abuse has aged. In the 1970’s when the term “domestic violence” had not yet entered the general lexicon, women came together to form shelters for battered wives and battered women. Naming battery as a crime was important because women generally received no legal protection from an abusive spouse at that time.

Much has since been written about how, as services for victims developed and became increasingly professionalized, they also failed to serve the diversity of people who had been victimized. In this narrow view, the public image of the domestic violence industry became a beautiful, young, white woman with a black eye. Most obviously, only women were seen to be victims, and men, abusers. Same sex abuse was largely ignored. Race was erased and age was not addressed. This is a vast oversimplification, and I note that only as a starting point to explore how, as that narrow view has continually been challenged, language has also evolved. We have developed many different terms to approach the true nature of the harm that we try to prevent and eliminate, that does not exclude anyone. Each becomes problematic for different reasons, and we can see age as a critical thread throughout this exploration.
Domestic violence is often used interchangeably with domestic abuse. The distinction can be important because “violence” connotes physical harm and therefore fails to include other forms of power, control, and harm such as coercion, emotional abuse, financial abuse, etc. Conversely, some feel that “abuse” does not adequately confer the seriousness of harm; regardless of whether or not it is physical, it is still violence. Moreover, in an unjust society, many of the people and communities we serve disproportionately experience incarceration, food and housing insecurity, for example; our society’s failure to deliver basic human rights is a form of violence. Violence on this scale leaves individuals and families far more vulnerable to the violence that occurs within relationships, that advocates at domestic abuse agencies see at our doors every day.

To consider more closely the language that we use, we can begin with “domestic” which excludes many people who experience power and control dynamics within a relationship, but who do not share a residence with the person doing harm. Dating violence and intimate partner violence are terms that may encompass these relationships. “Interpersonal violence” is sometimes used to be all-inclusive, yet suggests an equal relationship, as in “mutual abuse” which is not accurate in terms of power and control dynamics.
In a “domestic,” minor children and youth are included, most often as victims; adult children may be victimized or may do harm. In our discussion of ageism, consider how these victims, because of their age, are often seen as secondary rather than primary victims.

Caregivers may be domestic, as is essentially anyone in the home who shares an “ongoing, trust-based” relationship, as noted below. Disability and ableism are central to this discussion, bound up closely with age and ageism. The need for care may be required at any age depending on ability, but it is universal during infancy and into childhood and may return as we enter old age. The shortage of personal care workers (90% of whom are women, and nearly two-thirds of whom are people of color)\(^2\) is well-known, as is the inadequate compensation such workers receive. This deficit in caregivers has led to a huge increase in unpaid/family caregivers.\(^3\) As noted by researcher Carli Friedman, “personal care services not only reflect how we value the recipients of these services, but also those providing these services.”\(^4\) Similarly, childcare workers are among the lowest paid members of the workforce and these jobs are held primarily by women, a large percentage of whom are women of color.\(^5\)


Elder abuse may occur in a domestic relationship, but may also be perpetrated by a stranger.\textsuperscript{6} Abuse in Later Life is defined by the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL) as the willful abuse, neglect, abandonment, or financial exploitation of an older adult who is age 50+ by someone in an ongoing, trust-based relationship (i.e., spouse, partner, family member, or caregiver) with the victim. “Later\textsuperscript{7} life” then, includes people who may not consider themselves young or old, and may or may not reside with the abusive person. Abuse in later life also addresses the age gap where a victim aged 50-61 may no longer qualify for TANF but be too young to receive Social Security benefits.

Noticing the ways in which ageism and other biases limit our awareness can help us to be more open to seeing how vulnerabilities are exploited to cause harm in a relationship with anyone of any age. Acknowledging and confronting these stereotypes and biases in ourselves, our agencies, and our communities is also a critical step for ensuring all survivors receive healing services and support. For some quick tips on language, see the WHO’s Quick Guide to Avoid Ageism in Communication (downloadable PDF).

RELATED PROJECTS AND PUBLICATIONS

End Domestic Abuse WI holds several connected initiatives that can identify and highlight the ways ageism contributes to harm against individuals, as well as how ageism can prevent us from working more effectively to serve people of all ages who are harmed.


For more than 20 years, the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL) has been part of End Abuse. NCALL is a nationally recognized leader and comprehensive resource center focusing on program development, policy, technical assistance, and training that addresses the nexus between domestic violence, sexual assault, and elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation. NCALL has long been committed to addressing and calling out the harmful effects of ageism, in particular, how it devalues older adults and creates conditions that exacerbate elder abuse.\(^8\) This year, NCALL launched an awareness campaign, End Ageism | End Abuse, to challenge ageist assumptions that devalue, dismiss, and ignore older adults making them more susceptible to mistreatment and abuse.

End Abuse’s Statewide Domestic Violence Prevention Initiative began more than a decade ago, and now includes three major efforts: the Dare2Know Campaign, the Grant Program, and the Annual Teen Summit. When supporting youth leaders and uplifting youth voices, it becomes apparent that in so many spaces, ageism manifests in the discounting of these voices.

More than 10 years ago, The Children and Youth Advocate Committee identified four challenges that stood in the way of providing high-quality services within domestic abuse agencies. Children often comprise about half of shelter residents. As noted above, we seldom view children as primary victims of domestic abuse although it is well understood that they are acutely aware of violence in the home, and often are directly harmed. Several components of this project have evolved and continue today. (See page 23 for summary.)

