



A Report on Abuse of Older Adults: The Issue, the System, and Recommendations

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This report was developed with a collaborative effort from various stakeholders in areas of research, response, prevention, and policy related to abuse of older adults. Engagement was done through consultations, review meetings, and validation processes to ensure our report harnesses the expertise of our partners. With the input of many stakeholders, the information in this report should not be taken as a reflection of the views, opinions, or expertise of any one stakeholder acknowledged for contributing to the report.

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Disclaimer

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If you have any questions or feedback on this report, please reach out to us info@appta.ca.

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KEY MESSAGES



The abuse and neglect of older adults is not limited to criminal offenses. It includes any act, or lack of action, in a relationship of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person. It takes many forms; physical, financial, sexual, psychological, emotional, and abandonment or neglect.



Ageism is a key driver of abuse of older adults. It is also intersectional and an older adult's sex, past experiences of abuse, ethnic or cultural background, and living in disadvantageous socio-economic conditions can be linked to experiencing abuse or neglect.



Canadian studies estimate that 1 in 10 older adults experiences abuse or neglect and that rates are rising. The prevalence is likely an underestimate, due to underreporting by older adults, and fragmented or inconsistent monitoring of data from the legal, health, and social systems.



Abuse of older adults is a violation of human rights and is a major health concern. It causes direct negative health impacts through physical harm and financial loss, and also contributes to isolation, poor mental health, and inactivity among older adults.



Federal, provincial, and territorial governments have implemented a variety of strategies and programs through law enforcement, health, and social service departments to address abuse of older adults. Non-governmental prevention and response networks, and community organizations, fill essential roles in prevention by providing education, materials, resources, and supports.



This report collected and analyzed recommendations made in published reports on prevention of abuse of older adults in Canada. It identifies five areas for action:

1. Consistent and sustained funding to support the prevention and response networks and organizations that carry out action to address abuse of older adults;
2. Establish independent federal and provincial/ territorial seniors advocate offices, where they are not already present;
3. Amend legislation to protect all older adults;
4. Improve data collection and monitoring of abuse of older adults; and
5. Improve awareness and education about ageism and abuse of older adults.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 1: Background

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines the abuse of older adults as “a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action occurring within any relationship, where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person.” This definition includes physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, and financial abuse, and abandonment and neglect. The abuse of older adults, while underreported, is common in Canada. According to recent estimates, one in ten older adults in Canada experience some form of abuse each year. Psychological abuse is the most commonly reported form of abuse towards older adults, followed by financial, and physical.

A key driver of abuse of older adults is ageism. The WHO defines ageism as stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against people based on their age. Sex is also relevant to abuse patterns, with older women being more likely to experience family violence and men being more likely to experience abuse by strangers. Other factors include past experiences of abuse, cultural and ethnic background, and various disadvantageous social circumstances that enhance vulnerabilities.

The abuse of older adults has devastating impacts on the lives of aging Canadians and their families. It contributes to social isolation, poor mental health, inactivity, and other negative health-related outcomes which are preventable and avoidable, and increases the frequency of hospital visits, admissions, and likelihood of transition to long-term care.



Section 2: System Map

In Canada, responsibility of addressing the abuse of older adults is divided between various federal, provincial, and territorial jurisdictions. At the federal level, abuse of older adults is not defined as a specific crime: the sections in the *Criminal Code* that capture the abuse of older adults are age-neutral. However, provinces and territories have enacted specific legislation intended for the prevention of and response to abuse of older adults. Provincial and territorial adult protection acts are designed to protect adults who have cognitive, psychological, or physical conditions that make them unable to seek support and access services on their own and are being abused, neglected, or self-neglected. The acts apply to individuals who were born with or acquired their conditions earlier in their lives, as well as to those who acquire them in older adulthood, for example as a result of diseases that cause severe cognitive decline.

Some provinces and territories also have strategies, Seniors' Advocate offices, and grassroots networks specifically intended to address and respond to the abuse of older adults. Nationally, the Canadian Network for Prevention of Elder Abuse (CNPEA) is a pan-Canadian network that works with other organizations, networks, and government to provide opportunities for education, knowledge exchange, and collaboration.

The list below highlights the varied networks and/or strategies that some provinces and territories have established to address the abuse of older adults. Summaries of these strategies can be found in **Appendix A**.

British Columbia (BC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Together to Reduce Elder Abuse</i> (TREA) strategy • BC Association of Community Response Networks (BCCRN) • BC's Ministry of Health established the Council to Reduce Elder Abuse (CREA) comprised of representatives from various sectors including, legal, health, finance, among others
Alberta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A Collective Approach: Alberta's strategy for preventing and addressing elder abuse 2022-2027</i> • Alberta Elder Abuse Awareness Council (AEAAC) network
Manitoba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Manitoba, A Great Place to Age: Provincial Seniors Strategy</i> • Prevent Elder Abuse Manitoba (PEAM) network
Ontario	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Ontario Strategy to Combat Elder Abuse</i> • Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario (EAPO) network
Québec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Governmental Action Plan to Address the Abuse of Older Adults</i>
New Brunswick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We are all in this together: An Aging Strategy for New Brunswick</i> includes action points for the prevention of abuse of older adults
Nova Scotia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Nova Scotia Elder Abuse Strategy: Towards Awareness and Prevention</i>
Newfoundland and Labrador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newfoundland and Labrador Network to Prevent Elder Abuse (NLNPEA)
Northwest Territories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NWT Network to Prevent the Abuse of Older Adults

Section 3: Recommendations

Abuse of older adults is perpetuated by systemic drivers like ageism. The varied networks, community response organizations, provincial and territorial strategies and legislative changes devoted to the topic reflect ongoing concerns about it among policymakers across Canada. Actions to date have not been sufficient or applied consistently enough to tackle the issue across the country, however, and within the existing system there remain many opportunities for change.

Through analysis of many recommendations made in published reports, and engagement with our participating Elder Abuse Task Force members, we developed 5 overarching goals for Canada's approach to addressing the abuse of older adults:

- (1) Funding models for prevention and response to abuse that are budget line items for appropriate ministries, rather than special initiatives;
- (2) Establishing seniors advocate offices in the federal government, and in provinces and territories where they are not already present;
- (3) Amendments to legislation to protect all older adults;
- (4) Improved data collection; and
- (5) Improved awareness and education, including combating ageism in society.

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

The abuse of older adults is not a new problem in Canada; however, as average life expectancy increases and the population of people living into older age expands, it has become a growing concern¹. This type of abuse is seen as both a major public health concern, and a violation of human rights²⁻⁵.

There are variations in the terminology used to designate both the target demographic and what constitutes the abuse of older adults^{5,6}. Terms frequently used in Canada and internationally include “elder abuse,” “senior abuse,” “mistreatment/maltreatment of older adults,” and “abuse of older adults”⁶⁻⁹. Although these terms appear interchangeable, there are nuances that differentiate them. “Elder abuse” is the term used most often internationally, and in published literature. The World

Elder abuse is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person.

Health Organization (WHO) defines it as a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person^{5,10}. This includes physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, and financial abuse, abandonment, and neglect¹⁰. Similarly, Canada’s federal government defines mistreatment of older persons as, “a single or repeated event that involves a person, a group, a community, or an organization and occurs within a relationship where there is an expectation of trust, when an act, word, attitude, or lack of appropriate action, causes or risks causing negative consequences for an older person. It includes events of physical, psychological, financial or material, and sexual mistreatment that can be expressed in the form of violence (act, word or attitude) or neglect (lack of appropriate action)”⁶.

Despite the apparent comprehensiveness of these definitions, there is some disagreement about positioning the problem and recognizing the types and forms of abuse^{6,7}. For example, both definitions suggest that acts of abuse and/or violence by a person outside of a trusting relationship would not be classified as abuse of an older adult^{6,11}. The term “elder abuse” is also controversial because in Indigenous communities “Elder” does not refer to age, but rather to a person who stands out as a model for their peers in terms of their spirituality, wisdom, values, teachings, and contribution to the community^{6,7}. “Senior abuse” also faces criticism, as it is perceived as restrictive due to association of the term “senior” with age restrictions on access to certain government programs and benefits⁶. Additionally, “mistreatment” is perceived as a weaker term than “abuse”⁶. Many of these terms also do not implicitly include neglect⁶. Although it is not widely used internationally, the phrase “abuse of older adults” combines “abuse”, which is perceived as a strong term and “older adults”, which is perceived as inclusive⁷. These nuances highlight the complexity of abuse.

To be inclusive and representative, this report will use “abuse of older adults/people”, however, in some instances we may refer to “elder abuse” when following terminology used by specific organizations or cited from key publications.

In Canada, every jurisdiction except for Nunavut has at least one key organization/agency that has developed or adopted a definition of abuse and/or neglect of older adults⁸. For the most part, these definitions include a general description of abuse of older adults, followed by a list of the types of abuse and neglect. A key distinction between definitions is whether the abuse of older adults is limited to harms occurring within a trusting relationship, or applies more broadly to the mistreatment of older adults⁸. Additionally, spiritual abuse, which is recognized by the Canadian Department of Justice, is often not included, although it is recognized in the definition provided by the Yukon government^{8,11}. The Canadian government recently released its definition of mistreatment of older persons, but the historical lack of a general definition used nationally, and overlapping federal, provincial and territorial powers may contribute to difficulties in conceptualizing the issue and reporting in Canadian jurisdictions⁶.

Despite these challenges, contributors to this report have done significant work to gather evidence and data regarding abuse of older people within Canada, in order to highlight the scope of this issue, including its prevalence, factors that exacerbate abuse, social and health impacts, and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This report also considers the various laws and policies that exist in Canada to address the abuse of older people, and presents policy recommendations that will be useful for networks, organizations, communities, and government.

PREVALENCE OF ABUSE

According to the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA), one in ten older adults in Canada experience some form of abuse each year¹². In 2015, the National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly carried out a national elder abuse prevalence study, which found an aggregate prevalence of abuse of 7.5% in the previous year; they differentiated this from the aggregate prevalence for mistreatment of 8.2%, which includes both abuse and neglect¹³. The prevalence of abuse of older adults has risen over time, from a reported 4% in the 1990 National Survey on Abuse of the Elderly in Canada to the 10% reported today^{7,12}. Although these studies provide an idea on the extent of abuse in Canada, the reported rates are likely underestimates of the true prevalence. For example, older adults are recognized as a target population for fraud in Canada, but gauging the full extent of the problem is difficult because estimated reporting of fraud ranges from 5% to 11% of occurrences^{14,15}. Low reporting rates of abuse of older adults can be attributed to differences between reporting jurisdictions in abuse definitions and types, lack of consensus about the number of times an event must occur to be considered abuse, and variations in periods studied⁵⁻⁷. Estimated prevalence rates may also be lowered due to exclusion criteria applied in some studies, such as excluding residents of the territories or reservations, or people with reduced cognitive abilities and other vulnerable populations⁷.

In 2019, there were about 128,000 reports of older adults who were victims of violence in Canada¹².

While not all occurrences are reported, abuse of older adults includes non-criminal harm as well as criminal acts, and definitions of abuse of older adults typically exclude harm caused by strangers^{5,6,10}, statistics describing crimes committed against older adults help give context to abuse of older people in Canada. According to the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, the rate of police-reported violence against older adults increased 22% between 2010 and 2020, with the largest increase observed in the last five years among older men¹⁶. Rates of police-reported violence against older adults varies by region in Canada. In 2020, the rates were highest in the territories and New Brunswick; however, between 2015-2020, police-reported victimization of people aged 65+ increased in every province and territory¹⁶. Of types of violence reported to police, three-quarters (76%) of older adults who reported experiencing violent victimization in 2019 were physically assaulted¹⁶. Additionally, 60% of all police-reported violence against older adults involved the use of physical force¹⁶. In the most extreme cases of physical violence, older adults were the victims of 7% of homicides in Canada between 2000 and 2020¹⁶. Analysis of Canadian homicide statistics from 2016-17 found that women aged 65 and older were over-represented compared to men of the same age, making up 14% of all female victims while older men constituted 6% of all male victims¹⁷, and in 2021, 28% of female victims of homicide were women aged 55 and above¹⁸.

