

# Federal Elder Abuse Initiative: Public Health Component

PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY *of* CANADA  
AGENCE DE SANTÉ PUBLIQUE *du* CANADA

Centre for Health Promotion  
Division of Aging and Seniors

The Long Term & Continuing Care Association of Manitoba  
2010 ANNUAL PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION  
"Respect and Protect"



Public Health  
Agency of Canada

Agence de santé  
publique du Canada

Canada 

# Focus of Key Activities

- Development and dissemination of info and resources to HCPs
- Coordination and assessment of “promising approaches”
- Identification of public health strategies that influence/inform prevention and intervention

# Key Activities

- Gender Based Analysis of elder abuse
- Scan and critical analysis of screening and assessment tools
- Scan and analysis of elder abuse in First Nations communities
- Exploration of caregiving issues and elder abuse
- First national elder abuse e-newsletter

# Key Activities

- “Seniors are Cool” video
- Across the Generations: Respect all Ages – A National Adaptation
- Neighbours, Friends and Families: A National Adaptation
- “Snapshot 2009” – highlights of promising approaches in Canada

# Key Activities

- “Counterpoint” project – analysis of health outcomes in representative elder abuse cases in Canada
- World Elder Abuse Awareness Day – youth project
- Evaluation of tools

# Developing the Knowledge Base

Three key scans and analyses have been undertaken to inform future work:

- *When Elder Care Becomes Abuse or Neglect: An International Literature Review: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States (Lysne, 2009)*
- *Environmental Scan and Critical Analysis of Elder Abuse Screening, Assessment and Intervention Tools for Canadian Health Care Providers (Spencer, 2009)*

# Developing the Knowledge Base

- *Promising Approaches for Addressing/Preventing Abuse of Older Adults in First Nations Communities: A Critical Analysis and Environmental Scan of Tools and Approaches (Struthers, Martin & Leaney, 2009)*

## ***When Elder Care Becomes Abuse or Neglect: An International Literature Review: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States (Lysne, 2009)***

- Do the negative consequences of providing care lead or predispose family caregivers to become abusive?
- Who are the family caregivers at risk for elder abuse/neglect and what are predisposing factors including stress?
- What is the public health role in supporting caregivers when elder abuse or neglect is suspected or confirmed?



## ***When Elder Care Becomes Abuse or Neglect: An International Literature Review: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States (Lysne, 2009)***

- Men and women were equally likely to abuse
- Adult children were most often the abuser, followed by spouse (half of those situations involved the cognitive impairment of one spouse).
- When an adult child was the abuser, psychological abuse and financial exploitation were most common

## ***When Elder Care Becomes Abuse or Neglect: An International Literature Review: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States (Lysne, 2009)***

### Risk Factors for Caregivers:

- Alcohol and/or substance abuse
- Dependency of caregiver on care receiver
- Abuser psychopathology such as history of mental illness and/or depression
- History of family violence
- Shared living situation
- Violent/aggressive behavior by care receiver towards caregiver

## ***When Elder Care Becomes Abuse or Neglect: An International Literature Review: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States (Lysne, 2009)***

- Social, physical or cultural isolation of family unit
- Existing functional disability, new or worsening cognitive impairment
- Caregiving for a person with dementia
- Caregiver “stress”
- Note: different risk factors and vulnerabilities are associated with different types of abuse.

## ***When Elder Care Becomes Abuse or Neglect: An International Literature Review: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States (Lysne, 2009)***

### **Moving forward:**

- Interdisciplinary professional education including ethical guidelines
- Culturally sensitive approach
- Workplace training
- Public awareness, caregiver education and support
- Community networks

***When Elder Care Becomes Abuse or Neglect: An International Literature Review: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States (Lysne, 2009)***

- Evaluation of innovative programs
- Multidisciplinary team approach
- Dedicated research agenda
- Caregiver Assessment

***When Elder Care Becomes Abuse or Neglect: An International Literature Review: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States (Lysne, 2009)***

**“ The challenge for public health systems is to understand more about those caregivers who are particularly vulnerable and why... and then to design and implement evidence-based interventions to address identified needs”**

## **Environmental Scan and Critical Analysis of Elder Abuse Screening, Assessment and Intervention Tools for Canadian Health Care Providers (Spencer, 2009)**

### **Findings:**

- Limited consensus about abuse screening generally
- Key issues:
  - Who to screen. How to screen. Follow up.
  - Does it do any good and can it do harm?
  - What are professional responsibilities?
  - Does screening need express consent?