In 2020 End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin and its initiatives, The Asha Project, Inc. and the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL), with funding from the Office for Victims of Crime, began Enhancing Services and Supports for Older Survivors to address the needs of African American victims and survivors of crime and abuse, age 50 and older, in Milwaukee, WI. This project incorporates a toolkit developed by NCALL, Increasing Access to Healing Services and Just Outcomes for Older African American Crime Survivors: A Toolkit for Enhancing Critical Knowledge and Informing Action within the Crime Victim Assistance Field. The toolkit offers practical ways to enhance services and address systemic barriers older African American victims face in their healing and recovery processes.

In 2013 End Abuse published Violence in Relationships Across the Lifespan to explore how gender-based violence across the lifespan is understood differently across cultural groups, and expanded our thinking about gender violence as it affects all ages. With permission, we adapted The Lifetime Spiral of Gender Violence, developed by the Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-based Violence. It is an excellent visual representation of experiences of victimization across the lifespan, with examples specific to Asian and Pacific Islander communities and examples that are more universal.

(Continued from page 7)
In 2015, *End Violence in Teen Relationships* examined teen dating violence and healthy relationships, emphasizing the importance of strengthening connections to build strong youth. The intergenerational intervention, “Growing Roots,” is highlighted in this issue. See page 31 for an update.

In 2018, *Family Law* chronicled the Family Law Project, documenting the failure of the Wisconsin family law system to recognize or adequately address safety concerns of domestic abuse victims and their children and making recommendations for meaningful change. A critical part of the problem centers on the powerful role of the Guardian ad Litem (GAL) to influence the custody and placement of children, all too frequently failing to truly advocate in their best interest. (See text box, right and NCALL blog post *We Care A Lot* for discussion of court-appointed guardians for adults.)

In this issue you will find state and national resources—both for practical assistance, and for deeper learning and reflection; and pathways for taking action, featuring examples of intergenerational intervention. May we look forward to many decades of healthy aging in Wisconsin.

---

**Guardianships**

The courts can appoint guardians to protect the interests of elderly or incapacitated adults. Guardianship is a legal process by which someone—a guardian—is given the authority to make decisions on behalf of another person—a ward—due to the ward’s infancy, incapacity, or disability. The guardian possesses the same powers, rights, and duties as a parent to a child—they can determine where the ward will live, what personal property they may own, where and how they will receive medical treatment, and how their finances are managed. (Read the full NCALL blog post “*We Care A Lot*: Understanding Guardianships” for more details.)

---

*This issue of the Coalition Chronicles was developed by Sara Mayer, National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life Communications Coordinator; Colleen Cox, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin Education and Training Coordinator; and Cody Warner, LGBTQ and Youth Program Director.*

*Thanks to Kristin Burki, Monique Minkins, and members of the Children and Youth Advocates Committee, for their contributions.*
ENDING AGEISM: LEARN MORE

“NO AGEISM” is a 5-minute film from Afropunk, co-produced by Ayanna Maia-Saulsberry, exploring how Black Americans experience and reject age stereotypes. Link to watch NO AGEISM on Vimeo.

Yo, Is this Ageist?
Ashton Applewhite writes the yoisthisageist blog, which she describes as “pushing back against ageism—which affects everyone,” adding that it is a “shameless imitation of the excellent yoisthisracist blog.” The blog weighs in on questions posed by readers asking whether their examples are ageist or not. The blog is a quick read and is frequently updated.

Age Against the Machine: The Fatal Intersection of Racism & Ageism In the Time of Coronavirus
On this episode of “Intersectionality Matters,” Kimberle Crenshaw is joined by two timely voices – Ashton Applewhite, author of This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto Against Ageism, and J.R. Fleming, Executive Director of the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign – to discuss how ageism, and its varying intersections with race, class, ability, and gender, is materializing in the fight against COVID-19. Listen to the podcast using this link (38 minutes long).

Lifetime Spiral of Gender Violence
This informational graphic developed by the Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence (APIGBV), outlines how girls and women may encounter numerous oppressions during infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and as elders. Some of these are confined to one stage in the lifecycle, some continue into subsequent stages. The Lifetime Spiral reveals patterns of victimization by enumerating the types of violence, vulnerabilities, and harms women and girls face. It also implicitly shows the presence of different abusers located over the lifecourse. Link to the Lifetime Spiral if Gender Violence downloadable, one-page tool, also available in Chinese, Farsi, Korean, Punjabi Tagalog, and Vietnamese.
Two Guides for Launching Consciousness Raising Groups:

• Who me? Ageist? how to start a consciousness raising group
• Ageist? Racist? Who, Me? A guide to starting a consciousness-raising group around the intersection of ageism & racism

Both booklets from the Old School Anti-Ageism Clearinghouse can be downloaded at this Old School resources page, and include practical tips on facilitating a group, conversation starters, and additional resources. Consider how these ideas might be integrated into a support group. Some examples of conversation starters from the booklets:

• How do you relate to people significantly older or younger than you?
• Share a time when you said or did something that reflected your own marginalized identities. Have you used anti-wrinkle or skin-lightening products, for example, or considered using them?
• What do you think of the phrase “age pride?”
• When and where should we strive for communities that are race- and age-diverse? What purpose do self-segregated spaces serve (for example, historically Black universities and colleges, and retirement communities for “55+” people)?