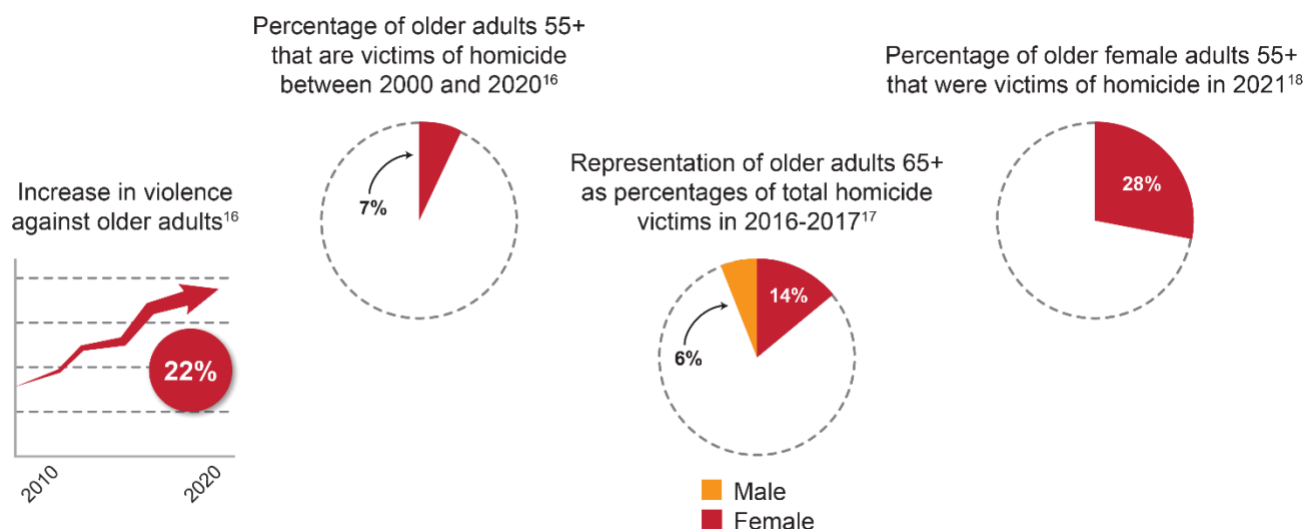


Figure 1 - Uniform Crime Reporting Survey statistics

As mentioned above, older adults are often targets of fraud^{14,15}. Analysis of self-reported data collected in the 2019 General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety found that people aged 65 and over were more likely than average to have reported fraud to the police within the previous five years¹⁴. Similarly, the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre's analysis of 2021 data provided by police forces found that the number of reported fraud attempts was highest among people aged 60 and over¹⁵. The most common types of fraud against older adults were extortion (19.2% of reported incidents), service fraud (11.8%), personal information fraud (11.7%), and email phishing scams (10.7%)¹⁵. Total reported losses from older adults aged 60+ to fraud increased from \$24M in 2017

to \$84M in 2021, and incidents of extortion and identity theft rose from 2020 to 2021¹⁵, corresponding with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

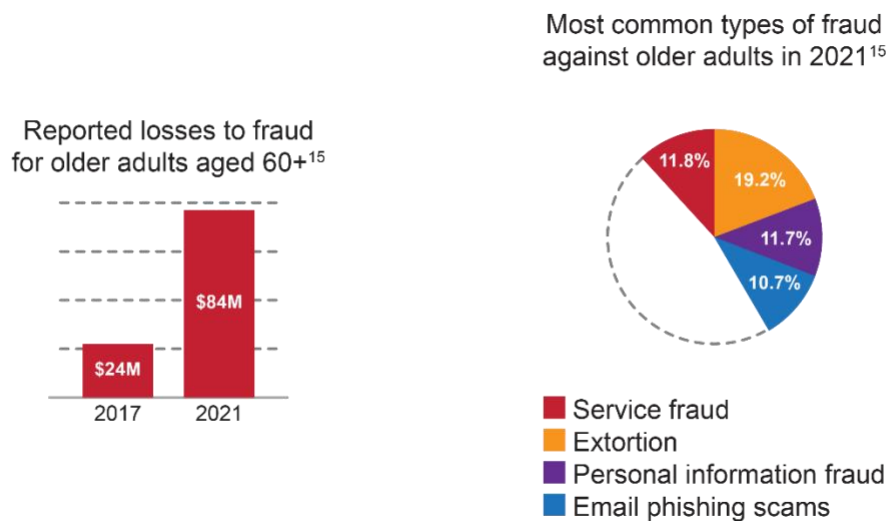


Figure 2 - Statistics from the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre

The prevalence of abuse of older people in Canada varies by type. While the studies used different methods and data sources, and cannot be directly compared to each other, two reports give an indication of the prevalence of different types of abuse. The 2015 *Into the Light: National Survey on the Mistreatment of Older Canadians*, found that psychological abuse was the most commonly experienced form, with a prevalence of 2.7%¹⁹, while the CLSA reported a prevalence of 8.8% in 2022¹². This was followed by financial abuse (2.6%, *Into the Light*, and 1.4%, CLSA) and then physical abuse (2.2%, *Into the Light*, and 1.3%, CLSA)^{12,19}. The *Into the Light* survey also reported prevalence of sexual abuse (1.6%) and neglect (1.2%)¹⁹.

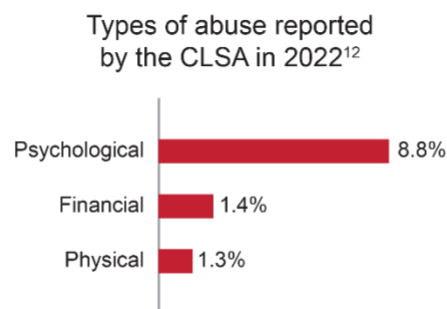


Figure 3 - Statistics from the 2022 CLSA report on types of abuse experienced by older adults

Although requirements for reporting the abuse of older people vary between Canadian jurisdictions, some differences in regional prevalence have been identified. An analysis of the 1999 Canadian General Social Survey (GSS-99) found that older adult residents of Atlantic Canada, Québec, and British Columbia faced greater likelihood of assault/sexual assault than those living in Ontario²⁰. It also found that older adults living in the prairie provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba) had a 40% lower chance of sexual or physical abuse than those living in Ontario²⁰. More recently, reports by Statistics Canada have demonstrated the extent of abuse of older people in the north. In 2020, the total rate of police-reported violence against older adults in the territories was 2,053/100,000, more than nine times the cross-provincial average of 220/100,000¹⁶. Between 2017 and 2018, the Northwest Territories saw the sharpest increase of reported violence against older adults. While family violence against older adults increased by 4% in Canada as a whole, the Northwest Territories recorded an increase of 27%²¹. These numbers are not necessarily a reflection of higher prevalence, but could be the result of awareness campaigns and community initiatives helping individuals in northern communities feel more empowered to report acts of abuse²¹. There are differences in prevalence of abuse in rural versus urban regions across Canada. In 2020, the overall rate of police-reported victimization of older adults across provinces was 247/100,000 in rural areas compared to 214/100,000 in urban areas¹⁶.

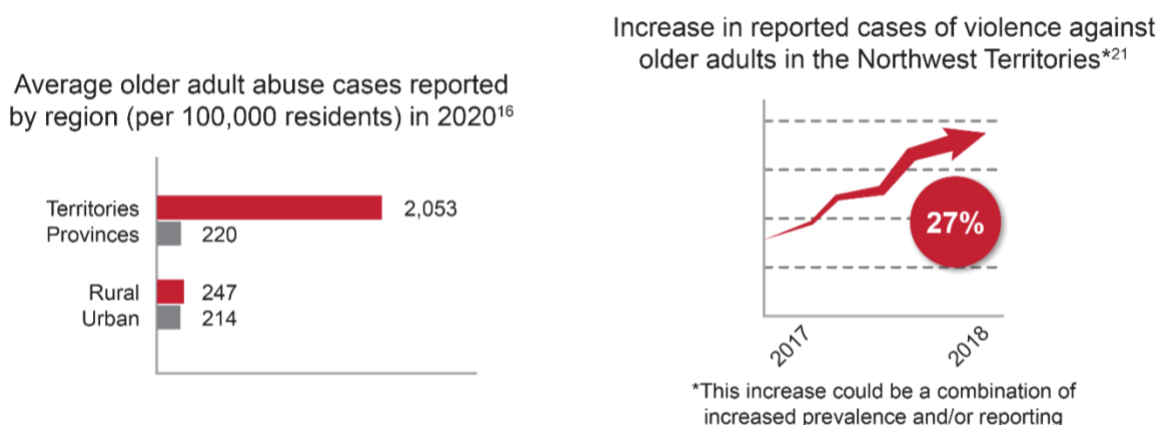


Figure 4 - Jurisdictional statistics reported by Statistics Canada

It is important to acknowledge that the statistics cited in this report cannot provide a full, representative picture of the prevalence of abuse and neglect of older adults in Canada. The information given is based on data for physical, financial, sexual abuse and neglect, as reported from national surveys and Statistics Canada reports, and from analyses of police records. As mentioned above, those sources point out that much abuse and neglect of older adults goes unreported. In part, this can be attributed to inconsistency in defining types of abuse, as well as in reporting and data collection mechanisms across the country. It may also be related to contextual factors, such as reliance of abuse victims on perpetrators reducing some incident reporting. These difficulties in building an accurate picture of the extent of abuse and neglect of older adults highlight the need for improved and more consistent reporting mechanisms across the country.

SOCIAL DRIVERS OF ABUSE

Ageism is a major social factor in the risk of abuse among older people^{5,6,13}. It is defined by the WHO as stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against people on the basis of their age²². A 2012 Canadian survey of 1,500 adults reported that 35% admit they have treated someone differently because of their age, and 80% believe those 75 and older are seen as less important and more ignored than younger generations¹³.

Findings from reports and the literature demonstrate how the physical and mental health of older adults suffers from ageist stereotypes^{5,23}. Physical health of older adults is affected by ageism when care providers communicate both verbally and non-verbally in different ways with older adults than with younger adults²³. Physicians may be more impatient and less engaged with older patients, and less likely to respond to issues raised by older patients²³. Since effective communication between older adults and care providers is a key component to avoiding medically under- or over-treating older patients, it is crucial that caregivers become more aware of ageist issues during medical interactions²³. Negative psychosocial impacts of ageism include low self-esteem, self-exclusion, lack of self-confidence and loss of autonomy²³. Self-directed ageism, which occurs when individuals embody or conform to stereotypes about themselves, has also been linked to mental health issues among older adults²³. These all contribute to pathways through which older adults become vulnerable to abuse by others.



Ageism can contribute to the underreporting and persistence of abuse when individuals in authority do not believe older adults, question their credibility, or do not consider the harms as serious as when they are experienced by younger persons^{5,11}. Service providers, health care professionals, and the general public may also fail to recognize the abuse of older adults, or adopt paternalistic approaches for dealing with abuse²⁴. Self-directed ageism may result in older adults who are being abused normalizing their situation, or not recognizing it as abuse²⁴. Ageism is also reflected in social policies which assume that all people, particularly adult children of older

individuals, are willing and capable of providing care, when in reality some relationships may be strained from the outset and more likely to become abusive¹¹.

Gender differences may also exacerbate the abuse of older people in Canada. In 2004, older women were more likely to be victims of family violence (39%) than men (20%); however, men were more likely than women to be victims of crimes committed by strangers^{11,25}. A more recent study by the CLSA contradicted those results, finding that older women were less likely than men to experience overall abuse, physical abuse, and financial abuse¹². Older women differ from younger women due to changing social norms and expectations, and declining health puts them in circumstances where abuse by a spouse or adult children could persist^{26,27}. Older women are also seen as less capable of fleeing or resisting abuse²⁸. A common theme emerging in several studies is that past experience of abuse or childhood maltreatment is a risk factor for experiencing abuse in older age^{12,19}. Often, older abused women have been subject to physical, sexual, and emotional abuse by their spouse in their early to mid-life and this abuse continues in to older age, or they experience abuse from their adult children^{5,20,27}. The cultural and ethnic background of women may also affect their experience with abuse, and access to health and counseling services²⁰. Female refugees and immigrants in Canada cite continuation of culturally sanctioned spousal abuse into older age, and neglect and financial abuse by adult sons. They may also experience emotional abuse, due to vulnerabilities created by Canada's laws on the sponsorship of family members¹.

Older Canadians identifying as Indigenous may experience higher rates of abuse; however, there are difficulties in estimating the prevalence in that population, because many surveys do not include people living in the territories or on reserves¹¹. Studies that do include these populations have found that Indigenous older adults were more likely to experience abuse²⁰. In a 1997 study, over half of Indigenous female seniors revealed they had been aware of, or were victims of, more than one type of abuse²⁹. Interviews with Indigenous men and women recount high rates of financial abuse and neglect from family members, and also show cultural expectations of care which view placing an older family in a nursing home as an act of neglect¹. Indigenous older adults were more likely to report that they had little or no confidence in police compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts¹⁶, which suggests that Canada's history of colonialism and violence towards Indigenous people also contributes to underreporting of abuse among that population.

“Studies have found that the risk of abuse decreases as income increases, and a change in income from “adequate” to “inadequate” for satisfying basic needs is significantly associated with higher risk of all types of abuse.”

Socioeconomic status is another factor that exacerbates abuse of older adults. Studies have found that the risk of abuse decreases as income increases²⁰, and a change in income from “adequate” to “inadequate” for satisfying basic needs is significantly associated with higher risk of all types of abuse^{5,12}. Additionally, abusers with low income may be more likely to be financially dependent on a victim of higher socioeconomic status, contributing to greater risk of financial abuse¹¹. Relatively little is known about links between ethnic and cultural background and abuse

of older adults¹, but as mentioned above, it may increase vulnerability to financial abuse. The CLSA reports that those identifying as Black were at heightened risk of financial abuse¹².

There is also concern about abuse of older adults suffering from dementia, cognitive decline as well as disability^{1,12}. Older adults suffering from a decline in cognitive status over time are at an increased risk of abuse. This vulnerability may arise during periods of cognitive transition when an older adult experiences change in their capacity, living situation, and systems of care¹². Additionally, caregivers of people with dementia cite concerns and uncertainty about whether or not their behaviours, often intended to protect or prevent harm to the person with dementia, may constitute abuse¹. While the data on these potential drivers of abuse is sparse, the intersection of aging and disability is important to consider as many people acquire disabilities as they age³⁰, and may come to live in similar conditions to those that make people with disabilities more vulnerable to abuse. People with disabilities are twice as likely to experience violent victimization compared to people without disabilities, and factors such as economic strain, disability, caregiver burden, and informal social support are risk factors for the abuse of older adults³⁰. Taken together, the experiences of those with disabilities and older adults overlap in ways that may increase vulnerability to abuse.

“People with disabilities are twice as likely to experience violent victimization compared to people without disabilities, and factors such as economic strain, disability, caregiver burden, and informal social support are risk factors for the abuse of older adults.”

