



FORMS OF ELDER ABUSE

Physical Abuse

When somebody hits an older adult or handles the person roughly, even if there is no injury. Giving a person too much or too little medication, or physically restraining a person, are also forms of physical abuse.

Sexual Abuse

When somebody forces an older adult to engage in sexual activity. This may include verbal or suggestive behaviour, not respecting personal privacy, sexual touching, or sex without the person's consent.

Emotional abuse

When somebody threatens, insults, intimidates, or humiliates an older adult, treats the person like a child, or does not allow them to see their family and friends. Emotional abuse can devastate a person's sense of identity, dignity, or self-worth.

Financial abuse

When somebody tricks, threatens, or persuades older adults out of their money, property, or possessions. Misusing a power of attorney is a common form of financial abuse.

Violation of rights and freedoms

When somebody interferes with an older adult's ability to make choices, especially when those choices are protected under the law. Examples include interfering with spiritual practices or traditions; withholding mail or information; denying privacy; preventing visitors; dictating how someone else can spend their own money; or keeping someone in an institution without a legitimate reason.

Neglect

When somebody fails to provide the necessities of life, such as food, clothing, a safe shelter, medical attention, personal care, and necessary supervision. Neglect may be intentional or unintentional. Sometimes the people providing care do not have the necessary knowledge, experience, or ability.

Systemic abuse

Systemic abuse (also called institutional abuse) refers to rules, regulations, policies, or social practices that harm or discriminate against older adults. Systemic abuse includes rules that are developed for an apparently neutral purpose, but that hurt the person. Examples include using physical restraints as an easy way to prevent falls; or diapering a person instead of helping them to the washroom, simply to save time or effort. Sometimes staff shortages can lead to systemic neglect.



STATISTICS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Elder Abuse in Canada

For the first time in its history, Canada now counts more people aged 65 and over than youth 14 and under. (Figure from Statistics Canada's 2016 census)

Two recent national studies estimate that **between 4.5% and 7.5% of Canadian seniors report experiencing some form of abuse**. 7.5% of Canadians over the age of 55, that's 695,248 Canadians. (Figures from The National Survey on the Mistreatment of Older Adults in Canada – Prevalence Study, 2014-2015)

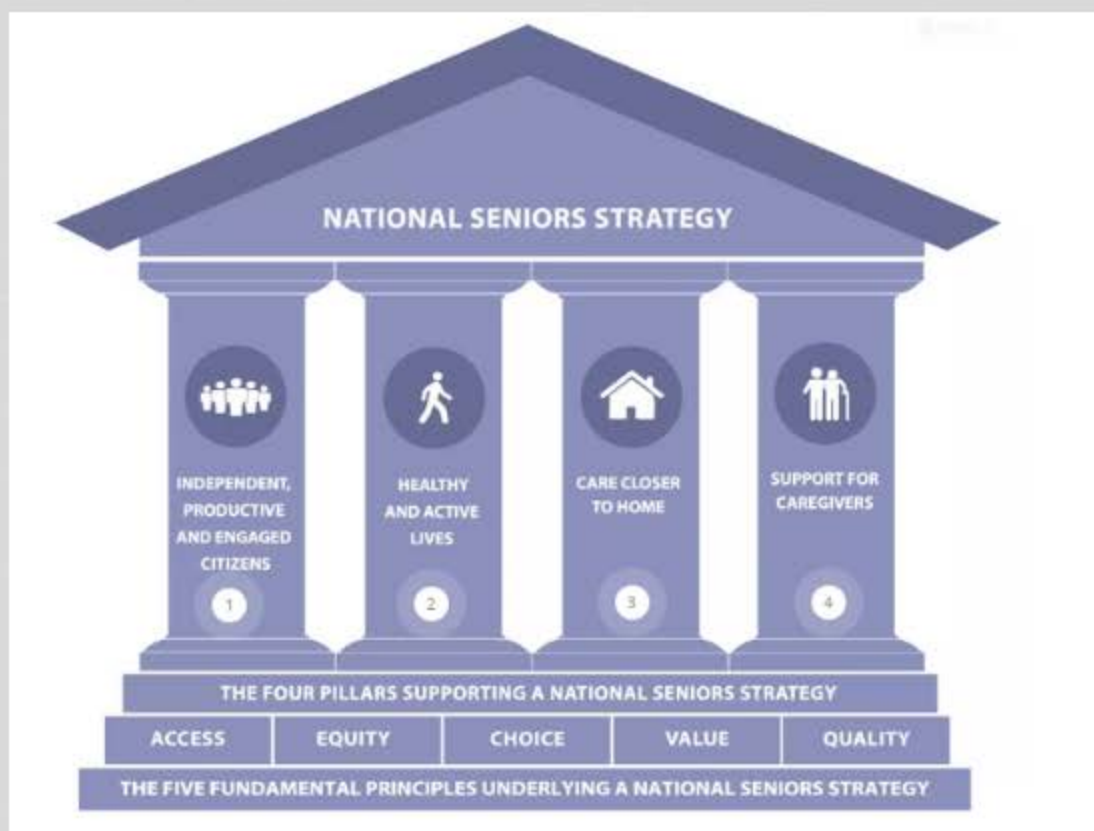
Elder Abuse is known as “the invisible crime” as it is **one of the most under reported crimes** in our country. It is estimated that **up to 10%** of seniors experience a form or more of elder abuse.

Recommendations for a National Seniors Strategy

The World Health Organization's strategy on Ageing and Health focuses on 4 key points:

- Encouraging healthy ageing
- Enabling functional ability
- Combatting Ageism
- Addressing inequalities

The four pillars of a national strategy according to www.nationalseniorsstrategy.ca:





STATISTICS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Our Recommendations

Devise a collaborative, multidisciplinary approach involving seniors (including seniors living with disabilities and dementia), researchers, gerontologists and other healthcare professionals, elder abuse prevention professionals, community development stakeholders, seniors-serving organizations, elder law experts, social workers, urban planners, educators, financial sector professionals, LGBTQI2S+ advocates, caregivers (formal and informal), and more.

Recognize that there is no one-size-fits-all answer. The word “seniors” fails to acknowledge the variety of people, life experiences, and age groups -spanning over four decades- currently living in Canada.

Develop national awareness campaigns about ageism and elder abuse.

Encourage public discourse around aging and what it means for Canadians and how to stay informed and safe (as individuals and as communities) against risks of elder abuse:

1- Ageism - Help people recognize ageist clichés and assumptions and how they negatively affect our views of older people and our self-perception. Recognize their impact on professional and personal lives, as well as impact on responses to older adults' needs (availability and relevance of services, etc.).

2- Elder Abuse - Find new ways to talk about elder abuse by offering specific, solutions-oriented messages. Elder abuse is on the cusp of public awareness. We know it is prevalent, we know it is likely to grow as the older population increases, we cannot afford to have it stay in the margins of public consciousness.

Place emphasis on improving social inclusion of older adults:

- Develop strategies to fight social isolation and combat ageism.
- Encourage development of age-friendly cities and intergenerational initiatives
- Develop and expand caregiving, housing and transportation support and solutions

Provide sustained financial support for CNPEA. CNPEA's hub was developed thanks to New Horizons for Seniors funding. It has established itself as a mobilizing force for elder abuse prevention stakeholders. We want to be able to pursue our mission of connecting and sharing knowledge across provinces and territories; offering easy access to valuable information and initiatives that can be adopted and applied across the country, while preventing redundancy; and fostering dynamic collaborations to guarantee that older adults can have a safe, healthy and enjoyable later life.