

# TAKE A FIRST STEP.

**You are not alone!**

**HALT**  
KEINE GEWALT

**PRO**  
SENECTUTE

# VIOLENCE IN OLD AGE

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## Violence can be committed intentionally or unintentionally.

Violence in old age is rarely spoken about which is why there is also little reliable data on the frequency of violence. However, a high number of unreported cases is to be assumed as many actions and measures are not viewed as violence and thus are not recorded as such. Nonetheless, this should not disguise the fact that there is a broad range of actions by means of which older people are insulted, injured and harmed and that a large number of social standards and organisational regulations trigger processes and types of behaviour that lead to violence.

This violence can take the form of neglecting elementary needs, mental abuse, financial/material exploitation, physical abuse, measures that restrict their freedom, restriction of their free will, sexual violence, neglect, breach of human rights (e.g. discrimination on the basis of age).

There are diverse risk factors for violent actions. On the one hand, these include, in addition to physical and emotional stress, also long-standing unsolved relationship conflicts between the generations, addiction problems or biographically conditioned violent behaviour. On the other hand, social conditions can trigger or exacerbate incidents of violence, such as social and intra-family isolation of those affected, lack of privacy or financial dependencies on the part of the person cared for. But with this topic, it is not about pointing to the perpetrators and being out-raged but rather about getting to the bottom of the causes and taking corresponding measures. Because when the „perceived perpetrators“ are spoken to, sometimes a bottomless pit of helplessness,

desperation, total overwork, shame, loneliness and a feeling of being „abandoned“ opens up. This does not excuse violent action but provides information about what needs to be noted for preventive measures.

Measures such as courses for nursing relatives, support services (mobile assistance, day centres, short-term care, advice, self-help groups...) can have a de-escalating effect in stressful day-to-day nursing life. As many people lack an awareness of violent actions, information and the removal of taboos regarding this topic are essential.

A public awareness of violence in old age must be created so that violence prevention is no longer seen as an individual problem but rather as a phenomenon for which all groups of society have a shared responsibility. Because non-violent dealings with old people cannot be prescribed by law but must be the common goal of us all.



## ADDRESSES

### Hotline

0 699 112 000 99 (throughout Austria)

### Women's helpline against violence

0 800 222 55 (around the clock)

### Help for the deaf and hard of hearing

0 800 133 133 (around the clock by SMS)

### Online advice

[www.haltdergewalt.at](http://www.haltdergewalt.at)

### Weisser Ring helpline for victims Free-of-charge legal and psychological advice

0 800 112 112 (around the clock)

### Police emergency number and any locally responsible police inspectorate

133

### Crisis line

142 (around the clock)