

## What is elder abuse?

Elder abuse or neglect is when there is violence against seniors or mistreatment of seniors, including neglect of seniors who depend on others for care. Abuse or neglect may take many different forms including physical, sexual, emotional, and financial. Many types of abuse, and some types of neglect, are criminal offences.

## All types of abuse and neglect are harmful

- Abuse and neglect encompass a wide range of behaviours. Examples include:
  - assault, rough treatment, or inappropriate restraint
  - failing to meet the physical needs of someone who requires care
  - chronic verbal abuse that belittles or intimidates
  - leaving a person who requires care alone for long periods of time
  - stealing money or possessions, or using money for unauthorized purposes
  - failing to meet someone's financial needs when responsible to do so
  - unwanted sexual contact or sexual harassment
  - giving too much or too little medication
  - making decisions for someone who is capable of making them, against the person's wishes

## What are the signs of elder abuse?

- Each person can have different reactions to being a victim.
- Signs that an older person is a victim of acts of violence or neglect may include:
  - Physical signs such as bruising, black eyes, welts, cuts or injuries in states of healing.
  - Emotional signs such as mood swings, shaken sense of personal safety, heightened sense of smell or hearing, emotional detachment, disassociation, and so on.

## **What can I do if I'm being abused or if I am concerned about someone else?**

- If you or someone you know is a victim of elder abuse or neglect, or if you just want to talk to someone, you can call:
  - VictimLINK: 1-800-563-0808 or visit: [www.VictimLinkBC.ca](http://www.VictimLinkBC.ca).
  - Seniors Abuse & Information Line (SAIL): 604-437-1940 | 1-866-437-1940 (toll free)

## **Steps to take if you or someone you know needs help**

- If you or someone you know is in immediate danger or needs urgent medical assistance, call 911.
- If the situation is not urgent but you want to report it to the police, call the non-emergency number for police in your community.
- If you're not sure about talking to the police, call VictimLINK at 1-800-563-0808 or the Seniors Abuse & Information Line 604-437-1940 to discuss your options.
- If you are being abused, talk to another adult you can trust. If you need help ask for it. If you have the opportunity to talk your doctor or a home care worker or health nurse, tell them about the abuse.

## **Should I report abuse to the police?**

You may wish to report elder abuse or neglect to the police. If you're not sure about reporting to the police, please call VictimLINK at 1-800-563-0808 or the Seniors Abuse & Information Line at 604-437-1940 to discuss your options.

### **What if I don't speak or understand English?**

VictimLINK provides interpretation services for all the major languages spoken in BC.  
Contact VictimLink BC: 1-800-563-0808 or [www.VictimLinkBC.ca](http://www.VictimLinkBC.ca).

**Staff at Victim Services & Crime Prevention as well as resources available from the BC Center for Elder Advocacy and Support ([bceas.ca](http://bceas.ca)) helped to create this fact sheet.**

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