

# IDENTIFY ELDER ABUSE & HELP OLDER ADULTS AT RISK



*"Abuse is a big word for us and we do not talk about it. It is family matter and we do not share with other people."*

*"We tried to accept it even when our children mistreat us because we do not want to end our relationship with them."*

## Abusive behaviours can be:

- ◆ Isolating an older adult from family and friends
- ◆ Blaming the older adult for the abuse
- ◆ Ignoring the rights of the older adult
- ◆ Treating the older adult like a child
- ◆ Name calling, frequent arguments, or threats
- ◆ Neglecting, leaving the older adult alone for long periods of time

## What can you do to help?

Neighbours, friends, and family members can learn to do 3 things:

1. **SEE it!** "It's not right!" Know the warning signs.
2. **NAME it!** "I am worried about you." Talk to the older adult and tell him or her your concern.
3. **CHECK it!** "What can I do to help?" Ask questions, check with professionals, check for danger, help with safety planning.

## What is Elder Abuse?

- ◆ When someone limits or controls the rights and freedoms of an older adult. The older adult cannot freely make choices because he or she is afraid of being humiliated, hurt, or left alone.
- ◆ Abuse can be physical, verbal, emotional, financial, sexual, spiritual, or neglect.
- ◆ The abuser is often a family member. They can also be a friend, neighbour, caregiver, or any other person in a position of trust or power.
- ◆ Any older adult can become a victim of elder abuse no matter the race or culture.

## What are the warning signs?

- ◆ Unexplained injuries: bruises, sprains, broken bones, scratches
- ◆ Depression, withdrawal, fear
- ◆ Missing religious or social events they always attend
- ◆ Unexpected or unexplained changes in living arrangements
- ◆ Misuse of the older adult's money or properties
- ◆ Signs of neglect: no food in house, untreated medical conditions

*"We have learned that abuse is not just physical violence. I hope people are aware if they behave abusively."*

*"Many of us seniors do not speak English. If I use helpline, I need to speak to someone who can speak my language."*

## Where to get help?

- ◆ Call **911** in case of emergency and immediate danger.
- ◆ Talk to someone you trust, or contact service providers for older adults or health care providers in your local areas.
- ◆ Call the helplines below to report or for more information (all have language interpretation):

### In Calgary:

- ◆ Elder Abuse Resource Line **403-705-3250**
- ◆ 403-SENIORS **403-736-4677**

### In Alberta:

- ◆ Family Violence Info Line **310-1818**
- ◆ Go to [www.alberta.ca/get-help-elder-abuse.aspx](http://www.alberta.ca/get-help-elder-abuse.aspx) for information on elder abuse (in different languages)