



# Seniors **SAFE** **HOUSE**

*sage*  
Sage Seniors Association

The Seniors Safe House provides temporary accommodation for men and women 60 years of age and older who are in need of refuge after leaving an abusive situation.

Qualified social work staff provide the holistic case management, peer support, professional and practical assistance, and connections to community resources that help residents deal with all the areas of their lives that have been impacted by abuse.

Safe House staff and residents are fully supported by Sage's broader programming, including Life Enrichment activities, Social Work supports, and Volunteer Services.

## **WHY A SAFE HOUSE FOR SENIORS?**

Though shelters exist to support women and children who are experiencing abuse, research indicates that women's shelters are not equipped to deal with the issues of older adults - nor can they house men or couples experiencing elder abuse.

The needs of older adults are different to those of younger women; older adults often have mobility or complex health needs that require unique supports that the Seniors Safe house can help with.

The Seniors Safe House provides necessary security and safety for seniors while they work towards a life free of abuse. Other shelters operate on a communal living model that can be stressful for seniors.

The Seniors Safe House has seven individual furnished living units that offer residents the privacy and independence needed to engage in their best lives free from abuse.

Seniors are provided with the support necessary to navigate complex and confusing systems successfully, while maintaining their level of independence and dignity. **Of those who receive support and shelter at the Safe House, 85-90% do NOT return to their abuser.**





Elder abuse is a highly complex social and public health issue. The personal, social, and economic implications of elder abuse are significant to the victims, their families, and the local community, as well as to the health and justice systems. Ageism enables elder abuse to go unrecognized and the consequences to be overlooked.

Types of elder abuse include:

- › Emotional abuse
- › Financial abuse
- › Physical abuse
- › Sexual abuse
- › Neglect
- › Medication abuse

Two-thirds of Safe House residents have experienced more than one type of abuse.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

Recognizing that abuse often impacts all parts of their lives, residents of the Safe House develop a plan with their assigned social worker which identifies needs and develops goals related to health, finances, housing, safety planning, employment or volunteer work, social and emotional supports, personal relationships, and independence.

People who come to the Safe House often have unresolved health issues to address: Safe House social workers connect clients as needed to the necessary medical resources, including weekly nursing support, connection to Community Geriatric Psychiatry, Home Living supports, and other specialists.

When financial abuse has occurred, social workers assist in securing bank accounts and initiate changes to relevant information required by pension and benefits administrators.

**Safe House social workers** maintain collaborative relationships with housing service providers to ensure that clients are able to move from the Safe House into safe, appropriate housing that meets the full range of their needs.

The **Safe House Follow Up Coordinator** provides continuity of services for clients who are transitioning into the community - working with clients to ensure that they are safe in their new environment and able to access community supports once they leave the Safe House.

### **An Intensive Case Management (ICM)**

Coordinator provides support to seniors who are on the waitlist, as well as to seniors who are ineligible or, based on individual circumstances, choose not to seek refuge. All clients served by the ICM Coordinator are experiencing some form of elder abuse: individuals may be staying in hotels or other temporary accommodation, or are living with an abuser. The ICM Coordinator provides comprehensive, wrap-around support to these community-based clients.

The ICM Coordinator also provides support to clients of the Seniors Protection Partnership (SPP), a team of specialized police officers and social workers who provide immediate intervention in high risk situations.



» The **Seniors Overcoming Abusive Relationships (SOAR)** group is a skill building support group for current and past clients that blends peer support with learning about the cycle of abuse.

» An **Indigenous Elder** provides peer support to shelter residents, leading a talking circle twice a month with access to ceremony, offering guidance and one-one support.



## Annual Safe House Numbers

over  
**300**

CALLS ARE RECEIVED BY  
THE SAFE HOUSE INTAKE  
LINE REQUESTING  
INFORMATION OR  
CRISIS SUPPORT



**35** OLDER ADULTS FIND REFUGE  
AT THE SENIORS SAFE HOUSE

.....  
**WAIT TIME FOR ADMISSION: 6 DAYS AVERAGE**  
.....

**AVERAGE STAY**



**70** DAYS

**RANGE**

**2-285** DAYS

## WHAT INCREASES LENGTH OF STAY?

- › Access to affordable housing
- › Finding pet-friendly homes
- › Need for designated assisted living
- › Need for accessible housing
- › Need or desire to relocate outside of Edmonton
- › Access to income
- › Unstable health issues



It can be a gut-wrenching experience to make the decision to change your life, to stand up for yourself and step outside of your comfort zone and take the life-altering advance- stepping into a new and unfamiliar environment...  
but now we look forward into a brighter future.

— **Safe House Client**

# GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES



While Sage receives funding from the provincial government for core staff and basic operations, there are significant gaps for which additional resources are always required. The funding does not cover toiletries and basic care items for residents during their stay, regular mattress replacements, furniture and building upgrades.

Sage consistently seeks to better address elder abuse in the community. Funding is continually sought for initiatives such as increasing awareness and outreach to underserved populations and working with women's shelters to better understand the unique needs of older women.

Sage is actively engaged within provincial and national shelter networks and advocacy. The **Seniors Safe House** in Edmonton was established by Sage in 2000 and remains the only service of its kind in Northern Alberta.

In 2022, the Seniors Safe House was recognized with a Minister's Seniors Service Award for innovation and outstanding service by an organization that serves Alberta seniors.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP?

### **Raise awareness of elder abuse**

Educate yourself and raise awareness with others. Elder abuse is still under the radar - ageism is a contributing factor.

### **Be a Community Champion**

Engage your network in learning and/or fundraising. Ask us about opportunities.

### **Make a contribution**

Donations help sustain the level of support that has demonstrated effectiveness in helping seniors move forward from abuse. Ongoing support has the greatest impact.

## ABOUT SAGE

Sage Seniors Association (Sage) is a community-based senior-serving not-for-profit organization that works with the strengths of individuals and communities in the greater Edmonton area. Underwriting a holistic spectrum of services and programs is a vision of a community where all seniors are valued and have the opportunity to live according to their beliefs, abilities, and aspirations.

**When you support Sage, you support seniors.**

### **Charitable Registration**

No. 11915 4839 RR0001

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