

**Elder Abuse  
Prevention  
Ontario**

# Starting the Conversation

## HOW TO ASK ABOUT ABUSE

Abuse is a difficult and emotional topic to approach. Make sure that seniors know they are not at fault and that they are not alone. Listen carefully to what they say and let them know you are there to support them and to help. Reassure them that you will respect their confidence and ask them what they would like to do about the abuse.

Keep an open mind and do not be judgmental. Typically the senior has a relationship with the abuser and does not want anything bad to happen to that person. The senior may be fearful of making things worse and may be feeling vulnerable and afraid.

### Sample Conversation:

**Mary:** Sam, I am very concerned about what I have been seeing and hearing. (Describe what you have been seeing and hearing.)

**Mary:** This bothers me because it is wrong and you do not deserve to be treated this way. It worries me to see you feeling (describe) and I am worried that (describe specific concern).

**Mary:** You are not to blame for the problem and I want to help, but first, tell me what you would like to do? I will respect your wishes. (Listen to what the senior has to say and encourage them to tell you what they want to do.)

**Mary:** I realize how difficult that was for you to share with me. I will not share this with anyone or do anything without your permission. Let's look at some of the options and see what you think about them. (Share some of the resources that you have found. Most importantly follow through and continue to support the senior.)

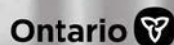
### What if the senior refuses your help?

Do not feel badly if your first offer of help is rejected. This can be a common initial reaction. Seniors often need time to think.

### Try this as a Response:

**Mary:** Okay. I will respect your wishes. I just want you to know that you can talk to me anytime. Is it ok if I ask you about this the next time I visit?

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# What You Need to Know

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT ABUSE



### In the community:

#### If senior is in immediate danger:

- Dial **911**
- Stay with the senior and offer support and reassurance until help arrives

#### If senior is NOT in immediate danger:

- Investigate further to get the facts, ensuring that your information is clear and accurate
- Do not do anything until you speak to the abused senior, unless they are not competent.
- Ask the abused senior what they want to do and provide reassurance and support.
- Find out what help is available for the senior and share this information with them.
- Call the toll-free **Seniors Safety Line (1-866-299-1011)** to get information about what help is available in your community.
  - For a non-competent senior call the **Police or the Office of the Public Guardian & Trustee (1-800-366-0335)**
  - Stay connected with the senior and follow up.

### In a Long-Term Care Home or Retirement Home:

#### If senior is in immediate danger:

- Dial **911**
- Stay with the senior and offer support and reassurance until help arrives

#### If senior is not in immediate danger:

- If you see or suspect a resident in a **Long-Term Care Home** is being harmed or is at risk, report your concerns to the **Long-Term Care ACTION Line: 1-866-434-0144**
- If you see or suspect a resident in a **Retirement Home** is being harmed or is at risk, report to the: **Retirement Home Regulatory Authority: 1-855-275-7472**

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