Elder Abuse—Breaking The Silence
ICCER NETWORKING EVENT: KEEPING SENIORS SAFE

- JUNE 6TH, 2018

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Community Advisory Groups (CAG)

Regional Definition (September 2016): “Elder abuse is any action or inaction that jeopardizes the health and/or well-being of any older adult.”

Types of abuse include: physical, financial, neglect, emotional, sexual, spiritual and medication. Abuse involves the senior’s experience of betrayal or breach of trust within an intimate, trusted relationship.
Types of Elder Abuse

- Financial abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual abuse
- Medication abuse
- Spiritual abuse
Financial Abuse Indicators

Theft or misuse of a senior’s money or property. Indicators:

- Standard of living not in keeping with income or assets
- Theft of property
- Unusual activity in bank account
- Forged signatures on financial documents
- Coercion used in signing of wills or releasing property; overdue bills
- Limiting a senior’s access to his or her own accounts
Emotional Abuse Indicators

Actions or statements that cause emotional anguish, diminished self-esteem or dignity.

- Fear
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Withdrawal
- Cowering
- Secrecy
- Fearful interaction with caregiver
- Caregiver speaking on behalf of senior
- Not allowing privacy
- Physical signs of isolation
Physical Abuse Indicators

Action that causes physical discomfort, pain or injury.

- Unexplained injuries such as bruises, burns or bites
- Missing hair
- Untreated medical problems or history of injury
- Harming or threatening to harm pets
- Confinement
Neglect Indicators

Intentional or unintentional failure to provide for the basic needs of someone.

- Inappropriate or dirty clothing
- Poor hygiene
- Dehydration
- Unsafe living conditions
- Lack of social contact
- Irregular medical appointments
- Lack of, or poor conditions of, dentures, glasses, or hearing aids
Sexual Abuse Indicators

Unwanted sexual behaviour including sexual comments, exploitive use of pornography, fondling or sexual assault.

- Pain
- Bruising or bleeding in the genital or chest area
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Recent depression
- Recent incontinence
Medication Abuse Indicators

Intentional or unintentional misuse of medications and prescriptions, such as withholding or providing doses that cause bodily harm, sedation or other adverse effects.

- Changes in mental ability or physical ability
- Decline in general health status including
  - Confusion
  - Poor balance
  - Falling
  - Depression
  - Recent incontinence
  - Agitation
Neighbours, Friends and Families for Older Adults—It’s Not Right!

- How you can identify abuse and help older adults at risk?
What neighbours, friends and family members can do to help...

- Neighbours, friends and family members can do three things:
  - **SEE it!** “It’s not right!” Recognize the warning signs of abuse
  - **NAME it!** “I’m worried about you.” Talk to the older adult. Name your concern.
  - **CHECK it!** “What can I do to help?” Ask questions, check with professionals, check for danger – help with safety planning.
Keep connected to local resources – the development of the Coordinated Community Response (CCR) – prevention of elder abuse

Promote wellness for caregivers – eating, sleeping, physical activity, staying connected.
Thank You