Despite some recognition of important determinants of health in emerging studies of abuse of older adults¹², there are inconsistencies and gaps in the literature, making it difficult to analyze the relationships among abuse, gender, disability, race and ethnicity, disability, and socioeconomic status^{5,11}. The findings that are available suggest that those who are exposed to disadvantageous social circumstances that make them vulnerable to abuse throughout their life course continue to experience this as they age, highlighting the importance of taking a life-course perspective studying or developing policy related to abuse of older adults.

IMPACTS OF ABUSE

Several social and health impacts result from abuse of older people, highlighting the importance of taking action on this issue. Abuse of older people poses significant negative health risks to Canadians³¹. While physical and sexual abuse have direct negative health impacts, other forms such as emotional and financial abuse also have the potential to deprive older adults of basic necessities of health and well-being³¹. Older victims of abuse often suffer from self-criticism and blame for the abuse they experience, leading to a decreased sense of self-worth and negative self-evaluation³². Abuse of older people may also result in loss of autonomy for those experiencing it, if they become dependent on their abuser(s) and fear the consequences, embarrassment, or the future implications of seeking help³². In addition, neglect can lead to social isolation³¹, which

is both a risk factor for, and result of, abuse to older people³³. Social isolation has been found to have significant negative effects on health³¹, and older adults who are socially isolated are more likely to experience falls, coronary heart disease, strokes, depression, and suicide^{32–34}. Dementia and cognitive decline are also linked to social isolation^{33–35}. It can lead to lack of social cohesion, higher social services costs, and loss of the contributions and experience that older adults bring to communities³³. Overall, the abuse and neglect of older people is part of broader health and social system costs resulting from increased hospitalizations and hospital readmissions, as well as earlier placement into costly nursing home settings^{31,36,37}.

“During the pandemic, elder abuse hotlines reported a 10% increase in calls regarding scams and fraud, indicating an increase in financial abuse.”

The COVID-19 pandemic brought attention to important health and social barriers that can make older adults vulnerable to abuse. Media coverage highlighted the extent to which ageism contributed to the health outcomes and neglect Canadian older adults experienced during the crisis³⁸. Academics also criticized ageism and documented the negative impacts it had on mental health, social isolation, access to care, and on forms of discrimination and abuse³⁸. Long-term care home residents were at high risk of infection, with over 80% of COVID-19 related deaths during the first wave of the pandemic occurring in those facilities³⁸. There were also reports of neglect witnessed in long term care homes in Ontario during the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to increased mortality³⁹. Efforts to prevent COVID-19 transmission imposed significant restrictions on those wishing to visit people in residential and acute care facilities, which had the undesired side effect of increasing social isolation, loneliness, and inactivity for many older adults living in those settings³¹. Perpetrators of abuse who lived or worked in residential and acute care facilities were isolated alongside their victims, which increased opportunities for abuse, while at the same time higher staff workloads and fewer visitors made it more difficult to detect incidents. During the pandemic, elder abuse hotlines reported a 10% increase in calls regarding scams and fraud, indicating an increase in financial abuse^{31,40}. Additionally, between 2015 and 2020 the rates of senior victimization increased in every province and territory, which coincides with the beginning of the pandemic¹⁶. Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in increased prevalence of abuse compared with before the pandemic and has exposed a range of abuse to the public^{5,7,16}.



SECTION 1 CONCLUSION

Although the exact prevalence of abuse of older people is difficult to pinpoint and more consistent data collection is needed, it is clear that it is a complex and growing concern facing Canadians. Older adults generally have the capacity to, and are expected to, protect themselves from harm³¹. Despite this, there are multiple individual-level, family-level, structural, community, and cultural barriers to seeking help against this type of abuse^{5,33}. Community and victim-centered approaches are necessary to guide detection and intervention in the abuse of older people, including developing community response plans, conducting community risk assessments, as well as considering the victims' needs and wishes and offering information to support informed choices^{41,42}. Collaboration among various services and sectors, organizations and their affiliates, and professionals, particularly in the healthcare system, is also essential for the assessment and documentation of indicators of abuse^{41–43}.

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SECTION 2 – SYSTEM MAP

This section outlines the global approach from the UN *Decade of Health Aging (2021-2030)*, and the Canadian federal, provincial and territorial efforts and legislation intended to guide the identification of, and action to address, abuse of older adults.

A GLOBAL APPROACH

Since 2006, June 15th has been acknowledged as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day¹. As part of the UN *Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030)*, the WHO and its partners published a report with five priorities for tackling abuse of older people:

- (1) Combat ageism as it is a major reason why the abuse of older people receives so little attention;
- (2) Generate more and better data to raise awareness of the problem;
- (3) Develop and scale up cost-effective solutions to stop abuse of older people;
- (4) Make an investment case focusing on how addressing the problem is money well spent; and
- (5) Raise funds as more resources are needed to tackle the problem^{1,2}.

The WHO compiled a list of prevention and response interventions that have been employed and show promise for addressing abuse of older adults².

Prevention interventions	Response interventions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• public and professional awareness campaigns• screening of potential victims and abusers• school-based intergenerational programmes• caregiver support interventions, including stress management and respite care• residential care policies to define and improve standards of care• caregiver training on dementia• money management programmes• multidisciplinary teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• mandatory reporting of abuse to authorities• self-help groups• safe-houses and emergency shelters• psychological programmes for abusers• helplines to provide information and referrals• caregiver support interventions

CANADA'S APPROACH

In Canada, responsibility for making legislation to address the abuse of older adults is divided between the federal, provincial, and territorial governments³. Provinces and territories are responsible primarily for laws related to health and social services, family law, labour relations, and some other areas⁴. The federal *Criminal Code* also gives the provinces and territories authority for administering justice in their regions, which includes prosecution of offenders. Consequently, although criminal laws related to abuse of older adults fall within the federal jurisdiction, criminal justice policy is formed and carried out at the federal, provincial, and territorial levels of government. A range of strategies and approaches have been implemented in Canadian jurisdictions to address abuse of older adults^{3,4}. However, most provinces and territories use adult protection and guardianship legislation in their efforts to address the abuse and neglect of older adults⁵.

This section of the report outlines and discusses existing legislation, policies, strategies, and the work done to address elder abuse federally, provincially, territorially, and locally. The goal is to provide a visual tool showing where the efforts in each jurisdiction lie, in relation to others and holistically, in terms of addressing the abuse of older adults.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

In the Canadian *Criminal Code*, the abuse of older adults is not defined as a specific offence. Most of the *Criminal Code* is age-neutral, including offenses that constitute abuse when perpetrated against older adults. Consequently, a person who commits criminal abuse towards older adults is usually charged with the offence that relates to the action taken. Examples of crimes that could constitute abuse of older adults include assault, sexual assault, uttering threats, theft by a person holding a power of attorney, fraud committed by someone with whom an older adults has a relationship with an expectation of trust, or failure to provide the necessities of life. The *Criminal Code* also includes sentencing provisions which may be applicable in cases of abuse of older adults. Factors linked to age and disability are aggravating factors when a person is sentenced for a crime. If a person convicted of a crime intentionally targets someone because that person is aged 65+ or has a disability, the sentence could be increased⁴.

FEDERAL PROGRAMS

In addition to *Criminal Code* amendments applicable to abuse of older adults, the government of Canada also launched a federal Elder Abuse Initiative in 2008⁵. This initiative included a multi-sectoral approach to assist and provide support to older adults, caregivers, and others in recognizing the various risk factors and forms of abuse of older adults. Although this initiative ended on March 31, 2011, the federal government's *New Horizons for Seniors* program continued and funds community action plans to address the abuse of older adults⁵. It emphasizes the active contributions and participation of older adults to their quality of life through active living and social participation⁵. In 2021, the federal government began consultations for the development of a policy definition for abuse of older adults, and in 2023 released its definition of mistreatment of older persons³.

Nationally, there is no specific government strategy or action plan to address the abuse of older adults. However, the Canadian Network for Prevention of Elder Abuse (CNPEA) is a non-governmental organization that focuses on the prevention of, and response to, the abuse to older adults locally, regionally, provincially/territorially, and nationally. It does this through knowledge exchange and working to advance policies and programs that tackle the abuse of older adults⁶. The CNPEA developed the *Future Us* strategy in 2022 with funding support from the federal Department of Justice. The *Future Us* strategy is a community engagement plan that has been developed for people of all ages. This roadmap is governed by three overarching goals:

- i. prioritizing the prevention of abuse of older adults across every community;
- ii. establishing and supporting existing prevention networks at all levels; and
- iii. teaching and educating everyone to recognize the risk factors associated with the abuse of older adults and how to respond to it.

Further, it argues that a collective effort from communities, advocates, and the government is needed to address the abuse of older adults in its entirety. The roadmap's scope is pan-Canadian and underscores the role of broad and diverse engagement as a fundamental strategy to prevent abuse of older adults⁶.

MINISTER OF SENIORS

The 2021 Mandate letter to the federal Minister of Seniors directs the Minister to, “continue to work with the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada to strengthen Canada’s approach to elder abuse by finalizing the national definition of elder abuse, investing in better data collection and establishing new offences and penalties in the *Criminal Code* related to elder abuse”⁷. In March 2023, Minister Kamal Khera announced that Canada joined the Informal Cross-Regional Core Group of the United Nations Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (UN OEWSGA). She also participated in the 13th Session of the UN OEWSGA, which focused on the right to health and access to health services and social inclusion⁸. To date, reports about progress to meet those commitments have not been publicly released. In late July, 2023, the government changed cabinet ministers and Seamus O'Regan Jr. was appointed Minister of Labour and Seniors⁹.

Additionally, partners in the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Forum for Ministers Responsible for Seniors identified addressing and preventing abuse of older adults as a theme in their 2021 virtual symposium on the future of aging in Canada. Actions discussed in this forum included improved data collection; training and education resources; and interventions and best practices. These actions represent positive steps forward for Canada’s approach to addressing elder abuse¹⁰.

Recent work at the federal level to address abuse of older adults builds on several earlier initiatives. In 2007, the federal government increased funding for national and regional projects for the prevention of abuse of older adults, under the *New Horizons for Seniors Program* (NHSP)

Other federal offices and partners in support of seniors' policy, programs, and services include:

- The Public Health Agency of Canada;
- Veterans Affairs Canada;
- Department of Justice; and
- National Seniors Council.

provided through Employment and Social Development Canada. The NHSP provides grants and contributions to fund projects at a community and pan-Canadian level with one of five specific objectives being to expand awareness of elder abuse. Community-based projects may receive up to \$25,000 in funding for 1 year and pan-

Canadian projects can span up to 5 years¹¹. Current prevention and response networks and organizations have leveraged this funding to support their efforts to create awareness, provide resources, and make lasting changes toward ageism and abuse. The National Seniors Council developed a report following engagement with fifty experts and participants, they noted that although NHSP funding was a positive development, its limited duration did not enable sustaining promising and necessary initiatives¹². This was echoed by our task force members in that positive work is done through this program, however, it is not conducive to sustained work and initiatives. A further evaluation of the *New Horizons for Seniors Program* in 2015 highlighted processes used by the federal government to assist community-based organizations to engage with and support older adults through project-based initiatives. There were four expected direct outcomes of the program, that recipient organizations:

- recognize and address barriers to social inclusion faced by seniors;
- adopt approaches to engage and retain volunteers;
- have capacity to support seniors' initiatives in their communities; and
- participating seniors share their knowledge and experience with peers and different generations.

PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL LEGISLATION

Adult Protection Acts

Provinces and territories have specific legislation tailored to preventing and responding to the abuse of older adults. Adult protection acts are one of such type of legislation. They are used to protect vulnerable adults who are being abused, neglected, or self-neglected and cannot seek support and assistance on their own. Protection acts typically apply to all adults, not just older adults^{13,14,15}, however Québec and New Brunswick legislation specifically mentions older adults/seniors as a category of people the acts may apply to. **Appendix B** provides more detail related to adult protection legislation in each jurisdiction. Overall, these laws protect older adults who are patients/clients within health care facilities or live in residential care facilities, and/or when individuals have mental or physical incapacities that keep them from making decisions on their own behalf. They do not automatically apply to older adults, many of whom may be determined to have mental and/or physical capacity to report and respond to abuse or neglect. The information below on the adult protection acts within each province and territory was obtained

from the Canadian Legal Information Institute database¹⁶, and the *Practical Guide to Elder Abuse and Neglect Law in Canada*, authored by the Canadian Centre for Elder Law¹³.