Quick Guide to Avoid Ageism in Communication

Language and images convey meaning, which feed assumptions and judgments that can lead to ageism. The way we frame communications also affects the way people think, feel and act towards different age groups. Link to this short guide (5 pages), from the World Health Organization, which aims to help you improve your communication efforts by avoiding ageism in the messages and images you use.
Letter from the NCALL Director

Dear Wisconsin Domestic Violence Programs,

As the new NCALL Director with End Abuse, I am nothing but thrilled to introduce (or for many of you, re-introduce) myself. As the former Director of Services at DAIS (Domestic Abuse Intervention Services) serving Dane County, and then most recently at the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) managing state family support programs including the DCF Domestic Abuse Program, I am beyond excited to jump into this new role.

My passion lies in preventing the trauma of abuse across the lifespan and particularly, in ways that account for the unique dynamics for populations that have historically been overlooked in the traditional response. This is what brings me to NCALL, whose focus is on the intersection of domestic violence, sexual assault, and elder abuse, and on advancing practice and community strategies to support the diversity of older survivors in a way that truly accounts for their authentic lived experience.

As advocates, we see first-hand the deep and complex connection a survivor’s culture, background, and identity has to their experience of abuse, and their options for safety, justice, and healing. We also see how oppression related to a survivor’s background, culture, and identity create unique dynamics and barriers. This is true as it relates to gender, race, ethnicity, ability status, and sexual orientation; it is also very much true for age.

(Continued on page 13)
While I think it’s commonly understood that age plays a critical role in services and system responses as it relates to youth, it’s still not as commonly understood that for older survivors, our outreach, safety strategies, and resources also need to be tailored. This includes recognizing ageism in ourselves, our programs and policies, and our systems, and how ageism makes older adults more susceptible to abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Ageism contributes to the misperception that the identity and experience of older adults is homogenous and that the needs of all older survivors are one and the same. In reality, as the US population ages, it becomes more diverse and making assumptions about an entire age cohort is harmful. Ageism also contributes to myths that abuse doesn’t happen to older adults or that older adults can’t accurately describe their experiences. Without addressing ageism in ourselves, our programs, and our system responses, abuse in later life will be overlooked and older survivors will not be able to access the support and services they need.

In addition to providing training and technical assistance to local communities across the country receiving Office of Violence Against Women Abuse in Later Life grants, NCALL is also a national resource center, with a wide range of education, training, and resource materials and consultation available to support programs and communities like yours in reaching, identifying, and effectively serving abuse in later life survivors. In other words, we’re here to support your work! Please visit our website or reach out anytime. We’d love to hear from you.

In the meantime, thank you for all you do for those impacted by domestic violence in communities across Wisconsin. I’m grateful to be partners with you in this work.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

(Continued from page 12)
NCALL RESOURCES

The Abuse in Later Life Education Series for Advocates consists of 20 instructional video clips featuring national experts discussing key topics advocates encounter when serving older survivors. The training modules are formatted as videos, each less than 30 minutes in length. A worksheet accompanies each module with links to additional resources and questions for advocates and programs to consider as they incorporate key content into their practice.

Increasing Access to Healing Services and Just Outcomes for Older African American Crime Survivors: A Toolkit for Enhancing Critical Knowledge and Informing Action within the Crime Victim Assistance Field. This toolkit offers victim services providers and criminal justice systems stakeholders information and practical strategies to enhance their capacity to identify, reach, and serve older African American victims.

Partnering to Address Faith and Safety: A Guide for Faith Leaders and Domestic and Sexual Violence Service Providers to Assist Older Victims of Abuse. This toolkit was developed with Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence and Elder Abuse and provides ideas for best practices and strategies for domestic and sexual violence service providers and faith leaders to use so that they might build partnerships that support older victims and survivors.

Reclaiming What is Sacred: Addressing Harm to Indigenous Elders and Developing a Tribal Response to Abuse in Later Life. This toolkit was developed with Red Wind Consulting and designed to help tribal communities create or enhance their response to harm to elders in their community.

(Continued on page 15)
Rural Domestic and Sexual Abuse Program Advocates: Making a Difference in the Lives of Older Survivors of Abuse. This guide aims to provide rural domestic and sexual abuse service providers with a variety of tools, strategies, and resources for effectively responding to the unique challenges of abuse in later life cases.

Tech Safety + Older Adults is a toolkit created with contributions from Disability Rights Wisconsin and the Safety Net Project of the National Network to End Domestic Violence, to help older adults identify ways to safeguard themselves from those who misuse technology to control, harass, stalk, and/or threaten them.

Working with Older Survivors of Abuse: A Toolkit for Advocates offers seven guiding principles with minimum guidelines and practical strategies for domestic and sexual violence advocates and programs working with older survivors.

Training requests and technical assistance consultation: ncall@ncall.us

NCALL Website, including a publications library, video library, and training resources on abuse in later life: www.ncall.us

NCALL YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCB-sVm3bqLSYqROfmDAUFSw
National Resources for Supporting Older Survivors

The **Elder Justice Initiative**, a U.S. Department of Justice (US DOJ) initiative, supports and coordinates the US DOJ's efforts to combat elder abuse, neglect, and financial fraud that target older adults in the United States.

**Eldercare Locator** offers help with services like meals, home care, and local services information for older adults and their families. Call 1-800-677-1116.

**National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA)** works to strengthen the capacity of APS at the national, state, and local levels, to effectively and efficiently recognize, report, and respond to the needs of elders and adults with disabilities who are the victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Through research, policy work, advocacy, and education, they also aim to prevent abuse.

**National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA)**, one of the 27 Administration on Aging-funded Resource Centers, conducts research, and provides training, information on best practices, news, and other resources on elder abuse, neglect and exploitation to professionals and the public.

