

DO YOU TALK ABOUT IT



**ENDING
THE
ABUSE
OF
SENIORS**

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Only the *Centre d'aide aux victimes d'actes criminels de la région de Trois-Rivières* (Trois-Rivières Region Crime Victims' Support Centre) may be considered bound by the contents of this booklet.
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*Your experience turns
out to be informative*

*Your memories prove
to be numerous*

Share them

Listen to others

By talking about them

*You will break
the isolation*



INTRODUCTION

- *What is a criminal act?*
- *What are the reactions and consequences resulting from victimization?*
- *What types of abuse are perpetrated against senior citizens?*
- *What resources are available in the region?*

The Trois-Rivières Region Crime Victims' Support Centre (CAVAC) wants to reach seniors who have been or are afraid of being victims of or witness to a criminal act.

The information included in this booklet about the different types of abuse and their related indicators will enable you to recognize acts perpetrated against you or someone you are close to. It will guide you in taking action to seek the help you need.

You will also find prevention tips which will increase your safety at home or when you go out.

We invite you to carefully read the information contained in this guide.



WHAT IS A CRIMINAL ACT?

A criminal act is a violation, by action or omission, which breaks a law enacted by the government for the purpose of ensuring law and order and the personal safety of individuals and their property, as well as public safety.

THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF CRIME:

- ***Personal crimes***

Example: As you are walking on the sidewalk, an individual attempts to steal your handbag and throws you on the ground, inflicting bodily injury.

- ***Household crimes***

Example: While you are absent from your home, individuals enter it by breaking a window, grab your jewels and leave the scene.

Being the victim of a crime or abuse leads to certain reactions and consequences that may affect your daily life. The intensity of the resulting emotions varies from one person to the next. But no matter what, the reactions and consequences experienced by the victim are normal.



THE VICTIM'S REACTIONS

DURING THE CRIME

- Fear of dying
- Dread reaction (fright, terror, etc.)
- Intense physical and/or psychological reactions (paralysis, hysteria, palpitations, trembling, etc.)
- Feelings of captivity and powerlessness
- Feeling he or she is living a nightmare
- Feeling the abuser bears him or her a personal grudge

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE CRIME

- Disorientation
- Apathy: impression of not feeling anything
- Denial: refusal to acknowledge what happened
- Feeling isolated and alone
- Feeling powerless
- Being in shock

DURING THE FOLLOWING DAYS

- Questioning his or her physical, psychological and mental condition
- Hope of becoming like he or she was before
- Acute crisis periods – physical and emotional reactions (insomnia, loss of appetite, nervousness, etc.)
- Emotional ambivalence
- Sudden mood changes

DURING THE FOLLOWING MONTHS

- Aggressiveness
- Hatred
- Periodic feelings of reliving the crime
- Persistent fear in a specific situation or in general
- Change in his or her perception of life
- End of the acute phase of depression
- Mood becomes more stable
- Thinking less about the crime, without forgetting anything



THE CONSEQUENCES OF VICTIMIZATION

PHYSICAL CONSEQUENCES

- Digestive problems or disorders (loss or increase of appetite, constipation, nausea, etc.)
- Trembling
- High blood pressure
- Respiratory disorders (asthma attacks, choking feeling, etc.)
- Headaches
- Energy drop, exhaustion
- General weakening of the immune system
- Intolerance to cold or hot flashes
- Changes in sexual habits
- Insomnia

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

- Anxiety
- Depressive disorder
- Anger
- Self-doubt
- Lessening of personal assertion
- Mistrust
- Constant fear
- Phobias
- Feeling of loss of control
- Feeling of powerlessness
- Feeling of distress
- Guilt feelings
- Feelings of shame
- Feeling of aloneness
- Feeling of having had an unfair experience
- Constantly recurring thoughts
- Nervousness
- Thoughts of suicide

PROBLEMS IN MENTAL PROCESSES

- Memory loss
- Diminished attention span
- Concentration problems
- Confusion (difficulty making decisions or clarifying priorities)

SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

- Isolation
- Marital or family tensions
- Radical changes in normal activities (avoiding certain places or groups of people)
- Fear of being alone, inability to live alone psychological consequences

- Increase in consumption of alcohol, drugs or medication
- Rejection of community
- Fear of going out
- Loss of trust in strangers

FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

- Material losses (stolen or broken property)
- Loss of objects with sentimental value
- Medication costs
- Medical care not covered by the *Régie de l'assurance-maladie du Québec* (Quebec Health Insurance Board)
- Hospitalization costs
- Transportation costs
- Moving costs
- Costs related to changing telephone number
- Legal fees

