

# Combating Elder Abuse & Building Resilience

## Session 2 - Preventing Elder Abuse



**Elder Abuse** is any action or inaction that jeopardizes the health and well-being of a senior.

### When a senior indicates that they are experiencing abuse...

**Be patient** – Listen carefully and avoid jumping to conclusions.

**Believe them** – Do not question what they're telling you. You may be the first person they've entrusted with this information.

**Do not judge** – Don't express pity or tell them what to do. Respect their decisions even when you disagree. Offer the level of support you feel comfortable with and know you can continue to provide on an ongoing basis. Do not promise things you know you cannot do or are uncomfortable doing.

**Understand that making an effort to change an abusive relationship is extremely difficult** – A senior who is being abused may be afraid and uncertain about what to do. It can take a long time for people to decide to make a change, to ask for help or to talk about their situation.

**Don't deny what is going on** – This will further isolate the senior.

**Do not confront the perpetrator**– Which could escalate the situation.

**Educate yourself on available resources** – Review resources discussed during this series.

**Encourage the senior to seek help** – Offer to help the elder locate resources and support.

**Don't act too quickly** – Only take immediate action when a crime is being committed or the senior needs immediate protection.

### Respectful Approaches

- May I ask...?
- Can you tell me about...?
- I've noticed...
- I'm concerned about...
- What I'm seeing is...
- I'm wondering about...?

### When Help is Not Wanted

- Keep the lines of communication open.
- Create a code word or action so that the senior can let you know when they need immediate help.
- Provide information about senior services and let the elder know who they can contact for more information.
- Show compassion and avoid getting frustrated if they choose not to act.
- Call the Senior's Safety Line (1-866- 299-1011) for guidance or 911 if you have immediate concerns.

## What To Do When You Suspect Mistreatment or Abuse

**See It** – “It’s not right!” Recognize the warning signs of abuse and document any abuse you see or hear.

**Name It** – “That looks/sounds like abuse.” Talk to the senior or someone you trust about your concerns.

**Check It** – “Is it abuse? What can I do to help?” Ask questions, check for danger, check with abuse experts about what to do next.

### Use statements like...

- I heard your daughter yelling at you and I’m worried about you.
- I saw him take money from your wallet. Did you say it was okay?
- I heard your daughter say that she won’t take you to the doctor. Is there anything I can do? Do you still want to go?
- Do you feel safe?
- Is anyone in your life hurting you or making you feel uncomfortable?
- What do you want to do? How can I help?

### Statements to Avoid

- I think your son is abusing you.
- Your granddaughter is stealing from you.
- Your daughter is being abusive for not taking you to the doctor.

### References (2021)

<https://psan-sc.ca/>

<http://www.eapon.ca/>

<http://www.elderabuseontario.com/>

<http://www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca/>

[www.seniors.gc.ca](http://www.seniors.gc.ca)

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/information-about-elder-abuse>

<https://canadianwomen.org/blog/elder-abuse-in-canada/>

Complete System Failure, Alex Roslin, Zoomer, Dec/Jan 2019, p. 50

What Do We Owe Our Parents, Jay Teitel, Zoomer, June 2019, p. 54

The Bully, The Bullied, The Bystander, Barbara Coloroso, Harper Collins Publishers, 2002

Seniors Safety Line 1-800-622-6232

211ontario.ca or dial “211”

www.opp.ca or call 1-888-310-1122

<https://www.askennonia.com>, Askennonia Senior Centre, (705) 526-7609

**Ageism** occurs when seniors are less valued, less visible and their needs and lives are treated as less important.