**Background information**

In Estonia, there is no specific elder abuse law, nor is there a domestic violence law. Abuse and articles on violence are specified in the Penal Code. Incidents of violence are underreported, and older people report abuse or exploitation by close relatives rarely. There are no special age-based services for victims of violence in Estonia. National victim helplines and victim support centers offer free help and counseling services to people who have been victims of crime, neglect, or abuse, or who have experienced physical, mental, economic, or sexual violence. Local governments also offer some support to reduce dependence on informal caregivers. Women's centers specializing in helping victims of domestic violence offer support services across the country.

**1.** Answer:

[The Constitution of the Republic of Estonia](https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/530122020003/consolide)guarantees the rights of all persons to recourse to the courts (§ 15). Estonian law differentiates between passive and active legal capacity. Elderly, incl persons with disabilities have full procedural legal capacity, which means that they can exercise all of their procedural rights and obligations independently, unless this has been explicitly restricted by a court of law.

# [Penal Code](https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/530092022005/consolide) sets out sanctions for physical abuse (incl. causing damage to the health of another person, or battery or other physical abuse which causes pain), torture, and other crimes listed in the Law. The prescribed punishments depend on the type and severity of the offence and vary from pecuniary punishment to twelve years of imprisonment.

# [Law Enforcement Act](https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/526082022003/consolide) determines the requirements for behavior in public places (§ 55). It is forbidden to hit, push, fight or otherwise behave violently against another person. It is direct physical violence against another person, which is also criminalized in most cases (physical abuse). Such behavior can probably be considered the most serious possible violation of the requirements of behavior in a public place. General indecent behavior is prohibited, including verbal abuse (e.g. cursing), threatening or obscene gestures, as well as any other form of offensive, threatening or intimidating behaviour.

[Victim Support Act](https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/505012023003/consolide) (the new version enters into force 01.04.2023) aim is to improve the availability and quality of victim assistance services provided to victims of violence, crime, or crisis incidents and to make the system of applying for compensation for victims of crime more victim friendly. The law stipulates the following services: psychosocial assistance in crisis cases, sexual violence crisis assistance, restorative justice services and support for giving up violence.

[Equal Treatment Act](https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/507032022003/consolide) aims to ensure the protection of persons against discrimination on grounds of nationality (ethnic origin), race, colour, religion or other beliefs, age, disability or sexual orientation (§1). Discrimination on the grounds of religion or beliefs, age, disability and sexual orientation is prohibited in relation to work life and vocational training.

There is no special Strategy or Development Plan, that addresses violence against elderly directly. However,

* [Internal Security Development Plan 2020–2030](https://www.siseministeerium.ee/stak2030)
* [Violence prevention agreement 2020-2025](https://www.just.ee/en/crime-and-prevention-crime/violence-prevention-agreement)
* [Welfare Development Plan 2023-2030](https://www.sm.ee/heaolu-arengukava-2023-2030#vabariigi-valitsuse-) (currently in the Parliamentary discussions, not adopted yet)
* [Chancellor of Justice Act](https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/528052020006/consolide)
* [Commissioner for Equal Opportunities](https://volinik.ee/en/sul-on-mure/public-sector-representative/vanus-avs-en/)

**2.** Answer:

All forms of violence occur (physical, psychological, economic, sexual, neglect). Can be both in the institution and at home. There is usually more than one type of violence at the same time. The number of elderly male victims of violence is growing rapidly. The number of types of violence is smaller for men than for women. In public spaces, the elderly are more at risk of becoming victims of violence. Older women experience more intimate partner violence and therefore end up in women's support centers. In 2021, there were 152 victims of intimate partner violence aged 50-65, and 72 victims aged 65+. In 2022, respectively 211 aged 50-64 and 90 aged 65+.

**3.** Answer:

The risk of becoming a victim of violence increases when a person is older. In Estonia, there is the [Estonian LGBT Association](https://www.lgbt.ee/uhingust) is a non-profit organization working for LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and other sexual and gender identity and self-expression) people. Every few years, the Estonian Human Rights Center conducts a survey that shows the attitude of Estonian residents towards LGBT+ people in relation to various areas of life.

By signing the [Estonian Diversity Charter](https://humanrights.ee/en/topics-main/diversity-and-inclusion/charter/), the organisation – the company, NGO, or public body – voluntarily commits to promote diversity and equal opportunities among their employees, partners, as well as clients. The organisations that have signed the Charter form a community in order to mutually share experience and promote equal treatment both in their own organisation and in the society.

4. Answer:

Based on Estonian Police and Border Guard Board data in 2022 physical abuse occurs the most, including ca 65% of the victims are women and ca 35% are men. Violent crimes against the elderly (aged 65+) constitutes the majority physical abuse (72%).

