

Elder Abuse– Breaking The Silence

ICCER NETWORKING EVENT: KEEPING SENIORS SAFE

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Community Advisory Groups (CAG)

Regional Definition (September 2016):

“Elder abuse is any action or inaction that jeopardizes the health and/or well-being of any older adult.”

Types of abuse include: physical, financial, neglect, emotional, sexual, spiritual and medication. Abuse involves the senior's experience of betrayal or breach of trust within an intimate, trusted relationship.

Types of Elder Abuse

- ▶ Financial abuse
- ▶ Emotional abuse
- ▶ Physical abuse
- ▶ Neglect
- ▶ Sexual abuse
- ▶ Medication abuse
- ▶ Spiritual abuse

Financial Abuse Indicators

Theft or misuse of a senior's money or property.

Indicators:

- ▶ Standard of living not in keeping with income or assets
- ▶ Theft of property
- ▶ Unusual activity in bank account
- ▶ Forged signatures on financial documents
- ▶ Coercion used in signing of wills or releasing property; overdue bills
- ▶ Limiting a senior's access to his or her own accounts

Emotional Abuse Indicators

Actions or statements that cause emotional anguish, diminished self-esteem or dignity.

- Fear
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Withdrawal
- Cowering
- Secrecy
- Fearful interaction with caregiver
- Caregiver speaking on behalf of senior
- Not allowing privacy
- Physical signs of isolation

Physical Abuse Indicators

Action that causes physical discomfort, pain or injury.

- ▶ Unexplained injuries such as bruises, burns or bites
- ▶ Missing hair
- ▶ Untreated medical problems or history of injury
- ▶ Harming or threatening to harm pets
- ▶ Confinement

Neglect Indicators

Intentional or unintentional failure to provide for the basic needs of someone.

- ▶ Inappropriate or dirty clothing
- ▶ Poor hygiene
- ▶ Dehydration
- ▶ Unsafe living conditions
- ▶ Lack of social contact
- ▶ Irregular medical appointments
- ▶ Lack of, or poor conditions of, dentures, glasses, or hearing aids

Sexual Abuse Indicators

Unwanted sexual behaviour including sexual comments, exploitive use of pornography, fondling or sexual assault.

- ▶ Pain
- ▶ Bruising or bleeding in the genital or chest area
- ▶ Sexually transmitted diseases
- ▶ Recent depression
- ▶ Recent incontinence

Medication Abuse Indicators

Intentional or unintentional misuse of medications and prescriptions, such as withholding or providing doses that cause bodily harm, sedation or other adverse effects.

- ▶ Changes in mental ability or physical ability
- ▶ Decline in general health status including
 - Confusion
 - Poor balance
 - Falling
 - Depression
 - Recent incontinence
 - Agitation

Neighbours, Friends and Families for Older Adults – It's Not Right!

- ▶ How you can identify abuse and help older adults at risk?

What neighbours, friends and family members can do to help...

- ▶ Neighbours, friends and family members can do three things:
- ▶ **SEE it!** “It’s not right!” Recognize the warning signs of abuse
- ▶ **NAME it!** “I’m worried about you.” Talk to the older adult. Name your concern.
- ▶ **CHECK it!** “What can I do to help?” Ask questions, check with professionals, check for danger– help with safety planning.

How Do We Keep Ourselves Well?

- ▶ Keep connected to local resources– the development of the Coordinated Community Response (CCR)– prevention of elder abuse
- ▶ Promote wellness for caregivers– eating, sleeping, physical activity, staying connected.

Thank You