**National Elder Fraud Hotline**, supported by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, is a resource for victims age 60+. A case manager will help the caller navigate the reporting process at the federal, state, and local levels, and may also offer additional resources on a case-by-case basis. 833–FRAUD–11 or 833–372–831, Monday–Friday, 10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. ET.
Spotlight: OVW ALL Grantees in Wisconsin

The Office on Violence (OVW) Against Women’s Enhanced Training and Services to End Abuse in Later Life Program (ALL Program) funds eight to ten communities across the country each year to address abuse in later life.

Since 2002, the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL), has received funding from OVW to provide training and technical assistance to ALL Program grantees. In that time, NCALL has created training curricula on abuse in later life for the OVW ALL grant program specific to law enforcement, direct service providers, prosecutors, and faith leaders and faith communities. Staff have also authored training resources related to older survivors in rural communities and in tribal populations. Through tailored technical assistance consultations, NCALL has helped to increase the capacity of communities across the country to recognize and better respond to the unique and complicated needs of older survivors. NCALL is also the National Resource Center on Abuse in Later Life, providing comprehensive TA, training, and resources aimed at increasing the capacity of professionals who work with older survivors of abuse.

(Continued on page 18)
The four purpose areas are:

- **Training**: Provide training to assist community partners in recognizing and addressing elder abuse. Training is focused on partners including law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, agencies of states or units of local government, population specific organizations, victim service providers, victim advocates, and relevant officers in federal, tribal, state, territorial, and local courts.

- **Services**: Provide or enhance services for victims of abuse in later life, including domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, exploitation, and neglect.

- **CCR**: Establish or support a multidisciplinary collaborative community response (CCR) to victims of abuse in later life.

- **Cross-Training**: Conduct cross-training for law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, agencies of states or units of local government, attorneys, health care providers, population specific organizations, faith-based advocates, victim service providers, and courts to better serve victims of abuse in later life.

Since 2006, the OVW ALL Program has administered over $38 million dollars to over 100 communities across the country. Entities eligible for grants include: states, units of local government, tribal governments or tribal organizations, population-specific organizations with demonstrated experience in assisting individuals over 50 years of age, victim service providers with demonstrated experience in addressing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and state, tribal, or territorial domestic violence or sexual assault coalitions.
OVW ALL Grantees in Wisconsin

Since the OVW ALL Program's inception, there have been two funded projects in Wisconsin. The Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin was a Fiscal Year 2015 recipient and the first grantee project in the state. The project was implemented by the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin Department of Aging and Long Term Care. For purposes of the grant and to expand services and support for older victims, they partnered with the Menominee Tribal Police Department, Menominee Crime Victims Department, Menominee Prosecutor's Office, Menominee Tribal Courts, Menominee County Human Services, and Oskeh-Waepqtaah DV Shelter. Under the award, law enforcement officers and direct services personnel, prosecutors, and judges were trained, and they established an elder abuse CCR. They also conducted a community needs assessment, developed an outreach and services strategic plan to address service needs and created a comprehensive legal remedies and community resources manual.

More recently, the Wisconsin Department of Justice (WI DOJ) was awarded funding in Fiscal Year 2018 for a statewide project to provide training and victim services in four communities: the City of Milwaukee; Outagamie County; the Oneida Nation; and Door County.
As a statewide project, the WI DOJ has grown elder abuse leadership and cultivated stakeholders across Wisconsin committed to advancing elder safety, healing, and justice. During their award, the WI DOJ has trained more than 500 law enforcement officers on how to detect and investigate abuse in later life and trained more than 80 direct services providers. They also sent five prosecutors to the National Institute on Prosecution of Elder Abuse, which spurred an in-state training for prosecutors in July 2021 and sent 10 judges to the National Enhancing Judicial Skills in Elder Abuse Cases Workshop, generating in-state training for judges in August 2021.

Upon conducting a needs assessment in the project communities, the WI DOJ determined that while many communities have services that support abuse in later life victims, community members often were not aware of the services or how to access them. Through the grant, victim advocates were hired to work with the Elder Rights Project of Legal Action Wisconsin to support victims of abuse in later life and work directly with other community partners on outreach.

Additionally, each of the four ALL Program communities have either created or enhanced existing CCR teams to focus on abuse in later life issues. Some successes attributed to the CCRs include commitments to train other disciplines not covered by the grant such as county corporation counsel, engagement from local banks to review policies related to elder abuse, a review of the process by which cases are referred to prosecutors’ offices, and the creation of a review process for suspicious elder deaths.

The WI DOJ recently received a new federal grant from the Office for Victims of Crime to strengthen local coordination among multidisciplinary partners including victim service providers. In the future they will begin offering trainings for direct service providers, upon request, and will offer technical assistance on creating an abuse in later life CCR.
Wisconsin Resources for Supporting Older Survivors

Wisconsin's population of seniors 65 and older is projected to increase by more than 70% in the next 20 years. According to statistics from the Wisconsin Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources, the number of reported elder abuse cases is also steadily increasing each year.

Fortunately, there are tools, resources, and services to help support older survivors and their concerned friends or family. We've compiled a list of some of Wisconsin's resources, tools authored by NCALL, and some other helpful links to national support.

The **Wisconsin Elder Abuse Hotline** (1-833-586-0107) is toll-free and connects callers to resources and support for making referrals to local authorities. The hotline website also offers information on types of abuse, including risk factors and signs of abuse, and includes an online reporting tool.

**Adult Protective Services (APS)** investigate reports of elder or vulnerable adult maltreatment. Every county has an agency that will look into reported incidents of abuse, neglect, financial exploitation, and self neglect. Contact your **county or tribal help line** to talk to someone about suspected abuse of an adult at risk (age 18 to 59). To report abuse of an elder over the age of 60, **contact your county or tribal elder adult-at-risk agency**.

**Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC)** provide information on a broad range of programs and services, help people understand the various

(Continued on page 22)
long-term care options available to them, help people apply for programs and benefits, and serve as the access point for publicly funded long-term care.

Find your local ADRC here.

**Area Agencies on Aging (AAA)** were established under the Older Americans Act (OAA) in 1973 to respond to the needs of Americans aged 60 and over in every local community. **Dane** and **Milwaukee** are single county agencies that also serve as county aging units. The other 70 counties and 11 federally recognized Indian Tribes are served by the **Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources (GWAAR)** as the contract and oversight agency.

**Legal Action of Wisconsin** houses an **Elder Rights Project** which provides statewide civil legal aid to abuse in later life victim. Services include safety planning, assistance with finding safe housing, emotional support, and connections to resources, referrals, as well as legal services. Their **SeniorLAW** program provides free legal assistance to Milwaukee County residents who are 60 and older. Benefit specialists provide legal information and attorneys provide representation in appropriate court cases.

**Long-Term Care Ombudsman** advocate for residents of nursing homes, board and care homes, and assisted living facilities. They investigate and resolve problems, provide information, referral and consultation, and work with licensing, certification, and other enforcement agencies to improve the quality of care in long-term facilities (e.g., nursing homes) and programs. Learn more about ombudsman here.

Contact the Wisconsin Long Term Care Ombudsman here.

**Wisconsin Guardianship Support Center** provides information and assistance on issues related to guardianship, protective placement, advance directives, and more. This support center is operated by GWAAR and offers a toll-free helpline or e-mail support. *(855) 409-9410* or guardian@gwaar.org.
Domestic Abuse Services for Children and Youth: 2011-2021

Introduction

In 2011, End Abuse Children & Youth Program Coordinator Ann Brickson started the 4 Challenges Project in Wisconsin, highlighting the long-standing challenges faced by domestic abuse agencies to provide stable programming for children and youth. This project sought to inspire children and youth programs and the organizations in which they were located, to find practical solutions to these challenges and deliver the best quality domestic abuse services for children and youth.

The Children and Youth (CY) Committee grew out of that project and continues to meet quarterly. The role of the committee, made up of CY advocates who represent the cultural and geographic diversity of Wisconsin, is to advocate for children and youth domestic violence programming throughout Wisconsin, often taking on related projects. The committee reflected on the project in May 2021, and agreed that the challenges identified in the project 10 years ago are still pervasive today.

In this article we summarize the 4 Challenges Project, look at what has been done to address these challenges since 2011, and point to some pathways forward to practices that support advocates and strengthen the services they provide to children and youth.

Children & Youth Programming in Wisconsin Domestic Violence Programs in 2011: What were the Biggest Challenges?

WI DV programs have been offering services to children and youth exposed to DV and teen victims of dating violence, and prevention education for youth since 1998. By 2011, services for children and youth (CY) had become more stable and

(Continued on page 24)
sophisticated and CY advocates had become well integrated members of their programs. These were impressive accomplishments, and WI DV programs had much to be proud of. But in many programs, some long-term challenges remained. End Abuse wanted to start a conversation about these challenges, and support programs in addressing these barriers to good practice. Four challenges (see textbox below) were identified as priority areas for change, because:

- They were significant, widespread difficulties that hampered the effectiveness of DV programming for children and youth for many years.
- They were comparable to problems in delivering services to adult victims that most programs had solved without great difficulty.
- They were challenges that could largely be addressed without raising new funds.

(Continued on page 25)

4 Challenges in 2011

#1 New CY advocates need more orientation and training: Many new CY advocates have little prior experience in domestic violence, children’s exposure to DV, group facilitation or prevention education and, with no other staff working specifically with children and youth, they receive only basic orientation and training for their job.

# 2 New CY advocates often must reinvent the agency’s children’s program every time this position turns over: Because there is often no one else on staff who works with children and youth, new CY advocates in many programs have little information about pre-existing children and youth curricula or established program practices and must figure it out for themselves.

#3 Very broad range of ages in a single support group: This prevents offering developmentally appropriate group content, a fundamental feature of good practice when serving children and youth.

#4 Single support group facilitator: One facilitator working alone cannot adequately address behavior problems or individual needs that often arise, which can lead to poor behavior management, bad experiences for some children, and out-of-control group dynamics.
There was widespread and heartfelt agreement among children and youth advocates that these problems presented significant difficulties for them in their work. Some measures led by Ann Brickson at that time included:

- A CY listserv was created for those working with families to connect with one another via an email distribution list, which continues today.

- Directors were provided an opportunity to discuss their successes and challenges with other directors and collaborate on practical ideas for solving these problems. Ann attended regional director’s meetings to discuss these problems, get feedback from directors, and begin to generate solutions.

- Domestic violence and sexual assault agency directors and children’s advocates were encouraged to meet at their agencies to discuss how these problems played out in their agencies and to strategize and implement solutions.

- Ann created the Guide to Training New Children and Youth Advocates, intended specifically for supervisors to review together with newly hired CY advocates to foster connection within the agency as well as growing and preserving program knowledge among multiple staff within the agency.

**Reflections on the 4 Challenges in 2021, and Moving Forward**

Below, the Children and Youth Committee members offer updates, reflections, and potential solutions to move forward more strongly with high quality children and youth services.

