

# Elder Abuse Workshop



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Plan to Protect®

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# Overview

- Raise Awareness of the Prevalence of Elder Abuse
- Identify Categories, Definitions and Indicators
- Discuss Case Studies
- Equip Learners on How to Respond
- Develop a Safety Plan
- Where to Get Help?
- Time for Questions







# KWL Activity

- What do you **KNOW**?
- What do you **WANT TO KNOW**?
- What have you **LEARNED**?

# Case Study 1

*My mother lives with my brother and his wife. Last time I visited, I noticed that my sister-in-law was very rude to my mother and my mother had a large burn on her arm.*

*Her explanation seemed unlikely. I am worried she is being abused. What kinds of actions constitute physical abuse?*





# Definitions & Terms

## Vulnerable Adult

A person who, because of age, disability or other circumstance, whether temporary or permanent, is dependent on others or is otherwise at greater risk than the general population of being harmed by a person in a position of trust.



# Definitions & Terms

## Elderly/Elder

An adult who is over 65 years old. However, if the situation of abuse is in relation to a person requiring assistance or support due to aging, this description can include someone under the age of 65.







# What is Elder Abuse?

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- Any deliberate action or lack of action that causes harm to an older adult.
- Could be physical, emotional, neglect, financial or some combination.
- Under or over-medicating a person might also constitute abuse.
- Violating the civil rights of a person





# What is Elder Abuse?

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- Elder abuse is often caused by a close friend or relative.
- It is not your fault.
- It is controlling behaviour.
- Abuse does not stop on its own. If it is ignored, it will continue, and may even get worse.





# What is Elder Abuse?

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- You can take actions on your own and with the help of others to end the abuse.
- You may feel the need to protect your children, spouse or other family members, even if they are treating you badly.
- Abusive behaviour is not healthy for you or for your abuser. No one deserves to be hurt. It's okay to reach out for help.



We live in an aging society. People 85 and older represent the fastest growing segment of the population.

As the number of elderly individuals continues to grow, so will the cases of elder abuse.

Elder Abuse: One elderly person is victimized every 2.7 minutes.

*World Health Organization*





An estimated 766,000  
Canadian seniors are  
abused a year

*National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly  
2016 Survey*





**NICE**

National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly

Initiative nationale pour le soin des personnes âgées

*We care together*

*Ensemble pour le bien-être des aînés*

In 2015 a population-weighted sample of all Canadian residents 55 years of age and older was developed that yielded a representative sample of 8,163 Canadians





**NICE**

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The prevalence for elder abuse in Canada was 7.5% (physical, sexual, psychological and financial abuse) representing 695,248 older Canadians



**NICE**

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The prevalence for mistreatment was **8.2%** (physical, sexual, psychological, financial abuse and neglect) representing 766,247 older Canadians





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Psychological abuse was **2.7%**  
(roughly 251,000 Canadians)

Physical abuse was **2.2%**  
(roughly 208,000 Canadians)

Sexual abuse was **1.6%**  
(roughly 147,000 Canadians)

Financial abuse was **2.6%**  
(roughly 244,000 Canadians)

Neglect was **1.2%**  
(roughly 116,000 Canadians)

# Typical Elder Abuse Profile

## Victim

- Over 75 years
- Female/widow/single
- Physical and/or cognitive impairment
- Social isolation
- Dependent on caregiver
- Low self-esteem

## Abuser

- Often under 30 or over 60 years
- Close relative or caregiver
- Living with abused elder
- Psychologically stressed or depressed
- Substance abuse history
- Financial problems





*“Most elderly people value autonomy above personal safety and comfort, and would rather have inadequate care with families than the best of institutional care.”*

*~Anne Sclater, MD*

## Case Study 2

*I live with my daughter and her husband. My son-in-law works very hard, so he is often tired and moody. Lately he has been doing things like pulling my hair and leaving me in my room all day without food when my daughter is out. He even punched me once. I think it must be because he is tired, but is this normal?*







# Physical Abuse

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- Any physical force or action that results or could result in injury or death
- Punching, slapping, beating, shaking, or burning
- Administration of poisonous substances or inappropriate use of drugs
- Over medicating or withholding medication
- Overuse of restraints

