

ROW

RESOURCES FOR OLDER WOMEN

Saskatchewan Edition



NICE

National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly

Initiative nationale pour le soin des personnes âgées

We care together

Ensemble pour le bien-être des aînés

www.nicenet.ca



What Is This Information Booklet About?

This information booklet is for older women who feel uncomfortable or unsafe in their home because they are being treated badly by someone who lives or visits there.

The information will help you decide: if what you are experiencing is abuse, **why** you should seek help, and **how** and **where** to find the help you need to be safer.

If you think there is a good chance that your abuser might read the information inside and mistreat you further, do not keep the booklet.

Part One of this booklet was created in 2009 by a group of older Ontario women with ‘lived expertise’ of abuse. The project was supported by the National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly (NICE) and received financial assistance from Status of Women Canada (SWC).

Part Two of this booklet is a Saskatchewan adaptation of the resource list put forward by the NICE “Bridging Aging and Women Abuse” project team in Ontario.

Contents

Part One: Your Rights

Are you being abused?	1
Why take action?	3
How can you be safer now?	4
How can you get the help you need?	6

Part Two: Resource Directory

Where can you find help?	7
If you are in immediate danger	7
When you are out of danger	8

Part One: Your Rights

Are You Being Abused?

The following six examples will help you determine whether you are experiencing abuse and what type of abuse it is.

“He was raised to believe spanking and strict rules are a part of running a home. With the kids gone he’s been more frustrated with me. He’s slapped me a few times but only when he was really angry.”

If anyone causes you physical harm by hitting, burning or rough handling you; or keeping you from moving about or leaving a room (using physical force, alcohol or medication), **this is physical abuse.**

“I moved here to help my daughter during her divorce. But, she’s so angry and depressed. I can’t have visitors and she keeps the phone from me. She rarely lets me go places without her and times my trips when I go alone.”

If anyone is controlling your comings and goings, your activities in or outside the home and/or who you talk to, **this is emotional abuse.**

“When my husband comes home drunk, he forces me to have sex. Saying ‘no’ doesn’t stop him. I’m his wife; maybe I shouldn’t say no.”

If anyone (including your husband) exposes him/herself or touches you against your will, or forces you to look at sexual material, have sex or perform other sexual acts, **this is sexual abuse.**

“I am grateful to my daughter-in-law, who’s been caring for me since my stroke. But, I wish she wouldn’t leave me alone so often without my lunch or medication or a way to use the bathroom.”

If the person providing your care consistently leaves you alone, without food, medication or a way to go to the bathroom, **this is neglect which is a form of abuse.**

“I try to cook nice dinners but my partner Maria ruins it by drinking too much and screaming that I’m a bad cook, a bad mother and can’t do anything right.”

If anyone does or says something to make you afraid, to make you uncertain about yourself or to cause you emotional pain by calling you names, yelling, insulting or threatening you, **this is emotional abuse.**

“My son helps me with my banking and when he deposits my cheque he takes a lot of money for himself. I don’t say anything because he’s my son and I’m supposed to help him, right?”

If someone close to you is taking your money, wrongly spending money you’ve given them access to, or making you feel like you have to give them money, **this is financial abuse.**

Why Take Action?

These are some of the reasons why you might not want to take action and get help, and why you should act to be safer.

You may not be seeking help because:

- You **don’t want the abuser to get in trouble or go to jail**
- You **believe the abuse is not intentional** because it is by someone you trust and care for OR by someone who ‘can’t help’ their behaviour
- You **think no one will believe you** because the abuse didn’t leave a mark OR it only happened once

- You **believe the abuse will get worse** if you seek help OR you think it's not a big deal and **hope it will get better** over time.
- You **believe that you are not able to take action** because you provide care for someone, you depend on someone for care, you don't have money OR you don't know where to turn
- You **believe that what happens in your home is private and family comes first** so you are embarrassed OR you believe you must accept your situation so your family stays together

Abuse Is Not Your Fault, Is Always Wrong And There Are Ways To Get Help!

How Can You Be Safer Now?

These are actions that you can take yourself or with the help of people you trust.

If you are living with your abuser:

- Don't be ashamed - talk to people about what's going on
- Carry \$15 for a taxi and change for a pay phone
- Open your own bank account (\$5 to start) and request that no bank mail come to your home

- Get a cell phone, keep it charged and program numbers in speed dial
- Avoid the kitchen and rooms with one exit when abuse is possible
- Create a telephone code word with someone to signal danger and ask them to call 911 if they think you're in danger
- Ask someone to help you find services and go with you to appointments
- Have someone take photographs or notes as evidence of the abuse
- Join activities outside your home (art or fitness classes)

If you are leaving your home:

- Leave an emergency bag at a safe location or with someone you trust, with copies of your identification, prescriptions, phone numbers, health/credit/drug/bank cards and spare glasses/cane
- Bring a picture of the abuser to show police, neighbours and co-workers; record the abuser's licence plate number
- Make arrangements for dependent adult children, spouse/partner and pets because it may be difficult to get them out of the home once you've left

If your abuser lives outside your home:

- Change/strengthen the locks and install a peephole
- Inform your neighbours that your abuser shouldn't be around
- Change the places you go and consider changing your doctor, dentist and/or lawyer if shared with your abuser
- Carry restraining, custody and bail orders with you

How Can You Get The Help You Need?

When you call for help it is very important that the person you speak to understands the type of abuse, and the most important help you need right now.

When contacting someone for help:

- **Say that you are experiencing abuse and name it** - physical, sexual, financial, emotional or neglect
- **Make sure voice messages are very specific** - name the kind of abuse, what you need help with and whether it is safe to call you back/leave a message
- Tell them if you have **dependent adult children, spouse/partner or pets who will need care** if you are not around

- **Ask them to make the call for/with you** if they suggest you contact another agency
- **Don't stick with services that aren't helpful** - don't let a bad experience stop you from continuing to look for help
- **Know you have the right to consent, or not, to share your information** with others without losing your service provider's support (but know this may limit their ability to connect you with other services)

Part Two: Resource Directory

Where can you find help?

If you are in immediate danger

- DIAL 911. Do not text 911.
- Or dial **"0"** for the operator and you will be connected as needed.
- If your area doesn't have 911 or operator service, see the front pages of your phone book for your nearest **police**.
- If using a cell phone, be sure you can reach 911 or other emergency numbers from your calling location. Be sure you can clearly specify where you are.

When you are out of danger

- Rely on your existing support network.
- If you would like additional support or information, refer to the “Community Service Numbers” pages in the front of your local phone book. Types of numbers included are: police, hospitals, senior’s information, community services, abuse help lines, emergency services, safe shelters and counseling and support services.
- Or, if you are not sure which number to call, contact:

Saskatchewan Health Line

NON-EMERGENCY 24/7

1-877-800-0002 TTY 1-888-425-4444

<http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/healthline>

This line provides free and confidential information and appropriate referrals to health and other community services in your own community in English with access to translation for a wide variety of other languages.

This is one in a series of tools in the NICE tool kit designed to detect, intervene in, and/or prevent abuse of seniors. For more information about this, or any of the other tools and related training events, please visit **www.nicenet.ca**

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Canada

New Horizons for Seniors Program
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

Programme Nouveaux horizons pour les aînés
Ressources humaines et Développement des compétences Canada



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