

**Pembroke Diocesan Council of the Catholic Women's League of Canada
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Terry Hodgson, Community Life Chair**

Elder Abuse Every person, no matter how old, deserves to be safe from harm by those who live with them, care for them or have daily contact with them. Approximately one in ten people aged 60 or older who live at home experience abuse. This includes mistreatment or exploitation, according to the Centers for Disease Control or Prevention. Some evidence indicates elder abuse has increased in communities and institutions since the COVID-19 pandemic. Over time, elder abuse can affect physical and psychological health, destroy social and family ties and carry immense financial loss. Research suggests that older people who have been abused tend to die earlier than those who have not.

Many different causes can lead to elder abuse. There could be a history of family violence, a change in lifestyle and stress caused by new living conditions. Also, a caregiver's personal problems can be stressful, mental or emotional illness, drug or alcohol addiction, or job loss. The attitudes of society can also contribute to violence against older people as they can be regarded as insignificant and failure to recognize its lack of respect. We tend to believe that what happens in the home is a private matter. Elder abuse can take many forms, including: Physical abuse: hitting, slapping, shoving and restraining and can include the inappropriate use of medications. Verbal, emotional or psychological abuse: insults or disrespectful talk, repeatedly ignoring the older adult. Psychological abuse involves threatening behavior or treating the adult like a child and isolating the person from family or friends and regular activities. Sexual abuse: inappropriate touching or any unwanted sexual behavior. Financial abuse and exploitation: embezzlement, cheque forgery, or using personal credit cards or bank accounts without permission. Caregiver neglect: failure to meet the physical, emotional and social needs of the elder person. This can also include failure to provide food, water, clothing, medications and assistance with daily living or help with personal hygiene. Signs of elder abuse include the following: unexplained bruises, cuts or scars lack of basic hygiene and inappropriate clothing lack of medical aides such as glasses, dentures, hearing aids, walkers, etc. unexplained weight loss and unreasonably fearful and suspicious unpaid bills and large amounts of bank withdrawals

If you suspect someone is suffering from elder abuse or is being neglected, try and talk to them alone, or contact Senior Protective Services at 806-540-4096.

Respectfully Submitted