

# Who We Are

Elder Abuse Ontario (EAO) is a non-profit charitable organization incorporated since February 1992. EAO is governed by an elected volunteer Board, representing seniors and their issues from across the province of Ontario. EAO's major funder is the Government of Ontario. Specific project funding is received from a variety of foundations as well as private donors.

EAO has seven Regional Consultants serving the province of Ontario, offering organizations customized training and education for their staff. Regional Consultants also perform outreach activities for seniors' groups, and further the cause of abuse prevention at conferences and events.

## Mission Statement

*Our mission is to create an Ontario that is free from abuse for all seniors, through awareness, education, training, collaboration, service co-ordination and advocacy.*

## Vision

We envision an Ontario where seniors are safe and respected.

## Ontario Strategy to Combat Elder Abuse

- ONPEA is responsible for implementing this provincial strategy, which includes:
  - i. Strengthening community co-ordination of resources
  - ii. Training and education for front line staff
  - iii. Raising awareness of elder abuse and available community resources

## Tools and Resources

- Interactive website – [www.elderabuseontario.com](http://www.elderabuseontario.com)
- Core Curriculum and Resource Guide
- e-Tools and Assessment Guidelines
- Training DVDs, customized educational resources
- Up-to-date information regarding local elder abuse networks and contact information

## Seniors Safety Line – 1-866-299-1011

- Provides 24/7 toll free line to support abused seniors and their families in over 150 languages.

## Elder Vibrancy Campaign

- Collection of eight paintings celebrating the vibrancy of seniors while raising awareness of ageism and promoting a positive perception of aging.

# Starting the Conversation

**Remember, no one deserves to be abused or mistreated. Consider telling:**

- someone you trust
- someone who will listen and support you.

## **Who Can You Tell?**

- Family Member or Relative
- Friend, neighbour
- Lawyer/Accountant
- Community Centre Staff
- Consider bringing a friend with you when you decide to speak with someone about the abuse
- Clergy/Faith Leader
- Physician
- Police
- Staff at the Seniors' Centre or Seniors' Group

## **How to Start the Conversation.**

- Pick a time when you will have privacy and not feel rushed
- Say "I have a serious problem that has been happening for....." [mention the length of time]

## **Describe what has been happening.**

**My son, daughter, friend, caregiver... has not been treating me well. He/she has:**

- Used my money for themselves
- Taken money from my bank account without my permission
- Denied me access to my money/possessions
- Forced me to appoint him/her the Power of Attorney
- Forced me to sign over my house
- Forced me to give him/her my PIN # and bank account information
- Prohibited me from visiting my friends/family or having them visit me
- Forbidden me from using the telephone to speak with friends or family and blocks all callers from speaking to me.

**My son, daughter, friend, caregiver... has been abusive by:**

- Pushing me
- Slapping me
- Threatening me
- Saying hurtful things to me
- Not providing adequate food, shelter, medicines
- Shoving me
- Yelling at me
- Saying untrue and unkind things to me
- Ignoring me

**When this happens, it makes me feel:**

- Sad
- Helpless
- Lonely
- Humiliated
- Embarrassed
- Depressed
- Angry
- Disrespected
- Frightened

**I want you to help me by:**

- Listening and supporting me.
- Helping me to safeguard my finances and money.
- Taking me to a lawyer to make a new Power of Attorney or Will.
- Helping me to move somewhere safe.
- Talking to the abuser with me.
- Working with me to solve this problem.
- Calling an agency for help.
- Checking with me before you take any action.

Please don't share this with anyone else unless you have my permission.

This was very hard for me to talk about. Thank you for listening.





## HOW TO ASK ABOUT ABUSE

# Starting the Conversation

Abuse is a difficult and emotional topic to approach. Make sure that seniors know they are not at fault and that they are not alone. Listen carefully to what they say and let them know you are there to support them and to help. Reassure them that you will respect their confidence and ask them what they would like to do about the abuse.

Keep an open mind and do not be judgmental. Typically the senior has a relationship with the abuser and does not want anything bad to happen to that person. The senior may be fearful of making things worse and may be feeling vulnerable and afraid.

### Sample conversation:

**Mary:** Sam, I am very concerned about what I have been seeing and hearing. (Describe what you have been seeing and hearing.)

**Mary:** This bothers me because it is wrong and you do not deserve to be treated this way. It worries me to see you feeling (describe) and I am worried that (describe specific concern).

