



# Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario

## IT'S TIME TO TALK ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE OF THE OLDER ADULTS

### WHAT IS SEXUAL ABUSE OF OLDER ADULTS?

Sexual Abuse is “non-consensual sexual contact of any kind with an older adult. Sexual contact with any person incapable of giving consent is also considered sexual abuse.”

(Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), 2012)

### Sexual abuse is any act by violence or force:

- Unwanted sexual touching or kissing
- Fondling or sexual intercourse without consent
- Unnecessary touching of the genital area that is not part of the care plan
- Making sexual remarks or suggestions
- Forced viewing of pornography

### Physical Signs:

- Difficulty sitting or walking
- Torn or stained underclothing
- Pain and bleeding in genital area
- Imprint injuries, bruising behind the neck, bite marks, scratches
- Sexually transmitted diseases

### Emotional Behaviours:

- Fear, mistrust or paranoia
- Depression or anxiety

### What puts older adults at risk?

- Abusers seek power and control over vulnerable individuals
- Dependency on others such as family or paid caregivers for assistance with daily care
- Physical frailty or mobility
- Living alone in isolation
- Experienced of sexual abuse prior to age 60

Older adult victims can experience serious effects and long term impacts from sexual violence. Due to age related physiological changes, older victims tend to sustain more severe physical injuries and emotional trauma as a result of an assault.

Sexual Harassment is “engaging in discourse of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought to be known to be unwelcome.”  
(Ontario Human Rights Code)

Older women are three times more likely to experience sexual assault than older men.

## Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario

416-916-6728 | [www.eapon.ca](http://www.eapon.ca)

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Sexual  
violence can  
affect  
individuals.

## How to Prevent Sexual Abuse

- Stay informed and know your rights
- Ask for help
- Tell someone about your concerns – for example a nurse, social worker, or doctor
- Maintain contact with loved ones and connections with friends, family and support networks
- Seek alternative options if care is unsatisfactory.
- Do not rely ONLY on family members for daily care and social activities

## Laws and Reporting

Sexual assault and harassment are against the law. Older victims often suffer in silence, due to their reluctance to report. If sexual abuse has occurred, talk to someone you trust when it is safe.

Reporting is mandatory ONLY in Long-Term care or retirement homes. The law requires reporting by anyone who knows or has reasonable grounds to suspect that a resident has been, or might be, harmed.

## To Report

### Long-Term Care ACTION Line

[www.health.gov.on.ca](http://www.health.gov.on.ca)  
1-866-434-0144

### Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority

[www.rhra.ca](http://www.rhra.ca)  
1-855-275-7472

When a spouse is  
the abuser, the  
situation of sexual  
violence is a form  
of domestic abuse.

## Where to Get Help

- In an emergency call **911**
- Contact local Sexual Assault / Domestic Violence Centre for Assistance

## Seniors Safety Line

[www.awhl.org/seniors](http://www.awhl.org/seniors)  
**1-866-299-1011**

### Talk 4 Healing

[www.talk4healing.com](http://www.talk4healing.com)  
1-855-554-heal (4325)

### Support for Male Survivors

[www.malesurvivor.org](http://www.malesurvivor.org)  
1-866-887-0015

### Assaulted Women's Help Line

[www.awhl.org](http://www.awhl.org)  
1-866- 863-0511

### Victim Support Line

[www.ontario.ca](http://www.ontario.ca)  
1-888-579-2888

For more information and resources contact Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario.

[www.eapon.ca](http://www.eapon.ca)

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