

Project ECHO Personal Care Providers

All Teach, All Learn

Building Skills, Knowledge, and Confidence



Observation to Action: Responding to Abuse and Neglect in Home Care Clients

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Land Acknowledgement



Artist Credit: Patrick Hunter

We recognize with humility and gratitude that Canada is located in the traditional, historical and ceded and unceded Lands of First Nation, Inuit and Metis Peoples. On behalf of us all, we acknowledge and pay respect to the Indigenous peoples past, present and future who continue to work, educate and contribute to the strength of this country.

Introduction



Laura Tamblyn Watts LLB, ICD.D
CEO and President
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Elder Abuse 101



Definitions, Theories and Where to Go From Here...

OLDER CANADIANS' VALUES

- Are these yours?

KEY SOCIAL AND CULTURAL VALUES OF SENIORS (1998)

- INDEPENDENCE
- REQUIRES SOMEONE
TO HELP DEFEND
AND ENFORCE



DIGNITY	FAIRNESS
PARTICIPATION	SECURITY

Elder abuse in Canada



- Seniors Canada estimates that somewhere between four and ten percent of older adults in Canada are victims of abuse or neglect.
- An important factor to consider when analyzing this statistic is that many victims of abuse are unaware they are being abused, particularly in cases of financial exploitation.



Myth-Conceptions

OLD PEOPLE:

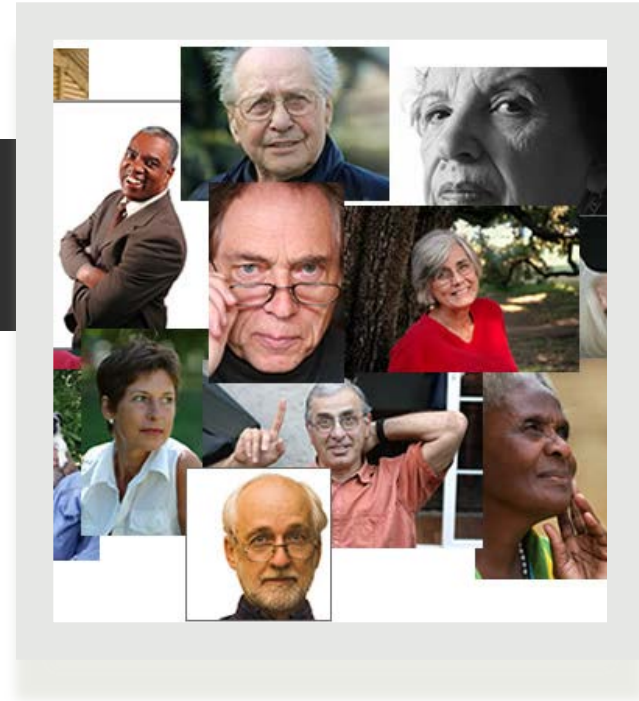
Cost the system too much

Don't contribute to society

Are bed-blockers and complainers

Don't have new relationships

Are mostly demented



Defining Elder Abuse

- ❑ The term “elder abuse” has various definitions, depending on the context in which it is used (e.g. legal, health care, social work).
- ❑ “Elder abuse” is often defined as an action or inaction by an individual that results in harm to an older person.
- ❑ Abusers may be family members, friends, caregivers, persons in a position of trust or power, or even strangers.



Defining Elder Neglect

- ❑ **“Neglect” usually refers to the failure of a caregiver to provide needed assistance (goods or services) to an older person.**



Defining Self-Neglect

- **“Self-neglect” is the failure of an older person to adequately care for his or herself.**

This may include refusing assistance from others. This may be linked to physical limitations of older persons or cognitive difficulties.

- **Not considered the “same” as elder abuse**



8 Underlying Theories of Elder Abuse and Neglect – an Evolving List

- ❑ 1. **Power and Control** – The “Power Wheel”
- ❑ 2. **Caregiver Stress** – “If I wasn’t so exhausted, I wouldn’t abuse”
- ❑ 3. **Revenge** – “S/he deserves it after what they did to me before”
- ❑ 4. **Greed** – “It should be mine – I want that money”
- ❑ 5. **Ageism** – “S/he is useless / doesn’t need it anyway - useless”
- ❑ 6. **“Tug of War”** – “My sibling is not getting ahead of me...”
- ❑ 7. **Lifelong Abuse / Family Abuse / Domestic Abuse** – Grown old
- ❑ 8. **Institutionalization / Dehumanization** – “Not a real person”

Power and Control Wheel



Common power and control dynamics:

- ❑ Targeting and grooming victims
- ❑ Undue influence and financial exploitations
- ❑ Charm and manipulation
- ❑ Exploiter excuses
- ❑ The appearance of willing participation by the victim in activities that run contrary to their beliefs or best interests
- ❑ Trauma reactions of victims



Recognizing elder abuse and neglect

□ Elder abuse includes:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional/psychological abuse
- Financial abuse or exploitation
- Neglect & self-neglect

(Other expanding areas: chemical, spiritual/cultural etc)

- Abuse may take shape as an isolated incident or a pattern of behaviour.



