

Statistics

It is estimated that 4–10 % of older adults will experience one or more forms of abuse at some point during their senior years, representing between 172,000 and 430,000 older adults in Canada. The numbers, however, are considered by many practitioners to represent significant under-reporting, because many older adults do not, or are not able to, speak about the abuse with someone who can help.

Abuse is often times committed by someone close to the individual such as a spouse, family member, or caregiver in a facility for older adults. Victims of older person abuse are typically torn between the feelings they have for their abusers and their desire to speak up about the abuse. They may blame themselves and try to deny or hide the abuse. They may depend fully upon the abuser and fear losing their source of assistance, or they may fear what might happen to the abusive individual.

Getting Help

If you are being abused or if you suspect someone is being abused, call the police. Also consider accessing advice and assistance from social agencies and professionals such as Envision Counselling, Public Health, Medical Services, and/or Home Support.



Envision is a non-profit, community-based organization governed by a volunteer Board of Directors from Southeast Saskatchewan.

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Envision Counselling and Support Centre receives funding from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Social Services, Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice, Department of Justice Canada, United Way of Estevan, United Way Regina, Affinity Credit Union, Community Initiatives Fund, Access Communications Children's Fund, South Saskatchewan Community Foundation, and the community.



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Donations from private groups, organizations, corporations, or individuals are gratefully accepted to assist Envision in serving communities in Southeast Saskatchewan.



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Serving Southeast Saskatchewan since 1994

Exploring your options and supporting your decisions.

Older Person Abuse

Making a difference.

What is Older Person Abuse?

Older person abuse includes any action/inaction which could harm the health or well-being of an older person.

Types of Older Person Abuse:

Physical Abuse:

Physical Abuse is the use of physical force that may result in bodily injury, physical pain or impairment. This type of abuse could include punching, pushing, shaking, pinching, burning, or any sort of physical punishment, confinement or restraint.

Signs of physical abuse may include:

- Unexplained, vague, or illogical explanations for injuries
- Sudden changes in behaviour
- Refusal of a caregiver to allow visitors to see an individual alone
- Delay in seeking treatment or frequently using different treatment facilities
- Untreated injuries

Emotional or Psychological Abuse:

Emotional, psychological and verbal abuse is inflicting mental pain, anguish, or distress on an older person through verbal or nonverbal acts. It lessens a person's sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth. This could include verbal aggression, humiliation, isolation, intimidation and name-calling. Another example is not respecting an older adult's wishes or belongings and treating them like a child.

Signs of emotional/psychological abuse may include:

- Fear
- Low self-esteem
- Isolation or withdrawal
- Depression or apathy

Sexual Abuse:

Sexual abuse is any sexual behaviour directed toward another person without that person's full knowledge and consent. It includes coercing an older person through force, trickery, threats or other means into unwanted sexual activity or contact.

Signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain, bruising, bleeding, or abnormal discharge in genital area
- Bloody or torn clothes
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Disclosures of strange encounters with known or unknown individuals.

Neglect:

Neglect is divided into two categories:

1. Active neglect: the deliberate withholding of basic necessities and/or care.
2. Passive neglect: the failure to provide proper care due to lack of knowledge, information, experience or ability.

Physical signs of neglect may include:

- Dirty surroundings
- Poor personal hygiene
- Missing dentures, glasses, hearing aids etc.
- Soiled bedding
- Untreated cuts or sores, malnourishment, dehydration
- Left unattended for long periods of time



Financial or Exploitative Abuse:

Financial or exploitative abuse is defined as the illegal taking, misuse, or concealment of funds, property, or assets of a vulnerable older person. It includes theft, forgery or fraud.

- Signs of financial abuse include:
- Unexplained discrepancy between known income and standard of living
- The signing of documents without the basic understanding
- Unusual bank account activity by a person in the position of trust
- The overcharging for home repairs, funerals, telemarketing, etc.
- Changes in signing authority, power of attorney, will, or ownership of property
- Used as a babysitter/housekeeper
- Inability to meet expenses

Medication Abuse:

Medication abuse refers to the misuse of an older person's medication and prescriptions, including withholding medications and over-medicating.

Signs of medication abuse may include:

- Hyperactivity or depression
- Non-compliance with prescription
- Over sedation
- Reduced physical/mental activity



*There are no simple, easy solutions.
If you know someone who is hurting,
don't ignore the abuse or the person.*