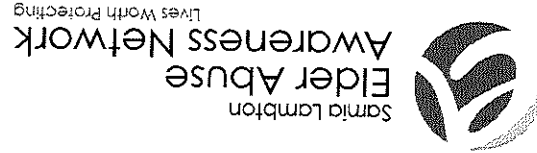


Elder Abuse Prevention Information for Seniors



Sarnia Lambton
Elder Abuse Awareness Network
Lives Worth Protecting

This information has been provided by:

The Sarnia-Lambton Elder Abuse Awareness Network

This committee consists of: community service providers, nurses, related health care professionals, social workers and police. The role of the committee is to educate others, advocate for older adults and provide information.



www.sleaan.com



Sarnia-Lambton Coordinating Committee on Violence Against Women



Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario

WHAT IS ABUSE OF OLDER ADULTS?

Abuse of older adults is any harm done to an older person that is violent or abusive. The abuse is often a **crime**. The abuse can be caused by:

- a family member
- a friend
- a landlord
- a stranger
- staff in residential homes
- anyone the older person relies on for basic needs
- by a person in a position of trust

TYPES OF ABUSE MAY INCLUDE:

- Physical Abuse
- Financial Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect
- Emotional Abuse

VIOLATION/DENIAL OF HUMAN/CIVIL RIGHTS

Any action or inaction that takes away the basic rights and freedoms to which all Canadians/residents are entitled.

Abusive Behaviours:

Withholding or restricting access to information • Restricting right to privacy
Denying access to religious worship • Denying opportunity for informed consent
Interference with or censoring mail • Unwanted confinement • Restricting social contact
Accessing personal information (e.g., email, online bank account) without permission
Restricting access to community supports • Denial of independent legal advice
Restriction of liberty • Threatening deportation

Possible Indicators:

Rarely seen outside • Not making or receiving calls • Isolation
Not seeing family or friends, or not attending faith or social gatherings
Restricted access - difficulty visiting, calling, or otherwise contacting an older adult
An older adult makes excuses for social isolation • Not allowed to express opinions or to vote
Not receiving information to enable an informed choice
Not given opportunity to understand documents being signed

For further information...

Sarnia Lambton Elder Abuse Awareness Network..... www.sleaan.com
Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre..... 1-888-495-8501
www.antifraudcentre.ca
Age Friendly Sarnia Lambton..... www.agefriendlysarnialambton.ca
The Competition Bureau of Canada..... 1-800-348-5358
www.competitionbureau.gc.ca
Sarnia Police Service (519) 344-8861
www.sarniapolice.com
Ontario Provincial Police (519) 882-1011
www.opp.ca
Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario www.eapon.ca
Financial Fitness Centre (519) 542-1130
Alzheimer Society Sarnia-Lambton (519) 332-4444
Women's Interval Home of Sarnia Lambton..... (519) 336-5200

WHO CAN I CONTACT FOR HELP & INFORMATION?

WHO CAN I CALL FOR HELP & INFORMATION?

Abused Persons Need To Remember...

- You are not alone
- You are not to blame
- You deserve all the time, care, attention and support you need.
- You have the right to talk about what happened.
- You deserve a better quality of life.
- It is never too late to heal.
- Help is available for you.
- Being the victim of abuse does not mean you cannot look after yourself.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CALL FOR IMMEDIATE HELP 9-1-1

Sarnia Police Service	(519) 344-8861
Lambton County O.P.P.	1-888-310-1122
Kettle Point - Anishinabek First Nation Police	(519) 786-5445
Victim Services (a service through your local police) ..	(519) 344-8861 ext. 5238 or 1-888-281-3665 ext. 5238
CMHA Crisis Line (Canadian Mental Health Association)	(519) 336-3445
Lambton Elderly Outreach.....	(519) 845-1353
Bluewater Health Sexual/Domestic Assault Treatment Centre	(519) 464-4522
Sexual Assault Survivors' Centre	(519) 337-3320
Victim Witness Assistance Program	(519) 337-1766
HRDC/Old Age Security & Canada Pension Plan	1-800-277-9914
Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee.....	1-800-891-0504
Sexual Assault Outreach	(519) 336-0120
Sarnia Lambton Elder Abuse Awareness Network	www.sleaan.com

Why Does Older Adult Abuse Happen?

There are many different reasons why abuse happens.

