

SEXUAL ABUSE IN LATER LIFE: A FACT SHEET FOR OLDER ADULTS

WHAT IS SEXUAL ABUSE OF OLDER ADULTS?

Any sexual behaviour directed towards an older adult without their consent. Sexual abuse of older adults is best viewed as occurring along a continuum of hands-off to hands-on behaviours. These behaviours may include, but are not limited to:

Inappropriate or harassing sexual comments, jokes, or suggestions

Forcing you to watch or listen to pornography or masturbation

Unwanted kissing or touching

Forcing you to engage in, or listen to discussions of sex or sexualized activities

Exposure of one's private body parts to you without your consent

Harmful or unnecessary genital hygiene practices

Taking explicit photos/videos & sharing them online without your consent

Fondling

Coerced nudity

Forced vaginal penetration

Forced oral sex

Forced anal penetration

➤ **It is important to remember sexual abuse does not only happen to younger people. It occurs across the life span to individuals of all ages and in all cultures and socio-economic groups.** ◀

WHO IS THE MOST LIKELY TO CAUSE YOU SEXUAL HARM?

Quite often, abuse is caused by someone known to the victim, but also includes any other offender, including strangers.

Although women can and do cause sexual harm, men are more likely to engage in sexually-harmful behaviour. Persons most likely to cause sexual harm can include:

- Spouses or partners
- Sons, grandsons, and nephews
- Caregivers
- Acquaintances
- Friends
- Strangers

WHAT IF I HAVE BEEN HARMED SEXUALLY?

Please remember:

- You deserve, and have a right to be treated with respect
- You have a right to live free from all types of deliberate harm and abuse
- You have a right to safety and security
- You are not alone
- Abuse often gets worse over time
- **There is no excuse for abuse EVER. Abuse is NOT your fault**



WHAT ARE SOME COMMON FEELINGS AND REACTIONS AFTER BEING HARMED SEXUALLY?

- Fear
- Anxiety
- Neglect of one's own health
- Anger
- Shock
- Sleep disturbances
- Shame and/or Embarrassment
- Disbelief
- Lack of trust
- Powerlessness
- Confusion
- Alcohol, substance, or medication misuse
- Depression
- Self-blame
- Not wanting to be touched

NOTE: These are only some of the reactions you may have. It is OK and NORMAL to have these and/or any other reactions and feelings.

WHAT CAN I DO TO STAY SAFE FROM ABUSE AND INCREASE MY SAFETY?

- If you are in immediate danger **call 911**
- If you can, try to get to a **safe place**, away from the abuser
- If you are experiencing pain or have injuries, **consider seeking medical treatment**
- Consider **seeking counselling, and/or reach out to someone you trust** – family, support worker, caregiver, health care professional, seniors centre, legal professionals, members of faith communities
- **Prepare a safety plan** in case you need to leave your home quickly. This safety plan should outline the steps to take when exiting an abusive situation, including:
 - o identifying safe places to go (e.g. friends, family, community shelters, etc.)
 - o having a list of medications and important phone numbers
 - o having taxi or bus fare prepared
 - o planning for pets (if applicable), including a place for them to go if they cannot go with you, or having someone care for them at home

 **Help is available! Although you may not want to take any action, or leave the situation, it is important you know there are options and help available to you.** 

USEFUL RESOURCES

ONTARIO

Ministry of the Attorney General's Victim Support Line 1-888-579-2888 (Toll Free)
www.ontario.ca/victimservices

Seniors Safety Line 1-866-299-1011 (Toll Free)

Seniors INFOline 1-888-910-1999 (Toll Free)
TTY 1-800-387-5559
www.ontario.ca/seniors

Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario 416-916-6728
www.elderabuseontario.com

Advocacy Centre for the Elderly 1-416-598-2656
www.advocacycentreelderly.org

ALBERTA

Kerby Rotary House (403) 705-3250 (Calgary)
(Kerby Rotary House is the first and only full-service shelter in Canada for abused seniors)

Older Women's Long-term Survival (OWLS) Support Group 403-253-2912 (Calgary)

Edmonton Seniors Safe Housing 780-702-1520

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Seniors First BC

Phone: 604-437-1940

Toll-Free: 1-866-437-1940

<http://seniorsfirstbc.ca/>

MANITOBA

Seniors' Abuse Support Line

1-888-896-7183

Toll-free 24 hours:

NEW BRUNSWICK

Crossroads for Women Inc./
Carrefour pour femmes Inc.

Phone: 506-857-4184

Crisis/Urgence: 506-853-0811

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

NWT Seniors Society
Senior Info Line

Toll free: 1-800-661-0878

Phone: 867-920-7444 in
Yellowknife

www.nwtseniorssociety.ca

NUNAVUT

Qimaavik Women's Shelter

Phone: 867-979-4566

24hr crisis line: 867-979-4500

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Office of Seniors

Telephone: (902) 620-3785

SASKATCHEWAN

Saskatchewan Seniors
Mechanism

Phone: (306) 359-9956

Toll free 1-888-823-2211

www.skseniorsmechanism.ca

YUKON

Victim Link

1-800-563-0808

(24-hour crisis line)

For more province-specific resources visit:
<https://cnpea.ca/en/what-is-elder-abuse/get-help>

Canadian References:

Canadian Government. Facts on the Physical and Sexual Abuse of Seniors.

<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/esdc-edsc/documents/campaigns/elder-abuse/physicalandsexual.pdf>

CARP (Canadian Association for Retired Persons). Elder Abuse Resources, where to look, who to call, and how to talk to someone you think might be a victim. <http://www.carp.ca/2013/06/14/elder-abuse-resources-where-to-look-who-to-call-and-how-to-talk-to-someone-you-think-might-be-a-victim/>

Ontario Government. What you need to know about elder abuse.

https://files.ontario.ca/what_you_need_to_know_about_elder_abuse.pdf

Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime (2006). Elder Abuse.

https://crcvc.ca/docs/elder_abuse.pdf

Other References:

Gold Coast Sexual Assault Support Services (2002).

<http://www.stopsexualviolence.com/information/info-for-victims-survivors.php>

Brandl, B. (2016). Working with Older Survivors of Abuse: A framework for Advocates. National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL). Office on Violence Against Women (OVW).

National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL) (2013). An Overview of Abuse in Later Life.

http://s3-us-east-2.amazonaws.com/ncall/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/04145613/Overview__Abuse_Later_Life.pdf

Ramsey- Klawnsnik, H. (2009). Sexual Violence in Later Life: A Technical Assistance Guide for Advocates.

Retrieved from http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications_SVlaterlife_Guide.pdf

This fact sheet was created as part of the CNPEA project
Increasing Access to Justice for Older Victims of Sexual Assault

Also available: Sexual Abuse in Later Life - A Fact Sheet for
Caregivers, Service Providers, Friends and Families

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**For more information about this project and for additional
resources, visit www.cnpea.ca**