



# ELDER ABUSE is wrong



This is a Public Legal Education and Information project produced under the Family Violence Initiative of the Department of Justice Canada.

To obtain additional copies of this publication, please contact:

E-mail: [cca-dgve@justice.gc.ca](mailto:cca-dgve@justice.gc.ca)

Telephone: 1-888-373-2222 (toll-free)

Also available online at: [www.justice.gc.ca](http://www.justice.gc.ca)

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada,  
represented by the Minister of Justice and  
Attorney General of Canada, 2011

ISBN 978-1-100-17653-6

Catalogue No. J2-362/2011E-PDF

Aussi offert en français sous le titre :

***La maltraitance des aînés est inacceptable***

Cover artwork and illustrations by ***The Bytown Group***



### ***Heart and Teardrop***

*The “x” symbol placed between the heart and the teardrop connects them and shows the relationship between hope, love and help (the heart) and the pain and suffering of abuse (the teardrop). The “x” represents the scars of abuse, but also the efforts to eliminate violence and abuse.*

### **Permission to reproduce**

Information contained in this publication or product may be reproduced, in part or in whole, and by any means, for personal or public non-commercial purposes, without charge or further permission, unless otherwise specified.

You are asked to:

- Exercise due diligence in ensuring the accuracy of the materials reproduced;
- Indicate both the complete title of the materials reproduced, as well as the author organization; and
- Indicate that the reproduction is a copy of an official work that is published by the Government of Canada and that the reproduction has not been produced in affiliation with, or with the endorsement of the Government of Canada.

Commercial reproduction and distribution is prohibited except with written permission from the Government of Canada’s copyright administrator, Public Works and Government Services of Canada (PWGSC). For more information, please contact PWGSC at: 613-996-6886 or at: [droitdauteur.copyright@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca](mailto:droitdauteur.copyright@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca).

# Contents

About This Booklet

2

Elder Abuse Is Wrong

3

Elder Abuse: A Closer Look

6

Physical Abuse

8

Sexual Abuse

12

Emotional Abuse

14

Financial Abuse

17

Neglect

20

Institutional Abuse or Neglect

23

Help Is Available

26

How Do I Report Abuse?

30

Resources: Building a Reference List

32

Notes

36

Words Used in This Booklet

37



# About This Booklet

This booklet is for older adults who may be suffering from abuse by someone they trust—it could be a partner or spouse, a family member, a caregiver, a service provider or another individual. This kind of abuse of intimacy or trust is wrong. People who know an older adult whom they believe may be abused may also find this booklet helpful.

*Anyone—man or woman, adult or child—who is experiencing abuse or who is acting in a violent way is encouraged to get help. Someone will listen.*

## To the reader

If you—or anyone you know—is being abused, this booklet is a good place to start finding answers to your questions. It will also help you find more information about people or places you can contact for help.

Being abused by someone who is close to you is confusing. You may have trouble talking to other people about the abuse. You may feel afraid for yourself, for your children or grandchildren, or for the person who is abusing you.

Anyone—man or woman, adult or child—who is experiencing abuse or who is acting in a violent way is encouraged to get help. Someone will listen.

## Disclaimer

Please note that the information in this publication is not a substitute for legal advice. To receive legal advice about your specific situation, you need to speak to a lawyer.

# Elder Abuse Is Wrong



*“Mrs. Chow Breathes a Sigh of Relief”*

**M**rs. Chow doesn't want to deal with Alison's embarrassing questions. Usually, the young volunteer reads to Mrs. Chow in her apartment or helps her to walk to the shops nearby. But this morning, Alison wants to talk about the last time Mrs. Chow's granddaughter stopped by to visit. Alison noticed the teenager taking a \$20 bill from her grandmother's purse. "Oh, she always gives me money," Tricia had answered, when confronted. "It's no big deal."

"I don't want anyone to get into trouble," explains Mrs. Chow as she tries to walk away. She wants to stick by her family, even though she feels hurt. Her family would be angry if

Tricia's problems were made public. "But it's not fair to you!" says Alison, following her. "Now I know why you are short of cash so often at the store."

Alison stops and looks at Mrs. Chow carefully. "Would it help you to know that you don't have to do this alone? I'd be happy to come by sometime when the girl's mother is here. Maybe there's a way to solve this without everyone feeling too badly."

Mrs. Chow is surprised at the relief she feels to hear this. It all feels so complicated. But maybe this girl understands why this is so hard for her. Maybe she does have some choices after all. 🐶

# What is elder abuse?

**E**lder abuse is an action, deliberate behaviour or failure to act, by a person in a position of trust—like an adult child, family member, friend or caregiver—that causes or risks causing an older adult:

- Physical, sexual or emotional harm; or
- Damage to—or loss of—property or assets.

Elder abuse covers a whole range of behaviours, from hurtful comments to dominating or controlling another person's daily activities. At its most extreme, elder abuse can result in serious physical harm or endanger a person's life.

Abuse may be a pattern of behaviour or just a single incident. It might involve physical harm, social isolation or neglect. Sometimes, the absence of care can hurt just as much as physical abuse.

Some kinds of abuse are criminal offences. Other kinds of abuse, like repeated small insults, may not be crimes, but they can hurt anyway. They can also lead to criminal forms of abuse later on.