SPIRITUAL AND EXISTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES

- Loss of Faith, interruption in religious practice
- Feeling of existential emptiness: Life has no more meaning
- Change in certain basic values (forgiveness, sense of justice, generosity, respect, etc.)
- Loss in enjoyment of life
- Perception changes
 - before victimization: belief in a fair and good world
 - after victimization: difficulty in accepting that someone has intentionally hurt him or her



IF YOU ARE THE VICTIM OF A CRIMINAL ACT

- Consult a physician if you have sustained an injury or if you experience health problems resulting from a criminal act.
- You can file a complaint with the Public Security Service. A police officer will meet you and conduct an investigation to identify the person who has committed the crime.
- Talk to someone you trust (a parent, a friend, a CLSC case worker, a nurse, your physician, a minister or priest, etc.)
- Get information from an employee of the Crime Victims' Support Centre in your region. The CAVAC provides free and confidential services specifically designed for individuals who have been the victims of a criminal act. Do not hesitate to call the following telephone number: **373-0337**.

An offense perpetrated by an unknown individual ("outside crime") is usually reported to the police. A crime committed by a known individual ("inside crime"), however, is rarely declared to the police.



IF YOU WITNESS A CRIMINAL ACT

If you witness a criminal act, or have good reason to believe a crime is about to be committed, report it to the police. By doing so, you are preventing further crimes. You do not have to identify yourself.

When you witness a criminal act, try to give the police officer as much information as possible:

DESCRIBE

- the occurrence
- the place where the crime was perpetrated
- the people involved
- the individual who committed the offense
- the vehicle, if applicable

*Negligence
and abuse experienced
by seniors are hidden, and
even denied, but they
are still absolutely
wrong.*



NEGLIGENCE

This consists in refusing to take care of the senior, whether deliberately or involuntarily, through laziness or ignorance: abandoning the person, depriving him or her of food, care, companionship or assistance.



TYPES OF ABUSE

● PSYCHOLOGICAL OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE

This consists in injury to the person with respect to their sense of their own worth as a person. The abuse is inflicted through attitudes or behaviour. It is often related to repetitive verbal assault, infantilization, humiliation, isolation, deprivation of human warmth, restriction in social relationships and threats.

A few indicators of psychological or emotional abuse:

- Confusion
- Self-expression problems
- Lack of self-confidence
- Frequent headaches
- Insomnia
- Apathy, indifference
- Depressed condition
- Crying
- Nervousness
- Inability to make decisions

● PHYSICAL ABUSE

This consists in deliberately inflicted physical harm or injury. The abuse may take the form of physical assault, violent behaviour, sexual assault or depriving the person of things that are essential to physical well-being, such as: food, personal care and hygiene, or even medical care.

A few indicators of physical abuse:

- Head injuries
- Broken bones
- Internal lesions
- Difficulty in moving about
- Malnutrition
- Vaginal or rectal bleeding
- Dehydration
- Bad oral hygiene
- Bad body hygiene
- Dirty clothing
- Cuts
- Burns
- Bruises
- Finger marks
- Hidden wounds
- Absence of dental, visual or aural prostheses when these seem necessary

● SOCIAL OR COLLECTIVE ABUSE

This consists in maintaining social prejudices and behaviour patterns which have a tendency to decrease self-esteem and negate the senior's identity or dignity.

A few indicators of social or collective abuse:

- ageism (age discrimination)
- social indifference

● MATERIAL OR FINANCIAL ABUSE

This consists in using the senior's financial or material resources for purposes that are different from his or her needs or interests. This includes misappropriation of funds or property, breach of trust, exploitation, fraud and theft.

A few indicators of material or financial abuse:

- Unpaid bills
- Unofficial Power of Attorney
- New will in favor of a single person
- No management of financial and material assets
- Material dispossession (gifts of property, valuable items, etc.)
- Basic needs not met (glasses, dental prostheses, etc.)

● ABUSE OF THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM

This consists in acts intended to stop a person from exercising normal control over his or her life, such as forced medical treatment, physical restraint, non-respect of the senior's choices, interference with his or her personal achievements.

A few indicators of right to freedom abuse:

- Absence of decisional power
- No management of the senior's property
- Opposition to re-marriage
- Eviction from an apartment
- Unjustified withdrawal of a driver's license
- Control over the senior's outings or visitors
- Imposition of abusive use of medication



IF YOU ARE A VICTIM OF ABUSE

You can file a complaint with the police. If you do not want to be the one to denounce your abuser, confide in someone you trust. This can be a family member, a friend, a CLSC practitioner or case worker, a nurse, your physician, a minister or priest, or someone at the Crime Victims' Support Centre.