The abusive person may:

- be going through a time of high stress with their family.
- be struggling financially.
- have a history of concerning behaviour.
- have a history of family violence.
- have a drug or alcohol problem.

Someone who commits abuse usually has control or influence over the older person. The senior often knows and trusts the abusive person.

WHAT IS ABUSE?

WHAT IS NEGLECT?

WHAT IS IT?

Abandoning or failure to provide an older person with adequate provision of physical requirements, e.g. food, medical care, housing, medicine, clothing, physical aids. Also, inadequate provision of hygiene, supervision/safety precautions, or assistance with activities of daily living.

Signs and Symptoms...

- Malnourished, dehydrated
- Inadequate hygiene, open skin sores, soiled clothing/linen, unpleasant odours
- Being left alone though assistance/supervision required
- Not taking an elder to medical appointments
- Missing or broken glasses
- Missing dentures or hearing aids

HELP IS AVAILABLE

- Home support workers may be able to come into the home to help with personal care and household chores.
- Lambton County has several adult day programs that could be accessed on a regular basis to provide relief to the caregiver and socialization to the senior.
- Retirement Homes and Long Term Care Facilities offer “respite care.” This allows for your loved one to spend time away from home for a pre-arranged stay that could last a few days to a few weeks.
- Support or self-help groups help you to see that other caregivers are experiencing the same feelings as you are. Because group members are usually strangers, it's a safe place to share thoughts, vent anger or talk about feelings you might be ashamed of. Two programs that offer support include:
 - Lambton Elderly Outreach provides support and transportation to individuals. Call (519) 845-1353 or 1-800-265-0203.
 - Alzheimer Society Sarnia-Lambton offers caregiver support and respite care for Alzheimer clients call (519) 332-4444 or 1-800-334-8529.

Remember, even the best caregivers need help. You should not consider it a failure if you do. For more information on the suggestions above, please call the Home & Community Care Support Services at (519) 337-1000.

County of Lambton – Adult Enrichment Centres

Petrolia Site: Lambton Meadowview Villa
3958 Petrolia Line, R.R. # 4 Petrolia, Ontario, N0N 1R0
(519) 882-1470 ext. 5505

Sarnia Site: Marshall Gowland Manor
749 Devine Street, Sarnia, Ontario N7T 1X3
(519) 336-3720 ext. 5704

CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER

As a caregiver, you may become overwhelmed with the responsibilities and demands placed on you. The following information came from a study based on caregivers of individuals with memory loss, however, the feelings described below may be felt by a caregiver in any situation. Read through the following stages. Can you relate to what is being described? If so, it is important to access the help that is available. Decide how much you are able to give, and then accept that there are limits to what you or anyone else can do in this situation.

Stage 1 • Caregiver is anxious to provide best care possible for loved one. Maintains the house, garden and car. Attends to family. "Keeps up appearances." Helps person through social situations. Remains optimistic, caring, supportive. Operates as "superwoman/superman." Attends to personal care. Denies problems.

Stage 2 • Caregiver begins to take medications, usually for sleep or headaches. It becomes harder and harder to keep on top of things. Some help from family is still available.

Stage 3 • Emotional and physical resources are drained. Less and less contact with people, doctor/dentist/minister/friends. Caregiver experiences feelings of powerlessness. Caregiving consumes the whole day and night. Outside help dwindles away.

Stage 4 • Stress becomes harder to conceal. Caregiver begins taking tranquilizers. Sleep is continually disturbed. Caregiver becomes irritable. Less and less contact with others is made. There is danger of abuse.

Stage 5 • Caregiver feels unhealthy. Finds it hard to get up in the morning. Never feels rested. May have hypertension/colitis. Symptoms of chronic fatigue. Caregiver loses the will to take care of self. Is unable to manage the household. Rarely socializes with others. Feel helpless, guilty, a failure.

Stage 6 • Chronic state of fatigue. Caregiver is in a state of "unwell-ness." Is unable to ask for help. Becomes isolated. Is unable to access resources for information. Caregiver suffers from burnout. Caregiver burnout is characterized by exhaustion, frustration, and anger.

Signs of Neglect

- presence of fleas or lice
- urine burns
- listlessness, fatigue, confusion
- over-medicated or over-sedated

Suggestions and Safety Tips

- link to emergency services ie. medical, social, housing, etc.
- link to community services
- obtain legal advice
- have friends visit you at home
- if you move, keep in touch with old friends and neighbours

PHYSICAL ABUSE

WHAT IS IT?

