

Understanding Intimate Partner Violence among Older Adults in Canada



What is Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)?

Intimate partner violence (IPV), known as spousal or domestic violence, is a prevalent form of gender-based violence (GBV). It refers to multiple forms of harm caused by a current or former intimate partner or spouse.⁽ⁱ⁾



4 in 10 Canadian women have experienced some form of intimate partner violence (IPV) in their lifetime.⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

44% (6.2 million) of women in Canada—who had ever been in an intimate partner relationship—reported experiencing some form of sexual, physical, or psychological abuse by an intimate partner in their lifetime.⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾

Women in Canada are 6 times more likely than men to have been sexually assaulted by an intimate partner in their lifetime.⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

Forms of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Among Older Adults can include:

01

Sexual Violence

Sexual acts without consent, ... dementia threats of repercussions for refusing sexual activity, sexually degrading language and belittling sexual comments.⁽ⁱ⁾

Severe forms of IPV, such as being forced to perform sex acts, being confined, or being choked, are significantly more prevalent among women.⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

02

Physical abuse

Intentional or threatened use of physical force, including pushing, hitting, cutting, punching, biting, slapping, shoving, strangulation, pulling hair, and arm twisting.⁽ⁱ⁾

03

Emotional or psychological abuse:

Inflicting mental pain, anguish, or distress on an elder through verbal or non-verbal acts. Insults, belittling, constant humiliation, threats of harm, intimidation.⁽ⁱ⁾

04

Financial Abuse:

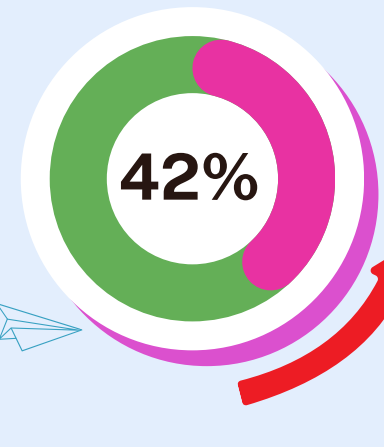
Restricting or controlling access to money, property, or assets; withholding information on finances, undue influence for signing legal documents or financial decisions.⁽ⁱ⁾

Key Statistics

- ▶ 4 - 10% of older adults in Canada experience some form of elder abuse, which can include physical, emotional, or sexual abuse as well as neglect.
- ▶ Women aged 55 and older experience higher rates of intimate partner violence compared to men of the same age group.⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾
- ▶ Senior women who experienced police-reported violence were twice as likely to have been victimized by an intimate partner compared with senior men (16% versus 7%).^(iv)




▶ 117,093 
Victims of police-reported Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in Canada (in 2022).^(v)

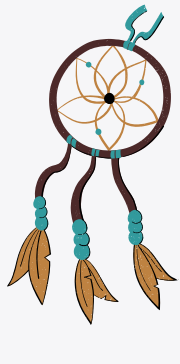


Intimate partner violence (IPV) among seniors aged 65+ increased by 42% from 2014 to 2022.^(v)

▶ 10% vs. 4.9%
Indigenous seniors were more likely to report not having much or any confidence in police compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts.^(iv)

944 **SENIORS WERE VICTIMS OF HOMICIDE IN CANADA,** 
which accounted for 7% of all homicide victims (between 2000 and 2020).^(iv)

Vulnerable Groups Experiencing Higher Rates of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in Canada



▶ Indigenous women (61%) were more likely to experience IPV compared to non-Indigenous women (44%)⁽ⁱ⁾



▶ Women with disabilities reported higher rates of IPV (55%) compared to those without disabilities (37%)⁽ⁱ⁾

Seniors with cognitive impairments, such as dementia, are particularly vulnerable!

WHO ARE THE MOST COMMON PERPETRATORS?

Intimate Partners

Most perpetrators are current or former spouses or common-law partners. Both men and women can be perpetrators, but men are more frequently the aggressors.⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾

Adult Children

Senior women are most often victimized by their child or an extended family member (e.g., grandchildren, nieces, nephews and in-laws).^(iv)

15%

SEXUALLY ASSAULTED SENIORS IN LONG-TERM CARE OR RETIREMENT HOMES

Of the 14,156 senior victims of police-reported violence in Canada in 2019, one in seven (15%) were sexually assaulted in nursing or retirement homes.^(vii)

34%

Family violence against seniors that came to the attention of police was most often perpetrated by their child.^(vii)

ONLY 1 in 4 cases of elder abuse are reported to authorities^(vi)



“Older women may be less likely to report instances of IPV due to factors like generational beliefs about privacy, stigma surrounding divorce or separation, or lack of awareness about available support services.”

Sources:

- (i) Fact sheet: Intimate partner violence (Canada.ca, 2021)
- (ii) Intimate partner violence in Canada (Canada.ca, 2018)
- (iii) Intimate partner violence in Canada, 2018: An overview. By Adam Cotter (Canada.ca)
- (iv) Violence against seniors and their perceptions of safety in Canada, www.150.Stats.ca, 2022
- (v) Trends in police-reported family violence and intimate partner violence in Canada, 2022
- (vi) Elder Abuse. Canadian Resource Center of Victims of Crime (CRCVC), 2022.
- (vii) Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2019 by Shana Conroy, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics. Section 4: Police-reported family violence against seniors in Canada, 2019
- (viii) Crime and Abuse Against Seniors: A Review of the Research Literature With Special Reference to the Canadian Situation



Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario

<https://eaapon.ca/>

Supported by Department of Justice Canada