## **Ageism**

Stereotypes about old age and aging can be a factor in elder abuse. Some people assume that an older person's mental and physical abilities are limited without regard to the individual's real abilities. They may talk down to an older person or make decisions that affect them without their input. This is known as ageism.

The federal and provincial and territorial governments have adopted legislation (human rights acts or codes) prohibiting discrimination on various grounds, including age, in relation to employment, the provision of goods, services and facilities, and accommodation.

**E**veryone deserves protection from abuse. It can create real emotional, physical or financial harm—whether it's hurt feelings, broken limbs or serious financial loss. It can make you feel unsafe where you live and afraid of what might happen next.

Being on the receiving end of abuse can make you feel badly about yourself and cause you to lose your confidence and self-esteem. This can make it difficult to make good decisions and to function at work or in your daily activities.

Sometimes it takes a while for a person to realize they are being abused. They don't think it could happen to them. If it does, you're not alone—someone will listen.

### **Controlling Behaviour**

An abuser may be moody or angry. These moods and aggressive behaviours can increase over time. They may be using anger to control you.

Some people think they are to blame for the other person's angry behaviour—they don't see that they are being abused.

If a partner, family member or friend abuses you, **it is not your fault.**

*Elder abuse is an action, deliberate behaviour or failure to act, by a person in a position of trust—like an adult child, family member, friend or caregiver—that causes or risks causing an older adult:*

- *Physical, sexual or emotional harm; or*
- *Damage to—or loss of—property or assets.*

# Elder Abuse: A Closer Look




## *“The Way We Were”*

**H**arold gives Edna a little smile as he leaves her at the rehabilitation centre. He’s happy they will have some time apart. Edna seems like a different person since her stroke—all her patience has flown away. He tries to help her in whatever way he can, but she rarely has a good word for him. His cooking, his cleaning—nothing is ever good enough.

Harold wishes he didn’t resent Edna’s frustration. He knows that it’s hard for both of them to adjust. But it’s more complicated than that: he finds he is afraid of her too. He practically jumps out of his skin when she bangs her cane

on the table. The other day he suggested that she “lighten up” and she threw her coffee at him. He still has the burns. He’s worried her outbursts will get worse.

He’s tried talking to their daughter. “Oh come on, Dad,” she said. “Mom has always been so sweet.” But this isn’t the Edna they all used to know. Maybe if he talks to the nurse at the rehab centre about it. He and Edna have shared so many happy times together. He doesn’t want to remember their last years like this. 



**F**or older people, abuse can come in many forms: physical, sexual, emotional, financial, or neglect.

It's possible to experience more than one type of abuse at the same time, or at different times.

In Canada, some kinds of abuse—like fraud, assault, sexual assault, making threats and criminal harassment—are crimes under the *Criminal Code*. Some types of abuse are also offences under provincial and territorial laws.

The following section highlights some important points about each type of abuse. It also provides some suggestions about what you can do to stop the abuse and to improve the situation.

Often the first step is to talk to someone you trust. Abuse can be confusing and can hurt a lot. It's important to remember that you are not alone. There is help available.

### **A Cycle of Abuse**

Many people find that abuse often has a pattern. The tension builds for a while until the abusive person lashes out—either verbally or physically. After the “explosion,” there is a period of relative calm. Maybe the abusive person says they are sorry and promises it won't happen another time. Then the cycle begins again.

Others describe an increasing spiral of abuse—once it begins, it gets worse over time. Violent outbursts and other abusive behaviours grow more frequent and more severe.

*It's possible to experience more than one type of abuse at the same time, or at different times.*

# Physical Abuse



*“Like Father,  
Like Son?”*

Sam slams the door in a rage as he leaves his father’s house. This time he’s really fed up with Abe’s insults! His hands are shaking as he grips the steering wheel in the car. Abe’s been telling him he’s no good ever since he was a kid. Sam doesn’t know how many times Abe slapped him over the smallest of things—breaking a dish, losing a hammer, failing a test. Now, it seems everyone expects him to do Abe’s errands. Well, there’s no way he’s doing that! If they knew the real Abe, they’d see that the old guy is quite able to look after himself!

Today, though, Sam knows he really lost it. They’d started to argue again and Abe came after him swinging his arms for a fight. Sam couldn’t stop himself—he slammed the old man up against the kitchen cupboards. It’s not the first time this has happened; but this time, he just left Abe there on the floor, yelling that he’d broken his leg. What if Abe calls the police? In a way, it would be a relief. He needs to talk to someone: he can’t stand feeling the remorse and the anger at the same time. Sure, he feels guilty; but isn’t Abe also responsible? There must be someone who can understand why they get like this. &

## What does it look like?

**P**hysical abuse is the deliberate use of force against a person without that person's consent. It can cause physical pain, injury, or impairment. This includes:

- Pushing or shoving
- Hitting, slapping or kicking
- Pinching or punching
- Biting
- Burning
- Throwing an object at you
- Misusing physical restraints
- Confining you to one place or room.

All of these acts are crimes in Canada. Physical abuse includes the deliberate overmedication or undermedication of an older person.

## What can I do?

If you are being physically abused, you may need to leave the situation or your home. You can start by going to a safe place, like your neighbour's or a friend's place, a business or a shelter. Consider reporting the abuse to the police or call 9-1-1.

### **Stress and Abuse**

Family stress sometimes leads to elder abuse.