Intentional infliction of physical harm to an older person by slapping, pushing, or beating, or by use of physical restraints in a room, bed or chair. Also includes physical coercion e.g. force feeding.

Signs and Symptoms...

- Depression, fear, anxiety, or passivity.
- Unexplained physical injuries, dehydration or malnourishment.
- Poor hygiene, genital bruising, or bed sores.
- Clustered bruising, parallel injuries, multiple fractures
- Burns

Call Consumer Protection Ontario at 1-800-889-9768 or visit <https://www.ontario.ca/page/consumer-protection-ontario>

On the Internet...

The Canadian Anti-Fraud Call Centre
www.antifraudcentre.ca

The Competition Bureau
www.competitionbureau.com

Government of Canada - GET CYBERSAFE.CA
www.getcybersafe.gc.ca

RCMP - Scams and Frauds
www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/scams

FACTS ABOUT FRAUD

Seniors are often targeted by criminals because they may live alone, isolated, may have disposable income and are trusting.

Fraudsters attack people using the internet, emails, telephone, mail or in person. Fraudsters are always in a rush for you to “Act Now”, “One Time Only” offers or they have a desperate situation and only you can help, and ...they want your money!

Tips and Red Flags...

- Never sign anything on the spot.
- Take your time, tell them you will contact them if you are interested further.
- Always obtain 3 separate quotes for work to be done, home repairs, etc.
- Research and verify the company or salesperson - call the Better Business Bureau, check on the internet.
- If they claim to be from your bank or card company, later call your bank or credit card company to see if they actually contacted you.
- You never have to pay a fee to collect a prize in Canada.
- You can't be a winner of a prize or lottery that you did not actually enter!
- Be very suspicious and wary of ANY unsolicited contact - through email, internet, telephone or regular mail.
- Never give out personal information, credit card numbers, banking information, S.I.N., etc. to unsolicited parties.
- Never share your P.I.N. with anyone.
- If the caller or internet fraudster asks for money, they usually want you to wire the money - Western Union, Money Gram, etc.
- Financial Institutions and credit card companies do not ask you for personal information over the internet, or by sending emails.
- If you are unsure or suspicious - say “no”, hang up, delete it, shred it.

SUGGESTIONS AND SAFETY TIPS

- maintain social contacts
- develop a buddy system with a friend outside the home
- don't live with somebody who has a history of violent behaviour or alcohol or drug abuse
- don't expect family problems to disappear when going to live with a relative
- seek counselling to empower yourself
- link yourself to community agencies for support services
- have regular medical and dental care
- periodically review your will
- designate power of attorney for health care and finances

PHYSICAL ABUSE

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

WHAT IS IT?

- Name calling and ignoring
- Threatening an older person
- Intimidation
- Isolation
- Scolding and shouting
- Provoking fear
- Humiliation
- Treating an older person like a child

Signs and Symptoms...

Noticeable in the Older Person

- low self-esteem
- agitation
- difficulty sleeping or needs excessive sleep
- withdrawal, passivity, resignation
- tearfulness
- feelings of hopelessness/helplessness
- unexplained fearfulness, particularly in the presence of the caregiver
- significant change of weight
- exclusion from family gatherings with the intention of isolation from possible supports
- no visitors/outings

Power of Attorney

A Power of Attorney is a legal document that gives someone (the attorney) the right to do things or make decisions on your behalf. There are two types:

- a) A **Power of Attorney for Property** authorizes your attorney to do anything with your property that you could do. "Property" includes your money, your home (if you own one) and your possessions. Your attorney can act for you in financial dealings such as banking, signing cheques, buying or selling real estate, and buying consumer goods. Power of Attorney for Property takes effect as soon as it is signed and witnessed, unless you state in the document that you want it to take effect at a later date. For example, if you want it to take effect only if you later become incapable of managing your finances, ask your lawyer to help you make this clear.
- b) A **Power of Attorney for Personal Care** gives someone the power to make personal care decisions on your behalf only if you become mentally incapable of making them yourself. Personal care decisions are decisions about your health care (including medical treatment), diet, housing, clothing, hygiene and safety. Having a Power of Attorney for Personal Care gives you a chance to say what you want and do not want. For example, if you don't want certain medical treatments in the event of serious illness, you can make this clear in your Power of Attorney.

