

Resources

If you or anyone else is in immediate danger call 911

Camrose Police Service (non-urgent) 780-672-4444

Trauma and Crime Support Services 780-672-4570

In Camrose

Service Options for Seniors 780-672-0141

Women's Shelter Outreach (men and women) 780-672-1035

Camrose Primary Care Network 780-608-4927

Helplines

Senior's Helpline 780-454-8888

Family Violence Helpline 780-310-1818

Protection of People in Care 1-888-357-9339

Shelters

SAGE Seniors Shelter 780-720-1520

Elder Abuse



CAMROSE POLICE SERVICE

TRAUMA AND CRIME SUPPORT SERVICES

780-672-457

What is Elder Abuse?

Elder Abuse is any single or repeated act, intentional or reckless, which harms a person aged 65 years or older. It can occur in any relationship of family ties or dependency on another person for some aspects of daily living. There is usually a power imbalance in the relationship.

Elder Abuse is most commonly committed by a family member. It is considered Family Violence. It is about control and power over someone's life.

Some Elder Abuse is an offense under the Criminal Code of Canada. **Even if the abuse is not criminal it is wrong.**

Under the Criminal Code of Canada, you will not find the offense of "Elder Abuse." Charges are laid under the following provisions:

- s.215 Neglect prosecuted under "the failure to provide the necessities of life."
- s. 344 and 349 Home invasion
- s. 271 Sexual Assault
- s. 380 Fraud
- s. 236 Manslaughter
- s. 718.2 Breach of Trust

Sentencing in Canada can consider the position of trust the accused was in with the victim and the age of the victim.

This is the point where the system recognizes the victim as being "elderly" and in a vulnerable position.

Remember

- You are not alone. There is help.
- Often the people who hurt you are those people you care about. This can make it hard to speak out. But all abuse is wrong no matter who is hurting you!
- It is not your fault. Nothing you have done makes it right for someone to abuse you. It is their choice to hurt you and you do not have to accept that choice or behavior.
- Everyone deserves to be safe and treated with respect.
- You have rights. You can take steps to be safe and treated properly. Even if you talk to a lawyer or support person, you have the right to decide what happens next. And you have legal rights to your assets.
- Leaving can be hard especially if it is your home. And leaving can be dangerous. Call the police if you need assistance in leaving. If safe to do so, have someone you trust take you from the home.
- Try to keep a record of events that are abusive in nature.
- Try to take your ID with you but if not safe there are social agencies that can help you with that at a later date.

Help for Victims of Elder Abuse

If you are a victim of Elder Abuse

**If you are in immediate danger and it is safe to do so call
911**

Tell someone – tell a doctor, nurse, trusted friend or family member, lawyer. It does not matter whom you tell, as long as it is someone you can trust to help you.

Ask the person to help you to contact the police if you are unable to.

Camrose Police Service 780-672-4444

CPS Trauma and Crime Support Services 780-672-4570

Camrose RCMP 780-672-3341

If you feel someone is a victim of Elder Abuse call

Camrose Police Service 780-672-4444

Family Violence Info Line 780-310-1818

Edmonton Seniors Abuse Help Line 780-454-8888

If the person is receiving care or support services from publicly funded service providers report suspected abuse to

1-888-357-9339

Elder abuse result in:

- Loss of dignity
- Cognitive decline
- Depression/anxiety
- Physical injuries
- Loss of ability to live in their home
- Early death

Types of Elder Abuse

Physical – any type of action which hurts or injures a person physically

This includes hitting, spitting, pushing, kicking, shoving, punching, using medication inappropriately, restraining (physically or chemically) or confining a person.

Signs include:

- Injuries especially where the explanations do not correlate with the injuries
- Going to different doctors and medical centers for help
- Signs of sedation or non-medication use
- Broken personal care items (glasses, dentures, walkers)
- Bruises on wrists or/and ankles (restraints)

Psychological – any act that is done in order to decrease the dignity, self-worth, or sense of identity in a person

This includes insults, put-downs, not considering the wishes of the person, threatening the person verbally, treating the senior like a child, shunning, ignoring or verbally intimidating the person. Isolating a person from family and friends or threatening to do so is also psychological abuse.

Signs include:

- Depression and anxiety
- Fearfulness of certain people
- Withdrawn and reluctant to talk
- Insomnia and fatigue
- Lack of eye contact

Sexual – any type of coerced or forced sexual activity

This includes unwanted touching, fondling a confused senior, coerced nudity, inappropriate photographs, or suggestive remarks/threats.