**Challenge #1: Need for More Orientation and Training**

We see a continuing lack of intention around properly on-boarding new CY advocates before they start working directly with families. When advocates are not
properly trained in both advocacy and anti-oppression, we believe they will unintentionally cause further harm to clients. Children and youth advocates experiences include:

- CY advocates are often responsible for individual advocacy with children and youth, prevention education in schools, and supporting parents.
- The needs and characteristics of children and youth vary according to their developmental stage. This can make for a job which requires a wide range of skills and expertise. Yet CY advocates often get less orientation and training than co-workers with more limited job responsibilities.
- When no one else works specifically with children and youth at their agency, CY advocates may have no one to turn to for questions or consultation about the specifics of their jobs. This feels isolating, especially when there is not a sense of direction.
- CY advocates do not get the same credibility as other staff because they work with youth and are seen as glorified babysitters.

**Potential Solutions**

- CY advocates: contact Cody Warner, LGBTQ & Youth Program Director ([codyw@endabusewi.org](mailto:codyw@endabusewi.org)) for End Abuse services that support CY programming.
- The CY advocate and their supervisors: review the [Children & Youth Advocate Manual](#) together to identify areas where the advocate may need to grow their knowledge.
- Seek opportunities for CY advocates to connect and job shadow with other agencies.

(Continued from page 25)
Challenge #2: Reinvent Children’s Program with Each Position Turnover

Maintaining current programming remains difficult because newly hired CY advocates are still required to reinvent the agency’s CY programming. Recreating the program with every position turnover is overwhelming for most advocates, especially if they are new to the movement to end gender-based violence. Children and youth advocates experiences include:

- New CY advocates report receiving little or no support group materials when starting their jobs, although programs have offered support groups for years.
- When new CY advocates lack access to existing materials for either/both programming and schools, not only do they feel overwhelmed, but program strengths are lost when staff turns over, and CY services lack consistency over time.
- There is little co-advocacy within the agencies to have a wraparound approach to supporting the families.
- Advocates feel isolated.

Potential Solutions

- Advocates can create a Program Module which can be shared with other advocates
- Partner with adult advocates working with the parent to co-advocate with the family.

(Continued from page 26)

(Continued on page 28)
Challenge #3: Very Broad Range of Ages in a Single Support Group

Having broad ages in a single support group can prevent the use of developmentally appropriate group content, which is a fundamental feature of good practice when serving children and youth.

CY Committee members note that large age ranges within a single support group hinders the healing that could take place in an effective support group of similar-aged participants. CY advocates cannot have meaningful interactions with youth ages newborn to 18+. In such groups, facilitators often must simplify topics to make sure that concepts do not get lost among younger group participants, while making the CY programming less engaging to the older youth. CY advocates report the following:

- A broad age range in one support group erodes the value of these groups, resulting in negative experiences for participants; it is one of the most insurmountable problems advocates face.
- Siblings can be extremely disruptive in support groups, especially if there is only one youth support group offered.

Potential Solutions

- Separate children and youth by developmental age or stage to offer support or education to children and youth. Domestic violence agencies have solved a similar problem for adults by offering separate groups, for example – support groups for older battered women, women in crisis

Photo by Meruyert Gonullu from Pexels

Challenge #3 in 2021:
Broad age range within one support group

Potential Solutions:
Separate children and youth by developmental age or stage; consult sections 1 & 11 of the Children & Youth Advocate Manual (see page 25.)

(Continued on page 29)
(vs. women living in the community) and culturally-specific support groups.

- Consult the Children & Youth Advocate Manual on these focus areas:
  - Section 1: Child & Youth Development
  - Section 11: Age-Appropriate Support Groups

**Challenge #4: Single Support Group Facilitator**

Domestic violence agencies see a high percentage of children and youth with behavioral and mental health needs that can be exacerbated by exposure to domestic violence. Serving these children and youth is a group setting requires enough staff to meet their individual needs and manage challenging behaviors.

CY Committee agreed that a single facilitator running a CY support group is unsustainable. Very little impactful healing is possible in these spaces, and the potential for harm is increased, especially if there is a disruption among participants that requires individual attention.

When a problem develops in a group with only one leader, the entire group must stop while the leader addresses one child. This can inadvertently reinforce problem behavior or make group participation difficult for children who need special attention.

**Possible Solutions**

- Have at least two group facilitators at every youth group. This way there can be one facilitator handling individual interactions while the other facilitator can continue with the group.
- Offer two or more age-appropriate support groups.
- Add a second or third adult to a single support group. This can temporarily

(Continued on page 30)
address the problem of offering only one support group with one facilitator, while working to develop additional groups staffed by at least two facilitators.

What Can We Do Now?

- End Abuse LGBTQ & Youth Program Director Cody Warner offers technical assistance, and will collect information about promising approaches to share with agencies as agencies work to address these challenges.
- In collaboration with the Department of Children & Families, we hope to continue ‘Joint Regional Meetings’ for CY advocates to share aspects of their programming with other CY advocates.
- Cody will look for new ways that End Abuse can assist with orientation and training for new CY advocates. Two ways they are continuing such assistance:
  - Hosting monthly CY Conference Calls for advocates working with families for peer-to-peer support, learning, and developing solutions to common challenges.
  - Regularly updating the Children & Youth Advocate Manual.

Looking Ahead

The Children & Youth Committee recognizes that these 4 challenges persist and that new issues have emerged. They are committed to more thoroughly reviewing and clarifying today’s challenges, and look forward to working together to develop solutions!

If you would like further assistance with children and youth programming please feel free to contact Cody Warner, LGBTQ & Youth Program Director, codyw@endabusewi.org.