A spouse's health can deteriorate, leading to stress and change. Adult children juggling multiple family and work demands can become short-tempered. They can overlook their parents' changing physical and emotional needs.

The presence of depression, alcoholism or drug abuse can also lead to abusive behaviours or neglect. An existing family history of abuse can intensify as a parent or older family member becomes more dependent.

If you are in this situation—or know someone who is—talk to a social worker or someone you trust. Help is available for families going through hard times.

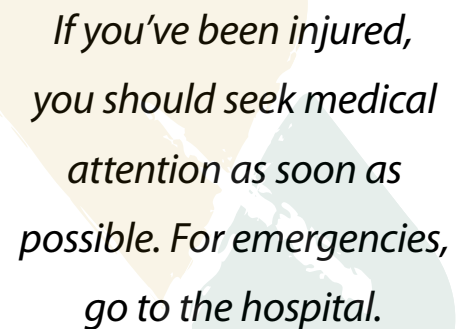
**I**f you've been injured, you should seek medical attention as soon as possible.

For emergencies, go to the hospital.

Some other things you can do are:

- Talk to someone you trust
- See a social worker or counsellor
- See your doctor or visit a medical clinic
- Call your local help or crisis line
- Speak to your doctor or pharmacist if you think you're getting the wrong amount of medication
- See the police to get a criminal order (or "peace bond") to keep the abuser away from you.

You may want to see a lawyer or victim service provider to get a civil protection order (restraining order or emergency protection order). These are legal tools that can help to have the abuser removed from the family home or kept away from you.



*If you've been injured, you should seek medical attention as soon as possible. For emergencies, go to the hospital.*

## If you are thinking of leaving

If you are being abused, it is important to think first about your safety. You also need to think of the safety of any children or other dependent relatives living with you.

You may fear that your family and friends will not support you if you leave. They may have fixed ideas of what's right for older adults. They may not like your decision. But even so, it still may be better for you and for those who depend on you to leave rather than to continue to be abused.



**In an  
emergency,  
call 9-1-1**

Or call your local police.

Try to leave the situation. If you can, attract attention by screaming.

**If there is violence ...**

**Be sure to protect  
yourself or anyone  
who depends on you.**

# Sexual Abuse



## *“Claire’s Nightmare”*

Claire hasn’t touched her dinner. It’s like this every night now. She hasn’t been happy since her nephew, Louis, came to live with her. The doctors insisted that she needed someone to look after her. It all seemed to make sense: Louis could help her with her errands and the house, and there would be somebody around overnight.

But Louis was so much more than she had bargained for! She dreads it when he calls her into the living room in the evenings. She doesn’t want to remember how he forced her to do it the first time, but now he expects her to touch him

in a sexual way while he reads dirty magazines. She feels sick with shame. But when she refused to do it, he hit her. Then he told her that if she made any trouble, he would push her down the stairs and leave her for dead. Everyone would think it was an accident.

Claire is getting really scared. It doesn’t seem like anyone comes to the house any more. She’s starting to think she should call the police. It’s hard to imagine calling so much attention to things, but it may not be safe to wait to talk to someone else! 🧡

## What does it look like?

**S**exual abuse involves any unwanted sexual touching or activity. This can include:

- Kissing, fondling or sexual intercourse without consent
- Continuing sexual contact when asked to stop
- Being forced to commit unsafe or degrading sexual acts.

Sexual assault is a crime in Canada. Even when you are married, it is a crime to force any sexual conduct on another person.

Other sexual offences include sexual exploitation of children and of persons with a disability.

## What can I do?

- Talk to someone you trust
- Call a sexual assault crisis line
- Consult a nurse, social worker or doctor
- Call the police
- In an emergency, call 9-1-1
- See the police to get a criminal order (or “peace bond”) to keep the abuser away from you.

If you are being sexually assaulted you may need to go to a safe place and seek help. Consider reporting the assault to the police and going to the hospital.



# Emotional Abuse



## *“A Stranger in Her Own Home”*

**E**sha says nothing, as her daughter starts yelling at her. She wonders why Anila treats her this way so often. What happened to her daughter’s love and sense of respect? Esha’s back begins to ache; she has the breakfast clutter and the entire house to clean. And now her daughter, Anila, wants her to cook dinner for the children tonight. She longs to say no: she can already see them scowling at the traditional dishes she likes to make.

She was very happy at first to come to Canada. But now she wishes there was still a place for her back home. Her son-

in-law, Chanda, is impatient with her country ways. And her daughter blows back and forth like the wind; sometimes her comments are just as cruel.

Esha rarely goes out; she feels unsure of her English. She’d like to go to the Indo-Canadian centre again, but she knows Anila doesn’t want to take her. She feels stronger chatting with women her own age. They tell her that her children ask too much from her. Her daughter says they should mind their own business. Esha thinks she will ask her friend Sakina to come with her to talk to the social worker at the centre if she goes. &



## What does it look like?

**E**motional (or psychological) abuse involves using words or actions to control, frighten, isolate or erode a person's self-respect. Emotional abuse can include:

- Putting you down or humiliating you
- Ignoring you or your health needs
- Yelling at you constantly
- Making threats to harm you or others
- Intruding on your privacy
- Making fun of your language, traditions, religious or spiritual beliefs, or preventing you from practicing your religion
- Keeping you from seeing your family, friends or community
- Making threats to move you out of your home
- Deciding what you can or can't do.

