




**Canadian Mental  
Health Association**  
Waterloo Wellington  
Dufferin

**Association canadienne  
pour la santé mentale**  
Waterloo Wellington  
Dufferin

# Seniors at Risk Overview

Laura Sullivan, MSc,  
February 20 2020

# Agenda

- Overview of SGS
  - Overview of Seniors at Risk
  - Review of 3 Risk Categories
  - Considerations and Options
  - Prevention
  - Community Supports
- 

# Community Support for Older Adults

- LHIN

- Homecare
- Day Programs
- Respite
- Long term care

- Specialized Geriatric Services

- Geriatric Medicine \*
- Geriatric Psychiatry \*
- CRBT \*
- IGSW \*
- Seniors at Risk

\* Requires a doctor referral

# Seniors at Risk

- Elder abuse
- Environmental Risk
- Functional Safety

# Referral Sources

- Hospitals
- Police
- LHIN/SGS
- Family/Friends/Neighbours
- Community Agencies  
(gatekeepers)

# What is Abuse of Older Adults?

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines abuse of older adults as “a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of **trust**, which **causes harm or distress** to an older person.

- *usually by someone they know and often by someone they care about.*
- *limits or controls the rights and freedoms*

• *Its Not Right ([itsnotright.ca](http://itsnotright.ca))*

# Forms of Abuse

- Financial
- Emotional
- Physical
- Sexual
- Neglect



Information in the following slides defining the forms and indicators of abuse can be referenced at [www.elderabsueontario.com](http://www.elderabsueontario.com)

# Financial Abuse

- Most common form of abuse
- “Improper conduct, done with or without the informed consent of the senior that results in a monetary or personal gain to the abuser and/or monetary or personal loss for the older adult.”



# Types of Financial Abuse

- Misuse of Power of Attorney
- Theft; Fraud (mail or phone)
- Sharing the senior's home without paying a fair share of the expenses.
- Unduly pressuring a senior to:
  - Move from, sell, or relinquish his or her home or other personal property
  - Sign legal documents that they do not fully understand
  - Give money to relatives or caregivers

# Emotional Abuse

- Also known as Psychological Abuse
- “Any action, verbal or non-verbal, that lessens a person’s sense of identity, dignity and self-worth”

# Indicators of Emotional Abuse

- Low self-esteem, withdrawal
- Tearfulness
- Lack of eye contact
- Fearfulness – Nervous around caregiver or other persons
- Reluctance to talk openly, waits for caregiver to respond to questions asked of them
- Helplessness
- Insomnia/sleep deprivation/fatigue,

Examples: threats, name calling, yelling, derogatory comments;  
Often occurs when one person is more dependent [Emotional Abuse - Elder Abuse Ontario](#)

# Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any act of violence or rough handling that may or may not result in physical injury but causes physical discomfort or pain.

- Unwanted physical contact
- Exerting greater force than is necessary

# Indicators of Physical Abuse

- Unexplained injuries such as broken bones, bruises, bumps, cuts, grip marks
- Discrepancies between injury and explanation from the senior
- Unusual patterns of injuries
- Seen by different doctors or hospitals
- Bruising and abrasions

## **Other Signs of physical abuse:**

- Signs of under/over medication
- Broken eyeglasses
- Signs of being restrained

# Sexual Abuse

- Any sexual behaviour directed toward an older adult without that person's full knowledge and consent
- Includes sexual contact with seniors who are unable to grant consent and unwanted sexual contact between service providers and their elderly clients

# Neglect

Neglect is not meeting the basic needs of the older person.

- Can be intentional (active) or unintentional (passive)
- Based on reasonable expectations

# Indicators of Neglect

- Withholding care or denying access to necessary services (home care, nursing) or medical attention
- Leaving a person in an unsafe place
- Improper use of medication – over/under medicating
- Not providing food or liquids, proper clothing or hygiene, mobility aids
- Failure to assist with activities of daily living
- Abandonment
- Denial of a senior's basic rights



# Environmental Risk

- Hoarding
- Isolation
- Property Concerns
- Pets/Animals
- Fire Safety

# Functional Risk

- Wandering
- Falls
- Medication Compliance
- Delusions

# Considerations

- Impact of Risk
- Probability
- Risk Tolerance
- Capacity

# Things to Remember

## *offering support in the moment*

- Listen - talk to the senior
- We are supporting adults not children
- Do not jump to conclusions
- Do not be judgmental
- Do not make accusations - be supportive

# Lowering Risk

- Power of Attorney Documents
  - Power of Attorney for Property
  - Power of Attorney for Personal Care
- Advanced Care Planning
- Awareness of Scams/Fraud
- Stay Connected!

# Guelph Wellington Community Support for Elder Abuse

- **Seniors at Risk Clinical Consultant:** 519-821-8089 x2049 (CMHA WWD)
- Seniors at Risk Consultation Team
- Women in Crisis – Counselling and Support, Groups 519-836-5710
- Emergency Retirement Home Placement Program – Wellington County Social Services
- Police -911
- Here 24/7 Crisis Line 1-844-437-3247

## Other Community Services:

- VON – Transportation, Support workers 519-323-3220
- LHIN – homecare and long-term care
- Alzheimer Society of Waterloo Wellington
- Vulnerable Seniors Lead 519-821-8089 x7030 (CMHA WWD)

Thank you

Questions?