

seniors first BC

ABUSE VERSES NEGLECT

Abuse is an action that causes harm to another individual, and neglect is the non-action of not providing care or assistance to a dependent person (Canada.ca, 2016).

Elder abuse has no single definition and the stories of abuse and neglect are varied and complex. Most people never like to consider themselves as a victim which is why we use the word survivor when speaking about those who have experienced abuse. Elder abuse is more common than you might think as it is often a hidden problem, but WHO estimates that **1 in 6 older adults experience abuse worldwide**. And a study by Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario revealed the prevalence of elder abuse in Canada for the last year was **7.5% (physical, sexual, psychological and financial abuse) representing 695,248 older Canadians**.

Currently older adults are finding themselves more vulnerable than ever to incidences of financial abuse and other [COVID-19 related scams](#). If you or someone you know is experiencing a scam or fraud, find more information from the [Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre](#). Report the scam to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre. Their call centre is currently closed due to COVID-19, but [you can report the scam online](#).

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER!!

The more you know about elder abuse, the better equipped you will be to prevent it from happening to you and those you love. What elder abuse might look like the figure below explains.



Figure 1- What elder abuse might look like.(Source WHO, 2016.

https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/elder_abuse/Elder_abuse_infographic_EN.pdf?ua=1)

It is most likely that abuse or neglect will be perpetrated by somebody well known or trusted. Most commonly experienced in a family setting (Wister, 2019). Which further muddies the water when it comes to recognizing that you are in an abusive scenario? Family members should be people that you can trust and it can be hard to spot abuse at the hands of a family member because it goes against everything you may believe to be true about those you are related to.

Family members and informal caregivers can lower their risk of committing abuse by:

- Use [coping techniques](#) to manage “caregiver stress”
- Ask for help from family or friends
- Take advantage of formal support systems in your area
- Take breaks when needed

Risk factors:

- Shared living situation
- Social isolation/poor social networks
- Presence of dementia increases the risk for physical abuse
- Presence of disability
- Mental illness of the perpetrator
- Hostility of the perpetrator
- History of abuse throughout the life course
- Being female or visible minority possibly increases the risk
- Being uneducated about elder abuse

ELDER ABUSE RESOURCES

SENIORS ABUSE AND INFORMATION LINE (SAIL):

Call: 604-437-1940 or Toll Free: 1-866-437-1940

7 days a week (excluding holidays), 8am to 8pm

Language interpretation is available Monday through Friday, 9am to 4pm.

- If you or someone you love is experiencing elder abuse you can call the **Seniors Abuse and Information Line (SAIL)**. [604-437-1940](tel:6044371940) or [Toll Free: 1-866-437-1940](tel:18664371940)
[SAIL is a safe place to speak to a trained](#) intake worker about abuse or mistreatment, receive information and support about issues that impact the health and well-being of an older adult. If you are in a confusing situation and not sure where to turn – give them a call! There is no harm in calling to ask a few questions. Those who answer the line are trained in identifying any red flags and have your best interest in mind when it comes to offering advice. The more tools we have, the better we can manage any situation that life throws our way!
Stay socially connected. Now, more than ever it is important to stay socially connected and engaged. We may be physically distant, but that does not mean socially isolated as well.
You are not a burden. Repeat! You deserve to be safe, secure and comfortable
Remember that you are not alone.

- **[Domestic Violence and Criminal Harassment Unit \(DVACH\) - Vancouver Police Department \(VPD\)](#)**

Teams consisting of community counsellors (employed by Family Services of Greater Vancouver) and VPD detectives provide investigative follow-up, emotional support, and advocacy to victims of high-risk domestic violence. There are also VPD officers who deal with criminal harassment, stalking cases, and elder abuse.

604-717-2653, Vpd.dvach@vpd.ca

- **[Royal Canadian Mounted Police “E” Division – British Columbia](#)**

General Inquiries: 604-264-3111

[Fraud victims](#) Assistance Guide

- **[BC 211](#)**

Call 211 if you have a concern about a situation of inappropriate or abusive behaviour affecting the well-being of an older person. All information you share will be kept confidential. You can also call or visit the 211 [Website](#) to find general information, as well as specific programs and services for older adults in British Columbia. It is a place anyone can call for information about community, government and social services in BC.

- **[BC Association of Community of Response Networks](#)**

A Community Response Network is a diverse group of concerned community members who come together to create a coordinated community response to adult abuse, neglect and self-neglect. [Website](#)

- **[BC Human Rights Tribunal \(BCHRT\)](#)**

Phone: 604-775-2000

Toll Free: 1-888-440-8844

TTY: 604 775-2021

Email: BCHumanRightsTribunal@gov.bc.ca

[Website](#)

- **[BC Securities Commission](#)**

if you suspect questionable investment activity, contact the BCSC.

Telephone: 604-899-6854 or 1-800-373-6393 (toll free across Canada)

Email: inquiries@bcsc.bc.ca

You can also submit a tip or report a complaint about a company or individual [at this link](#)

- **[Burnaby Seniors Outreach Services Society \(BSOSS\)](#)**
Phone: 604-291-2258
Email: bsoss@telus.net
[Website](#)
- **[Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of BC](#)**
Toll Free: 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)
TTY: 1-866-872-0113
Email: info@crisiscentre.bc.ca
[Website](#)
- **[Filipino Support Group \(FSG\) for the Prevention and Reduction of Elder Abuse](#)**
Free support group for Filipino seniors who have experienced or are experiencing abuse of any kind, seeking help on a voluntary basis, or referred by family, friends, or neighbours. Serves seniors who reside in Burnaby, Coquitlam, New Westminister, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Richmond, Surrey, and Vancouver. seniorsbrigade@yahoo.ca
Phone: 604-453-5885
- **[KUU-US Crisis Response Line](#)**
The KUU-US Crisis Line Society operates a 24-hour provincial aboriginal crisis line for Adults/Elders: 250-723-4050 or Toll Free Line: 1-800-588-8717
[Website](#)
- **[MOSAIC Multicultural Victim Services Program](#)**
Vancouver service offers support, information, advocacy, accompaniments, and referrals.
Phone: 604-254-9626
[Website](#)
- **[QMunity, BC's Queer Resource Centre](#)**
QMunity offers coming out and support groups for older adults, a lending library, free professional counseling, legal clinics, referrals and workshops for LGBTQ older adults.
Phone: 604-684-5307
Email: reception@qmunity.ca
www.qmunity.ca
Generations Project (Older Adults): 604-684-8449

- [Women Against Violence Against Women \(WAVAW\) Rape Crisis Centre](#)

Phone: 604-255-6344

Toll Free Crisis Line: 1-877-392-7583

[Website](#)

CONTRIBUTOR

Thank you to our volunteer Meeka Marsolais for writing this blog!