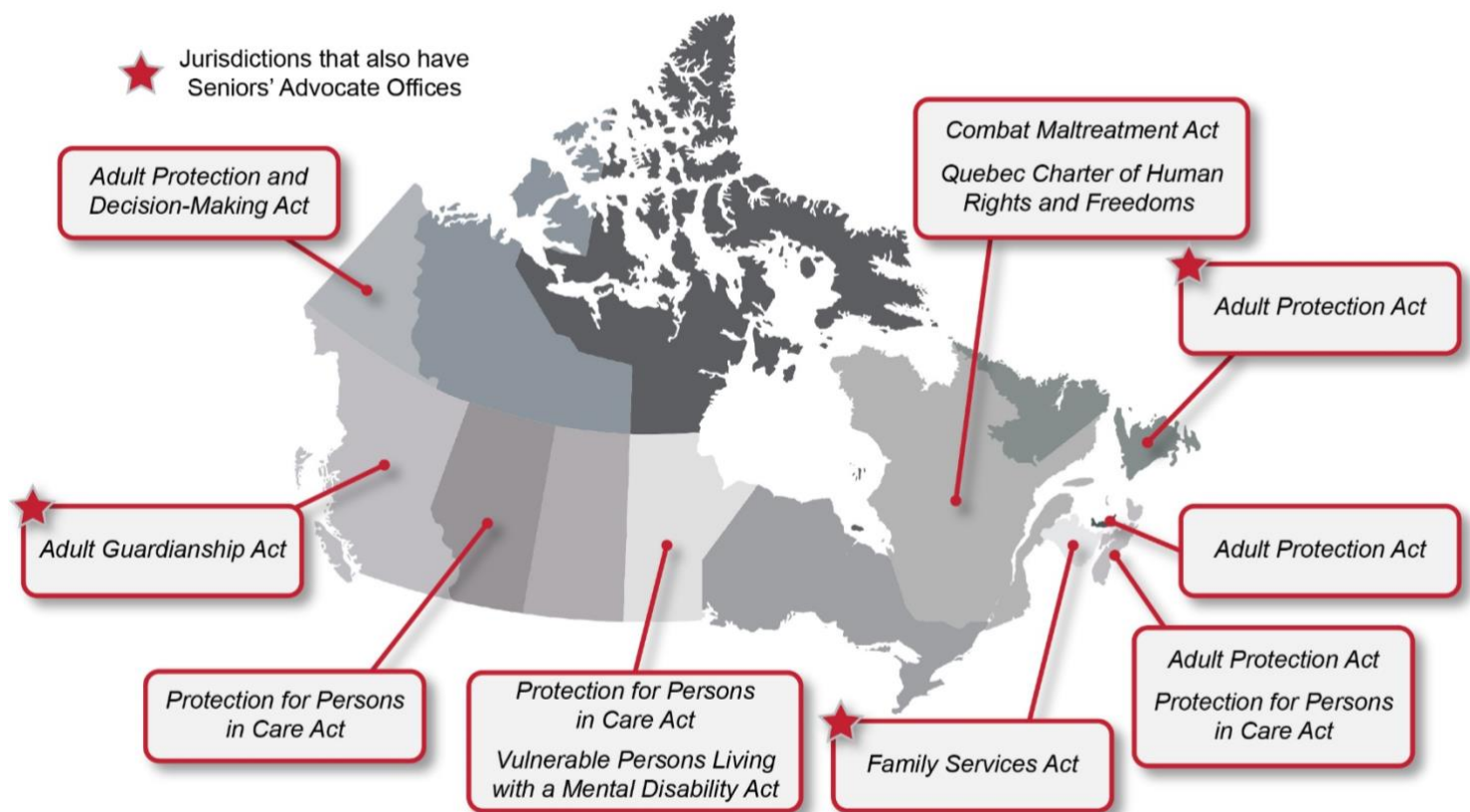


Figure 5 - System map of jurisdictional legislation and advocacy

- In **Nova Scotia**, all people are under a public duty to report to the Department of Health and Wellness, Continuing Care Division, any abuse, neglect, or self-neglect of an older person. The *Adult Protection Act* provides the framework for responding to the abuse and neglect of older adults in Nova Scotia. The province also has the *Protection for Persons in Care Act*, which applies to adults who reside in care facilities.
- In **New Brunswick**, adult protection falls under the *Family Services Act*. Abuse or neglect can be reported to the Department of Social Development. This Act includes provisions for protecting children, protecting vulnerable adults, investigating possible abuse or neglect, and providing community social services to address occurrences.
- In **Québec**, the *Act to Combat maltreatment of seniors and other persons of full age in vulnerable situations (Combat Maltreatment Act)* requires that health and social service organizations in Québec implement policies that address and respond to the abuse of older people and vulnerable adults. In addition, the *Charter of Human Rights and*

Freedoms (Québec Charter) acknowledges that an older person or person living with disabilities is entitled to protection from exploitation.

- In **British Columbia**, the *Adult Guardianship Act* provides a framework for responding to the abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults. Additionally, the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* applies to adults living in long-term care or assisted living when abuse or neglect occurs within the facility.
- In **Newfoundland and Labrador** there is specific adult protection legislation, entitled the *Adult Protection Act*, that provides the framework for which to respond to the abuse and neglect of older adults. The public has a duty to report an adult in need of protective intervention.
- In **Prince Edward Island** there is also specific adult protection legislation, entitled the *Adult Protection Act*, that also provides the framework for which to respond to the abuse and neglect of older adults.
- In **Yukon** there is the *Adult Protection and Decision-Making Act*, which provides a framework for responding to the abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults.
- In **Alberta**, the *Protection for Persons in Care Act* sets out how to respond to abuse or neglect of older adults receiving care specifically in publicly funded facilities.
- In **Manitoba**, the *Protection for Persons in Care Act* requires the reporting and investigation of abuse or neglect of patients in a health facility. Also, the *Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Act* provides a framework for providing support services, protection from and response to abuse and neglect, and appointment of a substitute decision-maker. This act applies to adults who have a mental disability which manifested prior to the age of 18.

The following provinces and territories do not have adult protection acts: Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Ontario, and Saskatchewan.

SENIORS ADVOCATES

Three provincial Seniors' Advocate Offices have been established in Canada, in British Columbia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador.

BC: The Office of the Seniors' Advocate is an independent office of the provincial government. It monitors and analyzes seniors' issues and services and makes recommendations to the government and service providers for systemic changes. Areas that are monitored include health care, housing, income support, community support, and transportation services¹⁷.

NB: The office of the Seniors' Advocate is independent from any departments of the New Brunswick government. Its main goal is to ensure that the rights of seniors are respected in the planning and delivery of government services, supports, and programs. To accomplish this, individual and systemic advocacy is undertaken, awareness and outreach activities are promoted, and recommendations are made to government departments and agencies¹⁸.

NL: The Office of the Seniors' Advocate is an independent office of the House of Assembly and has a mandate to address various systemic issues that negatively impact the health and wellbeing of older adults. The office identifies, reviews, and analyzes systemic issues and works with seniors' organizations, service providers, and other agencies to develop approaches to address issues that affect older adults and their families. Ultimately, the office identifies changes that will improve services for older adults and makes recommendations to government agencies¹⁹.

Emergency Shelters

In Canada, there are approximately 500 emergency and transitional shelters operated by a number of provincial/ territorial, municipal, and community organizations.

Only 13 shelters are specifically designated for older adults²⁰. The shelters for older adults are spread across five provinces: BC, AB, MB, ON, and NL.

NETWORKS

Click on the logos to visit the organization's website.



CANADIAN NETWORK for
the PREVENTION of ELDER ABUSE

RÉSEAU CANADIEN pour la PRÉVENTION
du MAUVAIS TRAITEMENT des AÎNÉS

The Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse has various tools to address the issue of the abuse of older adults, including brochures and factsheets, community development tools, policy tools, and practice tools.



BC ASSOCIATION OF
Community Response Networks

Stopping Adult Abuse and Neglect ...Together.

The BCCRN has several programs designed to educate and create awareness on abuse, neglect, and self-neglect in relation to older adults.



AEAAC
Alberta Elder Abuse
Awareness Council

AEAAC: <https://heyzine.com/flip-book/stayingsafe>

The Alberta Elder Abuse Awareness Council created a “staying safe” handbook for older adults living in Alberta. It was created to assist older adults in identifying and understanding that to do in abusive and unsafe situations.

The AEAAC also has print resources in multiple languages, and online resources that address the issue of abuse of older adults: <https://www.albertaelderabuse.ca/resources/print-resources>



Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario

The Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario website has resources and training tools for response and intervention efforts, and guidelines relating to the abuse of older adults, how and where older adults can get help, and social media awareness raising toolkits, among other resources.



PEAM PREVENT ELDER ABUSE MANITOBA

Preventing Elder Abuse Manitoba provides partner materials such as a legal information guide for older adults, a fact sheet targeting older adult safety, protection against frauds and scams, and other resources. Within its resources section, it also has a specific tab for ideas that could target the education and awareness portion of abuse against older adults. These include planning a walk to raise awareness on the abuse of older adults with the community, tactfully engaging the local media and other media outlets, establishing local networks or groups to identify and address issues in relation to the abuse of older adults, among other ideas.

SeniorsNL RESOURCES • INFORMATION • CONNECTION

SeniorsNL works to foster older adults' independence and overall wellbeing through peer-support volunteers in communities who provide information, as well as programs and referral services.

SECTION 2 CONCLUSION

Addressing abuse of older adults is multidisciplinary, multifactorial, and requires educating and mobilizing all levels of society and government. Canada has taken steps toward prioritizing this issue by hosting national consultations focused on abuse of older adults, working to develop a federal policy definition, and participation in the UN's open-ended working group on ageing where discussions focused on the human rights of older persons. This system map highlights some of the essential resources for change, such as the *Future Us* roadmap by the CNPEA, and models for advocacy for action to address abuse of older adults. The following tables provide a further overview of government resources, and non-governmental organizations and resources for combatting abuse of older adults. They highlight different efforts across the country and illustrate that there is no one-size fits all approach to prevention and response initiatives. We can learn from treating the ongoing efforts and resources as models for scale and implementation, while considering the unique contextual factors among jurisdictions.

TABLE 1: GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, STRATEGIES, AND RESPONSE RESOURCES

NOTE: UNLESS OTHERWISE REFERENCED, THE INFORMATION COMPILED FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS TABLE WAS SOURCED FROM THE PRACTICAL GUIDE TO ELDER ABUSE AND NEGLECT CANADA [HTTPS://CCELDERLAW.CA](https://ccelderlaw.ca)

Jurisdiction	Government Department/Agency(s)	Strategy or action plan(s)	Response effort(s)/program(s)	Helplines/Information lines
	<i>The column identifies the bodies of government within the provinces and territories that are responsible for response and prevention of abuse of older adults.</i>	<i>This column identifies the provincial/territorial strategies or action plans on abuse of older adults.</i>	<i>This column provides an overview of provincial/territorial level programs and services delivered by government departments.</i>	<i>This column includes the help lines and information lines within each jurisdiction that victims, potential victims, and their families can call.</i>
BC	Regional Health Authorities Community Living BC Public Guardian and Trustee of BC BC Office of the Seniors Advocate	The Together to Reduce Elder Abuse Strategy (TREA) https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/people/seniors/health-safety/pdf/trea_strategy.pdf	Assisted Living Registrar (ALR) for assisted living residents Community Care Licensing Offices protect individuals residing in a community care facility such as long-term care and mental health and addictions facilities https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/seniors/health-safety/protection-from-elder-abuse-and-neglect/where-to-get-help	Seniors Abuse and Information Line (SAIL) 1-866-437-1940 or 604-437-1940 https://seniorsfirstbc.ca/programs/sail/ The provincial Seniors' Phone Line 1-877-952-3181 https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/contact-us/#:~:text=Get%20in%20touch%20with%20us,will%20assist%20you%20after%20hours
AB	Ministry for Seniors, Community and Social Services https://www.alberta.ca/seniors-community-and-social-services.aspx Protection for Persons in Care	A Collective Approach – Alberta's five-year strategy (2022-2027) https://open.alberta.ca/publications/albertas-strategy-preventing-and-addressing-elder-abuse-2022-2027	Protection for Persons in Care https://www.alberta.ca/protection-for-persons-in-care.aspx	Alberta Provincial abuse Line https://www.alberta.ca/abuse-helpline Other lines are available at: https://www.alberta.ca/get-help-elder-abuse#help

	Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee			
SK	Ministry of Health, Community Care Branch https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/directory?ou=f6454dc9-b657-4349-985a-a52f7ad7970e Public Guardian and Trustee https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/justice-crime-and-the-law/power-of-attorney-guardianship-and-trusts/investigating-financial-abuse	-	Personal Care Homes Program Community Care Branch Police-based victims services	Seniors Information Line (operated by the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism) 1-888-823-2211 https://skseniorsmechanism.ca/
MB	Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care (formed in 2022 – branches and units under development) Manitoba Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat	Manitoba's 2002 strategy appears to no longer be in effect	Protection for Persons in Care Office www.gov.mb.ca/health/protection/	The Seniors Abuse Support Line 1-888-896-7183 www.gov.mb.ca/seniors/safety.html Seniors Information Line 1-800-665-6565 204-945-6565

NL	Department of Children, Seniors, and Social Development Office for Aging and Seniors Office of the Seniors' Advocate	-	Violence Prevention Initiatives coordinated by the office for the Status of women	Reporting line 1-855-376-4957 Domestic violence helpline 1-888-709-7090 (call or text)
YK	Department of Health and Social Services	-	Seniors' Services and Adult Protection Unit	Seniors' Services - Adult Protection Unit 867-456-3946 1-800-661-0408 ext. 3946 VictimLinkBC also serves Yukon residents
NWT	Department of Health and Social Services	-	-	NWT Help Line 1-800-661-0844
NU	Nunavut Family Services Department	-	-	Elder Support Phone Line: 1-866-684-5056

TABLE 2: NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND RESOURCES

NOTE: UNLESS OTHERWISE REFERENCED, THE INFORMATION COMPILED FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS TABLE WAS SOURCED FROM THE PRACTICAL GUIDE TO ELDER ABUSE AND NEGLECT CANADA [HTTPS://CCELDERLAW.CA](https://cclaw.ca)

Jurisdiction	Networks	Legal Aid/Advice	Emergency shelters/crisis intervention	Other organizations and services
CA	Canadian Network for Prevention of Elder Abuse (CNPEA) https://cnpea.ca/en/		Shelter database (not specific to older populations) https://sheltersafe.ca	
BC	BC Association of Community Response Networks (BCCRN)	Legal Aid BC https://legalaid.bc.ca SeniorsFirst BC https://seniorsfirstbc.ca/	Older Women's Safe Home http://www.kootenaimcommunitycentre.org Victoria Women's Transition House https://www.transitionhouse.net/our-programs/50-program/ Ama Transition House(Surrey) https://atira.bc.ca/what-we-do/housing/ama-transition-house/ Margaret's Housing for Older Women https://atira.bc.ca/what-we-do/housing/margarets-housing-for-older-women-maggies/ Sísele Housing for Women who are older https://atira.bc.ca/what-we-do/housing/sisele-see-se-la-housing-for-women-who-are-older/	SeniorsFirst BC https://seniorsfirstbc.ca/

