

Facts on the Psychological and Emotional Abuse of Seniors

Psychological abuse of seniors includes any verbal or non-verbal act that undermines their sense of dignity or self-worth and threatens their psychological well-being. Emotional abuse of seniors includes any verbal or non-verbal act that undermines a senior's sense of dignity or self-worth and threatens their emotional well-being. Any attempt to demoralize, dehumanize or intimidate older adults is abuse.



Learn the signs

Psychological and emotional abuse of seniors may include:

- shouting and bullying;
- insults or name calling;
- threats of violence or abandonment;
- intimidation or belittling;
- humiliation;
- harassment;
- treating an older person like a child;
- ignoring the person or isolating them from his or her family, friends, or regular activities; or
- inappropriately infringing on their privacy.

Signs of possible psychological or emotional abuse may also include:

- heightened levels of upset or agitation;
- unexplained feelings of hopelessness, guilt or inadequacy;
- unusual withdrawal from family and friends;
- discomfort or anxiety in the presence of particular people; or
- reluctance to speak about the situation.



Protect yourself

Staying informed and knowing your rights can help you protect yourself. Abuse happens when one person hurts or mistreats another. Remember:

- Seniors are entitled to respect.
- Seniors have a right to live free from psychological and emotional abuse.
- Seniors have every right to live in safety and security.
- There is no excuse for abuse.





Reach Out

If you think you are experiencing any form of elder abuse, ask for help. This may include support and assistance from family members or friends, caregiver, health care providers, social services, seniors' centres, police, legal professionals and/or members of faith communities.

For more information and a list of resources in your province or territory, call 1-800 O-Canada (1-800-622-6232) or visit seniors.gc.ca.