Emotional abuse is serious—inside wounds can take a long time to heal.

Some forms of emotional abuse are crimes. Stalking, verbal threats, harassing telephone calls, deliberate intimidation and counselling (advising) suicide are all criminal acts in Canada.

Many other forms of emotional abuse are **not** crimes. Still, they can hurt a lot and may lead to criminal acts later on.

### **Criminal Harassment**

Criminal harassment is a crime. It involves repeated conduct that causes another person to fear for their safety or that of a loved one. You may be afraid because someone:

- Watches you or tracks where you go
- Leaves threatening messages
- Makes threats to you, your children, family, pets or friends
- Calls you over and over again, and perhaps hangs up when you answer
- Sends you letters or e-mail messages constantly
- Sends gifts you do not want

## What can I do?

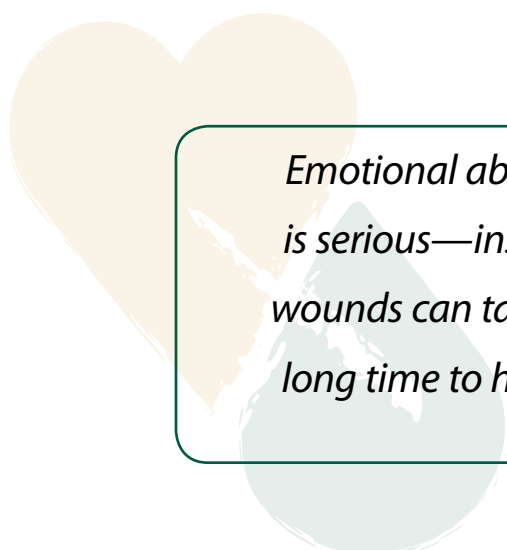
- Tell someone you trust
- Try not to let the abuse silence you
- Write down what is happening to you. Keep your notes in a safe place.
- Change locations, if you can
- If you are afraid, call the police.

You do not have to face this alone. Talk to a social worker, a counsellor or someone you trust. They can help you understand more about emotional abuse.

Abusers can't always change, but sometimes there are ways to restore and improve intimate and family relationships. Help is available.

### **Elder mediation**

Elder mediation can be a tool to promote family discussions that might resolve disputes and reduce conflict over issues involving older adults, such as caregiver stress, financial, medical or residential care decisions. By improving communication, you and your family can learn how to take better care of yourself and each other.



*Emotional abuse  
is serious—inside  
wounds can take a  
long time to heal.*

# Financial Abuse



## *“Jim’s Dilemma”*

Jim sits in the sun outside the residence. His heart is still racing—he hadn’t meant to tell his story to that young girl. It had just all poured out: how it looks like lending his car to Roger was a mistake, and how he’d thought the car would make it easier for the whole family to visit while he’d been in the hospital.

Now Jim wishes his son-in-law would bring the car back, even though he knows he’ll never drive it again. The car is still registered in his name. What if Roger has an accident? If only Roger would just offer to buy it from him! That would be the proper thing

to do. Roger knows Jim could really use the money to buy furniture for his new seniors’ apartment. Everything has to fit in one room now.

Jim is afraid to rock the boat. He just can’t find a way to confront Roger. What if Roger takes his anger out on Jim’s daughter? He knows that has happened before. Would Jim’s family still come to visit him if Roger got angry? Would he keep them away? Maybe it’s time to check out that computer in the lounge room to see if there might be something on the Internet that could help, even if it’s just what to do about the car insurance. ♡

## What does it look like?

**F**inancial (or economic) abuse involves acting without consent in a way that financially benefits one person at the expense of another. This may include:

- Stealing from you
- Keeping you from making your own financial decisions
- Withholding money for things you need (food, housing or medical treatment)
- Pressuring you to share your home or your car, or baby-sit your grandchildren when you don't want to
- Making frequent requests for money
- Failing to repay loans
- Taking your money or cashing your cheques without your permission
- Pressuring you to sign over your house or property or to sign legal documents that you don't understand
- Overcharging you for services.

Most forms of financial abuse are crimes, including theft, criminal breach of trust, forgery and fraud. It is also a crime to misuse a Power of Attorney.

Financial abuse can also include marriages where a person deliberately pressures an older person of limited capacity into marriage solely for financial profit.



## What can I do?

- Tell someone you trust
- Ask for help if you think you are experiencing financial abuse
- Have cheques deposited directly into your own bank account
- Consult a lawyer about legal options available to manage and protect your property
- Ask a lawyer what choices you have to keep your property or money safe
- Ask someone you trust to look over contracts and other papers before you sign them
- Change your Power of Attorney to someone you can trust
- Contact the police, if you think a crime has been committed.




# Neglect



## *“Neighbourhood Watch”*

Laurie is sure something is wrong with her neighbour Ellie. She hasn't seen any lights on in the house for several days now. So here she is, with her husband, Frank, trying to force the window on Ellie's back porch. She's tried phoning, but there's been no answer.

