



Case study five: Betty and Godfrey

Tool 2 - Reflection on attitudes towards older people and domestic abuse

For this exercise, first of all read the [podcast transcript](#) or [listen to the podcast](#)

Spotlight Episode 3: Domestic abuse and older people: are attitudes changing? (Safe Lives, 2016)

The podcast features a discussion between Jane, an IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advocate) based in a hospital and Mel, who is Adult Social Care's representative on a local MARAC.



Questions for reflection

Questions are based on listening to the podcast; the time stamp is given in brackets.

Challenges to practice in this area:

- > Jane the IDVA discusses the lack of referrals about older people (1.21 – 1.40).
 - Is this true in your area?
 - How could signposting of older people to IDVAs be improved?
- > Mel explains that concerns about older people generally come through safeguarding and don't always recognise where domestic abuse is occurring (1.41 – 2.07).
 - What are the dangers of social workers not recognising coercive control?
 - How can you be sure that safeguarding concerns that are domestic abuse are recognised as such in your area?

Use of Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs)

DVPOs provide short term protection for survivors of domestic abuse. They have the power to stop the perpetrator entering or being a certain distance from the person's home; prevent the perpetrator from excluding the person from the home; or require the perpetrator to leave the home of the person at risk.

The police can arrest anyone who breaches the terms of the DVPO.

They are meant to provide the survivor some 'breathing space' away from the coercive control, to start to plan for their longer term safety. When used well, agencies will make a plan to provide the necessary support to the person while the DVPO is in force.

- > Jane describes someone being left 'high and dry' after a victim's carer was removed as part of a DVPO (4.20 – 4.55)
 - How can you ensure that a DVPO does not leave someone with care needs 'high and dry'?
 - What other planning might you need to undertake?



Identifying coercive control

- > The speakers discuss ways in which we could get better at identifying older people experiencing domestic abuse (6.30). Listen to Mel's response (from 6.44 – 9.50).
 - Drawing on your own experience, what might the indicators that an older person with social care needs is experiencing coercive control?
 - How might you structure a discussion with a carer who seems to be neglecting or abusing their parent/ grandparent/ partner?

Where is the line between concerned or stressed carer, and perpetrator of domestic abuse?

The discussion turns to the complexities of situations where someone who may be perpetrating domestic abuse is also a carer (9.51 – 14.15).

- > What kind of behaviours from carers would cause you to make a professional judgement that coercive control was going on?
- > How are you making sure that carers are receiving the support they are entitled to under the Care Act 2014?

Barriers to older people accessing support

Listen to the section on barriers to accessing support (14.16 – 19.24)

Divide a piece of paper into 2 columns. In the first column, make a list of all the barriers that are mentioned during the section.

- > Are there any other barriers not mentioned here that are applicable in your area?
- > In the second column, add comments about how the barriers mentioned could be overcome. What is within your control? What will need action on the part of someone else? How will you influence this action being taken?

The use of MARAC

Mel explains that very few cases at MARAC relate to older people (23.15)

- > What do you think the purpose of MARAC is? Is this view shared in your group?
- > How can we make sure that MARAC does not override the wishes of victims, or add to the lack of control that they are experiencing?