It may be possible to revoke a Power of Attorney if the person appointed is not doing a good job. There are also ways to remove or replace attorneys. This may involve the Public Trustee or the Police. The first step is to get legal advice.

On the internet: The Office of the Public Guardian & Trustee
www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca

Financial Fitness – Not-for-Profit Credit Counselling Services
Sarnia Office, 420 East Street North, Sarnia, ON N7T 6Y5
Telephone: (519) 542-1130 • Toll Free: 1-877-777-9218

FINANCIAL ABUSE

WHAT IS FINANCIAL ABUSE?

WHAT IS IT?

It is the misuse of a senior's money, property or other assets by a relative or a person in a position of trust.

What are Some Examples of Financial Abuse?

- Forcing or tricking a senior into selling his or her property.
- Stealing money or personal possessions.
- Forging a signature.
- Misusing a Power of Attorney.

Financial Abuse is a crime.

You may not want to tell as you feel ashamed, embarrassed, guilty, fearful or protective of the abuser.

Warning Signs...

- Removing large sums of money or constant sums of money from the bank.
- Inability to pay bills or buy food that should not be a problem.
- Fear or anxiety to discuss finances.
- No knowledge of finances or what documents have been signed.

Suggestions...

- Keep money in a financial institution, rather than at home to avoid the risk of theft.
- Arrange to have cheques directly deposited into your account.
- Agree upon a schedule of repayment before loaning money to a relative.
- Find a person/lawyer you trust to review legal documents with you.
- Don't be pressured into signing any document. Talk to someone you trust first.

- deference to the caregiver (e.g., waits for the caregiver to respond to all questions/consultation.)

Noticeable in the Caregiver...

- speaks for elder
- is excessively involved with elder
- ignores needs and rights of the elder (e.g., makes decisions for the elder without their input).

Suggestions...

- Talk to someone you trust for support (friend, physician, health care worker)
- Contact Community Services (see attached phone numbers) for help and information
- Find out what options are available, such as housing, financial aid and legal services
- Know the emergency telephone number 9-1-1 and call in time of crisis
- If possible, speak to your caregiver about your feelings and suggest some possible changes

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

SENIORS & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

WHAT IS IT?

Sexual Assault is any form of sexual activity done to one person by another without his/her consent. This may include forced kissing, sexual touching, sexual intercourse, grabbing. Sexual assault is a criminal offense.

Signs and Symptoms may include...

- Physical • Bruising, genital bleeding, muscle soreness, infections, changes in sleeping and eating habits.
- Emotional • Denial, fear, guilt, anxiety, humiliation, shame, isolation, anger, depression, flashbacks

Safety Tips...

Based on information from seniors who have reported a sexual assault to the police:

- Senior women are often robbed and sexually assaulted at the same time. Do not keep large sums of money at home and do not allow strangers to see how much money you have with you.
- Seniors are more likely to be sexually assaulted in their own homes during the daylight hours. Make sure that all repairmen show identification and if you are in doubt, call the company before allowing anyone into your home.
- Seniors are often sexually assaulted by someone they don't know, such as a stranger who breaks into their home. Make sure all locks in your home are secure, and broken windows are repaired.

Making a choice to talk about a past or recent sexual assault is making a choice for health... and you are worth it!

HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS FOR SENIORS

- Seniors are more likely to be physically injured during a sexual assault.
- Bones may be more brittle.
- Muscles are not as strong and your joints are vulnerable to physical injury.
- Urinary tract or genital infection can develop following a sexual assault. Your body is not able to fight off infections as easily as it did when you were younger.

For these reasons, you should see a doctor if you have been sexually assaulted. You and your health are worth it!

Family Counselling Centre's Women's Outreach Program for women 50 years of age and older who have experienced sexual or assault at sometime in their lives. This confidential service is provided free of charge in your home or a office setting. To access this service contact the Family Counselling Centre: (519) 336-0120 or 1-800-831-3031 and ask to speak to intake.

The Women's Interval Home offers 24 hour emergency shelter services for women and children who have experienced domestic violence. There is also a crisis line available 24/7. Call 1-800-265-1412 or visit www.womensintervalhome.com

SENIORS & SEXUAL VIOLENCE