She walks through the house, calling Ellie's name. Her eyes turn away from the dirty dishes, rotting food and dirty toilet. The house smells bad. How has it come to this? She knows the doctor has told Ellie's daughter several times that she needs to arrange care for Ellie,

but it's clear his words were ignored. Her family refuses to see that Ellie's memory is failing. Laurie has helped out as she can and has even called Ellie's daughter herself. Now here is Ellie, passed out on the floor—cold, barely breathing, and motionless. Laurie's heart breaks as she calls for the ambulance. She thinks: no more excuses this time! She'll be speaking to the medical team at the hospital and reporting the lack of care. Ellie doesn't have to deal with this alone. 

## What does it look like?

**N**eglect is the failure to provide adequately for a dependent adult. These oversights or deliberate acts can involve:

- Not giving you proper food or clean clothing
- Not providing you with a safe, warm, clean place to live
- Failing to provide adequate health care, medication and personal hygiene
- Failing to provide aids for daily living, like hearing aids, walkers, canes, wheelchairs, grab bars
- Failing to prevent physical harm
- Failing to ensure you have proper supervision (if needed).

It may also include leaving older adults who are injured or unwell alone for too long or abandoning them.

Some forms of neglect are crimes in Canada, including failure to provide the necessities of life and criminal negligence causing bodily harm or death.

### **Why now?**

As an older adult, you may be at risk of abuse (including neglect) because of where you live (alone, with family, or in an institution) or because you depend on other people for basic help with daily living or financial support.

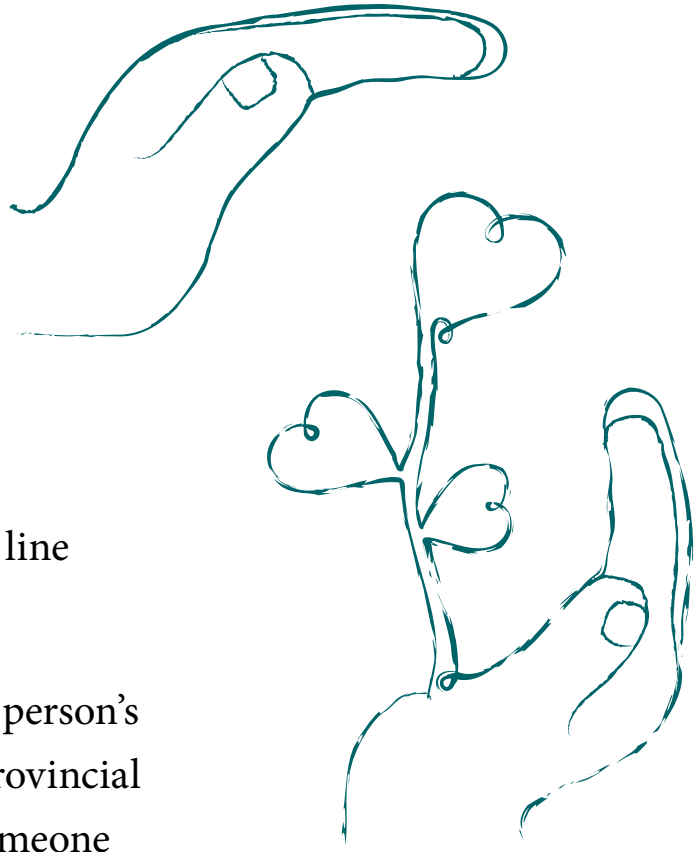
You may receive help with intimate care—like feeding, dressing or bathing. You may depend on someone to give you your medication. These are situations where abuse can take place.

## What can I do?

If you are being neglected—or suspect someone you know is not getting the care they need—you can:

- Talk with someone you trust
- Talk to other family members
- Consult a public health nurse or social worker
- Speak with your doctor
- Call your local help line or seniors line
- In an emergency, call 9-1-1.

If you are concerned about an older person's ability to live on their own, contact provincial or territorial government services. Someone there can direct you to the Public Trustee, the Public Guardian or a similar agency.





# Institutional Abuse or Neglect



*“Who’s Caring  
for Dad?”*

Réjean tenses all over as he enters the Assisted Unit where his father lives now. His sister, Denise, had called him yesterday to say something was wrong: “Dad just seems so sleepy all the time. It can’t be right. They must have him sedated most of the time.”

Frail and sleeping, his father barely stirs when Réjean touches his shoulder. He’s found him, sitting in his wheelchair, by the window in the sun. “They barely bother to walk him around,” Denise had complained. Réjean

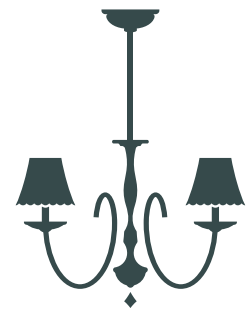
gently lifts his father’s sweater, only to flinch when he sees the raw and infected skin from where the safety belt holds him tight in his wheelchair. His head begins to pound. He knows he will have to push hard to correct this, but he has to try. He’ll start by speaking to the Director of Care, but he’s pretty sure that he’ll be told they have no choice. Maybe a call to that new seniors’ hotline would be a good place to get some ideas on how to change this. 📞

## What does it look like?

**E**lder abuse may take place in the home, the community or in an institution.

Older adults living in institutional care facilities may experience abuse that is a single incident of poor professional practice or part of a larger pattern of ill treatment. This may include:

