

Elder Abuse

Chapter Contents

- Elder Abuse
- Crisis Information
- Crisis Services
- Other Services & Information
- Safe Accommodations

ELDER ABUSE

Elder abuse is defined as any action or inaction that jeopardizes the health or well-being of an older adult. It includes denial of an older adult's fundamental rights and neglect (active or passive) by a caregiver. It can take many forms including: financial, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

An abuser can be anyone, but most often it is a family member or partner. Abusers can also be friends or caregivers. They are most often close enough to have influence or control over the victim.

Abuse includes using name calling, threats, yelling, put-downs and physical intimidation to control the senior's actions or decisions. It also includes taking money or possessions without permission and using coercion to have a senior sign documents. In many cases, the older adult feels they have to give in or agree to something in order to avoid escalation or to ensure their safety. Sometimes abuse can unintentionally occur due to caregiver stress. With additional supports for the older adult and the caregiver, some of this stress can be relieved. Victims include both males and females from every income level and culture, as well as people in both good and poor health

Signs of abuse:

Older adults being abused may become withdrawn, depressed and isolated. They may have financial difficulty, unexplained injuries, anxiety and difficulty sleeping. They may have changes in hygiene, nutrition or medication. They may experience diminishing self-esteem.

Some effects of abuse can include:

Abused or neglected older adults have a 200% increased risk of early death. The stress of living in an abusive situation shortens older people's lives by several years on average. Living with abuse and Elder Abuse neglect can also significantly increase the person's chances of becoming ill or may make other health problems worse. Up to 6% of abused older adults become severely depressed.

www.seniors.alberta.ca/services/resources/elderabuse/Fact4_WEAAD_E.pdf

Overlooking Warning Signs

Sometimes these signs of abuse are mistaken as a part of growing older or may look like other health conditions. For example, mental confusion, depression or

IF YOU THINK A SENIOR IS BEING ABUSED:

1. Call the Seniors' Abuse Helpline: **780.454.8888.**
2. Contact your local police, RCMP department or tribal police immediately when abuse involves theft, assault or other illegal actions.
3. You can also report abuse in a care facility through the Protection for Persons in Care Reporting Line (toll free) 1.888.357.9339.

anxiety resulting from abuse or neglect may look like dementia. People may not realize that sometimes older adults are experiencing frequent falls or have long-term pain because they are being abused or neglected. Ageism can also play a factor in why these warning signs are overlooked. Ageism is a social attitude and a way of looking at older people that stereotypes them. For example, often in situations of abuse, older people aren't taken seriously because they are viewed as being forgetful and seen as complainers.

18 per cent of 800 Albertans surveyed stated they knew a senior who experienced abuse. (2003 Omnibus Survey, Alberta Elder Abuse Awareness Network)

Resources for older adults experiencing abuse or those concerned about a senior.

CRISIS INFORMATION

Seniors Abuse Help Line 780.454.8888
(24-hour) information and support line for older adults experiencing abuse and for their families and friends.

Alberta Family Violence Information Line 780.310.1818 toll-free
(24 hour) for information and referrals. Interpreters for many languages available.

Community Resource Information 211
Information about services, programs, agencies in Edmonton.

CRISIS SERVICES

Sage Seniors' Safe House 780.702.1520
Offers temporary accommodation for seniors leaving abusive situations including furnished suites, meals, peer and staff support. www.mysage.ca

EAIT (Elder Abuse Intervention Team)

Suite 301, 11436 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 0M1
Phone 780.477.2929

www.catholicsocialservices.ab.ca

- For seniors (65+) who are at high risk of abuse or are experiencing abuse from a family member or unrelated caregiver.
- The team is made up through a collaborative effort between City of Edmonton Community Services, the Edmonton Police Service, Victorian Order of Nurses and Catholic Social Services.
- If you suspect a criminal offence has occurred and a police investigation is needed, call the Edmonton Police Service Complaint Line at 780.423.4567 or in an emergency call **911**.

EARS (Elderly Adult Resource Services)

Suite 301, 11436 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 0M1
Phone 780.477.2929

www.catholicsocialservices.ab.ca

- Services for seniors (65+) who have questions or concerns about elder abuse.
- Can assist in developing safety plans, protection orders, court processes and referrals to community resources.

Edmonton Protection Order Program 780.422.9222

Provides assistance through the process of obtaining an Emergency Protection Order.

