



**WOOD BUFFALO**  
ELDER ABUSE NETWORK

## Wood Buffalo Coordinated Community Response ***ELDER ABUSE FACT SHEET***

### ***VISION:***

To enhance capacity within the RMWB to address elder abuse by increasing the coordination of services for seniors. This will better connect them to existing resources and supports, and will in turn create opportunities to remain safe and free from abuse, which will support a safe and secure community.

### ***WHO IS A SENIOR?***

The age of a senior varies dependent upon the various programs and services. Many community programs consider seniors to be 55+, the World Health Organization uses 60+ for seniors, and the Alberta Government benefits and programs are 65+.

### ***SENIORS IN THE RMWB:***

Many people believe that we do not have a large senior population, which may have been true at some point. However trends are changing as more individuals and families have begun to establish roots here.

For some of our older adult population, they have worked here, this is their home and they want remain here. Some have lived and worked here and have children and grandchildren, too want to stay in the community. There are also situations of families who have rooted themselves in the community and want to bring their senior aged parents closer to them.

By 2035, 1 in 5 Albertans will be a senior. According to the 2015 RMWB census, there were over 13,000 residents over the age of 50. We are all growing older everyday. It's time to learn about elder abuse.

### ***WHAT IS ELDER ABUSE?***

A single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm and distress to an older person. This includes: Financial, Emotional/Psychological, Physical, Sexual and Neglect. Financial abuse and emotional abuse are the most commonly reported types of elder abuse. It is common for more than one type of abuse to be occurring at the same time.

### ***WHO ARE THE VICTIMS?***

Any older adult can become a victim of elder abuse regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, income or education. Although there is limited data about elder abuse in Canada and throughout the world, it is estimated that over 8% of older adults in Canada are likely to experience abuse. It is believed that many cases of elder abuse go unreported.

### ***BARRIERS TO REPORTING?***

Shame, guilt or embarrassment may stop a senior from revealing their abuse. Sometimes victims simply do not have the capacity to report it. Additional barriers are fear, love for the abuser, lack of understanding or impairment, acceptance of abuse or neglect as normal behavior, or they are unaware of where to get help.

### ***WHO ARE THE ABUSERS?***

In many cases it is a spouse, family member, paid caregiver, friend, or landlord. It occurs in any relationship where there is an expectation of trust. Mental health and addiction can be factor. Approximately 25% of crimes against older adults are committed by family members, usually a spouse or adult child.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Learn about elder abuse
- Recognize the signs of abuse
- Share your concerns with the older adult
- Be patient, listen carefully and don't judge or jump to conclusions
- Encourage them to seek help and respect their decision
- Don't confront the abuser
- Know where to refer for help
- Check back with the older adult


## RESOURCES

### FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE:

 Call 911

### FOR CRIMINAL MATTERS:

RCMP Complaint Line

 780-788-4040

### FOR INFORMATION AND/OR CONSULTATIONS ON ELDER ABUSE IN THE RMWB:

Waypoints Crisis Line (24 hrs)

 780-743-1190 (Collect Calls Accepted)

St. Aidan's Society

 780-743-4370 Ext. 2 (Business Hours)

The RMWB CCR/WBEAN is a network of organizations that have come together to address elder abuse in the Region. Elder abuse is a complex social and public health issue that requires the coordination of multiple disciplines in order to support seniors and families experiencing abuse.

A multidisciplinary team of professionals has been formed to deal with complex cases. For more information about this OR for education, awareness and prevention presentations on elder abuse, please contact St. Aidan's Society at 780-743-4370 Ext. 2.



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It Happens. We're Here.

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