



Orientation to Ontario

ELDER ABUSE

Older people must often depend on family members and caregivers. Elder abuse happens when an older person is mistreated or neglected by someone close to him or her. Family members or people outside of the family can abuse older people. Elder abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual or financial and also covers neglect.

Physical Abuse can include any act that causes harm or distress:

- slapping, hitting, pushing, shaking, shoving or restraining
- unnecessary physical restraints
- withholding medication or giving someone too much medication
- withholding food or not providing the right kind of food
- force feeding or force medicating

Emotional or psychological abuse includes many types of behaviours:

- using threats or fear to manipulate someone
- keeping someone from seeing their friends or family members
- not allowing someone to make decisions or treating them like a child
- threatening someone with eviction or moving them to a nursing home
- manipulating someone who is experiencing memory loss or dementia.

Sexual abuse is also a type of elder abuse. Sexual abuse includes any type of unwanted sexual advance or behaviour. Older people in nursing homes cannot legally consent to sexual activity with the workers in that nursing home.

Financial Abuse

Financial abuse is one of the most common types of elder abuse and can include many different acts or behaviours:

- not allowing an older person to control their own funds
- manipulating an older person so that they give you money
- selling an older person's belongings without permission
- withholding or misusing funds that you manage for an older person
- forcing someone to change their will with threats or intimidation
- forging documents in someone's name

Neglect is a common form of elder abuse and involves acts of physical and emotional abuse. When caregivers do not meet the physical, medical or emotional needs of older people, they are committing elder abuse.

Since older people depend on their family and caregivers, they are often afraid to report abuse.

SEEKING HELP

Victims of elder abuse can call the Senior Safety Line for help – 1-866-299-1011. If you suspect elder abuse, you can report it to the police. The police will investigate and offer help to the victim. However, because victims of elder abuse are adults, they can refuse that help. Reporting elder abuse is NOT required by law, unless the victim lives in a nursing home or other health care facility.

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