

Elder Abuse:
It's not "just a family matter"!

Ottawa Police Service

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OTTAWA POLICE SERVICE
SERVICE DE POLICE D'OTTAWA

Working together for a safer community
La sécurité de notre communauté, un travail d'équipe



Mandate

1) Investigate all allegations of abuse

2) Education

- Front line workers
- Raise awareness in community



What kind of abuse???

- abuse on a person over 65 **or** on a "vulnerable" person 16 years old and older
- **when** the abuse is committed by a person in a pre-existing relation of trust, care, control or power.



Types of Abuse

- Physical (including sexual assault)
- Psychological/Emotional
- Financial
- Neglect (Active or Passive)



Provisions within Criminal Code

- Assault (w/weapon, bodily harm, aggravated)
- Sexual assault
- Forcible confinement
- Manslaughter/Murder



Provisions within Criminal Code

- Intimidation
- Uttering threats
- Criminal harassment



Financial Abuse

- Theft/exploitation
- Money, property or assets



Provisions within Criminal Code

- Theft/ Theft by Power of Attorney*
- Fraud/ False Pretences
- Forgery
- Extortion
- Stopping Mail With Intent



Provisions within Criminal Code

- Criminal Negligence (causing bodily harm/death)
- Failure to Provide Necessaries of Life



Common Characteristics

- Abuser has power and control over an older person
- Abuser is usually a family member (stats)
- In **most** cases;
 - Drug/alcohol /gambling addiction
 - History of anti-social behaviour
 - Mental health problems
- Dependence on older person for \$\$ and/or shelter
- Victim often lucid BUT call to police usually generated by third party
- c. 70% of cases are financial abuse



Why is Elder Abuse Seldom Reported?

VICTIM:

- Afraid of repercussion
- Completely under the control of the abuser and dependent on him/her for basic needs (physically/mentally incapable)
- Fear of institutionalization
- Concern that abuser will be incarcerated/get criminal record
- Guilt/shame
- Misconception that police/social agencies cannot help
- Cultural/Ethnic values or beliefs



Cont'd

FAMILY/ FRIENDS/ SERVICE PROVIDERS:

- Do not know who to tell
- Do not want to get involved
- Older person asks them not to report it
- Fear of repercussion for the older person/ themselves
- Confidentiality issues/Privacy Legislation



What Happens When a Report is Made to Police?

- Risk / Needs assessment (patrol response vs. call intake)
- Documented
- General investigation
- If evidence permits, police can lay charges and provide subsequent protection measures for the victim
- Explore alternative solutions to the problem; coordinating police involvement with appropriate health, social and community service agencies (EARRS, OPGT, CCAC etc)



Fundamental Considerations

- Victim has the right to self determination
- What are the victims wishes throughout the investigation and possible judicial process? If not capable, what is in their best interests?
- What services will the victim need from the outset and then throughout and following the investigation? Who can help them and advocate for them?



How to report:

- Emergencies (imminent risk): 9-1-1
- To report an assault (or similar events) to police: 613-230-6211
- To report financial abuse: 613-236-1222, ext. 7300
- OPS Consultation line: 613-236-1222, ext. 2400



How to reach us!

Tel.613-236-1222

Det. Isabelle Coady, ext. 5945
(M-F 8am-4pm)