Elder Abuse

**Family Violence Prevention Centre
780.423.1635**

www.johnhoward.org

A service through Edmonton John Howard Society. Provides free confidential services to individuals impacted by family violence. Provides ongoing emotional and practical supports. Is client centered, culturally sensitive, and conscious of the needs of diverse groups. Uses risk management tools & safety plans. Offers court prep through the domestic violence court process. Services are offered in various languages.

**OTHER SERVICES &
INFORMATION****Addiction and Mental Health
780.427.2736**

2nd Floor 10010-102 A Ave

Drop-in hours available Mon-Fri.
Call for hours.

Information, supports and services for those using substances, or concerned family and friends of people who may have an addiction. www.albertahealth-services.ca

**Alberta Elder Abuse Awareness Network
(AEAAN)**

- A network of Albertans dedicated to increasing awareness and supporting a community response to elder abuse.
- AEAAN is a province-wide network of professionals, represented by communities across Alberta
- Promoting the well-being of older adults, working to increase community awareness, developing resources to address elder abuse, and strengthening the right to safety, respect and dignity. www.albertaelderabuse.ca/

• *See Counselling section of Directory page 78 for support groups*

**Alberta Seniors and Community Supports
1.800.642.3853****Edmonton Area: 780.427.7876**

Alberta government benefits for seniors, including financial assistance and assistance for special needs, optical and dental, prescriptions, property taxes, etc. www.seniors.gov.ab.ca

City of Edmonton Services 311

Free short term counselling and individual assistance, support groups for men, women, seniors, including Relationships With Your Adult Children and support groups for people experiencing family violence. Information and referrals are also available. Seniors Coordinator seniors@edmonton.ca

**Health Link (Edmonton Area)
780.408.LINK (5465)**

- Health advice and information provided by registered nurses 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week.
- Health Link Alberta also provides comprehensive information on services offered by Alberta Health Services (Edmonton Area) and can direct you to the most appropriate hospital or community services and programs.

**Office of the Public Guardian
780.427.0017 or 780.427.4525**

Seniors and Community Supports
4th Floor, 9942 108 St. NW T5K 2J5
www.seniors.gov.ab.ca/opg

- Provides decision-making mechanisms for individuals who are unable to make personal non-financial decisions for themselves
- Provides protective measures for

vulnerable adults through a complaint and investigation process.

Office of the Public Trustee 780.427.2744

Protects the financial interests of vulnerable Albertans by administering their estates.

Protection for Persons in Care (PPC) 1.888.357.9339

Addresses reports of abuse and administers the new *Protection for Persons in Care Act* that came into effect on July 1, 2010. PPC promotes the safety and well-being of adult Albertans who receive care or support services from publicly funded service providers such as: hospitals; nursing homes; seniors' lodges; shelters; mental health facilities and other supportive living settings. The Act requires that all service providers protect clients from abuse and maintain a reasonable level of safety. It is a requirement to report abuse to PPC or police. www.seniors.alberta.ca/PPC

Service Canada

See Seniors' Information Services - Consumer Resources for complete listing and contact information.

Questions about Old Age Security (OAS) or Canada Pension Plan (CPP)?

See pages 60-61 for detailed Pension information.

Disclaimer: Although **Sage** - Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton - attempts to monitor the advertising and listings in this publication, the claims of advertisers and those made in listings are not the claims of **Sage** and are not endorsed by **Sage**.

www.alis.gov.ab.ca/welcometoalberta.ca

SAFE ACCOMMODATIONS:

Sage Seniors' Safe House 780.702.1520

Temporary accommodation specifically for older adults (60+) who are needing safety due to an abusive situation. Staff is available on site to provide support and information about community resources, safety planning, financial benefits, and more.

A Safe Place 780.464.7233

WIN House 780.479.0058

Lurana Shelter 780.424.5875

For additional information for women's shelters in Alberta, contact the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters at **1.866.331.3933** or www.acws.ca

Remember **June 15** is **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.**

Plan to attend.

For more information see the **Sage** website at www.mysage.ca/elderabuse.cfm or phone the

Elder Abuse Intervention Team at **780.496.5932.**

Sage - Senior Association of Greater Edmonton, would like to thank all the business and organizations that advertise in the Directory of Senior Services 2011.

Your support for this important community resource is very much appreciated