

Elder Abuse

Information for older adults, families and caregivers

Read this pamphlet to learn about:

- what is elder abuse
- the different types of elder abuse
- who to call for help



What is elder abuse?

Elder abuse occurs when an older adult is mistreated or harmed, typically by a person or people they should be able to trust. It can happen once, or it may be repeated over time.

How common is elder abuse?

About 1 in 10 older adults in Canada will experience one or more forms of abuse at some point during their later years.

Older adults may experience abuse from:

- family members, relatives and care providers who are the most common abusers
- anyone who has contact or a relationship with an older person
- strangers who can often target vulnerable or isolated older adults living in the community

Where does it happen?

Elder abuse can happen anywhere and usually happens in the home. It can also happen in hospitals, retirement homes and nursing homes.

What are the different types of elder abuse?

Emotional

The abuser may threaten, scream at, frighten, insult or purposely ignore the older person.

Neglect

The abuser may withhold food, medications or health services from the older person.

Physical

There are many examples of physical abuse:

- hitting or pushing
- grabbing or shaking
- pulling hair
- throwing objects at the person

The abuser could also lock the older person in their room or keep them in bed or in a chair.

Financial

The abuser may take the older person's money (cash, pension cheques, savings) or force the older person to sell their home or other assets and valuables.

Sexual

The abuser may force any type of unwanted sexual act on the older person (sexual touching, kissing, hugging or intercourse).

What are the signs that elder abuse could be happening?

The older person:

- has bruises, cuts, skin sores or broken bones
- has lost weight
- has dirty clothes, hair, teeth and skin
- has not been given their pills regularly
- may feel sad or depressed or very afraid to talk about the abuse
- may act very uncomfortable or withdrawn in the presence of certain people

Why might an abused older person not ask for help?

The older person may:

- be afraid of what the abuser will do to them
- worry they will be put in a nursing home
- feel embarrassed
- feel no one will believe them
- not be able to tell someone about the abuse
- have difficulty speaking, speak a different language or be confused
- not recognize what is happening as abuse
- try to rationalize the abuse as being justified or better than another action

Who can I call for help?

Emergency reporting to police:

If you are in immediate danger dial 911 for emergency services.

Non emergency reporting and assistance:

Seniors Safety Line

The Seniors Safety Line provides information, referrals and support in over 150 languages 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This hotline is toll-free and confidential for seniors experiencing abuse, including financial, physical, sexual, mental abuse and neglect.

Toll Free: 1 866 299 1011 or call 211

Elder Abuse Ontario

Elder Abuse Ontario is a provincial, charitable, non-profit organization focused on supporting the implementation of The Ontario Strategy to Combat Elder Abuse. For information on elder abuse, visit their website.

Website: www.elderabuseontario.com

Victim Support Line

The Victim Support Line is a multilingual phone service that provides information for all victims of crime. This toll-free hotline offers information and referrals to support services available in your area.

Toll Free: 1 888 579 2888 or Toronto: 416 314 2447

Resources and services

Circle of Care

Circle of Care provides counselling and help in developing a safety plan, and information on referrals to legal, financial, housing and community resources.

Phone: 416 635 2860, 7 days a week, 7:00 am – 8:30 pm

Crisis Outreach Service for Seniors (COSS)

The COSS Team is an on-call mobile crisis intervention and outreach service for seniors that provides short-term response 365 days a year, 7 days a week.

Area: From Yonge Street to Warden Avenue, operates between Bloor Street/ Danforth Avenue and Lake Ontario. Between Yonge Street and Jane Street, this service operates between Eglinton Avenue W. and Lake Ontario.

Phone: 416 640 1459, 7 days a week, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Family Service Toronto – Pat’s Place

Pat’s Place is a temporary safe haven for adults 60 years and older experiencing abuse. Offers a 1-bedroom apartment in a secure location. Provides counselling, crisis intervention, safety planning and referral to community resources. There is no charge for rent at Pat’s Place. People are asked to contribute to the day-to-day costs, such as buying food, clothing, medications and doing laundry.

Phone: 416 595 9618

Website: www.familyserVICEToronto.org/our-services/programs-and-services/pats-place

Toronto Police Services

If you need more information about investigating a criminal case of elder abuse, call the Toronto Police Service.

Distress Centre: 416 808 4357 (HELP)

Elder Abuse Coordinator: 416 808 0130

Advocacy Centre for the Elderly (ACE)

Community-based legal clinic that provides services to low-income seniors along with public education.

Phone: 416 598 2656, open Monday to Friday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm



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