



**Hourglass**

Safer ageing · Stopping abuse  
Northern Ireland

Keeping you and your loved ones safe from

# PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE



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**We are  
Hourglass  
the only UK-  
wide charity  
that's calling  
time on the  
harm, abuse and  
exploitation of  
older people**



# Keeping You and Your Loved Ones Safe from Psychological Abuse



**Psychological abuse can take many forms, it can be subtle and hard to spot. If you or an older person you know are experiencing this you are not alone, sadly this type of abuse can affect anyone, regardless of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability or gender identity.**

Hourglass is here to help. This guide provides you with information about what psychological abuse is, how to identify it when it is happening and some tips on how to protect yourself and others.



# What is Psychological Abuse?



**Psychological abuse can hurt, manipulate or frighten you mentally and emotionally. It can be used with the intent to confuse or influence your thoughts which can diminish your wellbeing, esteem and confidence.**

Sometimes you may not realise you are experiencing psychological abuse and it may start with small comments or behaviours that escalate over time. This type of abuse is often a way for the perpetrator of the abuse to gain and keep control over you or someone you know. This type of abuse can happen alone or can be experienced alongside other forms of abuse such as physical or domestic abuse.

## Psychological Abuse may include:

- Constant put downs and negative remarks or comments.
- Gaslighting - being manipulated into doubting your own sanity.
- Humiliating you publicly or in private.
- Using silence against you or ignoring you.
- Being checked on constantly and feeling as though you cannot make your own decisions or choices.

## Possible indicators of Psychological Abuse:

- Changes in behaviour, sleeping pattern, eating habits, toileting.
- Low self-esteem, withdrawal, depression.
- Signs of distress, becoming tearful, confused, panicked.
- Behaviour changes around person causing the abuse, less talkative, submissive, passive.
- The abuser is keeping you or the older person isolated from family and friends.





## You may be feeling:

- Doubtful or question yourself or your sanity, worried that you are 'going mad'.
- Isolated, lonely, depressed.
- As though it's your fault.
- Unsure how to explain the abuse or who to tell.
- Worried that you won't be believed.
- Worried that you don't want the person hurting you to get into trouble, you just want the abuse to stop.
- Hopeless, if you have experienced a negative response from agencies before when reporting the abuse.

## Tips and advice for you:

- Do not blame yourself, abuse is never your fault and it is not okay for someone to treat you in this way.
- Talk to someone you can trust about the abuse, a friend, relative or your GP.
- Unfortunately abuse can escalate and worsen over time so do not delay in getting help.
- Contact Hourglass for further advice and support.



# Tips and advice if you are concerned about someone else:

- If you're worried about someone being psychologically abused, it can help to let them know you're there to help, just listening to them can make a huge difference.
- Stay calm if an older person tells you they are being abused and be sensitive to the emotional impact of disclosing abuse.
- Know how to spot the signs of psychological abuse, not all are obvious.
- Contact Hourglass for further advice and support.
- Provide Hourglass' contact details to the person you are worried about, if it is safe to do so.

# How we can support you:

**At Hourglass we are dedicated to stopping the harm, abuse and exploitation of older people. Our helpline and online services are available across the UK and our expert team provide information, advice and support and can put you in touch with appropriate local agencies that may provide additional services.**

We are here for you Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, offering:

- Support for any older person experiencing or at risk of abuse or exploitation.
- Support if you are unsure if abuse or exploitation is happening to you or someone else.
- Support for anyone with concerns about an older person, e.g. family, friends, neighbours, paid carers or professionals, etc.
- Information and advice relating to safer ageing and prevention.



**All our contact details can be found on the back of this brochure.**



# Hourglass

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You can contact us in many ways:

**24/7 Helpline: 0808 808 8141**

Our helpline is entirely confidential and free to call from a landline or mobile, and the number will not appear on your phone bill.

**Text message: 07860 052906**

Texts from outside the UK will be charged at their standard international rate which will differ depending on location and service charges of your phone provider. The number will appear on your bill and in your phone records but will not be identified as Hourglass.

**INSTANT MESSAGING service: [www.wearehourglass.org](http://www.wearehourglass.org)**

**Get information from our CHATBOT - [www.wearehourglass.org](http://www.wearehourglass.org)**

**Get information from our KNOWLEDGE BANK - [knowledgebank.wearehourglass.org](http://knowledgebank.wearehourglass.org)**

**Email: [helpline@wearehourglass.org](mailto:helpline@wearehourglass.org)**

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