AB	Alberta Elder Abuse Awareness Council (AEAAC)	Legal Aid Alberta Elder Law Program	SAGE Seniors Safehouse (Edmonton) https://www.mysage.ca/help/seniors-safe-house Kerby (Unison) Center (Calgary) https://acws.ca/shelters/kerby-rotary-shelter/ Golden Circle Safe House - Red Deer Shelter Lethbridge Safe Suite	Kerby Calgary Carya Calgary The Senior Protection Partnership (Edmonton police, city of Edmonton, Catholic Social Services, Covenant Health, and Sage Seniors Association)
SK	-	Seniors Legal Assistance Panel Program	3 mobile crisis units https://mobilecrisis.ca/programs-services/seniors-abuse-and-neglect	Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism
MB	Prevent Elder Abuse Manitoba (PEAM) https://weaadmanitoba.ca/peam/	A&O Support Services for Older Adults partners with Boni Singbeil Stienstra LLP (provide legal services to individuals 55 years and older)	Safe Suite Program https://www.aosupportservices.ca/our-three-pillars/safety-security/safe-suite/	A&O Support Services for Older Adults
ON	Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario (EAPO)	Advocacy Centre for the Elderly (ACE) http://www.ancelaw.ca Community Advocacy & Legal Centre https://communitylegalcentre.ca/legal-info/abuse-and-family-violence-other-help/	Pat's Place https://familyserVICEToronto.org/our-services/programs-and-services/pats-place/ Islington Seniors' Shelter https://www.torontohhs.org/shelters/islington-seniors-shelter/ Searchable database of emergency/crisis shelters and support services https://eapon.search211.ca/#subtopic_anchor	Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority (to report abuse of a resident who is living in a retirement home 1-855-275-7472)

QC	-	Roger Snelling Seniors' Legal Clinic		L'Appui Caregiver Support Crime Victims Assistance Centres (CAVACs) https://cavac.qc.ca/en/
NB	-	Public Legal Education and Information Services of New Brunswick Legal Toolkit for Seniors https://www.legal-info-legale.nb.ca/en/legal_toolkit_for_seniors		New Brunswick Senior Citizens Federation
NS	-	Legal Information Line Lawyer Referral Services Seniors Info Line 902-452-5755		Community Links Chebucto Links Caregivers Nova Scotia https://caregiversns.org/resources/our-partners-and-allies/organizations-for-seniors/
PEI	-	Community Legal information		PEI Seniors Citizens Federation

		https://legalinfopei.ca/preventing-abuse-and-neglect-of-older-adults/ Elder Mediation http://www.mediationpei.com/elder-mediation/		
NL	SeniorsNL NL Network for the Prevention of Elder	Public Legal Information Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (PLIAN)	Connections for Seniors -Emergency Housing & support services https://www.connectionsforseniors.ca Housing line 1-833-724-2444	Connections for Seniors 709-552-2683
Yukon	-	Yukon Public Legal Education Association		Yukon Council on Aging
Northwest Territories	NWT Network to prevent abuse of older adults		Alison McAteer House (NWT Help Line) Sutherland House	
Nunavut	-		Five Family Violence Shelters	

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SECTION 3 - RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents results from a review of literature and reports that propose recommendations for addressing abuse of older adults in Canada. Recommendations in the reviewed documents are outcomes of years of work by research experts, organizations, and governments. Five overarching goals have been identified through analysis of these sources, as well as consultations with Elder Abuse Task Force members and government representatives. This section also highlights the roles played by government and civil society stakeholders.

The Federal Government	Roles played by the federal government include, but are not limited to: providing a legal basis for action under the <i>Criminal Code</i> ; supporting policy, programming, public awareness, and education efforts; and providing sustained funding. Federal project-based grants have been awarded to community organizations to launch local programs to reduce the abuse of older adults.
Provincial/Territorial Governments	Provincial and territorial governments create strategies and implement policies intended to address abuse of older adults and raise public awareness about the problem. Development of legislation and policy frameworks is part of that role ^{1,2} . Provincial and territorial governments also make sustained investments and support the collaborative efforts of communities.
Municipal governments	Municipal governments play roles in supporting community-level abuse prevention and response. They support law enforcement efforts, and may fund community organizations, such as response networks and local grassroots organizations.
Civil Society Partners	Roles played by these varied organizations include raising awareness about the issue, in addition to providing valuable skills and local knowledge to support responses to the abuse of older adults.

ANALYSIS OF RESOURCES

Recommendations from the sources fall within 5 themes: (1) Awareness and education; (2) Resources for victims, potential victims, families, and others; (3) Response to abuse; (4) Data collection and analysis; and (5) Policy changes. **Appendix C** provides a summary of recommendations found within these 5 themes. Further analysis of the recommendations, paired with months of consultations and feedback from stakeholders, yielded five overarching goals that

acknowledge the roles of government, networks, community-based organizations, health care providers, law enforcement, and the public. We also explored examples of promising initiatives and interventions that can be modeled and expanded, a need highlighted in the 2021 federal/provincial/territorial virtual symposium on the future of aging³.

When considering the goals, it should be noted that while the federal government plays a crucial role, that typically does not involve delivering current, on-the-ground, efforts to address the abuse of older adults in its entirety. Instead, the federal government usually provides necessary funding, supports, and services to existing provincial, territorial

and community level initiatives. However, the 2023 federal definition of mistreatment of older persons⁴, and national strategies can provide comprehensive and coordinated goals, and guide actions toward addressing key issues⁵. Examples such as the National Dementia Strategy released in 2019 and the National Financial Literacy Strategy released in 2021, highlight the valuable roles all levels of government and society play in achieving common aims. There is a potential role for a national strategy to address the abuse of older adults in Canada. If such a national strategy was to be developed, it could provide sustained funding for national, provincial

Strategy example: Make Change that Counts: National Financial Literacy Strategy 2021-2026

This strategy highlights a 5-year plan and call to action to make the financial ecosystem more accessible, inclusive, and effective for all Canadians.

Read the strategy [here](#).

and territorial networks and organizations, which would allow them to support and sustain existing efforts to develop and enhance existing policies, strengthen existing prevention mechanisms, enhance responses, and improve education and awareness, including dismantling ageist stereotypes within society. It is important for support tailored to addressing the abuse of older adults to include healthcare, legal assistance, counseling, and other necessary services, regardless of where older adults reside. A coordinated and comprehensive approach should include government agencies, community-based organizations, healthcare providers, advocates, and other stakeholders.

Strategy example: A Dementia Strategy for Canada: Together We Aspire

This strategy highlights national objectives and areas of focus to achieve a collective vision that “all people living with dementia and caregivers are valued and supported, quality of life is optimized, and dementia is prevented, well understood, and effectively treated.

Read the strategy [here](#).



GOAL 1: SUSTAINED FUNDING FOR PREVENTION NETWORKS AND RESPONSE ORGANIZATIONS

The abuse of older adults is preventable. However, in instances where it does occur, it is vital to have adequate support and resources to respond and ensure that victims can safely report and recover without further disruption to their care and quality of life. Networks, organizations, and community groups have established a variety of resources and supports for older adult victims of abuse, potential victims, their families, and others. These resources and supports rely on appropriate funding for the development, dissemination, and maintenance of materials, education, and other supports. Currently, Canada has six provincial/territorial networks, and the national CNPEA. Canada's approach would be greatly strengthened with dedicated networks in each jurisdiction to provide awareness, public education, response, and navigation of services.

Members of the Elder Abuse Task Force emphasized the need for sustained funding to foster and support efforts by local and community networks and organizations in each jurisdiction. They stated that project-based funds are not sustainable and do not create avenues for long-term responses. This finding was also indicated in the 2007 *Report of the National Seniors Council on Elder Abuse*¹. The importance of community-based efforts is underscored in Alberta's updated elder abuse strategy, *A Collective Approach: Alberta's Strategy for Preventing and Addressing Elder Abuse*, and their recognition that responses to elder abuse are best created at the community level².



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One potential solution to the lack of sustained funding is the "cost-sharing" concept proposed in the *Future Us Roadmap*⁶. The roadmap proposes a shared, non-partisan, approach where the federal government matches funds from provincial and territorial governments to allow for the creation of local networks by NGOs, municipal governments, or others. Ultimately, cost-sharing could increase the number of initiatives funded by the federal government to provide resources and supports. Section Two of the *Future Us Roadmap* outlines how networks at the national, provincial, and local/municipal levels can be mutually supportive in the provision of outreach and education, community response, knowledge sharing, and much more.

Another benefit of sustained funding would be increased education and awareness, including in relation to legal tools and services that protect older adults from financial abuse, such as advance health care directives, appointing substitute decision makers, and selecting a suitable power of attorney. It is important to note that greater education and awareness is likely to lead to increased

reporting and demand for interventions. Thus, sustained funding for networks and response organizations, alongside awareness and education efforts, will be important in order to ensure that tools and support are available for victims, potential victims, and their families when abuse occurs.



PROMISING PRACTICES FOR GOAL #1

BC Community Response Networks

A Community Response Network (CRN) comprises individuals, groups and agencies that work together at a community level to promote a coordinated community response. CRN members can be anyone in the community who is concerned about adult abuse and neglect, including designated agencies, police, community organizations serving specific groups, faith communities, financial institutions, advocacy organizations, and concerned citizens. The BC Association of Community Response Networks (BCCRN) has received annual lump sum funding from the Ministry of Health, and BC Community Gaming Grants, since February 2012. As of 2023, the annual budget is \$1.6 million, which covers all the costs of operation and providing support to 86 Community Response Networks serving over 256 communities⁷. The core support includes funding for tool kits, workshops, materials, and administration of the BCCRN without requiring further fundraising.

A recent report evaluating BC CRNs over the last 10 years highlights a 400 percent increase in communities served and a 450 percent increase in engaged affiliates. Another noteworthy success is the work BC CRNs have done toward reconciliation and the use of inclusive practices with Indigenous peoples and communities in BC⁸.

Alberta's Coordinated Community Response (CCR) model

CCRs are models of collaborative community action based on a coalition of organizations and networks working together. Collaborative actions may include, but are not limited to: developing effective prevention mechanisms; improving supports and services for older adults affected by abuse; enhancing community participation in preventing, intervening, and providing wrap-around services to those impacted by abuse; and advocating for policy changes to ensure the security and safety of older adults in Alberta⁹. In addition, CCRs involve various government agencies, social services, legal services, healthcare, and community-based organizations, such as advocacy groups, faith-based organizations, and senior centres. By implementing the CCR model, Alberta aims to improve overall response to abuse of older adults, and ultimately enhance their health and wellbeing. Currently, there are 31 CCRs operating across Alberta.

The Alberta government has provided funding to develop and enhance CCRs as part of its efforts to address the abuse of older adults. For instance, the government of Alberta provided \$750,000 in grant funding to the Alberta Elder Abuse Awareness Council in 2021-2022 to support the provision of case management services in 16 CCRs across the province⁷. Alberta also provided \$3.6 million in grants from 2015-2018 to support the development or enhancement of local CCRs in 31 communities in Alberta. This grant program supported the creation of tools, such as tracking templates and forms, elder abuse risk management tools, reporting and tracking processes, safety plan templates, and consent forms, among others. In 2020, Alberta Seniors and Housing evaluated the CCR model through a grant program analysis, a toolkit survey, and an evaluation survey. Overall, the results showed that the CCR model helped communities identify and address the abuse of older adults. The results also recommended that the CCR model be developed and implemented in other communities.

Most recently, in an effort to reduce the abuse of older adults and increase prevention services for at risk older adults, the government of Alberta has committed in its 2023 budget to invest \$7.4 million over three years. Specifically, it commits to providing \$4.2 million over a three-year period to Kerby Unison Centre in Calgary, and Sage Seniors Safe House in Edmonton, an increase of \$625,000 over the previous year⁸. The funding will support ongoing intensive case management efforts. Additionally, the Alberta Elder Abuse Council will receive \$3.2 million to support older adults who are at risk of abuse, and their families⁹.



GOAL 2: ESTABLISHING FEDERAL, PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL SENIORS ADVOCATE OFFICES

As part of its recommendations on awareness and education initiatives, CanAGE's policy book suggested establishing a federal Office of the Seniors Advocate, and seniors advocate offices in provinces and territories that do not already have them¹⁰. The recommendation highlights the roles these agencies play in oversight and leadership on issues involving older adults. As outlined in **Section Two** of this report, British Columbia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and New Brunswick currently have seniors advocate offices that have drawn attention to a range of systemic challenges older adults face in their respective provinces. In 2023, the provincial seniors advocates also had a joint meeting with the federal Minister of Seniors, demonstrating their potential to foster collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries on issues that are important to older adults, including the prevention of abuse.



GOAL 3: AMENDMENTS TO LEGISLATION TO PROTECT ALL OLDER ADULTS

There is no specific crime of abuse of older adults in Canada, and responses by police are often conducted under existing provisions that criminalize sexual, physical, psychological, and financial abuse¹¹. The *Protecting Canada's Seniors Act* (January 2013) amended the *Criminal Code* to add vulnerability resulting from age to the list of aggravating circumstances for sentencing¹². Future amendments to the criminal code should explicitly include abuse of older adults. Measures should also be implemented to address the need for training and education about abuse of older adults for those who enforce and practice law⁵.