**Mary:** You are not to blame for the problem and I want to help, but first, tell me what you would like to do? I will respect your wishes. (Listen to what the senior has to say and encourage them to tell you what they want to do.)

**Mary:** I realize how difficult that was for you to share with me. I will not share this with anyone or do anything without your permission. Let's look at some of the options and see what you think about them. (Share some of the resources that you have found. Most importantly follow through and continue to support the senior.)

What if the senior refuses your help?

Do not feel badly if your first offer of help is rejected. This can be a common initial reaction. Seniors often need time to think. **Try this as a response:**

**Mary:** Okay. I will respect your wishes. I just want you to know that you can talk to me anytime. Is it ok if I ask you about this next time I visit?



## KEEPING YOUR MONEY SAFE

# What You Need to Know

As you age, some people, such as family members, telemarketers, or con-artists may try to take advantage of you and your money.

### What Can You Do?

- Arrange direct deposit for your cheques into your own bank account.
- Talk to your bank manager about changing your accounts so only you have access to them.
- Speak to your bank manager by yourself, that is, in the absence of your power of attorney, to make sure the bank is aware of your desires and following your directions.
- Set up automatic payments for your bills.
- Keep your PIN number safe and DO NOT share with anyone.
- Keep track of all transactions and regularly review bank statements and financial records, even if you have a Power of Attorney doing this for you.
- Consult your own lawyer to draft a Power of Attorney document and a Will.
- Choose people you trust to make decisions about your money.
- Before you sign any document make sure you fully understand it or wait until you have someone you trust review it.
- Lend money only if you want to and always have a signed plan for repayment, even for family members.
- If anyone is taking advantage of you or your money – TELL SOMEONE.
- Be aware of your rights.

### Where to Get Help

- Speak to clergy, your family physician, a community agency, staff at the seniors' centre or your local elder abuse network.
- Call the police or OPP. Many regions have officers who specialize in working with seniors.  
Remember that calling the police/OPP does not mean that the person abusing you will automatically be charged. You can just speak to them to find out what options are available or to get information.
- Call the toll free Seniors Safety Line – **1-866-299-1011**. The Seniors Safety Line operates 24/7 and in over 150 languages. They can assist you with Safety Planning and direct you to resources available in your community.
- If you wish to remain anonymous, call Senior Crime Stoppers at **1-800-222-TIPS (8477)**





## WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT ABUSE



### **In the community:**

#### **If senior is in immediate danger:**

- Dial **911**
- Stay with the senior and offer support and reassurance until help arrives

#### **If senior is not in immediate danger:**

- Investigate further to get the facts, ensuring that your information is clear and accurate
- Do not do anything until you speak to the abused senior, unless they are not competent.
- Ask the abused senior what they want to do and provide reassurance and support.
- Find out what help is available for the senior and share this information with them.
- Call the toll free Seniors Safety Line (**1-866-299-1011**) to get information about what help is available in your community.
- Check the ONPEA website at [www.onpea.org](http://www.onpea.org) for additional information and resources.
- For a non-competent senior call the police or the Office of the Public Guardian & Trustee (**1-800-366-0335**)
- Stay connected with the senior and follow up.

### **In a Long term Care Facility:**

#### **If senior is in immediate danger:**

- Dial **911**
- Stay with the senior and offer support and reassurance until help arrives

#### **If senior is not in immediate danger:**

- Report your suspicions to the Director of Care or the administrator of the facility.
- Call the Long Term Care ACTION Line to report your concerns: **1-866-434-0144**
- Stay connected with the senior and follow up.

**PROTECT YOURSELF FROM ABUSE**

# Stay Connected

**Protect Yourself from Abuse by:**

- Staying in touch with friends and family.
- Setting times for regular phone calls or visits with loved ones and friends.
- Joining a group and meeting new friends.
- Staying physically and mentally active.
- Volunteering and sharing your skills.
- Becoming involved in community programs and finding out what resources are available.

**If you are being abused, you are not alone, help is available.**

**For emergencies, dial 911**



**Seniors Safety Line**

**For Safety Planning and learning about local resources, dial the toll free**

**Seniors Safety Line: 1-866-299-1011 Operates 24 hours - 7 days a week in over 150 languages**

**Other agencies that can help include:**

**OPP: 1-888-310-1122**

**Senior Crime Stoppers: 1-800-222-TIPS (8477)**