

ELDER ABUSE IN CANADA

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Did you know that thousands of seniors are being repeatedly abused or neglected in Canada? What's most shocking is that they are being mistreated by someone close to them. Can you imagine a relative, a caregiver or any persons in a position of trust maltreating citizens unable to help themselves! What's most interesting as well is that this exploitation often goes on unnoticed and regrettably unreported.

There are many ways of physically or emotionally mistreating elders, but the most common form of elder abuse is of a financial nature. What can be easier than misusing bank accounts, credit or debit cards when one has a Power of Attorney over the affairs of a parent. Having a joint account with a loved one is a rather simple way to abuse too. Trusted unscrupulous individuals can steal from a vulnerable senior almost at will. This is not to say that all trusted persons are crooks. In most cases having free reign over the affairs of a parent, for example, is a necessity and is quite beneficial to the elderly person who is unable to pay their bills for example.

Fortunately, there are often signs of elder abuse. Unexplained bruises, ongoing tension on the part of elderly seniors, including loss of weight, untreated rashes and sores should be investigated. An elderly person dressed in dirty clothes, especially when you know that this person would never want to be seen in public, in such a state, needs to be checked. Being withdrawn or even depressed are often signs of elder abuse.

Preventing and protecting our loved ones against senior abuse is of prime importance. Seniors are urged to get their financial affairs in order with a trusted lawyer while they are still of sound mind. This includes preparing a will and naming an honest and trusted individual with appropriate Power of Attorney.

Relatives and friends can help as well by visiting regularly loved ones in private or public senior's residences. It doesn't have to be a long visit, but it would be useful to be done at different times of the day to get a better perspective of how the residence is run.

Finally, it is important to recognize elder abuse and to know what you can do to protect the dignity and the safety of citizens that can't help themselves. If you suspect abuse, a simple call to the police is in order.

Show the world you care about ending elder abuse and neglect by wearing something purple on June 15, 2011 as we observe the 6th annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD).

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For immediate release
January 13, 2011