IF YOU THINK AN INDIVIDUAL IS A VICTIM OF ABUSE

- Give him or her a list of emergency telephone numbers (police, ambulance, CLSC, etc.)
- Establish a relationship based on trust.
- Listen to him or her and try to determine whether there really is abuse and, if there is, what type of abuse it is.
- Offer him or her your support, your encouragement and your company.
- Respect his or her needs and desires.
- Provide assistance in his or her actions.
- Inform him or her about the available resources by mentioning the names of the people to contact as well as their coordinates.

***BREAK
THE ISOLATION !***



THE CRIME VICTIMS' SUPPORT CENTRE (CAVAC)

The CAVAC Centre provides services intended to help the victims of criminal acts. Its general purpose is to guarantee that victims' rights are respected. To that end, the CAVAC is a special place where victims may contact someone and obtain the following services:

- A telephone consultation
- A warm reception, a listening ear and support
- Basic information about the judicial process, the rights of crime victims and their legal recourse
- Support and accompaniment of the victim in his or her dealings with private and public organizations
- Guidance toward the appropriate legal, medical, social and community resources

Services are free of charge and confidential



CAVAC



PREVENTIVE TIPS

GOING OUT

- Avoid isolated places, alleys or back streets.
- Adopt a self-assured attitude.
- Do not carry large amounts of money.
- Carry your hand bag under your arm, not over your shoulder.
- Put your wallet in your coat pocket.
- Ask someone to come with you when you go out at night.
- If you feel you are being followed, cross the street and go to the nearest house, store or service station.... and ask someone to call the police.
- Always make it seem like there is someone in your home-leave the radio or TV on.

AT HOME

- Keep the doors locked at all times.
- Make sure your doors, windows and locks are functional and safe.
- Install a peephole so you can see any visitor who comes to your door.
- If you have an intercom, do not unlock the door before you know whom you are letting in.
- Never give information about another person.
- Put up a sticker that shows there is an alarm system or a watchdog on the premises, even if this is not true.
- Do not hide a key outside your residence.

ON THE TELEPHONE

- Program emergency telephone numbers on your phone or have them within easy reach.
- If someone phones you, do not reveal anything confidential. Never give out personal information, such as your social insurance number, your medical insurance number, your credit card number, your name, your address, etc.
- Do not say you are living alone.
- If you receive an embarrassing phone call, hang up. You can then report it to your phone company.
- If you are being harassed, say that your line is under surveillance by your phone company.
- If you are threatened, hang up and call the police.

MONEY AND PROPERTY

- Be discreet about your projects, your property and your valuables.
- Make a last will and testament, and revise it every year.
- Find out about your financial situation and how it is being managed.
- Never sign a contract without first understanding it thoroughly.
- Have your cheques deposited directly into your bank account.
- Do not commit your money or assets without giving it careful consideration or discussing it with someone.
- Keep an inventory of all your property and valuables, and verify this on a regular basis.
- Avoid keeping large amounts of money at home.



TELEPHONE NUMBERS OF RESOURCES

AMBULANCE

- Mauricie Ambulance Co-operative 000-0000

POLICE

- Cap-de-la-Madeleine Public Security 379-3424
- Trois-Rivières Public Security 9-1-1
- Trois-Rivières-Ouest Public Security 9-1-1
- Sûreté du Québec 379-7311

COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

- Legal Aid 379-3766
- Du Rivage CLSC 694-1414
- Les Forges CLSC 379-7131
- Crime Victims' Support Centre 373-0337
- Human Rights Commission 1-800-463-5821
- Ombudsman 1-800-463-5070
- Metropolitan Trois-Rivières Volunteer Centre 378-6050
- Cap-de-la-Madeleine point of service 373-1261
- Quebec Association for the Rights of Retirees
(A.Q.D.R.) 374-7700
- Mauricie Regional Council for Senior Citizens ... 374-5774
- Senior Citizens' Assistance and Services
Centre (C.A.S.A.) 371-1982
- Assistance and Accompaniment Services for
Health Services and Social Services Users
(information and complaints) 379-3771

WOMEN

- Sexual Assault Assistance and Control Centre (C.A.L.A.C.S.) 373-1232
- Women's Health Centre 378-1661
- Maison Le Far 378-2990
- Maison de Connivence 379-1011
- S.O.S. Conjugal Violence 1-800-363-9010

For any other information, consult the green pages in your phone directory.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Crime Victims' Support Centre: **373-0337**
- Doctor: _____
- Ambulance: **376-1212 / 9-1-1**
- Hospital: _____
- CLSC: _____
- Court-house: **372-4150**
- Lawyer: _____
- Police: _____
- Suicide Prevention: **379-9238**
- Tel-Aide: _____
- Others: _____





REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

(Note du traducteur – *Les titres des ouvrages énumérés sur cette page n'ont pas été traduits car, s'ils existent en langue anglaise, ils possèdent déjà un titre officiel dont il faudrait se servir.*)

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A GUIDE FOR SENIOR CITIZENS



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