Types and indicators of abuse and neglect



Physical or Sexual Abuse

Some forms of *physical or sexual abuse*:

- ❑ Violent or rough behaviour: pushing, kicking, beating, hitting, grabbing
- ❑ Unwanted sexual contact of any kind
- ❑ Confinement or restraint
- ❑ Touching without a consent



Indicators of Abuse – Physical/Sexual

Indicators of *physical abuse*:

ADULT REPORTS, and/or:

- ❑ Bruises/black eyes, welts, rope marks
- ❑ Internal injuries, burns, swelling
- ❑ Broken assistive devices
- ❑ Lacerations, punctures, restricted movement
- ❑ Untreated injuries
- ❑ Fractures, sprains, dislocations
- ❑ Pain, itching or bruises around breasts and genital areas
- ❑ Repeated falls, torn /stained / bloody underclothing
- ❑ Venereal disease, genital infections, vaginal/anal bleeding



Some forms of Emotional/Psychological Abuse

- ❑ Shouting and bullying
- ❑ Insults or name calling
- ❑ Threats of violence or abandonment
- ❑ Intimidation or belittling
- ❑ Humiliation
- ❑ Harassment
- ❑ Treating an older person like a child
- ❑ Ignoring the person or isolating them from family, friends, or regular activities
- ❑ Inappropriately infringing on their privacy



Emotional or psychological abuse

Indicators of *emotional/psychological abuse*:



- ❑ Heightened levels of upset or agitation
- ❑ Unexplained feelings of hopelessness, guilt or inadequacy
- ❑ Unusual withdrawal from family and friends
- ❑ Discomfort or anxiety in the presence of particular people
- ❑ Reluctance to speak about the situation

Financial abuse

Some forms of *financial abuse*:



- Misuse of funds or property
- Theft, exploitation or scams
- Abuse of power of attorney
- Fraud or forgery of documents

Financial abuse

Indicators of *financial abuse*:

- ❑ Unpaid bills / No money for basics
- ❑ Absence of aids, medications, etc.
- ❑ Sudden appearance of previously uninvolved relatives
- ❑ Forged signature or Power of Attorney granted under unusual circumstances
- ❑ Adult complains of not knowing where money/assets have gone
- ❑ Abrupt changes in will/accounts
- ❑ Family member/representative refuses to spend money on the adult's behalf



Neglect and self-neglect

Forms of *neglect or self-neglect* may include failure to provide:

- ❑ water or food
- ❑ shelter
- ❑ clothing
- ❑ medication or medical attention
- ❑ assistance with basic necessities



Neglect and self-neglect



Indicators of *neglect or self-neglect*:

- ❑ dehydration or malnourishment
- ❑ untreated bedsores or other medical problems
- ❑ unsanitary household conditions or lack of personal care
- ❑ unsafe living conditions or homelessness



Reporting abuse



There are also many barriers to reporting abuse that victims in Canada face:

- Victims may have restricted mobility or other physical or cognitive limitations that prevent them from seeking help
- Abusers are often caregivers or in a position of power over the older person, which removes control from the victim
- Victims may be isolated from outside resources
- Other barriers may exist: language, transportation, lack of knowledge of resources available to assist

Risk factors of abuse

Why older adults (especially women) may be at a high risk of abuse:

- ❑ They are unable to call for help or protest
- ❑ They are dependent on others
- ❑ They have never learned assertiveness
- ❑ Many people have access to their homes
- ❑ There is a history of abuse
- ❑ They are not believed
- ❑ The abuse has not been officially identified



Moving Forward...



- ✓ Rethinking Aging
- ✓ Increased research – markers of abuse
- ✓ Resources needed

Some Useful Resources

- ❑ **CANADIAN CENTRE FOR ELDER LAW**
www.bcli.org/ccel (especially our “links” and “resources” pages)
- ❑ **CANADIAN NETWORK FOR THE PREVENTION OF ELDER ABUSE**
www.cnpea.ca
- ❑ **NICE NETWORK**
www.nicenet.ca
- ❑ **BC CENTRE FOR ELDER ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT**
www.bcceas.ca
- ❑ **VANCOUVER COASTAL HEALTH RE:ACT**
www.vchreact.ca
- ❑ **ADVOCACY CENTRE FOR THE ELDERLY**
www.ancelaw.ca
- ❑ **INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR THE PREVENTION OF ELDER ABUSE**
www.inpea.net



Discussion / Q&A



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Your feedback is important!!

Let us know the topics we should explore in the fall

For more, visit our ECHO Personal Care Provider page:
cdnhomecare.ca/chca-project-echo-personal-care-providers