

**MIYKIWAN TOOLKIT
FACT SHEET**

**SENIOR
VIOLENCE**

WHAT IS

Seniors violence entails someone in a family environment who inflicts harm or distress on an older person. The most common forms of senior violence include physical, psychological and financial, and neglect among others. It is quite common for a senior to experience more than one form of abuse at the same time. The abuse may also consist of a single incident or a cycle of abusive behaviour.



“Well, we have to find a way to protect ourselves... We protected ourselves before in all of our societies prior to colonial conquest. If the men weren't there, don't think that things stopped, that life stopped... Women carried on.”

Lee Maracle, as quoted from Madeleine Berglund's *The Dance of Winndigo and Nanaboozhou: An Indigenous journey through hatred and violence.*

KEY THINGS TO KNOW

- One-third of those Canadians who were accused of a violent crime against a senior were family members (2013)
- Out of all family members, 28% of spouses were the second most likely to have committed violence against seniors (2013)
- Senior victims of family violence were most likely to be victimized by their own adult children (2013)
- A senior family member's own grown children were most often the ones who committed an act of violence against them (2013)
- While it is not reported often, grandchildren can also direct violence towards seniors, especially through financial abuse
- 28% of spouses were the second most likely family members who had inflicted violence against a senior in their family (2013)
- Seniors represented a small proportion of all family violence victims (about 3%) and had lower rates of family violence than any other age group (2013)

FORMS OF SENIORS ABUSE

While there are many forms of abuse against seniors of a family, these are the most common:

- **Physical abuse:** Striking, hitting, pushing, shaking, burning
- **Psychological abuse:** Insults, threats, intimidations, humiliation, harassment, isolation
- **Financial abuse:** misusing or stealing money, properties or assets; cashing cheques without permission; forging signatures
- **Neglect**—denying a person basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter; not willing to give medical service and support; rude and disrespectful treatment; denial of caregiver and disability support services
- **Destruction of property**—results in the damaging of necessary assistive devices such as hearing aid, wheelchair, walker, etc.

WARNING SIGNS

While there are a number of signs that can point to abuse, they may difficult at times to detect in a senior. Here are some of the most significant ones:

- Fear, anxiety, depression or passiveness concerning a family member
- Physical injuries that are not able to logically explained
- Continued dehydration, poor nutrition or hygiene, improper use of medication
- Person's cash or financial assets are reduced quickly, a new will or mortgage is introduced; hesitation on the senior's part to speak about or explain what is going on

STRATEGIES AND NEXT STEPS

Here are some steps that will help seniors get help and protection:

- Go tell someone what is happening. Reach out to other family members, friends, elders, co-workers, Aboriginal groups, service providers; anyone at all that you might trust.
- If you do not know who should turn to for help, call 911 or your local police service.
- If you would to find out more about seniors abuse and how you can help a loved one or a friend, you can contact the Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse at: <http://www.cnpea.ca/>

IF YOU ARE A SENIOR AND HAVE BEEN ABUSED:

- Remember, the abuse is not your fault. No matter what you think you may have done wrong, no one deserves to be hurt, especially by a member of their family.
- Any form of abuse, if it is ongoing or even it appears to be a one-time incident is not unacceptable.
- You are able to control an abusive person's behaviour
- If left alone, abuse often gets worse.
- Any form of abuse is not tolerated in any culture or religion.
- You have the right to be safe, secure and protected.
- You have the right to live your life without abuse or fear.

If you need help or someone to talk to please contact the National Office for Victims Services Center, toll free at: **1-866-525-0554** or Kids Help Phone, toll free at: 1-800-668-6868, www.kidshelpphone.ca

To obtain more information regarding the CAP Family Violence Prevention Awareness Toolkit, please contact the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples at www.abo-peoples.org or call 1-613-747-6022.
