

1. Background

Baksho was an elderly Sikh woman from a prosperous family who was killed by her husband Kesar. Other than her GP, her only contact with agencies was for a hip replacement and for carers to help her whilst she recovered from her operation.

2. Accompanying Adults

Practitioners should record who accompanies an adult in order to demonstrate familial support networks and which persons are involved in a caring role. It could also identify those who may pose a risk to an individual and signal the need to see someone on their own

3. Communication: the use of interpreters & the need to see people on their own for at least part of the assessment

Interpreters should always be used for assessments, discharge and care planning where a patient's first language is not English. This is because a number of problems can arise from the use of family or community members, friends, and children rather than professional interpreters.

- They may not understand or interpret everything that is being said.
- They may insert their own opinions or impose their own judgment as they interpret.
- They may inadvertently or deliberately obscure the voice, wishes and feelings of the individual and prevent person-centred and person-led care and treatment.

From a domestic abuse and safeguarding perspective,

- The individual may not be able to disclose abuse, particularly if it is perpetrated by an interpreter or family member
- The family member may share, or be capable of sharing, information that has been heard, with the wider family or community.
- Individuals should always been seen on their own, wherever possible, for at least a part of the assessment

Baksho

7. Black and Minoritised Women may experience additional barriers to identifying, disclosing, seeking help or reporting abuse including:

- A mistrust of agencies
- A fear of racism and racial stereotyping
- Language barriers
- Fear of rejection by family and wider community
- Intersecting identities will compound the barriers that they face

6. Domestic Abuse Disguised as a Propensity to Falls

Domestic abuse in older populations can easily be disguised as frailty and a propensity to falls. Practitioners should be engaging victims of falls in safe, sensitive, exploratory conversations and enquiry into domestic abuse.

5. Training Domiciliary Carers in Domestic Abuse.

Few practitioners have the opportunity to observe day-to-day life within an individual's home. By virtue of their discreet presence in the home environment, domiciliary carers have a unique role in identifying indicators of domestic abuse where they are present.

4. Selective Enquiry in Safe Environments

Healthcare professionals have a unique window of opportunity to respond to victims of domestic abuse.

All front-line health and social care staff should be equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to enquire about domestic abuse safely, sensitively and supportively through an explorative conversation.

safe & sound

Dudley's Community Safety Partnership

Domestic Abuse and Older People. A 'generational invisibility' and a 'generational silence.'

Practitioners need to be aware that domestic abuse occurs across the age span and that older people face additional barriers to understanding their experiences as domestic abuse and in accessing help including that:

- They are less likely to identify their experiences as domestic abuse
- They are less likely to have lived with abuse for prolonged periods before getting help
- They may lack awareness of support services and less likely to want to discuss personal matters with professionals
- They may face isolation and fear disrupting family dynamics
- They are more likely to suffer from health problems, reduced mobility or other disabilities which can exacerbate their vulnerability to harm
- If they have intersecting identities, this will compound the barriers that they face

Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance (2022) emphasises the importance of supporting older people to make safe and informed choices when seeking help and directs agencies to consider the guidance: Transforming the Response to Domestic Abuse in Later Life ¹ to improve their responses.