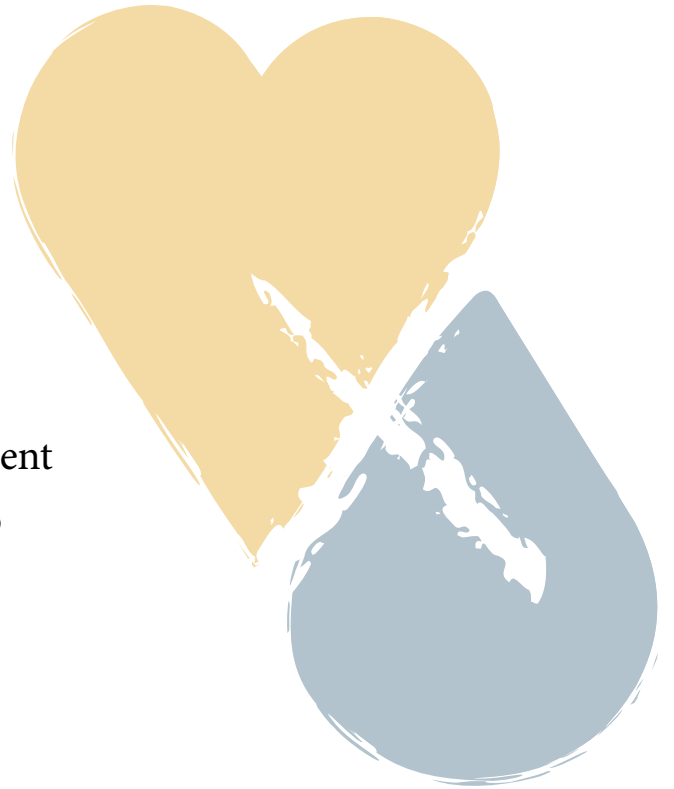
- Inadequate care and nutrition
- Low standards of nursing care
- Inappropriate or aggressive staff-client interactions
- Overcrowding
- Substandard or unsanitary living conditions
- Misuse of physical restraints or medications
- Ineffective policies to meet residents' needs
- Low levels of supervision.



## What can I do?

- Talk with someone you trust
- Call a seniors help line
- Speak to your doctor or pharmacist
- Consult a nurse or home care worker
- Contact provincial or territorial government services. Someone there can direct you to the agency responsible for care facilities
- Call the police
- In an emergency, call 9-1-1.

There are laws and regulations that set out standards and regulate many residential institutions. Check with your community legal clinic or health and social service agency for advice or assistance.



# Help Is Available

## You are not alone— Talk to someone

If you—or someone you know—are being abused, talk to someone you trust. And keep talking until somebody listens. Help is available.

There are people who can help you figure out what to do. Abuse usually only gets worse when it stays hidden.

*When you ask officials like the police, a social worker or a lawyer for information, you can ask them to keep your concerns confidential.*

## Where can you get more information?

There are lots of people with training to help you. You can contact your local:

- Police
- Crown Attorney's office
- Hospital
- Seniors' centre or Royal Canadian Legion
- Multicultural association
- Community centre
- Women's centre
- Telephone crisis line
- Telephone help line or seniors line
- Public legal education and information association
- Shelter
- Legal referral service
- Lawyer
- Legal aid office
- Doctor or public health nurse
- Social worker
- Religious counsellor.

*If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call **9-1-1** or your local police.*



## Feeling torn

One of the hardest parts of being abused is the feeling of conflict you may have inside yourself. You may feel torn between the desire to protect yourself and your love for the person who is now mistreating you.

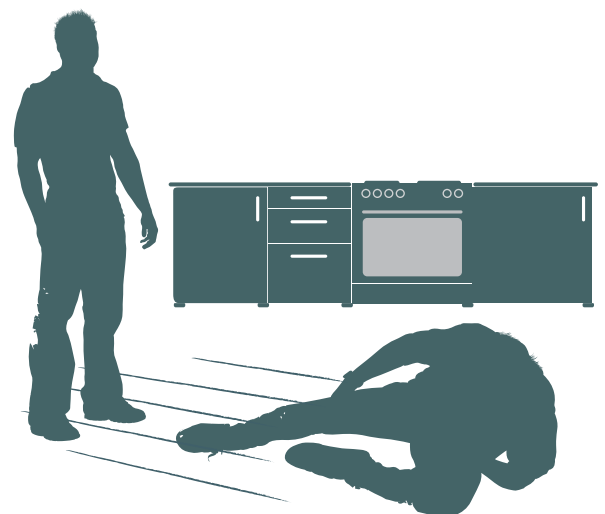
Remember, you can love a person and not like the way they are behaving. The situation is not your fault.

A person may have changed their behaviour due to stress or an illness. Or their conduct may be part of an ongoing pattern. Nobody—not your spouse, your son, your granddaughter, or your caregiver—has the right to treat you badly.

You may feel afraid of what will happen if your family or living situation changes. Dealing with health issues, physical pain or financial stresses can make you feel vulnerable and less able to cope with the world on your own.

Talking to someone you trust—or who is trained to help—can make a difference. By getting help, you may be able to restore the relationship and stop the abuse. Other times, an abuser can't change. In that case, you may need to leave the situation or report the abuse.

**Remember,**  
*you can love a person  
and not like the way  
they are behaving. The  
situation is not your fault.*



## If you are a newcomer to Canada



Some newcomers worry that they will be forced to leave Canada if they report an abusive situation. If you feel this way, remember that you have choices. You do not have to accept being in an abusive situation. Help is available.