[The Analysis of Older Victims of Crime](https://www.kriminaalpoliitika.ee/et/vanemaealise-kuriteohvrite-analuus) (2021) carried out by the Ministry of Justice revealed that the elderly are the most victims of physical abuse, fraud or theft. With increasing age, the proportion of violence in crimes with an elderly victim increased. In most cases, the elderly were victims of either property crimes or violent crimes. By individual type of crime, the elderly are the most victims of physical abuse, which accounted for 31% of all crime cases involving an elderly victim. 55% of the cases of violence were domestic violence and 11% were cases between neighbors. The elderly victim was mostly between 65 and 74 years old. The oldest victims were over 90 years old. Among the victims, 54% were women and 46% were men, which is similar to the gender distribution of all crime victims. As age increased, the proportion of women among crime victims increased.

**5.** Answer:

[Social Insurance Board Victim Support](https://www.palunabi.ee/en). A victim support worker in the Social Insurance Board provides confidential and if requested, anonymous, free of charge assistance and advice to victims.

They offer:

* support in the event of any kind of violence (physical, psychological, sexual, economic) or accident.
* psychological counselling.
* the possibility to apply for [**victim support compensation**](https://www.sotsiaalkindlustusamet.ee/et/pension-toetused/kuriteoohvri-riiklikud-kahjuhuvitised);
* support on the [**MARAC network**](https://www.sotsiaalkindlustusamet.ee/et/ohvriabi-huvitis/marac-juhtumikorralduse-mudel)principle where specialists from different disciplines work together for your benefit.

[The victim support helpline 116 006](https://www.palunabi.ee/en/victim-support) offers round-the-clock crisis counselling, provides information about victim`s rights and options for assistance, and connects victim with appropriate specialists.

In case of age discrimination, it is possible to contact with the [Commissioner for Equal Opportunities](https://volinik.ee/en/sul-on-mure/public-sector-representative/vanus-avs-en/). If person feels that he/she has been discriminated against in employment, receipt of services, education, or other circumstances, he/she can be advised and assisted by independent and impartial Commissioner for Equal Opportunities. This institution has been established to help people protect their rights and prevent discrimination. The contact can also be anonymous if person preferers so.

Chancellor of Justice task among other things is solving discrimination disputes. The Chancellor of Justice shall verify that persons are not being discriminated based on their gender, race, nationality, colour, language, origin, religion, or religious beliefs, political or other opinion, proprietary or social situation, age, disability, sexual orientation, or other status named in law.

Legal advice supported by the state is provided by the [contractual partners](https://www.just.ee/kohtud-ja-oigusteenused/oigusabi/riigi-toetatud-oigusabi) of the Ministry of Justice. Among other things, separate legal advice is offered for the elderly and people with special needs. The purpose of the service is to provide legal advice, information, and assistance to elderly people in daily communication with the authorities and administration. Among other things, free legal aid is intended for all Estonian residents, whose gross income is up to 1,200 euros per month. Local governments also offer free legal aid to low-income elderly people. Free legal advice is also provided through women's support centres.

**6.** Answer: The necessary information is available, but often requires digital competence, which not all older people have. In general, information is shared through local authorities, family doctors. From time to time, thematic articles are published in the media, media campaigns aimed at different target groups are organized.

7. Answer:

**Examples of good practices**

[Women’s Support and Information Centre projects (Estonia)](file://riik.sise/yld/SOM$/SM/HKO/vanemaealised%20(Maarja%20S)/vanemaealiste%20vastu%20suunatud%20vägivald,%20väärkohtlemine,%20hooletusse%20jätmine/Women’s%20Support%20and%20Information%20Centre)

* **Training to Identify and Support Older Victims of Abuse (TISOVA)**projects seeks to train caregivers and older people so they can identify and provide assistance to elderly victims of abuse.
* **Multi-Agency Response to Violence Against Older Women** (MARVOW) is a two-year EU project – from September 2019 to September 2021. More info: [www.marvow.eu](http://www.marvow.eu/)

In 2018, Estonian Police and Border Guard Board the campaign ["*Aga mina julgen sekkuda*"](https://www.politsei.ee/et/juhend/ennetusprojektid) took place, the purpose of which was to call people to notice family member violence and report it, and to be an example.

**Commissioner for Equal Opportunities** and her office advises and assists elderly who feel that they have been discriminated against in employment, receipt of services, education, or other circumstances that they cannot change themselves. The Commissioner is active in promoting rights of the elderly and raising public awareness about ageing and elderly. For example, a special web-page is created for [Ageing](https://volinik.ee/en/sul-on-mure/fuusiline-isik-en/vanus-fi-en/vanus-18-en/) and a **publication „**[**Ise oled vana!**](https://volinik.ee/vanus/lae-alla-raamat-ise-oled-vana/)**“** about pension, employment, health, violence, assets, use of ICT, how to adapt with life changes.

[Advancing Rights of Estonian Victims](https://www.just.ee/en/crime-and-prevention-crime/advancing-rights-estonian-victims-arev). The project was brought to life as a result of cooperation between the Ministry of Justice, Victim Support Europe, and the European Union and will last for two years (2021–2023). The project aims to offer better protection for victims of crime and to improve victim support services in Estonia.