

FACTSHEET

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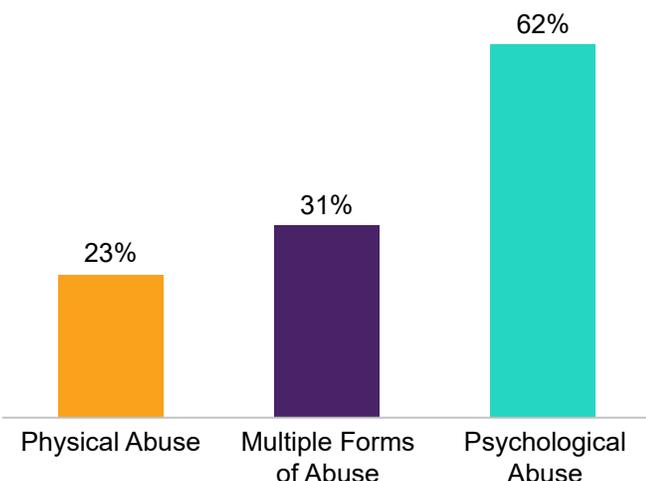
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Elder Abuse of Individuals with Alzheimer's

People with Alzheimer's disease are at heightened risk for experiencing elder abuse.

- Elder abuse is the intentional or negligent act by any person that causes serious harm to an older adult. This harm may be physical, mental, emotional, sexual, and/or financial.
- Older adults with dementia are especially susceptible to abuse — as many as 62% of them experience psychological abuse and as many as one-fourth have been physically abused.
- Additionally, one study found that 60% of elderly victims of sexual abuse have cognitive impairment.
- Nearly one-third (31%) of adults with dementia have experienced more than one form of abuse.

Older Adults with Dementia Experiencing Abuse



Professionals who deal with elder abuse have little knowledge about working with people who have dementia.

- Police, firefighters, emergency personnel, and social workers will increasingly encounter persons with dementia — and working with them can be fundamentally different from working with other victims of abuse or exploitation.
- Individuals living with dementia often have difficulty understanding or explaining situations, and their behaviors may be viewed as uncooperative, disruptive, or combative. Furthermore, persons living with dementia may have difficulty assisting investigators or prosecutors due to their cognitive impairment.
- Yet professionals and staff throughout health care, social services, and criminal justice systems receive little or no training in the special needs of individuals living with dementia.

The Promoting Alzheimer's Awareness to Prevent Elder Abuse Act (S. 3703 / H.R. 6813) would improve elder abuse training specifically on dementia.

- The Department of Justice (DOJ) would be required to develop training materials on how to work with victims of abuse who have Alzheimer's and other dementias.
- The legislation would also require DOJ to report annually on the dissemination and use of the materials to Congress.