Signs include:

- Bruising on breasts, upper legs, and genitals.
- Torn/stained/bloody underclothes
- Difficulty walking or sitting (new symptom)
- Making inappropriate sexual remarks or talking about sexual acts in a new manner.

Am I being Abused?

Answering yes to any of these questions could indicate you are not being treated right and may be being abused.

Someone has:

- asked you to sign a document, change your will, Power of Attorney or Personal Directive.
- put pressure on you to sign a document you do not understand or have not read.
- asked you to give them your money or property.
- asked you to purchase items you don't want or need.
- asked you for loans, gifts, or financial help.
- borrowed money from you and not paid anything back.
- shared a home with you and not paid any expenses.
- asked you to work or provide childcare without offering to pay for the work
- threatened that if don't do any of these things you cannot see your grandchildren, family, or friends
- forced you to do anything sexual you do not want to do
- withheld medication or refused you access to medical care
- put you down, humiliated you, or made you feel worthless
- threatened to put you in a care facility if you don't do what they want
- hurt you physically in any way

- deny you medical care
- physically, emotionally, or sexually assault you
- You have the right to change your decision maker if you feel they are not making decisions in your best interest or in line with your values and beliefs.

Capacity

- The ability to recognize a decision has to be made and what your choices are
- The ability to understand the information needed to make the decision
- The ability to understand the foreseeable consequences of making or not making the decision

Capacity can change over time. A person can retain capacity to make some types of decision while losing the capacity to make others.

Consent

The right to say no to an action.

You need to make informed consent. You understand what is going to happen; the reasons it is needed; the risk and benefits of what is going to happen; without pressure or coercion.

Financial – any misuse/ misappropriation of a person’s assets for personal gain.

Three categories:

Financial neglect – ignoring or avoiding the financial responsibilities of the older adult.

This includes not paying bills, mortgages, or taxes

Signs include:

- Sudden loss of utilities or eviction
- Calls from collection agencies
- Decrease standard of living

Financial exploitation – misuse or mismanagement of the older adult’s assets.

This can include withdrawing money or selling assets without consent or with false pretenses; living in the older adult’s home without paying any expenses; pressure to sign documents without reading or understanding the contents; not being allowed to see bank or credit statements or forging signatures to obtain access to older adult’s assets.

Signs include

- Sudden, unexpected selling or loss of home
- Insufficient funds in bank accounts or unexplained withdrawals
- Refusal of person to allow placement to appropriate levels of care

Health Care Fraud – caregivers take advantage of the older adult’s physical, cognitive, and mental health in order to make fraudulent claims for payment.

This includes double billing, over billing and falsifying claims to insurance companies.

Signs include:

- Large bills with no increase in service
- Insurance companies may start an investigation

Neglect – not meeting the basic needs

Active – intentionally not providing the necessities of life

Passive – due to lack of knowledge, experience, caregiver burnout, or concurrent health issues of caregiver, the basic necessities of life are not provided

This includes not providing food or fluids; leaving the person in an unsafe environment; withholding medications or medical care; failure to assist with personal care needs such as bathing, toileting, washing, or oral hygiene.

Signs include:

- Appearing messy and unkept. Noticeable body odor or soiled clothing.
- Appear sedated or not well due to no medication
- Dirty, cluttered home environment
- No food in the home
- Lack of normal personal care items – toothbrush, hairbrush, towels, glasses, walker or dentures

• Understanding your Rights

- You have the right to make your decisions until it has been determined you have lost capacity.
- Before anyone one can declare you to be incapable of making decisions, you must have a medical assessment by your physician to rule out temporary or reversible causes affecting your capacity.
- You are allowed to decide who makes your decisions for you when you no longer can.
 - Personal directive – personal and health decisions are made by another person.
 - Power of Attorney – legal and financial decisions are made by another person.
- You can retain the ability to make certain types of decisions (housing, activities, friends, health) and be unable to make other decisions (money, legal).
- Alberta Adult Guardianship and Trustee Act standardizes capacity assessments and supports a variety of decision-making options for adults. It recognizes that capacity and consent change over time.
- You can have temporary decision makers, co-decision makers or permanent decision makers.
- Even though a person(s) has the legal authority to make decisions for you, that person(s) does not have the right to:
 - use your assets for their own gain
 - deny you’re the necessities of life