## **Environmental Scan and Critical Analysis of Elder Abuse Screening, Assessment and Intervention Tools for Canadian Health Care Providers (Spencer, 2009)**

### **Purpose of screening:**

- Detection and identification with the intention of leading to further discussion and appropriate help
- Heighten professional awareness and guide a systematic process of observing and documenting



# Tensions in Screening Tools

**Knowledge  
need**

- Reliable
- Comprehensive
- Accurate (valid)

**Practice  
need**

- Quick and Easy
- Understandable
- Cost Effective

# **Environmental Scan and Critical Analysis of Elder Abuse Screening, Assessment and Intervention Tools for Canadian Health Care Providers (Spencer, 2009)**

## **Review of Screening Tools**

- Key domestic and international screening and assessment tools used for abuse and neglect in later life were reviewed including:
  - Description
  - Background
  - Review of questions
  - Evaluated? How?
  - Review of users
  - Strengths & limitations

# Examples of Screening and Assessment Tools Surveyed

- Assessment Screen–Disability (AAS-D)
- AMA Questions
- Brief Abuse Screen
- Caregiver Abuse Screen
- Caregiver Risk Screen
- Elder Assessment Instrument (EAI)
- Elder Abuse Suspicion Index (EASI)
- Health, Attitudes Toward Aging, Living Arrangements, and Finances (HALF) Assessment
- Indicators of Abuse (IOA) & and E-IOA
- INTERAI (MDS-HC) Minimum Data Set
- Maine Health and Safety Screen
- Modified Conflict Tactics Scale
- Mount Sinai Hospital
- ODIVA
- QUALCARE
- Screening Tools and Referral Protocol

## Lessons Learned

- Identifying risk indicators is not the same as identifying actual abuse
- However, if indicators of a high level of risk are present, it may give a clear signal that additional checks are essential
- Screening alone is insufficient

## Screening alone is insufficient

- ***Abuse screening always needs to be done in conjunction with comprehensive staff education and ongoing agency and managerial support.***
  - Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (2005)
- ***“It is neither desirable nor ethically defensible for untrained individuals to make assessment of problems”.***
  - Reis and Nahmiash (1995)

## Recommendations

- Continue to promote community awareness
- Education/training
  - Post secondary and professional development
- Organization & Policy
  - Coordination of effort to develop policy/procedures to facilitate effective screening
- Research on screening
  - diverse populations
  - effective screening methods
  - analyze impact of repeat screening

# **Promising Approaches for Addressing/Preventing Abuse of Older Adults in First Nations Communities: A Critical Analysis and Environmental Scan Of Tools and Approaches (Struthers, Martin & Leaney, 2009)**

## **Context**

- Health status of aboriginal people in Canada is significantly lower than the national average
- Residential school experience has had a huge impact
- Little research on First Nations and elder abuse in Canada

# **Promising Approaches for Addressing/Preventing Abuse of Older Adults in First Nations Communities: A Critical Analysis and Environmental Scan Of Tools and Approaches (Struthers, Martin & Leaney, 2009)**

## **Key issues highlighted in analysis**

- Health literacy
- Culturally safe practices
- Intergenerational challenges
- Isolation



# **Promising Approaches for Addressing/Preventing Abuse of Older Adults in First Nations Communities: A Critical Analysis and Environmental Scan Of Tools and Approaches (Struthers, Martin & Leaney, 2009)**

## **Key considerations in prevention**

- Family approach
- Traditional healing methods
- Utilize community knowledge
- Cultural safety is key in research and practice
- Work inter-professionally (with inside and outside resources)

## **Promising Approaches for Addressing/Preventing Abuse of Older Adults in First Nations Communities: A Critical Analysis and Environmental Scan Of Tools and Approaches (Struthers, Martin & Leaney, 2009)**

### **Findings of Scan**

- There are few assessment or screening tools that have been developed for use in Aboriginal contexts in Canada
- Some developed for domestic violence may be appropriate to adapt for elder abuse (i.e. Red Cross – “Walking the Prevention Circle”, The Healing Journey Tool Kit)
- One “promising approach” identified has now been evaluated by PHAC as a next step (First Nations Re-Act Tool, B.C)

## Across the Generations: Respect all Ages

- Focus on primary prevention
- Adaptation of an initiative developed in Manitoba
- Education kit focused on youth (ages 9-11)
- Goals of:
  - increasing sensitivity and empathy about elder abuse (in the context of bullying); and
  - promoting respectful intergenerational relationships.

## **Across the Generations: Respect all Ages**

“Seniors are Cool” videos (English and French):

- short videos geared to youth, focused on dispelling misconceptions about aging and older adults
- provide examples of older adult role models who are participating in activities of interest to youth

# Contact Info

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