

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is senior abuse?

- Senior abuse is any action or inaction by self or others that jeopardizes the health or well-being of an older adult. This includes physical, emotional, psychological, financial, sexual, or medication abuse as well as passive or active neglect. Senior abuse violates your basic right to feel safe where you live. It is controlling behavior, which makes you feel intimidated or afraid and it can be illegal.

Who are the abused?

- It can be anyone! In 2001, the Edmonton Elder Abuse Intervention Team received 265 referrals. Based on the information collected on those referrals, the following was noted.
- 71% of the clients were female.
- 29% of the clients were male.
- 56% of the time the victim was cohabiting with the alleged abuser.
- The most common abuse identified was financial (43%) followed by physical abuse (33%). In 77% of the cases emotional abuse was the secondary type of abuse identified.

Who are the abusers?

- It can be anyone! Often the abuser lives with the abused person or knows them well. They tend to have control and influence over an older adult and may have addictions, a history of mental health, or dependency issues.

What happens when you call?

- When you call the Seniors Abuse Helpline you will be connected to a highly trained volunteer. They will talk through the issue with you and help to develop an action plan to deal with the abuse or crisis. Information and referral to local programs and services in the community is also provided.

Who answers the Helpline?

- The seniors' abuse helpline is answered by highly trained volunteers.

What training do they receive?

- In addition to 70 hours of training in communication skills, suicide prevention, family violence, and community resources, volunteers receive additional information and training in issues specific to senior abuse.

Is there follow-up for callers?

- Yes. For callers who agree, there is a follow-up telephone call. The calls are made by peer volunteers. They ensure the caller received appropriate referrals, provide additional support to access services, and re-assess the caller's risk for further abuse.