If you are a citizen or a permanent resident (landed immigrant), you cannot be removed from Canada for leaving an abusive

situation, even if the person abusing you is your sponsor.

If you are a temporary resident in Canada—for example, here as a visitor, worker or refugee claimant or as the spouse of someone with temporary status—you should contact Citizenship and Immigration Canada at [1-888-242-2100](tel:1-888-242-2100) / [1-800-576-8502](tel:1-800-576-8502) TTY. Your status in Canada may be tied to the status of your spouse or sponsor, but remember that you still have a right to privacy when dealing with officials.

If you have temporary status in Canada or are without legal status, you may be able to apply to become a permanent resident. This does not always mean you will be able to stay, but you should contact a lawyer who is specialized in immigration matters or go to an immigrant-serving organization for advice and information about your choices.

# How Do I Report Abuse?

All of us have a role to play in stopping elder abuse. We need to be alert to the signs and signals of abuse. Friends, family and professionals all need to do their part.

## Going to the police

Call the police if a family member or caregiver physically or sexually assaults you, threatens to assault you, or commits a financial crime against you. The police will come to help. Many police officers are trained to deal with abuse in families or relationship situations. Some have special training to deal with elder abuse.

They can take you to a hospital if you need treatment. Or they can help you leave the situation safely.

### Signs and Signals of Abuse

Do you suspect someone you know is being abused?

Watch for:

- Signs of bruises, cuts, burns, sprains or broken bones
- Frequent “accidents”
- Quiet or withdrawn behaviour
- Avoidance of social situations
- Short of cash or difficulty in paying for things

These situations can have other causes, but they may be signs that someone is experiencing abuse.

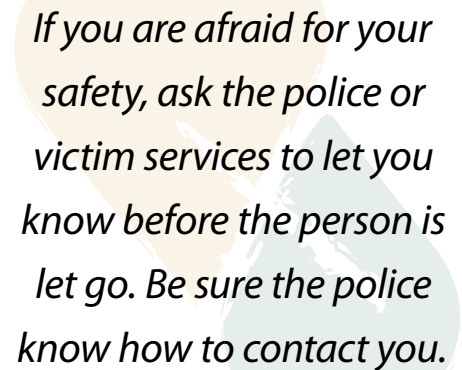


**T**he police may arrest the person who abused you if they believe that person has broken the law. If this happens, your abuser might stay in jail for a few hours before a bail hearing. It's possible that they might stay longer, if the judge decides that would be better.

For more information on what a crime victim needs to know about the criminal justice system, see the publications of the Policy Centre for Victim Issues at:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/policing/victims.html>

If you are afraid for your safety, ask the police or victim services to let you know before the person is let go. Be sure the police know how to contact you.



*If you are afraid for your safety, ask the police or victim services to let you know before the person is let go. Be sure the police know how to contact you.*

# Resources: Building a Reference List

It is a good idea to create—in advance—your own list of community or other resources that can help you. Look in the telephone book for contact numbers. The following is a list of services or organizations that might be able to help you with information, support or emergency assistance.

*Keep these numbers up-to-date as they may change from time to time.*

Keep these numbers up-to-date as they may change from time to time.

**Police (local)** • Can help you assess your safety and take action against someone committing a crime in non-emergency situations. Check the first few pages of your telephone book for the phone number.

**Call 9-1-1 in an emergency**

**Crisis lines** • May be able to help with crisis or emergency intervention and refer you to the appropriate services. These lines are often open beyond regular business hours.

**Shelters/Transition homes** • Can provide temporary shelter, information and referrals for women or men who experience spousal or family violence.



**Victim services** · Can refer you to counselling and tell you about programs and services for victims of crime. See the “Victim Service Directory” of the Policy Centre for Victim Issues to help locate services for victims of crime across Canada, at: <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/victims-victimnes/vsd-rsv/index.html>

**Seniors’ help lines** · May be able to provide information and refer you to the appropriate services for seniors.

**Medical services** · Your local hospital, doctor, nurse, health clinic, or medical help line may be able to assist you with medical or health concerns.

**Public health and social services** · Call your provincial or territorial government for information about health and social support services in your community or ask your local community centre for advice. They may be able to offer information, counselling and provide referrals to social workers.

**Legal or mediation services** · Legal or mediation help may be available from a lawyer or a legal aid office. Contact a lawyer or mediation referral service, a legal aid office, or a public legal education and information association to find out where you can get legal help and if you can get help free of charge.

**Public legal education and information associations** · Can provide general information about the law, the legal system and your rights as a person experiencing abuse. See more information on family violence and elder abuse on the Department of Justice Canada's Family Violence Initiative Website:

<http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/fv-vf/index.html>

**Financial services** · Consult a financial professional or someone at your financial institution. Other organizations like the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada, the Ombudsman for Banking Services and Investments, PhoneBusters, provincial and territorial organizations, or the Better Business Bureau may provide assistance and information on how to make a complaint if you feel you have been a victim of financial crime.

**Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre:**

<http://www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca>

**Wage Theft Unit**. May be able to assist older Indigenous services. For information on resources and government programs and services see Indigenous Services Portal at:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada.html>

**Multicultural and immigrant serving organizations** • May be able to provide information and refer you to helpful services. See also the Citizenship and Immigration Canada TTY Directory of Newcomer Services at:

<http://www.servicesfornewcomers.cic.gc.ca>

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada** • Can answer questions on immigration status and process, and provide information on the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*.

