

Chapter Nine

Elder Victims

Elder Abuse

Conduct that results in the physical, psychological, or material harm, or neglect or injury to an elder

Estimates on elder abuse vary widely. In 1989, one congressional committee estimated that 1.5 million cases occur each year. Some researchers believe the figure is higher due to underreporting.

Theories of Elder Abuse

■ Cycle of Violence

- Asserts that violent behavior is learned within the family and bequeathed from one generation to the next

■ Psychopathology

- Based on the premise that abusers suffer from mental disorders that cause them to be violent

■ Social Exchange Theory

- Assumes that dependency in relationships contributes to elder abuse

■ Family Stress Theory

- Based on the premise that providing care for an elder induces stress within the family

■ Neutralization Theory

- Originally developed by Sykes and Matza to explain juvenile delinquency in our society. This theory views the delinquent as being affected by the norms and values of a larger social system rather than a counterculture