## Case Study 3

*Lynn's grandmother was living in a nursing home. Lynn would visit her grandmother and her grandmother would voice extreme fear and recall stories of a man that would come into the nursing home in during the night and touch her. He also was the one that would do her sponge baths. Lynn feared her grandmother was being sexually abused.*







# Sexual Abuse

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- Sexual abuse can include any forced sexual activity or inappropriate touching

## Case Study 4

*Last year my elderly neighbour's nephew moved in with him while he was attending university. Since then, my neighbour has become very withdrawn and I hardly see him anymore. I worry that his nephew is not treating him appropriately.*

*What sorts of actions constitute emotional abuse?*







# Emotional Abuse

- Making threats
- Mental cruelty
- Humiliation
- Forced socialization or isolation
- Treating the older person like a child
- Not allowing the older person to make decisions for him or herself

## Case Study 5

*My elderly aunt lives alone and her neighbours have been very good to her. I am becoming concerned, however, that they might be taking advantage of her financially. They shop for her and cash her cheques, but when I last saw her, she seemed to be very short of money and food. How can I tell if they are stealing from her?*







# Financial Abuse

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- Theft of money, belongings, credit cards, or pension cheques
- Forcing an older person to make or change a Power of Attorney or Will
- Forgery of signature
- Withholding money that the older person needs
- Forcing, persuading or tricking an older adult to sell a home or possessions, or to pay for unnecessary services



# Financial Abuse

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- Persuasion to invest in a fraudulent investment scheme
- Pressuring an older person to provide services for free
- Abusing Power of Attorney, Guardianship, or Trusteeship responsibilities



## Case Study 6

*My friend lives with her children and I am concerned about her health. She rarely has clean clothes to wear, she can only go out when her daughter feels it is convenient, and she isn't receiving her insulin shots on a regular basis. What constitutes neglect of an older person?*







# Neglect

- Withholding clothes, food, medication, personal care, hygiene, or medical care
- Leaving the elder person in an unsafe or isolated place
- Leaving an older adult tied to a bed or chair
- Can be intentional or unintentional
- Difference between neglect caused by someone else and self-neglect

# Why do people not report abuse?

- They don't know about abuse
- They have been told they deserve this
- They are fearful it will get worse
- They don't want to get someone into trouble







# Why should you report abuse?

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- Abuse often escalates
- To stop the abuse, it is a crime
- Abuse harms the victim but also causes damage and harm to the person committing the abuse.





# What should you know?

- You do not deserve to be abused
- You are not to blame for abuse
- You have a right to live without fear
- You have the right to a safe, healthy environment
- Abuse often gets worse over time
- You have the right to control your own life and make your own decisions
- You are not alone





# What to do if you're not ready?

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- Tell someone you trust what is happening
- Ask others for help
- Turn to the police for help
- Talk with people to learn more about resources and services available in your community
- Find out your options to take care of your personal needs and financial security
- Make a safety plan

# Safety Planning Checklist

You may want to consider putting together an emergency kit with:

- emergency phone numbers
- emergency money
- extra clothing
- a list of medications, name and phone number of pharmacy, and at least three days' worth of medications
- Glasses, hearing aids and other assistive devices such as cane, walker or wheelchair
- A safe place to go in the event of an emergency (both in and outside your home)
- An escape route from your home
- Keys for your home, car, and safety deposit box



# Safety Planning Checklist

Copies of relevant documents, including:

- Identification
- Marriage certificate or record of common-law relationship
- Financial documents
- Lease, rental agreement, or house deed
- Health card
- Social Insurance Number
- Passport
- Immigration papers



# If a friend tells you they are being abused

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Be patient

Believe them

Do not judge them

- Tell them you care about them and offer support
- Understand that making efforts to change an abusive relationship is extremely difficult





# If a friend tells you they are being abused

- Do not deny what is going on
- Do not confront the perpetrator yourself
- Educate yourself on resources available
- Encourage them to seek help





# KWL Activity

- What do you **KNOW**?
- What do you **WANT TO KNOW**?
- What have you **LEARNT**?

*“To care for those who once  
cared for us is one of the  
highest honors.”*

*~Tia Walker*







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Thank you for participating!  
Time for Q&A