

# Elder Abuse Hurts Everyone

## WHAT IS ELDER ABUSE?

Any intentional or neglectful act by a caregiver or “trusted” individual that results in the harm or neglect of a vulnerable elder.



*Elder Abuse is an under recognized problem with devastating, life changing consequences. It can affect men and women of all ethnic backgrounds and social status.*

## TYPES OF ABUSE

**Physical:** Any act of violence causing injury or physical discomfort to a vulnerable elder (slapping, punching, pinching or forcible restraint).

**Emotional:** Any action or comment that causes anguish, fear or diminished self-esteem (threats to do harm, harassment or abandonment).

**Sexual:** Any unwanted touching or forced sexual contact upon a vulnerable elder, including anyone who is unable to grant consent (fondling, indecent exposure or rape).

**Financial:** Any exploitation or theft of a person’s money, property or assets (misuse of Power of Attorney, fraud or forgery).

**Neglect:** A caregivers failure or refusal to provide for a vulnerable elder’s safety, physical or emotional needs.

**Abandonment:** The desertion of a vulnerable elder by anyone who has assumed the responsibility for care or custody of that person.



## IF YOU SUSPECT ELDER ABUSE

**Acknowledge:** Suspicion of abuse may develop over time. Accumulate and document evidence.

**Barriers:** There can be fear of retaliation or withdrawal of caregiver support and breach of confidentiality.

**Urgency:** Assess immediate needs and potential risk of physical harm.

**Screen:** Assess person's ability to help themselves.

**Empower:** Inform a person of their rights and resources and assist with establishing a safety plan.

**Refer:** Offer support or consultation from other resources.



## CREATE A SAFETY PLAN



The plan may include a change in environment or relationship which could result in the elimination of the role of the abuser or context of the abuse.

### Consider:

- Home visits, telephone contact, contact with family and friends and regular appointments.
- Secure assets. Hide emergency money somewhere outside the house.
- Give copies of important documents and keys to trusted friends or family members.
- Plan an escape by packing a bag of extra clothing, medicine and personal items.
- Keep phone numbers of friends, relatives, shelters or other trusted individuals nearby.

## REPORT YOUR CONCERNS

Call the police or 9-1-1 immediately if someone you know is in immediate, life-threatening danger.

**Elder Abuse Hotline:** (24 hour) (800) 96-ABUSE

**Elder Helpline:** (800) 96-ELDER

**Sources:** National Center on Elder Abuse, Department of Elder Affairs and Victim Services Committee of Leeds and Grenville.