

### What is Dependent Abuse?

Dependent abuse is defined as unruly or inattentive acts or neglect of caretakers in regard to dependent on them individuals. First, dependent abuse may involve bodily injury, harm, unfair incarceration, unfair castigation, or physical attack of a needy adult. Second, it is the mistreatment of a dependent adult, which refers to taking unwarranted lead of a reliant adult, or the adult's monetary resources for caregiver's own individual or fiscal profit without acknowledging the needs of the dependent adult. This also entails theft through unjustified control, aggravation, coercion, fraud and fake illustration. Dependent abuse may also include denial of the bare minimum food, shelter, outfits, care, bodily or psychological health care or other necessities to keep the fitness and well-being of the dependent person. Such deprivation can be a result of the neglect or exclusion of the dependent adult.

In their studies, Chalk & King (1998) note that various discussions of domestic violence, child maltreatment, and elder abuse raise awareness of unequal power in the relationship between victim and abuser. In cases of all these domains, abusers are prompt to use violence in order to control the victim. Chalk & King (1998) indicate that children are dependent on and may be abused by their parents or guardinas who pose and exert control over them. Besides, abuse can occur if parents or guardians are inclined to use excessive physical force in the race to exert control. For the elderly, it is expected that their children or other family members are their caregivers. The typical victim of elder abuse is thought to be dependent and frail. According to some research, elder abuse is more likely to occur when a child remains dependent on his or her parent financially rather than in the case when the elderly parent becomes frail (Chalk & King, 1998). It has been noted that an adult child may still have more power over the elderly parent by virtue of mobility, strength, and size.

The feminist analysis of dependent abuse posits that through physical abuse abusers try to exert control over their partners. Chalk & King (1998) say that in feminist paradigm, emotional abuse, physical violence, social isolation, sexual violence, and withholding of financial resources limit woman's power in the relationship and undermine her autonomy. Dependent abuse based on gender inequalities suggests a framework for a wide set of interventions that are designed to expose the pattern of male control and dominance in violent relationships. It also studies the ways in which society legitimizes and tolerates various social inequalities that can contribute to entrapment (Chalk & King, 1998).

The causes of dependent abuse cannot be easily determined, particularly given the paucity of systematic scientific investigation in that area. Smith (1995) notes that most experts agree that the major precipitating factor is still family stress. This emanates from trying to meet the round-the-clock needs of a frail; and dependent relative may be an intolerable burden for family members or other caregivers. The resulting frustration may sometimes be expressed in violent behavior as a case of dependent abuse. Dependent abuse can result from increased pressures by insurers and government health care programs that contribute to the problem by requiring for shorter periods of hospitalization of elder patients (Smith, 1995). Earlier discharge of patients places a greater burden on home care, for which there is little private or public support.

Dependent abuse results from the fact that many families are confused by role reversals in which elderly parents, who are experiencing other major and uncomfortable upheavals in their lives, also find themselves in the unfamiliar position of having to take directions from their now adult children. Smith (1995) says that caring for the needs of the dependent poses new

challenges that call for special tactfulness and skill-qualities; and the adult caregiver may have neither time nor inclination to display those qualities and care.

Dependent abuse may occur as a result of retaliation. Smith (1995) claims that some experts surmise that elder abuse is a form of retaliation or revenge in which the abuser was mistreated as a child and returns the abuse to his or her dependent parent. Studies indicate that there are often unresolved conflicts between the generations. Some adult children become incapacitated emotionally from a history of abuse by the parent, and their reaction is to strike back. This may be exacerbated if the elderly parent continues to bait his or her vulnerable child.

Lack of close family ties can result in dependent abuse. Smith (1995) says that in families where there is very little or no closeness at all in the relationship between parents and their adult children, the sudden appearance of a dependent elderly parent can bring frustration and stress. Smith (1995) further asserts that without friendship and love necessary to counterbalance their new responsibilities, these adult children may become abusive. It can be noted that after living independently from their children, for a considerable part of their lives, elderly persons who have been separated either emotionally or geographically and try to reunite with their off-springs may be perceived as intruders. This is likely to lead to dependent abuse.