

- **Psychological Abuse:** Humiliating, insulting, frightening, threatening or ignoring an older person or treating an older person like a child. This includes name-calling that is derogatory towards someone or their religious practice, spiritual tradition, language, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, citizenship status, class, body functioning/mobility and all aspects of hate crimes.
- **Financial Abuse:** Forcing an older person to sell personal property; stealing an older person's money, pension cheques or possessions; fraud, forgery, extortion; wrongful use of a Power of Attorney. Removal of an older person's right to make choices and/or decisions.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Any unwanted sexual activity or sexual assault such as rape, sexual exposure, touch, sexual imagery without consent. NOTE: Sexual abuse is often under-reported or reported as physical assault by survivors.
- **Neglect:** Abandoning an older person, withholding food or health services; failing to give someone who is dependent what she or he needs.

Offences Under the Criminal Code:

- **Physical Abuse:** Assault, forcible confinement, assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm, aggravated assault, sexual assault, sexual assault with a weapon, aggravated sexual assault, threats to a third party or causing bodily harm, murder, manslaughter.
- **Financial Abuse:** Theft, theft by a person holding Power of Attorney, stopping mail with intent, extortion, forgery, fraud.
- **Psychological Abuse:** Intimidation, uttering threats, harassing, harassing phone calls.
- **Active Neglect:** Criminal negligence causing bodily harm or death, breach of duty to provide necessities.

Assessment Guidelines

The following may indicate elder abuse:

- Unexplained bruises, burns, scratches, under- or over-medication
- Depression, Withdrawal or passivity, reluctance to talk openly
- Signs of fear, shame and/or nervousness
- Changes in hygiene or nutrition
- Lack of food, clothing, social contact or other necessities
- Unusual bank withdrawals, standard of living is incongruent with income or assets
- Failure to meet financial obligations/overdue bills, theft of property noted
- Family or caregiver will not allow privacy of older person to be spoken to or interviewed alone; caregiver speaks for the elder

Why many older persons choose not to disclose abuse:

- Fear of more abuse
- Fear of losing caregiver/family
- Family honour/ family privacy
- Lack of self-esteem
- Fear of abandonment / institutionalization
- Fear of family break-up
- Shame / guilt
- Rationalization: "I deserve what I get"

Express the understanding that the person suspected of being abused has the right to determine and control their own affairs to the full extent they are capable (i.e., choosing whether to accept or refuse intervention and deciding how and where they will live). If the person is deemed incompetent, but has previously expressed wants or desires, every effort should be made to respect these wishes.

Be non-judgmental. The focus of any intervention is not the alleged maltreatment, but rather the total situation. Assistance should be offered to both the alleged victim and the abuser, as appropriate.

Possible questions might be:

- Are you afraid of anyone?
- Has anything happened recently that causes you concern?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you felt forced to do anything you didn't want to do?
- Has there ever been a time when you needed help to take care of yourself and you didn't get it?
- Have you ever signed any documents that you didn't understand?

Procedures

If you suspect elder abuse:

- If the person is in immediate danger, call 911.
- Establish rapport with person who is suspected of being abused
- Interview the person alone, in a secure environment which allows for privacy.
- Review assessment and intervention guidelines.
- Ensure your intervention is the least intrusive alternative to ongoing abuse. Removing the elder person from their environment should only be considered when support services are not sufficient to guarantee their safety.

Interventions:

- If the person is in immediate danger, call 911.
- Contact the police if the elder person is in imminent risk of physical harm or exploitation, and/or if the person wishes to file a report or legal charges. (NOTE that if the person is a victim of partner assault, the police MUST lay charges where there are reasonable grounds to do so.)
- If there is a substitute decision maker or trusted family member, involve them in any intervention, as appropriate.
- Discuss options. For example, a safety plan, counselling, legal advice, financial assistance, alternate housing, home support, caregiver help.
- Educate the elder and their family (as appropriate) regarding elder abuse and the cycle of violence. Stress that abusive behaviours tend to increase in frequency and intensity over time.
- Provide support to build on the strengths of the elder person and help them work through feelings such as anger, sadness and loss. Provide support to the caregiver to help them cope with feelings associated with caregiver burden. Help both discuss positive change strategies.
- Contact the Elder Abuse Investigator of the local Police (see below)

Community Resources:

**Waterloo Regional Police Service / Community Care Access Centre of Waterloo Region
Elder Abuse Response Team (EART)**

**Elder Abuse Response Team
519-579-4607**

The Elder Abuse Response Team's mission is to prevent and respond to elder abuse by working in partnership with the community and by providing an opportunity for change and healing to people affected by elder abuse, thereby enhancing the safety and well being of older adults. EART's mandate includes providing information and consultation, direct intervention, education and training and community development.

The Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (ONPEA):

Phone: 416-916-6728

Website: <http://www.onpea.org>

Seniors Safety Line:

Phone: 1-866-299-1011 Available 24/7, 150 languages

This policy will be posted on the KDCHC website

Approved by: Eric Goldberg, Executive Director

Date: December 21, 2016