Similarly, sources reviewed for the development of this report have made recommendations to amend PIPEDA (*Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*) to clearly define mental capacity and abuse of older adults¹³. This Act relates to data privacy and outlines the responsibilities of the private sector when collecting and using personal information. Alberta, British Columbia, Québec, New Brunswick, Ontario, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador have implemented additional private sector privacy laws, which exempt applicable organizations from PIPEDA where provincial laws are substantially similar. Provinces that have their own privacy laws should ensure mental capacity, and abuse of older adults is clearly defined within their legislation.



PROMISING PRACTICE FOR GOAL #3

Act to Combat Maltreatment of Seniors

In April 2022, Québec established the *Act to combat maltreatment of seniors and other persons of full age in vulnerable situations*. It includes the mandatory adoption of an anti-maltreatment policy for all public and private institutions in the province's health and social service systems¹⁴. The objectives of the policy to be developed and implemented are to:

- Establish measures to prevent maltreatment of persons in vulnerable situations;
- Combat maltreatment; and
- Support people in any steps taken to end maltreatment, whether at the hands of a person working for the institution or of any other person.

A LaPresse report describing Québec's efforts and achievements in improving reporting of abuse of older adults noted continuing practical challenges. For example, professionals are still hesitant to report, as they lack a clear understanding of the law and fear consequences of breaking confidentiality. Additionally, within congregate living facilities, incidents are often reported to management and/or administrators rather than appropriate entities, such as adult protection or police¹⁵. It is important to note these practical observations as efforts toward increased awareness and reporting unfold.



GOAL 4: IMPROVED REPORTING AND STANDARDIZED DATA

Canadian data regarding the abuse of older adults are inadequate due to several factors. Abuse and neglect of older adults is significantly underreported because it takes many forms, and because of complexities in the relationships and dynamics of abusive interactions. Underreporting also stems from a lack of infrastructure, education, and resources available to the public, to professionals who may be able to identify and support victims, and to victims and their families. Data reliability is undermined by variation between provinces and territories in definitions of abuse and neglect, and differences in how abuse is reported¹⁶. Pragmatic, standardized methods of data collection are needed to help ensure that responses to incidents of abuse of older adults are consistent and based on high-quality evidence.

Many recommendations have called for implementation of standardized data collection procedures, as well as investment in reporting and data collection infrastructure compatible with the needs of marginalized groups that are at a higher risk of abuse and neglect. The adoption of a life-course approach is recommended to bolster data collection methods. Individuals may have experienced abuse prior to becoming abusive, and life course data will contribute



to understanding and identifying abuse in relation to victimization experience^{5,17}. Further, longer-term research funding, the development and validation of measurement scales by type and form of abuse, repeated measures over time, the use of multiple methods to reach respondents, and sampling that is representative of Canadian settings would improve the quality of prevalence data through longitudinal studies¹⁷. This could also include collecting disaggregated data that allows analyses that takes into account marginalized, racialized and gendered older adults, and minimizes gaps in data collection across populations.

It is promising to note that the federal mandate letter to the Minister of Seniors indicates that the government is working to establish a federal definition of abuse toward older adults. A federal response could include the formation of a federal steering committee and working group to implement a multisectoral approach designed to identify and address the intersecting factors that worsen the abuse of older adults among some populations. In addition, federally funded agencies should collect data concerning neglect and abuse of older adults, and support enhanced communication and collaboration between Statistics Canada and law enforcement agencies¹⁸.

National reporting systems

Many sources reviewed during the compilation of this report have recommended the establishment of a national 1-800 phone line for reporting abuse of older adults. A staffed and securely funded national hotline would support those seeking information, services, and emergency intervention in their area. Canada currently has a 211 line to provide individuals with information on government and community-based services they need in their area, and it has been expanded across the country as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic¹⁹.

A national helpline focused on abuse of older adults could facilitate reporting and direct individuals to needed services for victims and their families. This also would provide a mechanism for collecting data that can be analyzed regionally to track and monitor prevalence and the need for interventions and resources. It is worth noting that improving the avenues to report abuse will result in higher demand for interventions and resources to address it. Therefore, a balanced approach must be taken to collaborate with and encourage provinces and territories, prevention networks, and community organizations to invest regionally in response capacity.

Additionally, as we highlight in tables A and B in **Section 2**, there are currently many government and community supported phone lines that exist for reporting, response, and support. Establishing a central line would take a concerted and collaborative effort to determine how to best integrate into the existing provincial/territorial landscape. A feasibility study would provide better understanding of how to successfully implement a national line and tie into existing supports. Examples could be taken from existing national helplines with similar goals of prevention, intervention, and support of vulnerable individuals, such as *Talk Suicide Canada* and *Kids Help Phone*. It is important to ensure that helplines support a range of languages, including those spoken by Indigenous peoples across the country. *VictimLinkBC* is an example of good practice, providing interpretation services with over 150 languages.



PROMISING PRACTICE FOR GOAL #4

US National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System

Under the Administration for Community Living, the US established a *National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System* (NAMRS). This system collects data on adult protection services (APS) investigations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults, abuse of adults with disabilities, and information on the administration of APS programs. This reporting system has the participation of all states, territories, and the District of Columbia, and is a flexible system allowing for multiple types of reporting based on the state organization data systems²⁰.



GOAL 5: IMPROVED AWARENESS AND EDUCATION TO COMBAT AGEISM

Age prejudice, or ageism, has been found to be a risk factor in the abuse of older adults, and throughout society older adults are marginalized and dismissed in a variety of subtle and obvious ways. Studies have noted that older adults may not be included in the development of programs or resources to tackle abuse. When older adults are asked, they often define abuse in terms of social exclusion, violation of human rights, and dismissal of the views and opinions they provided²¹. In a 2010 article, Biggs & Happala note that responding to the abuse of older adults requires recognizing that emotional ambivalences are part of familial care situations and finding appropriate ways to address ambiguities, while respecting older adults' right to self-determination by actively involving them in decisions about their care²². Older adults are also often treated as a homogenous population, and it is important that responses to their abuse take into consideration the varied roles they have within society and recognize their distinct, vibrant identities. Because various forms of neglect, and physical, financial, sexual, or psychological abuse may develop as a result of adopting, promoting, and activating ageist stereotypes and discriminatory behaviour²³, addressing the abuse of older adults requires combating ageism and age discrimination at the societal level.

The UN has proposed an approach to reduce ageism. The *Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021-2030* initiative aims to improve the lives of older people, their families, and communities through collaborative action^{5,24}. It identifies four critical action areas to combat ageism, with older adults at the center of this process. The action areas include changing the public perception and attitudes towards ageing; promoting age-friendly environments; developing integrated health care systems; and providing long-term care to older adults that need it²¹.



The complexity inherent in implementing these four action areas illustrates the need for approaches involving multiple sectors, including housing, education, transport, information, communication, long-term care, social protection, among others, to improve healthy ageing.

It is imperative that when tackling the abuse of older adults, broad-based societal approaches are implemented that empower older people and acknowledge the contributions they make within society. There is a problematic lack of systematic Canadian data documenting ways ageism exacerbates the abuse of older adults, however. More robust primary research is needed, as well as public education, professional training, and the enhancement of global policy initiatives on ageism to identify and understand it in its entirety. Taking action to address information and education gaps will support the creation of a national strategy to dismantle the systemic ageism that exists in Canada, and ultimately help reduce its negative impacts on the abuse of older adults.

Including ageism in equity, diversity, and inclusion training across sectors would be a valuable step, as would implementing collaborative national communications campaigns coordinated with existing networks and organizations to enhance public awareness of ageism, abuse of older adults, and resources available to address them.

A UN Convention on the Rights of Older Person

The International Longevity Center Canada (ILC) make a case for why Canada should support the United Nations convention to combat ageism¹⁶. They argue that a convention would provide public awareness and legally binding protection of older persons' rights under international law. That suggestion is in line with the roles envisioned by the UN for its national and international partners including: promoting research on ageism; conducting research on the role of older people, their contributions, and their social capital; and making healthy aging more widely known and understood through campaigns^{5,24}. Similarly, HelpAge International has published a report on advancing equality for older people, and calls for two main legislative steps for countries to take: formally recognize the need for a UN convention on the rights of older people; and adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination laws which include age discrimination²⁵.

A convention and its laws will:

- Offer protection to older persons;
- Combat ageism;
- Guide all levels government policy making;
- Improve accountability; and
- Empower older adults.



PROMISING PRACTICES FOR GOAL #5

A variety of tools and resources have been developed in provinces and territories across Canada to address the abuse of older adults. Prevention and response networks play a vital role in education and resources and have various events, courses, and resources to help individuals, families, and the public become more aware and understand abuse toward older adults. Education resources led by networks can be found on their respective websites, highlighted in section 2 of this report. For the purpose of this section, initiatives were chosen that address some of the recommendations compiled from various resources analyzed for this report such as a need for more awareness and education for the public, for health care providers, and the role of the financial services sector in tackling abuse of older adults.

It's Not Right! A pan-Canadian approach to address abuse and neglect of older adults

<http://itsnotright.ca>

It's Not Right! Neighbours, Friends, and Families for Older Adults (INR) is a proven pan-Canadian public education campaign on abuse of older adults. It has been a mainstay public education program for prevention networks at the local and regional levels since 2015. INR content is evidence-based, following from family violence death reviews that find most often, it is the people closest to an abusive situation who are the first to see abuse happening, but don't know what to do about it. INR is designed to educate and prepare citizens of all ages to recognize warning signs of abuse and ageism, respond safely and effectively and to know when and where to refer to professionals in their communities. It was funded through a series of projects by the Public Health Agency of Canada (2009) and Employment and Skills Development Canada (2013, 2019): New Horizons for Seniors. INR was developed by the Centre for Research & Evaluation on Violence against Women & Children (CREVAWC) at Western University (See: <https://www.learningtoendabuse.ca/>) in collaboration with the CNPEA, seven provincial/territorial prevention networks, and professionals, researchers and advocates from across Canada²⁶. The highly collaborative development process produced materials that represent the best collective thinking in Canada for public education on abuse and neglect of older adults. INR is a core component of *Future Us: A Roadmap to Elder Abuse Prevention* led by CNPEA⁶.

The General Bank of Canada Code of Conduct for the Delivery of Banking Services to Seniors

In 2019, the Canadian Bankers Association (CBA) introduced a voluntary code of conduct for the delivery of banking services to seniors (the Code)²⁷. The General Bank of Canada (GBC) outlines how they adhere to the 7 principles for delivering banking services to seniors. The principles include:

- Banks will establish and implement appropriate policies, procedures, and processes to support the code;
- Banks will communicate effectively with older adults;
- Banks will provide appropriate training to their employees and representatives who serve older adults;
- Banks will make appropriate resources available to client-facing employees and representatives to help them understand matters relevant to older adults' banking needs;

- Banks will endeavor to mitigate potential financial harm to older adults;
- Banks will consider market demographics and the needs of older adults when proceeding with branch closures; and
- Banks will publicly disclose the steps they have taken to support the principles set out in the code.

The GBC has published their 2022 annual report which outlines various implementation steps²⁸.

Education for health care professionals

Addressing Abuse of Older Adults: RNAO

The Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO) was awarded a federal New Horizons for Seniors grant to support their *Addressing Abuse of Older Adults* initiative. That initiative provides health care practitioners with a toolkit of best practices and resources to address and prevent abuse and neglect of older adults. It built on successes from an earlier initiative, which also launched the PEACE (Prevention of Elder Abuse Centres of Excellence) initiative in 10 Long-Term Care homes in Ontario in 2010²⁹.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the development of this report, we have learned of and highlighted various bodies of work and efforts by organizations, researchers, and governments to address the issue of abuse toward older adults. Addressing the abuse of older people requires a multi-faceted approach. Efforts should focus on raising awareness about ageism, challenging stereotypes, and promoting respectful and inclusive attitudes towards older adults. Policies and interventions must be developed to detect and prevent abuse, provide support and resources for victims, and hold perpetrators accountable. Collaboration among government agencies, community organizations, healthcare professionals, and the public is essential to effectively address this issue. Further, it is crucial to continue research and data collection to improve our understanding of the prevalence, risk factors, and impacts of abuse of older adults. By doing so, evidence-based strategies can be developed to prevent and respond to abuse, protect the rights and well-being of older adults, and create a society that values and respects its aging population.

The importance of sustained funding for networks and response organizations cannot be overstated. These organizations play crucial roles in prevention, response, and navigation of services for abused older adults. Improved awareness and education are key components in combating ageism and addressing the abuse of older adults. Public awareness campaigns and the integration of ageism into equity, diversity, and inclusion training across sectors can contribute to dismantling ageist stereotypes and creating a society that values and respects older adults. Support for a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons, and the adoption of comprehensive anti-discrimination laws, including age discrimination, can provide legal protection and guide policy-making efforts⁵. Promising practices and models such as the BC Community Response Networks, Alberta's Coordinated Community Response model, and various educational resources and toolkits, have shown positive outcomes in addressing abuse of older adults at the community level. These initiatives highlight the importance of collaboration, funding, and the involvement of multiple stakeholders, including government agencies, social services, healthcare providers, and community-based organizations.

A national strategy should be developed that focuses on raising awareness, enhancing existing policies, strengthening prevention mechanisms, and improving responses tailored to the needs of older adults, regardless of their location. Sustained funding, robust research, public education, and the recognition of older adults' contributions and rights are crucial for the success of such a strategy. A coordinated and comprehensive approach that involves all levels of government, networks, organizations, healthcare providers, advocates, and the public is necessary to effectively address the abuse of older adults. By implementing the recommended goals, Canada can make progress on preventing abuse, providing support to victims, and creating a society that values and protects its older population.