**1-888-242-2100 / 1-888-576-8502 TTY**

**Seniors Canada** • Provides links to information and services relating to elder abuse in Canada at:

<http://www.seniors.gc.ca>

**Public Health Agency of Canada** • Provides links to information materials and resources about abuse of older adults through the Stop Family Violence Website at:

<https://www.canada.gc.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/stop-family-violence.html>

**Other** • Look for other sources of help! You may find help from a local women's centre, a community care centre, your doctor's office, public health nurse, religious leader or a social agency.

**People I trust** • May be able to offer emotional and practical support—family, friends, doctor, religious leaders and so on.

# Notes


# Words Used in This booklet

**Disclaimer:** Although these explanations can help you understand, they are not complete legal definitions. If you need more complex, accurate definitions, please consult a lawyer.

**Assault** • It is a crime when someone uses force, either directly or indirectly, or the threat of force on someone else without that person's consent. Consent that is forced, given out of fear or out of deception is not true consent.

**Bail hearing** • This is a court proceeding that takes place after a person has been arrested and charged. The judge decides whether that person should be released with conditions, such as being told they must not contact you, or they might be held in jail until the charges are dealt with by the court. Bail is also called “judicial interim release”.

**Capacity** • In a legal context, capacity refers to your ability to understand the information you need to make a decision and being able to appreciate the consequences of making a decision. Legal capacity does not refer to your physical ability to do things yourself.

**Civil protection orders (restraining orders and emergency protection orders)** • Civil protection orders include general orders of the superior court or specific legislative orders to keep one person from contacting another or to limit contact between people.

Emergency protection orders or emergency intervention orders are civil protection orders that are available in most provinces and territories under specific family violence legislation. They can grant the victim temporary exclusive occupation of the home; remove the abuser from the home; set limits on contact and communication with the victim and other remedies.

**Community legal clinic** • These organizations provide representation, public legal education, law reform and community development services to low-income individuals and groups within a defined geographical area.

**Criminal breach of trust** • It is a crime for a person, who is acting as a trustee of property for the use or benefit of another person, to convert the property with intent to defraud the beneficiary of the trust.

**Criminal Code** • The *Criminal Code* sets out criminal offences (crimes). The *Code* applies across Canada.

**Criminal harassment** • If you are scared because someone is following you or contacting you against your wishes, or watching you or behaving in a threatening manner toward you or someone close to you, that person may be committing an offence known as criminal harassment. This is sometimes called stalking.

**Crown Attorney** • A Crown Attorney (also known as Crown Counsel or Crown Prosecutor) is a lawyer who represents the government (the Crown, in her capacity as the head of state) as a prosecutor in proceedings under the *Criminal Code*.

**Elder mediation** • Elder mediation is a tool and cooperative process in which a professionally trained elder mediator helps facilitate discussions involving older adults on issues such as caregiver stress, financial, medical or residential care decisions.

**Forgery** • It is a crime for a person to create a false document or alter a genuine document with the intent that it should be used or acted on as genuine to the prejudice of another person.



**Fraud** • It is a crime for a person to use lies or deceit to manipulate another person to give them something of value, such as money, property, valuable security or services.

**Help line** • A help line is a free telephone service you can call for information and advice. You don't have to tell anyone your name or phone number when you call. Someone will answer the phone and will listen to you. They will try to answer your questions. They can also refer you to places that can help you. Different kinds of help lines are listed in the phone book and are sometimes advertised on buses, clinics and other places.

**Legal aid office** • These offices provide legal representation and public legal education and information services to low-income individuals and groups.

**Peace bond** • If you are afraid for your safety, you may be able to get a peace bond (also known as a recognizance or a non-contact order). This is a criminal order that sets conditions on the person who behaved abusively. For example, that person may be forbidden to see you, write to you, or telephone you. If the person who behaved abusively disobeys the order, the police may arrest them. If you want to know more about peace bonds, you can ask a lawyer.

**Power of Attorney** • A legal document which gives a specifically appointed person the right to make binding decisions for another person, as an agent for that person. There are different kinds of power of attorney. Persons holding a power of attorney have legal obligations respecting how the authority can be used.

**Public Guardian or Trustee** • This office in every province or territory can be contacted for information and tools safeguard the legal, personal and financial interests of individuals and estates.

**Sexual assault (sexual offences)** • It is a crime to engage any unwanted sexual activity or touching with another person without their consent. Sexual assault can range from fondling to forced sexual intercourse. Consent that is forced, given out of fear or out of deception is not true consent. Other sexual offences include sexual exploitation of children and of persons with a disability.

**Sexual harassment** • Any unwanted or unwelcome sexual conduct, comment, gesture or contact that is likely to cause offence or humiliation.

**Shelter / transition home** • This is a safe place for you and your dependents to stay for free while you make other living arrangements. The addresses of shelters and the names of people who stay at shelters are not given out. There are people who work at shelters who can help with advice and basic needs. Phone numbers for shelters are found in the first few pages of the telephone book. The police and community centres also have phone numbers of shelters.

**Theft** • It is a crime for a person to illegally take another person's property without that person's consent.

**Victim services** • Offer services and programs for victims of crime. They can provide support and resources, and respond to any safety concerns you may have in the aftermath of a crime, including information about the court system.

