

ELDER ABUSE





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MANOTSAYWIN
L. BELL

Let's Get The Conversation Started!

“elder” & “Elder”

The term “elder” is often referred to outside the Indigenous community as an older adult or senior. In Indigenous communities, the term “Elder” is used for a person with knowledge of traditional ways, healing, history and language.

What Is Elder Abuse?

Elder abuse is defined by the World Health Organization (2002) as:

“a single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person”

“In many parts of the world elder abuse occurs with little recognition or response. Until recently, this serious social problem was hidden from the public view and considered mostly a private matter. Even today, elder abuse continues to be a taboo, mostly underestimated and ignored by societies across the world. Evidence is accumulating, however, to indicate that elder abuse is an important public health and societal problem.”

Often, more than one type of abuse occurs at the same time.

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Why Does This Happen?

There is no one explanation for elder abuse. It is a complex problem that can stem from multiple causes such as; caregiver fatigue, cycle of violence in the family, caregiver addiction and mental health issues.

Often elders won't report abuse because of shame, fear of their abuser, they are completely under control of the abuser, or they think no one will believe or help them.

Who Is Abused?

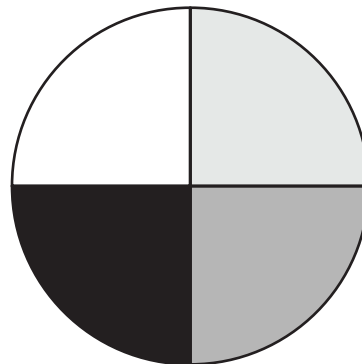
Abuse of an elder can happen to any elder.

Who Commits Elder Abuse?

Elder abuse can come from a range of people, including life partners, family members, friends, neighbors, landlords, employers and service providers.

Where Can Elder Abuse Occur?

- In their home
- Long Term Care facilities
- Retirement homes
- Hospitals
- Community Buildings
- Home of the caregiver
- Health Clinics
- Banks
- Stores



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Types Of Elder Abuse

Physical:

- pushing, kicking, hitting, slapping, poking,
- pulling hair, spitting, dragging, biting,
- forcibly confining an elder, in a room, to a bed or chair
- arm twisting

Sexual:

- unwanted sexual contact – touching, kissing
- sexual remarks and gestures
- inappropriate touching
- forced intercourse / rape

Neglect:

- not visiting with the elder for long periods of time
- withholding food and health services
- failure to give the dependent elder the necessities of life: food heat, weather appropriate clothing, clean shelter, medication, medical aids, care

Mental Abuse:

- not allowing other people to visit
- not being allowed to talk to others
- keeping an elder away from community events and services
- treating the elder like a child, bullying, name calling, humiliation, intimidation, and harassment

Financial:

- financial loss or personal loss to the elder
- theft of jewelry, money, or property
- sharing an elder's home without paying a fair share of the expenses
- cheque forgery
- Misuse of power of attorney
- Pressure to sign legal documents or sell property

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Warning Signs

Physical:

- bruising,
- unexplained broken bones
- discrepancies in injury and explanation of how injury happened from the elder

Sexual:

- bruising - breasts, inner thighs, or genital area
- difficulty walking, or sitting
- inappropriate sexual comments
- unexplained venereal disease or genital infections

Neglect:

- poor nutrition
- improper use of medication
- elder left in an unsafe place

Mental Abuse:

- appears withdrawn
- lack of eye contact
- low self esteem
- hesitant to talk openly
- appears fearful or nervous around caregiver or other people

Financial:

- sudden withdrawal of money from accounts
- unpaid bills – notice of eviction or discontinuation of utilities
- sudden lower standard of living



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Tips For Prevention

- Plan your future – prepare a Power of Attorney or Living Will while you are mentally capable.
- Maintain friendships and connections with family, community groups, workers, and support networks and avoid becoming isolated
- If you are unhappy with your care, speak up to someone you trust and have them report it.
- Make sure your financial and legal affairs are in order.
- If you are being abused speak up to someone you trust.

Legal Information

Canadian Criminal Code:

In Canada, certain categories of abuse, such as fraud, assault, sexual assault, uttering threats and criminal harassment are crimes under the Canadian Criminal Code.

Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007:

There are provisions in the Act to protect residents from elder abuse, including the duty to protect, promoting zero tolerance of abuse and reporting, details of the legislation are available in Section 19 Prevention of Abuse and Neglect.

Retirement Homes Act, 2010:

The Act states there is Mandatory Reporting required for people to report elder abuse to the Registrar of the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority (RHRA) if they suspect harm to retirement home residents (Section 75).

Information for this section came from
www.elderabuseontario.com/what-is-elderabuse/legislation-reporting/

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Statistical Information

- “More than 9,200 SENIORS AGED (65 years and older) were victims of Violent crime, about 1/3 committed by a family member. 34% family member, 25% stranger, 21% other relationship, 20% acquaintance.”

- *Fact Sheet Family Violence in Canada, 2014* www.statcan.gc.ca

- “currently 2 million seniors aged 65 and over residing in Ontario 14.6% of the population. Based on studies that indicate approximately 6% to 10% percent of seniors are abused, there are between 120,000 and 400,000 seniors living in Ontario who have experienced or are experiencing elder abuse.”

- *Elder Abuse Ontario – Fact Sheet* www.elderabuseontario.com, January 20, 2017

- Most often, grown children were responsible for family violence against seniors, followed by spouses.

- *Statistics Canada. Juristat Article. Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical profile, 2011* by Marie Sinha Released on June 25, 2013.

- Common assault, in which little or no physical injury is caused to the victim, was the most common form of family violence against seniors. In total, common assaults accounted for over one-half (52%) of family violence incidents, followed by uttering threats (20%) and serious assaults (12%).

- *Statistics Canada. Juristat Article. Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical profile, 2011* by Marie Sinha Released on June 25, 2013.

- “Elder abuse is a problem that exists in both developing and developed countries yet is typically underreported globally. Prevalence rates or estimates exist only in selected developed countries - ranging from 1% to 10%. Although the extent of elder mistreatment is unknown, its social and moral significance is obvious. As such, it demands a global multifaceted response, one which focuses on protecting the rights of older persons.”

- www.who.int/aging/projects/elder_abuse/en/

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Where To Go For Help

- 911 Police
- Seniors Safety Line: 1-866-299-1011
- Senior Crime Stoppers: 1-800-222-TIPS (8477)
- Ministry of Health and Long Term Care: 1-866-434-0144
- Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority (RHRA): 1-855-275-7472
- Talk4Healing: 1-855-554-HEAL
- Victim Support Line: 1-888-579-2888 or
416-314-2447 in the Toronto area
Website: www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca
- ConnexOntario Drug and Alcohol Helpline: 1-800-565-8603
- Mental Health Helpline: 1-866-531-2600
- Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline: 1-888-230-3505
Website: connexontario.ca
- Assaulted Women's Helpline: 1-866-863-0511
Website: www.awhl.org



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Notes

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References

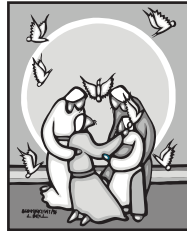
- Fact Sheet Family Violence in Canada, 2014 www.statcan.gc.ca
Police-reported family violence: Statistics Canada, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, 2014
- Self-reported spousal violence: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Victimization, 2014
- Elder Abuse Ontario – Fact Sheet www.elderabuseontario.com,
January 20, 2017
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