"At End Abuse, I see it as my role to support ANYONE working with children, youth, & families. Both within and outside of MAINSTREAM SERVICES."

Cody Warner LGBTQ & Youth Program Director

Cody Warner wrote this article incorporating original source material written by Ann Brickson and input from the Children and Youth Committee gathered during a discussion Cody facilitated.
What is Growing Roots?

Growing Roots was a “micro-mini-grant” distributed through End Abuse with funds from the Verizon Foundation, from 2015-2018. A micro-mini grant means that the agencies were awarded very limited funds. Growing Roots aimed to connect generations, youth & elders, in youth & youth-serving domestic violence and/or sexual assault programs in Wisconsin. During the first year, the grantees focused on gardening as the main objective, later expanding to include any project that connected youth and elders in meaningful ways, fostering intergenerational spaces that shared power through the transmission of storytelling and a connection to their culture.

Growing Roots Logistics

Micro-mini grantees received $500-$1,000 to support their efforts. The projects lasted from May to August, and grantees joined a Facebook group to post monthly project updates. Grantees established the groundwork during the first year and could re-apply for smaller continuation grants the following year. From 2015-2018 End Abuse supported 14 domestic violence, sexual assault, or youth serving agencies throughout the state, starting with five programs in 2015, and ending with eight programs the during the final year. Each grantee created their program to best fit their community: ten grantees created or expanded on culturally specific projects, and nine of them re-applied and received additional funding. The majority of the projects were culturally specific. (See text box on page 11 for project titles.)

Why Connecting Youth and Elders Matters

The Growing Roots projects created spaces where elders and youth could share their life experiences openly and without judgment. In such spaces, participants feel heard and valued as they begin to see connections between generations. Learning of each other’s life experiences, they see similarities and share feelings about these
experiences. By expanding their worldviews, participants take steps toward dismantling the white supremacy that has rooted itself in the way we live every day. See quotes from elder and youth participants in the Growing Roots project in text boxes on the following pages.

**Spotlight: Revitalizando las Semillas de Sanación, a 2017 Growing Roots Project**

Revitalizando las Semillas de Sanación was facilitated by advocates at UMOS Latina Resource Center in Milwaukee, WI. Their detailed reporting (highlighted in the project’s monthly posts below) showed how important their project was to the clients, their culture, and building a sense of community.

**May:** The UMOS Latina Resource Center started their project on May 22, 2017. The project submitted is titled ‘Revitalizando las Semillas de Sanación’ (Translation: Renovating the Seeds of Healing). They used a garden based project as a tool in healing for gender-based violence survivors and connecting survivors with the youth. As they proceeded through the stages of the project, they drew analogies with the gardening process and the experiences of the immigrant survivors.

They developed seedlings; having conversations surrounding their personal beginnings, messages they were raised hearing and key pieces of their identities. Through the development of the curriculum, as they proceeded to transplant the seedlings to the raised garden bed, they drew analogies in the way plants are transplanted. For example, they could relate that to the environmental adjustments immigrants make acculturating into the United States.

(Continued on page 33)
Conversations revolved around how immigrants acculturate to mainstream American lifestyles, what pieces of their culture is retain as they transition, how different immigrants adjust more easily. For example, more mature plant outdoor plants vs. fresh seedlings growing at different levels.

**June:** They’ve created raised beds, transferred seedlings and more mature plants to the outdoors, and began painting the exterior of the raised beds. Many clients brought their families to participate, for a wide age range. The clients began writing words of empowerment to make the space feel welcoming as victims approach the center: Amor es UMOS (Love is UMOS); Fortaleza (Resilience); Sanación (Healing); Querer es poder (Latinx saying); Paz (Peace).

**July:** They finished painting the garden beds and finished some beautiful work. The plants continued to grow thanks to the weather and love that the clients have provided the space. Elder and adult clients found the project rewarding for their personal healing as a unique emotional wellness activity. Youth enjoyed the arts piece, collaborating with older clients, and story telling. Through storytelling they really broke down the roots of the cycle of violence—what causes them to stay in violent relationships and how they break free from them.

The garden space has grown into a nice welcoming space for the Latina Resource Center as people who approach it read various messages of empowerment. One quote from a participant was:

"*A veces nos encontramos en una situación donde es difícil saber con quién podemos confiar, venimos de países donde la corrupción está bien mal y las cosas pueden salir peor cuando utilizamos la policía por ejemplo. Aquí en los estados unidos es al revés es importante utilizar la sistemas que hay por los remedios que existen por ser víctima y por el apoyo que te dan en seguir adelante.*"

"**BGH [Black Girls Heal] is my sisterhood and my way to step back from all of my realities in life. BGH is all in all a space where I never knew I needed to be a part of. Thank you, Growing Roots, for believing in our mission and allowing us to fulfill our dreams.**"

— Youth Participant, Black Girls Heal, 2018

(Continued on page 34)
[Translation] "Sometimes we find ourselves in situations where it's difficult to know whom we can trust, we come from countries where corruption is really bad and sometimes things can go worse when the police is involved for example. Here in the U.S. it's the opposite though, it's important to use those systems that exist because of the remedies available for victims and the support you receive going forward."

August: This collaborative project allowed the elders to share stories with youth about their backgrounds, cultural traditions and experiences with gender-based violence. It provided a space for clients to express themselves artistically with painting of the raised garden beds and provided an opportunity for clients to reflect on some old practices in gardening. Many clients because of this project plan to start their own gardens once again in their homes as they did back in their countries prior to immigrating. The project allowed clients to share their thoughts on what cultural beliefs they see as linked to increased prevalence of violence. The conversations provided insight for the youth into many of the experiences their families lived through as well as self-reflection into some of the emotions they manifest through their daily lives.

