

# Elder Abuse

The abuse of elderly persons is a growing concern to the Toronto Police Service due to an increasing seniors population and its reliance on caregivers to maintain levels of independence. Vulnerable persons are also a target for abuse due to an increasing trend encouraging independent community living. The elderly and the vulnerable are hesitant to report their victimization for a variety of reasons. In conjunction with the community agencies serving the elderly and vulnerable, the Service is working to encourage the reporting of abuse and to ensure that all complaints of abuse are fully investigated in a timely manner.

## **The goals of the Service regarding the abuse of elderly or vulnerable persons are:**

- to reduce the incidence of the abuse of the elderly or vulnerable persons in the community
- to investigate all occurrences thoroughly and to bring offenders to justice wherever possible
- to ensure the safety of victims through prompt action including referrals to other community partners

## **Definitions:**

*Abuse:* means harm done to anyone by a person in a position of trust or authority

*Elderly Person:* means a person over the age of 65

*Harm:* means physical abuse (includes sexual abuse), psychological abuse, financial abuse or neglect, or any combination thereof

*Incompetent:* means a person incapable of managing their day to day affairs, thus making them vulnerable to abuse

*Vulnerable Person:* means any adult who by nature of a physical, emotional or psychological condition is dependent on other persons for care and assistance in day to day living

## **Types of abuse**

- Physical
- Emotional
- Financial
- Neglect

## **Indicators of physical abuse**

- Cuts and bruises
- Unexplained injuries
- Poor skin condition
- Burns

## **Indicators of emotional abuse**

- Helplessness
- Hesitation to talk openly
- Depression/Denial
- Fear
- Agitation

## **Indicators of financial abuse**

- Power of Attorney has been changed
- Lost jewellery or silverware
- Not having the funds for the necessities of life
- Necessaries of life denied or not provided by the Power of Attorney
- Signing legal documents they do not understand

## **Indicators of neglect**

- Senior is inadequately clothed
- Senior is malnourished or dehydrated
- Senior has an untreated medical condition or injury
- History of accidents or injuries
- Caregiver is not meeting health care needs for the senior

Elder abuse may happen to any older person regardless of gender, culture, race, financial status, mental or physical condition. Abuse may occur more frequently to those older persons who are socially isolated.

If you or someone you know needs support, please contact the distress centre: 416-408-4357

Contact: Divisional Policing Support Unit  
Telephone: 416-808-0130