

Elder Abuse



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Aref Alshaikhahmed

Why did I develop this presentation?

1. I personally saw some of them suffer.
2. Elder abuse is a serious and growing problem, although the magnitude and extent of the elder abuse cases occurring in Canada is not well known, due to limited data collected and unreported cases*.

3. The number of seniors in Canada is increasing.

- ❑ According to Statistics Canada 2017, eight million or 25% of the population will be over the age of 65 by 2031.
- ❑ According to Hamilton 2016 Census Data the total population is 745,545 with 31% age 55+.

Another Example

Laura Tamblyn Watts, chief executive officer of CanAge, a national seniors' advocacy organization says:

"It is a catastrophe of elder abuse right now,"

"It is a crisis state."

Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario (EAPO), an organization dedicated to raising awareness about the issue, has not seen significant funding increases in more than a decade.

Findings from the survey

“Although public and professional information campaigns to raise awareness about elder abuse are reported in many countries, elder abuse is one of the least investigated types of violence in national surveys, and one of the least addressed in national action plans.”

What is Elder Abuse?

Elder Abuse is defined 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.”

Elder Abuse also means

- ❑ “The deliberate mistreatment of an adult that causes physical, mental or emotional harm,” or
- ❑ “Financial damage or loss to the adult, and includes intimidation, humiliation, physical assault, sexual assault, overmedication, withholding needed medication, censoring mail, invasion or denial of privacy, denial of access to visitors, or denial of use or possession of personal property.”

Elder Abuse Includes

1. Physical,
2. Sexual,
3. Psychological, Spiritual, Emotional,
4. Financial and material abuse,
5. Neglect
6. Abandonment or Confinement.
7. Chemical, and
8. Serious loss of dignity and respect

However

The Long-Term Care Homes Act (S. 2(1)) identifies five types of abuse in relation to a person admitted to and living in a long-term care home:

1. physical,
2. sexual,
3. emotional,
4. verbal or
5. financial abuse.

Neglect

“Neglect includes situations where a person or organization fails to provide services or necessary care for an older adult.”

Signs of Elder Abuse

- ❑ Serious physical injuries,
- ❑ Poor hygiene, bedsores,
- ❑ Anxiety, depression, fear, isolation and confinement
- ❑ Malnutrition or dehydration
- ❑ Weight loss or misuse of medication
- ❑ Lack of food or other necessities.
- ❑ Confusion about new legal documents, such as a new will.
- ❑ Sudden drop in cash flow or financial holdings.
- ❑ Reluctance to speak about the situation.

Even Though

Elder abuse is considered as a human rights violation under Ontario's Human Rights Code of 1962, potential insecurity is still there.

“When older people are the most vulnerable, they become a lot more dependent very quickly on family members, friends, neighbors etc. and you can start imagining how that really opens them up to becoming easy targets or easy prey,”

“Said Samir Sinha, director of geriatrics at Mount Sinai and the University Health Network hospitals in Toronto.”

Why so few older adults report Elder Abuse?

Many older adults

- "May not understand the protection of Human Rights."
- "May not recognize the signs, that Elder Abuse is occurring."
- "May fear a worse situation by disclosing the abuse."
- May be unaware of the options available to them."

Other reasons for the underreported Elder Abuse or Neglect

Many older adults may

- Have some cognitive or physical limitations.
- Have literacy or language problems.
- Feel dependent on the abuser as a caregiver, friend or family member and fear retaliation.
- Don't know where to turn to for help especially when dependence is coupled with isolation.

Who Commits Abuse

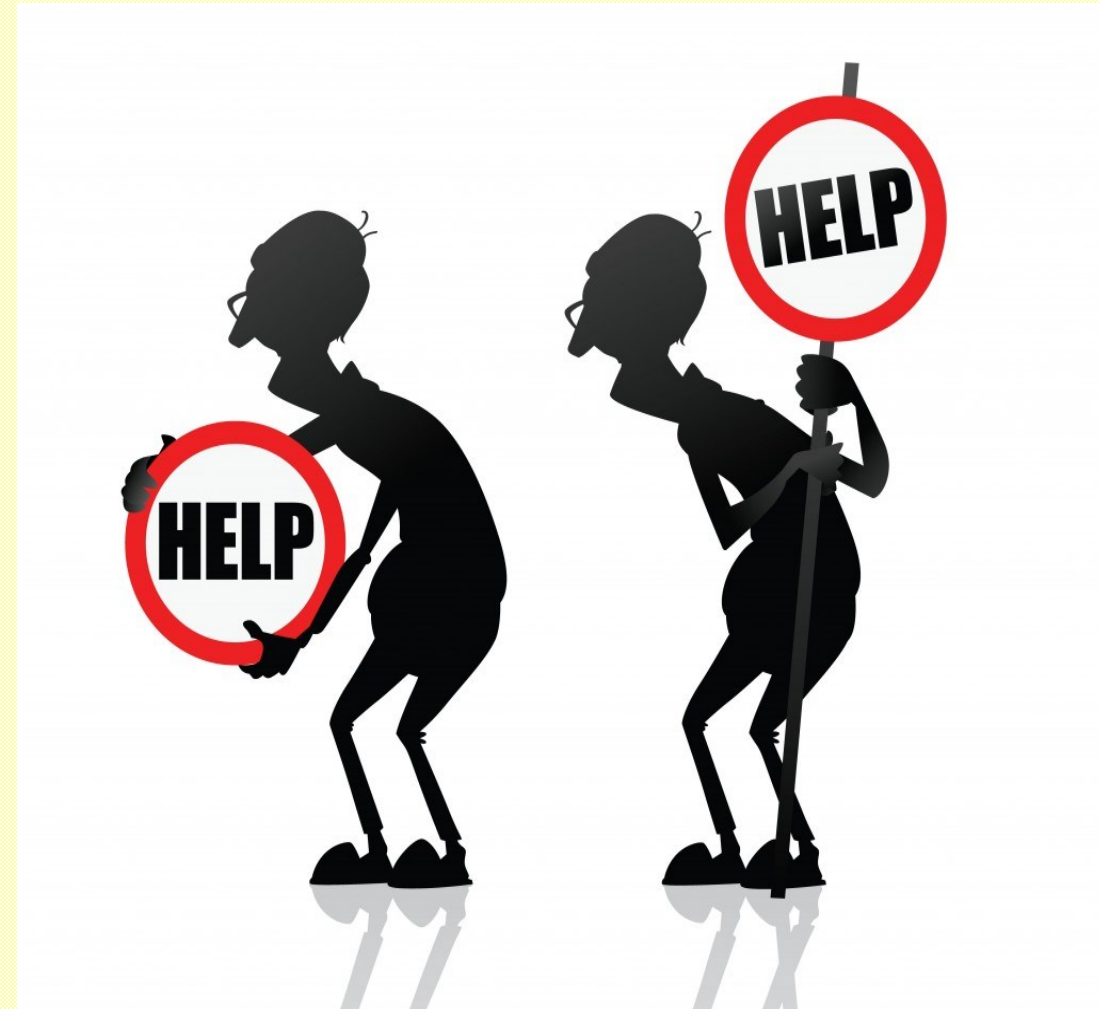
- ❑ Most often the abuser is a loved one or a person the older adult trusts.
- ❑ It occurs at home and in care facilities.
- ❑ It could happen anywhere.
- ❑ It could be one incident or an ongoing action.