The garden project was more successful than anticipated, with some beautiful flowers, vegetables and fruits. Everyone was always excited to get involved and learn and assist with the implementation of the project throughout its course.

“Desde que empecé este proyecto siento que me relaciono mucho con los temas que hablamos. Siento que mi experiencia aquí en los Estados Unidos se compara con la planta de calabaza, entre más crece y se cuida más echa fruto, así como yo.”

Quote from participant.

[Translation] "Ever since I started this project, I've been able to relate to many of the themes. I feel that my experience in the United States relates to a zucchini plant: the more the plant grows and is taken care of, the better the harvest, just as I have grown and become a better version of myself."

“Speaking Our Truth has helped me overcome many personal issues by being able to write out my progress through dealing with death of a brother and my own health issues as well as finding myself along the way. This has been a great experience.”

– Elder Participant, Speaking Our Truth, 2017
INTERGENERATIONAL INTERVENTIONS

We use the term “intergenerational interventions” for intentionally designed efforts to bring together multiple generations and foster meaningful cross-age relationships. Spaces are created to promote both structured activities and informal opportunities for engagement. Intergenerational interventions can bring together diverse groups, reduce inaccurate stereotypes, and promote healing, multigenerational relationships.

Growing Roots

End Abuse’s Growing Roots program offered funds to Wisconsin agencies from 2015-2018, aiming to connect generations, youth and elders, in youth and youth-serving domestic violence and/or sexual assault programs. (See page 31 for details.)

Sharing Our Space - Online Toolkit for Intergenerational Shared Sites

The Sharing Our Space toolkit was developed by Generations United with support from the Eisner Foundation. This online toolkit is for people interested in creating an intergenerational shared site or enhancing services at an existing site. Each section includes effective practices, challenges, tips, examples, and concrete tools to help plan and implement a high-quality shared site. Since the 10-section toolkit is entirely online, it is easy to go directly to any topic of interest; however, the chapters build on each other. This overview shows all sections of the toolkit. Section 7, “Building Relationships” offers a detailed view.

SAGEConnect

Read about SAGEConnect, a program launched in April 2020 by SAGE, a national non-profit organization that advocates for LGBTQ+ elders. LGBTQ+ older adults are very likely to live alone and often have no children, according to 2010 data from SAGE and the National Resource Center on LGBT Aging. SAGE developed SAGEConnect to alleviate the added social isolation they anticipated clients would experience during the pandemic. The program pairs volunteers with SAGE’s clients for six weeks of weekly phone calls, with most matches staying connected beyond that period.
**SUPPORT US!**
Your gift furthers our mission to prevent & eliminate domestic abuse. To make a donation, [click here](#).

**END IN DOMESTIC ABUSE WISCONSIN STAFF**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adrienne Roach</td>
<td>Grant Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ajamou Butler</td>
<td>Prevention Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia Lord</td>
<td>NCALL Training &amp; Technical Assistance Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angie Trudell Vasquez</td>
<td>Operations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Laatsch</td>
<td>NCALL Justice System Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annette Sauvola</td>
<td>Senior Staff Accountant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antonia Vann</td>
<td>Director of ASHA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty Brown</td>
<td>ASHA Office Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cia Siab Vang</td>
<td>LTE D2K Youth Outreach Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cody Warner</td>
<td>LGBTQ &amp; Youth Program Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleen Cox</td>
<td>Education &amp; Training Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal Ayad</td>
<td>ASHA Domestic Violence Victim Advocate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal Ingram</td>
<td>ASHA Domestic Violence Victim Advocate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Krishnan</td>
<td>Technology Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danny Ho</td>
<td>Leadership &amp; Advocacy Program Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elise Buchbinder</td>
<td>Director of Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gricel Santiago-Rivera</td>
<td>LTE Strategic Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadiyah Shaheer</td>
<td>ASHA Domestic Abuse Victim Advocate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenna Gormal</td>
<td>Director of Policy &amp; Systems Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer C. Johnson</td>
<td>RISE Associate Attorney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kari LaScala</td>
<td>Staff Attorney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathryn Chapman</td>
<td>Director of Education &amp; Membership Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelsey Mullins</td>
<td>Staff Attorney, Underserved Populations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristin Burki</td>
<td>Director of NCALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwnwahta Smith</td>
<td>LTE D2K Youth Outreach Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lia Ocasio</td>
<td>RISE Family &amp; Immigration Attorney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micaela Magel</td>
<td>Education &amp; Administrative Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monique Minkens</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia Osborne</td>
<td>Program Capacity &amp; Support Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin Dalton</td>
<td>Director of Legal Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara Krall</td>
<td>Homicide Prevention Program Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara Mayer</td>
<td>NCALL Communications Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Carpenter</td>
<td>Director of Finance &amp; Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawn Muhammad</td>
<td>ASHA Associate Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie Ortiz</td>
<td>Director of Prevention &amp; Outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tegan Swanson</td>
<td>Systems Change Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teresa Weinland-Schmidt</td>
<td>LTE Accountant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tia Love-DeBenedetto</td>
<td>ASHA Domestic Violence Victim Advocate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**END ABUSE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- Cheeia Lo
- Geri Segal
- Jane Graham Jennings, Chair
- Jennifer Varela
- Kristy Moran
- Michelle Bailey
- Morgan Young
- Natalia Kruse
- Pamela Johnson
- Samantha Collier

**STAY IN TOUCH**