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APPENDIX A: A SUMMARY OF PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL STRATEGIES

British Columbia

British Columbia has implemented the *Together to Reduce Elder Abuse* (TREA) strategy to address the abuse of older adults. The creation and implementation of this strategy was guided by input received during province-wide consultations with the sectors and individuals involved in prevention of abuse of older adults, including older people and their families. To bolster the effectiveness and efficiency of efforts to reduce the abuse of older adults, it built on previous work in other jurisdictions. The strategy focuses on three key areas. These include the recognition of all forms of abuse towards older adults; training and awareness to enhance the response to reports of abuse of older adults; preventing the abuse of older adults through multi-sectoral collaborations. More specifically, it includes commitments to:

- Expand the Seniors Abuse and Information Help Line to make it easier for people to get necessary information and support;
- Provide information kits to assist community groups in recognizing risk factors associated with the abuse of older adults;
- Establish a multi-sectoral council to address the abuse of older adults;
- Review process and staff training for informed consent to care for older adults; and
- Support training and initiatives tailored towards building awareness for health professionals to improve their ability to recognize and take action against the abuse of older adults.

As part of the TREA strategy, the BC government's Ministry of Health created the Council to Reduce Elder Abuse (CREA) in 2013. One part of the CREA's mission is to facilitate collaboration and coordination to address abuse of older adults across BC, including prevention, recognition, and response. This is done through sharing information, increasing public awareness, and supporting professional training and capacity-building.

In addition, the British Columbia Association of Community Response Networks (BC CRN) was created in response to the need to provide a province-wide support and funding structure for vulnerable adults who have experience (or are at risk of experiencing) abuse, neglect, and self-neglect. More than 80 community response networks (CRNs) receive assistance from the association through funding, resources, materials, training, and support. By supporting a coordinated response to abuse, neglect, and self-neglect of vulnerable adults at the local level, CRNs facilitate prevention and education activities with local stakeholders. Members of CRNs, as well as interested parties, are invited to participate in monthly provincial learning events.

To support efforts to address abuse of older adults, the Government of BC has also developed an information kit designed to educate older people about how to prevent abuse and recognize it

when it occurs, as well as how to respond and where to get help. Copies of these kits are available in English, French, Traditional Chinese, or Punjabi.

Find Strategy here: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/people/seniors/health-safety/pdf/trea_strategy.pdf

Find CREA information here: <https://reduceelderabusebc.ca/about-crea/>

Find BC CRN information here: <https://bccrns.ca/about-us>

Find the BC government's information kits here:
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/people/seniors/health-safety/eap-kits/responding-to-elder-abuse-resources_en_factsheet_dec2015.pdf

Alberta

In 2022, Alberta released *A Collective Approach*, which is the province's five-year strategy (2022-2027) for preventing and addressing abuse of older adults in all its forms. The strategy builds on *Addressing Elder Abuse in Alberta: A Strategy for Collective Action*, released in 2010, which had the goals of improving awareness about the abuse of older adults, training and equipping service providers to respond to and support victims, having a coordinated community response, and enhancing protective laws and policies. These goals continue to inform the work done within the current strategy to address the abuse of older adults. In addition, the new strategy prioritizes standardization in data collection, analysis, and sharing across sectors. It emphasizes the role of data collection and analysis in supporting the creation and implementation of policy and program responses. Further, the strategy also outlines various short and long-term action plans embedded within each goal to ensure that the abuse of older adults is addressed in its entirety. Alberta's government has also released a toolkit for addressing the abuse of older adults at the local level. This toolkit will assist communities in developing a framework to address the abuse of older adults locally.

Alberta's elder abuse prevention strategy is not the only approach that targets the abuse of older adults in the province. The Alberta Elder Abuse Awareness Council (AEAAC) was formed in 2002 and is a province-wide network of professionals working towards promoting community awareness and education around the abuse of older adults. As a non-profit society, its action plans are guided by certain goals, which have led to achieving numerous milestones during the past two decades. Some of its goals include:

- Increasing awareness on the impacts of the abuse of older adults by developing a strong marketing and communications strategy;
- Educating, informing, and fostering connections between communities; and
- Working in collaboration with the government and other essential stakeholders.

Since its inception, the AEAAC has developed resources and hosted learning events with the aim of addressing and raising awareness about the abuse of older adults. Currently, the AEAAC has launched *Staying Safe: A Resource for Older Adults Living in Alberta*. This comprehensive guide provides older adults with the information they need to recognize unsafe and abusive situations, and to understand their rights and options.

Find Alberta's latest strategy here: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/08be6f06-fb26-48f0-9c3d-a8c25ebb080a/resource/91537f0b-edcf-4bff-86a3-3026767ba5f7/download/sh-alberta-strategy-preventing-addressing-elder-abuse-20222027.pdf>

Find Alberta's 2010 strategy here: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/fc48c0aa-8431-4f78-9e2b-da4ca6884f31/resource/53317c68-cee2-4311-943f-71ac0d8c5374/download/4887723-2010-addressing-elder-abuse-alberta-strategy-collective-action-2010-11.pdf>

Find Alberta's toolkit here: https://cnpea.ca/images/addressing_elder_abuse_toolkit_-_overview_-_final.pdf

Find AEAAC's strategic plan here:
https://www.albertaelderabuse.ca/images/Strat_Plan_2020.pdf

Find resources from a past learning event here:
https://www.albertaelderabuse.ca/images/Presentation_for_the_FCSSAA_January_12_2022-1.pdf

Manitoba

In 2002, the Manitoba established a provincial strategy to prevent the abuse of older adults. That strategy included:

- Counselling services for older adults who have experienced, or are experiencing, abuse;
- Community consultations to inform the development of a coordinated response;
- A help line which provides information and support to older adults who are experiencing abuse;
- Support for a *Safe Suite* program offering accommodation for older adults in crisis; and
- Working collaboratively with the provincial interdisciplinary network of service providers to increase awareness and provide support to communities.

The 2002 strategy has been removed from the provincial government's website. A new provincial seniors strategy was introduced in 2023, but it does not directly mention or address abuse or neglect of older adults.

Prevent Elder Abuse Manitoba (PEAM) is a province-wide network constituted through various partnerships with Manitoba-based organizations, acting as a focal point of contact for the government's efforts to address abuse of older adults. This network also assists in raising awareness, and provides support and training to regional and community initiatives geared toward tackling the abuse of older adults in the province.

Age & Opportunity: Support Services for Older Adults (A & O) is a not-for-profit organization that provides specialized services and support for older adults across the province. It offers a variety of services including counselling for those experiencing abuse, referrals to appropriate community resources, assistance with crisis accommodations and legal services, consultation, and referrals for family members.

Find Manitoba's consultation paper on elder abuse here:

http://www.manitobalawreform.ca/pubs/pdf/elder_abuse_consultation.pdf

Find out more about PEAM here: <https://preventelderabusemanitoba.wildapricot.org/>

Find the provincial seniors strategy here:

https://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/seniors/seniors_strategy_2023.pdf

Ontario

In Ontario, Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario (EAPO), is the provincial organization that leads the prevention of abuse of older adults. EAPO collaborates with approximately 30 local area networks across the province that work to address the abuse of older adults. The local area networks deliver education programs and activities, promote public awareness, and provide supports and services to older adults at risk of, or who are experiencing, abuse in their community. EAPO receives funding from the Ontario government to support the implementation of Ontario's strategy to combat the abuse of older adults. This strategy was first launched in 2002 and operates on three pillars:

- Co-ordination of community services to bolster efforts across the province to address the abuse of older adults;
- Provision of specialized training to staff who work directly with seniors; and
- Public education and awareness on the abuse of elder adults.

Additionally, a community based legal clinic, the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly (ACE), participates in public legal education, provides direct legal services to low-income older adults, and promotes legal reform. In addition to serving adults aged 60 years and older in the Greater Toronto Area, ACE may also provide services to older adults outside of Toronto in some circumstances.

Find out more about EAPO here: <https://eapon.ca/>

Find information about ACE here: <https://www.ancelaw.ca/about/legal-information-services/>

Québec

In Québec the *Governmental Action Plan to Address the Abuse of Older Adults* originated from public consultations in 2007 to discuss the living conditions of older adults. The first action plan to counter the abuse of older adults operated from 2010-2015 and was renewed in 2017. It was intended to achieve three main objectives:

- Enhancing the knowledge surrounding what abuse is and what it constitutes;
- Ensuring that the actions of the different partners are consistent and complementary; and
- Acknowledging and promoting awareness about the abuse of older adults perpetrated by relatives, caregivers, and the public.

Evaluation of results achieved by 2010-2015 action plan, as well as the insights and recommendations made by various partners during consultations, contributed to the formulation of the 2017-2022 plan. Through those processes, four main areas to address the abuse of older adults were identified. They included:

- Preventing the mistreatment of older adults and promoting an approach which seeks to foster the wellbeing of an older adult by prioritizing their dignity, self-fulfillment, self-esteem, inclusion, and safety;
- Encouraging early detection and the employment of appropriate interventions, by training and equipping communities on concepts related to the abuse of older adults;
- Improving and promoting knowledge about services and resources available to support older adults that are at risk, or are experiencing abuse, to facilitate disclosure; and
- Identifying and disseminating information regarding how abuse is experienced by older adults belonging to ethnocultural, Indigenous, LGBTQ+, and disabled populations.

On June 12, 2022, Québec's Minister for Seniors and Caregivers announced a new five-year action plan (2022-2027) for the prevention of abuse and mistreatment of older adults. This third plan has two goals: to raise public awareness about and condemn the abuse of older adults; and to improve the effectiveness of intervention methods for ending abuse situations. To support these efforts, the Québec government amended the *Act to combat the maltreatment of seniors and other persons of full age in vulnerable situations* to enhance protection of older adults. Under this Act, an anti-maltreatment policy is required for all public or private health care and social service institutions.

Find Québec's Action Plan here:

<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3761023>

And here: [https://cnpea.ca/en/about-cnpea/blog/1273-Québec-invests-\\$50-million-for-new-action-plan-to-fight-elder-abuse](https://cnpea.ca/en/about-cnpea/blog/1273-Québec-invests-$50-million-for-new-action-plan-to-fight-elder-abuse)

Find Québec's Act to combat mistreatment of older adults here:

<https://www.Québec.ca/en/family-and-support-for-individuals/violence/mistreatment-of-older-adults/act>

New Brunswick

New Brunswick does not have a strategy specifically to address abuse of older adults. However, the *We are All in This Together* strategy published in 2017 highlights critical actions for addressing the abuse of older adults within the province. Within its framework, the strategy has three goals: enabling older adults to live independently; achieving sustainability and innovation in services for older adults; and embracing a provincial culture of person-centered care and support. Initiatives and actions meant to address the abuse of older adults include:

- Public awareness campaigns to inform older adults and their families on the importance of estate planning, preparing wills and power of attorney, and financial matters;
- Raising awareness and developing initiatives to prevent and respond to intimate partner violence and abuse of older adults;
- Revising legislation to address prevention and reporting of abuse and neglect;
- Increasing tools to combat financial abuse; and
- Support enhancement of the Chimo helpline to include support for reporting suspected abuse of older adults.

Most importantly, this strategy emphasizes that effective multi-sectoral partnerships and collaboration are essential to ensure that health and social systems are sustainable and capable of addressing the abuse of older adults.

Find New Brunswick's Aging Strategy here:

<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/sd-ds/pdf/Seniors/AnAgingStrategyForNB.pdf>

Nova Scotia

The *Towards Awareness and Prevention* strategy was launched in 2005 to address the abuse of older adults. **It is still accessible through the government of Nova Scotia website, but is no longer in effect as a guide for policy.** The strategy revolved around the belief that preventing the abuse of older adults is a collective responsibility and collaboration is essential for effective and appropriate action. The goal was to promote health and wellbeing through abuse prevention,

and prioritizing awareness about the abuse of older adults. More than 30 individual and organizational stakeholders collaborated to identify the priorities for action outlined within the strategy.

The strategy's four strategic areas focused on the key actions that were seen as likely to prevent and respond to abuse against older adults, based on conclusions from the Elder Abuse Awareness and Prevention Strategy Committee. These included education and awareness, prevention of financial abuse, community-based networks, and resources and support. In addition, the strategy made a variety of recommendations for action, and outlined activities in each strategic area that would help protect older adults, inform them about their rights, and provide information about resources critical to addressing abuse.

Nova Scotia's strategy provided a framework for preventing and treating abuse against older adults, based on several key principles:

- Capacity Building: individuals and communities can and should play a critical role in preventing abuse;
- Collaboration and Coordination: addressing and preventing abuse requires a coordinated and integrated response from all necessary stakeholders due to the complex nature of this issue;
- Cultural Diversity: abuse of older adults is viewed and defined differently across cultures, and respecting cultural differences and developing culturally appropriate responses is important;
- Understanding Individual Context: it is critical to understand each person's experience of abuse, and to tailor responses and supports accordingly; and
- Inter-generational relationships: creating opportunities for positive interaction between younger and older people to foster mutual understanding, commitment and respect between the generations is important.

Find Nova Scotia's Elder Abuse Strategy here:

https://novascotia.ca/seniors/pub/2005_ElderAbuseStrategy.pdf

Newfoundland and Labrador:

The Newfoundland and Labrador Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (NLNPEA), works to address the abuse of older adults, and it is an integral part of Seniors NL, a non-profit organization providing information and supports for older adults. NLNPEA consists of community, organizations, individuals, and governmental agencies that are tailored to tackling the abuse of older adults. This network helps to address the abuse of older adults in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) through a few crucial areas including:

- Capacity building through training, resources, and presentations;
- Helping older adults connect to resources needed to support them through brochures and easy to follow websites; and

- Improving connection and collaboration among older adults and raise public awareness on the abuse of older adults.

