

WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT ELDER ABUSE?

The renowned author, George Orwell, once said "In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act." At no other time in history has this quote become more relevant. As we find ourselves amid a world of stress and anxieties, we sometimes lose sight of vital issues among our society. It is the inability to analyze and solve crucial societal issues that has blinded many from our largest problems. In fact, we more often do not lose sight of our most important issues, rather sweep them "under the rug" for following generations to deal with. The issue of elder abuse, however, is one that cannot go unnoticed. Essentially, failure to acknowledge elder abuse as a prominent issue within the United States would be a disservice to those who created our country's foundation.

While many remain uninformed about the issue of elder abuse, the statistics of the crime are strikingly tangible to many American families. In fact, one study found that about 6 percent of the elderly population will fall victim to elder abuse. With such a statistic, it is a wonder how this crime has gone relatively unnoticed in society. Why is it that the American culture has lost interest in the protection of its elders? Is it because of a selective blindness, which causes many to turn their backs toward the abusive treatment of the elderly? Is it because of a national incompetence to handle such an issue. Or perhaps, it is because the present American society has lost touch with its roots.

Essentially, the issue of elder abuse has flown under the radar, because many have falsely assumed that the labels of "Assisted Living" and "Nursing Home" translate to safety. The reality of our current situation is that although these institutions have provided many elderly people with a home-like environment, equipped with assistance, the elderly residents are significantly more vulnerable to neglect and abuse within the same walls in which they have been assisted. Many, however, fail to realize that their grandmother, great aunt, mother, or sister, is susceptible to this horrible abuse. In fact, many cases of elder abuse go unreported, thus muting the voices of many defenseless elders—muting their cries for help.

It is the inability of many abused elders to defend themselves that should ignite a fire behind Americans behind an anti-abusive movement. In this situation, the policy used by this country's military, to defend and assist those who are unable to do so, becomes surprisingly relevant. If not for ourselves, unaffected Americans should take pride in ending such a despicable crime. In essence, it is the undeniable duty of the able population to speak on behalf of the abused and neglected elders within this country. Such an interest in the well-being of these elderly people would suggest a positive movement towards a more compassionate society; a society much-needed.

Certainly, the issue of elder abuse and neglect has blemished the American culture. The allowance of this atrocity to exist without due recognition has left many questioning the priorities of this country. However, it is the combination of a caring attitude and resistance to complacency that will rid this country of the character stain that is elder abuse. "Why should I care about elder abuse?" many ask. However

proverbial it may seem, the answer lies within oneself. One's reasoning for a fight against elder abuse can vary. However, the constant among all who fight this problem is this: a love and desire to rescue those who have built and carried this country for generations.