

# Arlington Heights Police Department

## Senior Bullying



Bullying is mostly associated with children. One child corners another in the hallway and begins to tease and push them. There is no age limit for bullying. In fact, some reports have shown seniors face bullying more often than children. This is an issue which should not be ignored.

### **BULLYING BEHAVIOR: Can range from verbal intimidation all the way to physical violence.**

- ❖ Repetitive, negative behavior towards another person which violates standards of appropriate conduct.
- ❖ Negative behavior occurring over a period of time, typically becoming more extreme.
- ❖ Behavior which may be consciously or unconsciously committed by the bully.
- ❖ The battle over a limited number of shared resources like chairs, tables, TVs or staff attention may promote bullying.
- ❖ Women tend towards passive-aggressive behavior like gossiping and spreading rumors, while men are more direct and "in your face".
- ❖ Negative gossip, public snubbing, being left out of social gatherings and vocal insults are just a few examples of bullying behavior.

### **THE BULLY and the TARGET: Someone with more power and status trying to control someone with less.**

- ❖ Relative intimidating a senior into releasing property or other assets.
- ❖ Health care professional bullying a senior because they are frustrated or just because they can.
- ❖ Senior peer-to-peer bullying is prevalent in assisted living facilities and senior communities.

### **WHY SENIORS BECOME BULLIES: The reasons are not always clear.**

- ❖ Some senior bullies were bullies when they were younger.
- ❖ Seniors sometimes do not welcome aging and become disorderly and aggressive towards others.
- ❖ Dementia can cause seniors to become confused, aggressive or less inhibited.
- ❖ Seniors who lose their independence might try and dominate others to establish some control in their life.

### **PREVENTION: Bullying must be identified and not allowed to continue.**

- ❖ Implement a Code of Conduct creating a culture which does not tolerate bullying.
- ❖ Make sure staff, relatives and other senior residents can identify bullying and then intervene.
- ❖ Encourage seniors to report bullying. They may keep the information to themselves because they are embarrassed or have no friends and family to confide in.
- ❖ Report bullying to staff, senior advocates, ombudsmen, social workers and family members.

**Whether physical or emotional – being bullied can be traumatic regardless of age.**