Find out more about the NLPEA here: <https://seniorsnl.ca/all-resources/nl-network-for-the-prevention-of-elder-abuse/nlpea/>

Northwest Territories:

The NWT Network to Prevent the Abuse of Older Adults is committed to addressing this issue by establishing networks in every region of the NWT. These networks support strategies and action plans that will enhance the safety of older adults.

Find out more about the network here: http://www.nwtnetwork.com/?page_id=80

Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island, Yukon, and Nunavut do not have strategies, action plans, or networks specifically to address the abuse of older adults.

APPENDIX B: ADULT PROTECTION LEGISLATION

Province/ Territory	Adult Protection Legislation	Categories of Persons Included	Protections Provided
British Columbia	<i>Adult Guardianship Act</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/544c1)	Adults who lack capacity to make decisions on their own behalf	Appointment of guardians – court-ordered supports or assistance
	<i>Community Care and Assisted Living Act</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/549r3)	Adults who reside in assisted living, community care, palliative care, long-term care facilities	Regulations require facility operators to prevent abuse/neglect – intervene if abuse/neglect occurs – mandatory reporting of abuse/ neglect
	<i>Assisted Living Regulation</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/55m6w)		
	<i>Residential Care Regulation</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/55x6z)		
Alberta	<i>Protection of Persons in Care Act</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/55x4q)	Adults receiving care or support services	Mandatory reporting – care providers required to protect clients from abuse and provide safety
	<i>Adult Guardianship and Trusteeship Act</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/55xch)	Adults who lack capacity to make decisions on their own behalf	Appointment of guardians – intervention by Public Guardian on behalf of an adult
Saskatchewan	<i>Residential Services Act</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/55q5x)	Adults living in residential care facilities	Mandatory reporting
	<i>Public Guardian and Trustee Act</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/54x2v)	Adults who lack capacity to make decisions on their own behalf	Investigation of alleged financial abuse – intervention to protect adult against financial loss
Manitoba	<i>Protection of Persons in Care Act</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/55d5g)	Patients receiving care at health facilities	Facility operator and staff has duty to protect patients – mandatory reporting of abuse or neglect – investigation by the Minister or reported abuse or neglect
	<i>Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Act</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/55cjk)	Adults with mental disabilities, who require assistance to meet basic needs or manage their property – does not include residents of psychiatric facilities	Duty of service providers to protect the adult from abuse or neglect – mandatory reporting - investigation by the Minister of reported abuse or neglect – arranging support for the vulnerable person – appointment of substitute decision makers to act on the adult's behalf
Ontario	<i>Retirement Homes Act</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/55fnj)	Adults residing in retirement homes – does not apply to some types of long-	Facility operator is required to provide information on zero-tolerance for abuse/neglect – required to have and enforce

		term care which are regulated under other Acts	policies to protect residents from abuse/neglect – mandatory reporting
	<i>Fixing Long-Term Care Act</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/55kk1)	Adults residing in long-term care homes	Facility operator is required to provide information on zero-tolerance for abuse/neglect – required to have and enforce policies to protect residents from abuse/neglect – mandatory reporting
Québec	<i>Act to Combat maltreatment of seniors and other persons of full age in vulnerable situations</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/55xq3)	Adults aged 65+ – adults who lack the ability to request or obtain assistance due to temporary or permanent limitation	Institutions providing health or social services must adopt policies to prevent and combat maltreatment (wider definition than abuse or neglect) – investigation by the Minister of reported maltreatment – intervention by the Minister
	<i>Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/55lp3)	Adults residing in Québec	Statement that aged persons have a right to protection from exploitation – right to protection and security – investigation by Human Rights Commission of alleged exploitation – imposition of emergency protective measures
New Brunswick	<i>Infirm Persons Act</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/54c8m)	Adults who are unable to manage their affairs, due to mental disorders, physical infirmity, or substance abuse	Administration of affairs or management of property on behalf of the adult
	<i>Family Services Act</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/55vc6)	Adults aged 65+ – adults with physical or mental disabilities that limit their ability to carry out normal daily activities	Investigation by the Minister of alleged abuse or neglect – removal or detention of persons found to have committed abuse/neglect – provision of services, or referral to social services, police, or health agencies – protective care if the adults is in immediate danger or refuses offered social services
Nova Scotia	<i>Adult Protection Act</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/528qb)	Adults who lack capacity to make provisions to protect themselves or obtain adequate care	Mandatory reporting – investigation by the Minister – provision of assistance by the Minister – application to impose protective care if the adult is in danger
	<i>Protection of Persons in Care Act</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/5330j)	Patients in health facilities, including hospitals, residential care facilities, and other designated health facilities	Duty for administrators and staff to protect patients from abuse or neglect and maintain safety – mandatory reporting – investigation by the Minister of alleged abuse or neglect – issuing directives from the Minister, or referral to professional bodies
Prince Edward Island	<i>Adult Protection Act</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/52v5p)	Adults who lack capacity to protect themselves from abuse or neglect	Mandatory reporting by health, social services, and police professionals – investigation by the Minister of alleged abuse or neglect – provision by the Minister of assistance or protection
Newfoundland and Labrador	<i>Adult Protection Act</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/55zbg)	Adults who lack capacity to obtain care or services, or protect themselves from abuse or neglect	Mandatory reporting – investigation of alleged abuse or neglect – application for court orders to provide protection –

			imposition of emergency protection orders if the adult is in danger
Yukon	<i>Adult Protection and Decision Making Act</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/551px)	Adults who lack capacity to obtain care or protect themselves from abuse or neglect	Processes for court appointment of a guardian for an adult – reporting of alleged abuse or neglect – investigation by designated agencies of alleged abuse or neglect – action by designated agencies to provide support – establishment of protection orders
	<i>Public Guardian and Trustee Act</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/551pv)	Adults who lack capacity to obtain care or protect themselves from abuse or neglect	Investigation by Public Guardian and Trustee of alleged financial abuse – report by Public Guardian and Trustee to a designated agency, the RCMP, or other institution – provision of financial protection for the adult – Public Guardian and Trustee may become the statutory guardian for the adult
Northwest Territories	<i>Guardianship and Trusteeship Act</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/55hfr)	Adults who lack capacity to make decisions on their own behalf concerning health, nutrition, shelter, hygiene, or safety	Appointment of a temporary guardian if the adult is at risk of abuse or neglect
Nunavut	<i>Guardianship and Trusteeship Act</i> (https://canlii.ca/t/52143)	Adults who lack capacity to make decisions on their own behalf concerning health, nutrition, shelter, hygiene, or safety	Appointment of a temporary guardian if the adult is at risk of abuse or neglect

APPENDIX C: RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE

Theme	Sub-category	Recommendation
Approaches and Guidelines	Social Determinants of Health	<p>Apply an intersectional approach by recognizing various social determinants of health that may worsen the impacts of abuse of older adults^{1, 2, 3, 4, 5}</p> <p>Implement interventions that consider factors such as geographical isolation, as well as the degree of interconnectedness between victims and perpetrators, when considering the ability for older adults to disclose abuse²</p> <p>Apply a dual perspective of public health and advocacy, which will require intersectoral work especially with public health and the legal sectors⁴</p> <p>Incorporate harm prevention approaches in interventions implemented^{6, 7}</p>
	Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion	<p>Apply a gender lens that recognizes that women are vulnerable to abuse and violence, and conducting a gender-based analysis of existing elder abuse data^{4, 8}</p> <p>Implement trauma informed practice anchored in trauma awareness, nurturing an environment of safety and trust, and supporting opportunities to express choice and build skills⁸</p> <p>Apply a cultural humility and safety when dealing with Indigenous older adults, recognizing the impact of colonialism and racism⁸, including factors such as the erosion of family and tradition due to colonization, the residential school system and the sixties scoop, when responding to abuse of older adults in Indigenous communities¹</p> <p>Apply an inclusive and participatory approach with older persons when establishing actions to address abuse of older adults⁴</p> <p>Ensure age, disability, and dementia-friendly practices are tied to challenging stereotypes⁸</p>
	Appropriate Communication and Terminology	<p>Screen the language being used in the media to ensure it is inclusive and non-ageist⁷, ensuring the media present a balanced view of ageing⁹</p> <p>Use appropriate terminology such as “abuse of older persons” or “abuse and neglect of older persons”⁴</p>
	Multi-disciplinary Teams	<p>Tackle abuse of older adults by means of a multidisciplinary team. This includes sectors such as health care, mental health care, criminal justice, civil legal services, adult protective services, long-term care, victim services and financial services^{1, 10}</p> <p>Establish a multi-sector council and holistic lens to tackle the impacts of abuse of older adults across sectors^{8, 9, 11}, ultimately leading to policy coherence and shared accountability</p>
Awareness and Education	Awareness	<p>Implement a national neglect and abuse of older adults awareness campaign⁴ including a focus on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and social isolation¹²</p> <p>Internationally recognize the rights of older people formally in the UN convention^{4, 13}</p> <p>Provide information pamphlets to help community groups recognize abuse of older adults¹¹</p>

	Education Initiatives	<p>Utilize the <i>Future Us Roadmap</i> to increase the education on abuse of older adults³ and expand the <i>It's Not Right!</i> initiative and its materials to diverse audiences¹² http://itsnotright.ca</p> <p>Train all residential care staff in violence-reduction intervention⁷</p> <p>Incorporate knowledge about abuse of older adults and ageism in curricula taught in schools and post-secondary institutions^{3,9,14,15}</p>
Resources for victims, potential victims, families and others	Reporting	Establish a staffed and funded 1-800 helpline and a crisis line ^{7,10,16,17} , specific to reporting of abuse toward older adults
	Intervention	<p>Create emergency shelters and support groups for older adults that have been abused, and their caregivers¹⁰</p> <p>Provide counselling and support services to assist older adults with the trauma that and come with disclosure and healing, for example, psychiatric interventions and legal assistance⁷</p> <p>Interventions such as psychologically based programmes (anger, stress, and coping management)⁷</p> <p>Support for language training for immigrant seniors¹</p>
	Prevention	<p>Money management programs for older adults^{10, 17}</p> <p>Support the creation of more elder lodges in Indigenous communities to address the issue of housing that some Indigenous older adults face,^{1, 17}</p>
Responding to Elder Abuse	Funding	<p>Make funding available across jurisdictions specifically for organizations that work to address neglect and abuse of older adults^{1,16}</p> <p>Provide funding to create and staff a 1-800 help line to ensure an appropriate, safe, and supportive platform is available for victims^{7,10,16,17}, expand the senior abuse information line¹¹</p>
	Reporting and Prevention	<p>Train all staff in violence-reduction interventions⁷</p> <p>Establish evidence-based safety practices in nursing homes⁷</p> <p>Address older adults living in public housing who may be at a higher risk¹⁸</p> <p>Provide training for justice system actors, supported by the appropriate tools and policies¹</p> <p>Utilize technology to mitigate the impacts of financial abuse that affects the seniors¹, and encourage the use of safe, affordable, and effective digital technology in integrated care⁹</p> <p>Provide good quality long-term care that complies with national standards, guidelines, and protocols for promoting responsiveness to the needs of older people⁹</p> <p>Standardize complaint processes, and specifically establish a complaint committee⁷</p>
Data Collection and Monitoring	Requirements and quality	<p>Require federally funded agencies to collect data concerning abuse of older adults and neglect, and support collaboration and enhanced communication between Statistics Canada and law enforcement agencies⁵.</p> <p>Adopt a life-course approach when collecting data, to contribute to a better understanding of abuse as it relates to victimization experiences⁴.</p> <p>Improve the quality of Canadian prevalence data through research funding for longitudinal studies, the development and validation of measurement scales by type and form of abuse, repeated measures over time, the combination of various methods to reach respondents, and use of samples that are representative of all Canadian settings⁴</p> <p>Ensure the collection of disaggregated data identifies marginalized, racialized, and gendered groups^{3,5,9,16}</p>

		Require all financial institutions to collect data on abuse of older adults ⁴
	Research and evaluation	<p>Invest in academic and community-based research¹⁶.</p> <p>Research on aging and abuse of older adults should include seniors and caregivers as research partners³ and elder engagement¹⁷.</p> <p>Expand their population data in research to include Indigenous peoples on reserves, and the territories⁸</p> <p>Develop and fund a feasibility study concerning the creation of a non-governmental Canadian Adult Protective services agency¹⁶</p> <p>Evaluate the sustainability and effectiveness of programs addressing abuse of older adults⁹</p>
Policy Changes	Amendments	<p>Amend PIPEDA (Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act) to clearly define mental capacity and abuse of older adults^{16,19}</p> <p>Review current legislation and policies to ensure that they acknowledge economic abuse as a form of family violence¹⁵</p> <p>Improve housing, transport, banking pension, welfare aid policies specific to older adult populations¹³</p> <p>Consider the amendment of privacy and banking legislation to protect older adults against financial crimes^{1, 20}</p> <p>Amend the <i>Criminal Code</i> to clarify what types of abuse of older adults are covered by the criminal law; extending criminal liability to those who own and operate long-term care homes¹</p> <p>The Government of Canada should reduce the immigration sponsorship period for older relatives, and reduce the residency requirement for entitlement to a monthly pension under the <i>Old Age Security Act</i> from ten to three years²</p>
	Reporting and protections	<p>Implement mechanisms to protect whistleblowers who report abuse of older adults¹</p> <p>Increase mandatory reporting and adult protection statuses⁷</p>

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