Be Aware that

The most important step towards preventing elder abuse is to recognize that no one should be subjected to abusive, neglectful, humiliating and violent behaviour – no matter the age.

Expectations

When you put your loved person in a nursing home, you expect that they're going to get the right care. And when they don't, it's time to get justice.



Long-Term Care Homes Act (s. 1)

The fundamental principle of this act is that:

“A long-term care home is primarily the home of its residents and is to be operated so that it is a place where they may live with dignity and in security, safety and comfort and have their physical, psychological, social, spiritual and cultural needs adequately met.”

Laws and Legislations Protecting Older Adults

- **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.](#)

Long Term Care ACTION Line

If you suspect or have evidence that elder abuse is taking place in the Long-Term Care Home, it is mandatory to report it with the exception of residents themselves (who have a choice in the matter). The Long-Term Care Homes Act (s.24) states if a person who has reasonable grounds to suspect abuse has occurred or may occur shall immediately report the suspicion and the information to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Director.

Is elder abuse and neglect a crime?

Sometimes, elder abuse and neglect can result in criminal acts.

“The Criminal Code¹ applies to all adults, regardless of the age of the victim. However, “There is no specific crime of elder abuse”.”

People who commit crimes that involved elder abuse are charged with crimes such as:

- ❑ Physical assault (s. 265)
- ❑ Sexual assault (s. 271) •
- ❑ Uttering threats (s. 264.1.)
- ❑ Unlawful confinement (s. 279)
- ❑ Failing to provide the necessaries of life (s. 215)
- ❑ Theft (s. 334) • fraud (s. 380)

What can the police do?

Concerns about suspected or actual abuse should be reported to the police for investigation. A person reporting abuse may remain anonymous, however, it is often useful for the police to have a contact number in case they require some clarifying information.

What can the police do?

Police can lay Criminal Code charges if they have reasonable grounds to believe a crime has been committed. Additional support can be provided by the Victim Crisis Assistance and Referral Services (VCARS) and/ or the Victim/Witness Assistance Program (VWAP).

Many police departments have officers who specialize in seniors' issues, sometimes referred to as Seniors Support Officers (SSO) who are well informed about abuse.

Preventive approaches

Strategies to prevent elder abuse include efforts to raise professional awareness and train practitioners; inform the public about how to identify the signs and symptoms of elder abuse and where help can be obtained and improving policies and practices in residential care facilities for elderly people. This is really a critical gap to fill.

Strategic Action

Ontario is the first province in Canada to introduce a strategy to combat elder abuse. The strategy's three key priorities are:

1. Coordinating community resources.
2. Training for service providers.
3. Raising awareness through public education

The Ministry of Seniors Affairs is leading the implementation of Ontario's Strategy to Combat Elder Abuse in partnership with [Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario](#), a not-for-profit charitable organization dedicated to the prevention of elder abuse and neglect.

June 15 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. What the relevant Agencies are going to do?

Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario has [resources](#) to help in planning events to raise awareness in our communities.



Elder Abuse Prevention (ON)

Stop Abuse - Restore Respect

Prévention de la maltraitance envers les aînés (ON)

Arrêtez les mauvais traitements - Restaurez le respect

Whom you can call

Hamilton Police Services: Senior Support

Central SSO: [905-540-5351](tel:905-540-5351)

East-End SSO: [905-546-2945](tel:905-546-2945)

Mountain SSO: [905-546-891](tel:905-546-891)

[Hamilton Police SSO website](#)

[Senior Safety Line Website](#)

Catholic Family Services of
Hamilton

Call: [905-527-3823](tel:905-527-3823)

Senior Safety Line

Call: [1-866-299-1011](tel:1-866-299-1011)

[Senior Safety Line Website](#)

[Seniors Crime Stoppers Website](#)

Call: [1-800-222-8477](tel:1-800-222-8477)

Emergency Services

Call: [911](tel:911)