Creating a Federal Policy Definition of Senior Abuse

Online Survey

Print and complete the survey below by hand. Mail the completed survey to:

Creating a Federal Policy Definition of Senior Abuse
Employment and Social Development Canada
140 Promenade du Portage, Phase IV
Gatineau, QC
K1A 0J9

To fill out the survey online, use the web version. (https://srv217.services.gc.ca/ihst4/Intro.aspx?cid=7f3ee234-a138-4b90-8370-c00b4894e45e&lc=eng)

INTRODUCTION TO THE SURVEY

Senior abuse can have a different meaning to different people. It can be in the form of direct violence against an older person, or in the form of intimidation and control. In Canada, there is no standard for defining senior abuse.

Senior abuse is a social and public health issue that can undermine an older person's quality of life and sense of security. Senior abuse is expected to increase over the next several decades, as the Canadian population ages.

The information collected as part of the survey will inform work to develop a federal policy definition of "senior abuse." A standard definition could help provide a common ground for data collection and research. This could support the monitoring of trends in order to develop effective prevention and support programs.

This survey should take about 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

We appreciate you taking the time to share your views.

If you or someone you know is being abused and is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1 (in Canada) for emergency services in your area.

If you are outside the 9-1-1 service area, please access available emergency services in your area.

If you would like to access services and are not in immediate danger, please call 1-800-O-Canada or visit Provincial and Territorial resources on elder abuse – Canada.ca.

Privacy Statement

Before you begin, please read our privacy notice statement for consultation and engagement activities.

Please note:

- Findings from this survey will be summarized and will not link responses to individual participants or organizations.
- If you are completing this survey on behalf of an organization, your organization's name may be included as having participated in a final report on the consultation. We may also pull quotes from your organization's submission in the final report.
- If you are not participating on behalf of an organization, your response will remain anonymous.

TERMINOLOGY

A variety of terms exists that refer to harmful behaviours targeting older persons. For example:

- “senior abuse”
- “elder abuse”
- “elder mistreatment”
- “mistreatment of older adults”
- “elder exploitation”, or
- “inadequate care of the elderly”.

Some terms can be inappropriate for different groups of seniors. For example, the term “elder” has a different meaning for Indigenous people. The term “elderly” or “abuse” can sound stigmatizing for some people.

The following section includes questions about the concept of term(s) “senior abuse”.

Q1(a). Throughout this consultation, we will be using the term “senior abuse”. You may prefer to use a different term to describe the issue. Which of the following terms do you prefer? Choose one.

☐ Senior abuse
☐ Abuse of older persons
☐ Abuse of older adults
☐ Mistreatment of older persons
☐ Mistreatment of older adults
☐ Other, please specify:
☐ Prefer not to answer
☐ I do not know

Q1(b). Why did you choose that specific term? Choose all that apply.

- ☐ More inclusive
- ☐ Less stigmatizing
- ☐ Consistent with the term used in the media
- ☐ Consistent with the term used by Canadian organizations
- ☐ Consistent with international terminology
- ☐ Other, please specify:
- ☐ Prefer not to answer
- ☐ I do not know

ELEMENTS

The following section includes questions about the elements or behaviours that could be included in the definition.

The term “senior abuse” refers to the abuse of a specific group of persons. That said, there is no official definition of “seniors” or “older persons” in Canada. There is also no consensus on whether those who experience senior abuse should be defined based on chronological age, on vulnerability factors related to age, or on a mix of both.

Q2. When defining “senior abuse”, what age group should be included? Choose one.

- ☐ Age 55 and older
- ☐ Age 60 and older
- ☐ Age 65 and older
- ☐ Other, please specify:
- ☐ Prefer not to answer
- ☐ I do not know

Senior abuse is often understood as occurring within a relationship of trust or within a relationship where trust can be expected. Perpetrators can be adult children, family members, friends or caregivers.

Perpetrators can also be employed by organizations that older persons are likely to trust such as:

- volunteers
- paid caregivers
- health providers, or
- professionals providing financial services.

Organizations can also be considered as a perpetrator in the context of organizational abuse or systemic abuse.

Perpetrators can also be strangers. For example, situations where criminals have developed schemes or tactics specifically targeting older persons.

Senior abuse can be perpetrated intentionally or through a failure to live up to reasonable and expected standards of behaviour. This can be unintentional but very negligent. Some perpetrators know exactly what they are doing. Others may not be aware of the potential harmful impacts their action or inaction can have on older persons.

Q3. Of the following, what elements should be included in a federal policy definition of senior abuse? Choose all that apply.

☐ Apply to older persons who have specific vulnerabilities, impairments or dependencies
☐ The perpetrator is in a position of trust relative to the victim
☐ Repeated acts (e.g., harm, violence)
☐ Willful behaviour on the side of the perpetrator
☐ Abuse of power (i.e., improper use of authority by someone such as a family member, financial advisor or healthcare provider)
☐ Recklessness of the perpetrator
☐ Other, please specify:
☐ Prefer not to answer
☐ I do not know

DEFINITION

Various definitions of senior abuse coexist in Canada and worldwide. In 2002, the World Health Organization (WHO) adopted a definition that inspired many other definitions and is still largely used.

- “Elder abuse is a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person”. (WHO definition of elder abuse)

Definitions do not always refer to a detailed list of types of senior abuse. Definitions can also be broader in nature as shown by the WHO definition.

Q4. Do you think the WHO definition is an acceptable definition of “senior abuse”?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Prefer not to answer
☐ I do not know

Q5. Is there anything missing from the WHO definition?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Prefer not to answer
☐ I do not know

Q6. If answered ‘Yes’ to question 5, what should be included?

Q7(a). What do you consider to be types of "senior abuse"? Choose all that apply.

☐ Physical abuse (e.g., hitting)
☐ Emotional / Psychological abuse (e.g., threats of violence or abandonment)
☐ Financial abuse (e.g., stealing money)
☐ Sexual abuse (e.g., unwanted touching or intimate partner violence)
☐ Systemic abuse (e.g., institutional practices)
☐ Neglect (intentional and unintentional)
☐ Gender-based violence (i.e., any violence directed towards or against someone due to their gender expression, gender identity or perceived gender)
☐ Other, please specify:
☐ Prefer not to answer
☐ I do not know

Q7(b). Would you include the types of "senior abuse" selected in Q7(a) as part of the federal policy definition?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Prefer not to answer
☐ I do not know

The following section is optional.

Q8. Please include a definition of senior abuse, elder abuse, or any other similar term, that could inform a federal policy definition. If a website reference is available, please add.

DATA NEEDS TO RESPOND TO RESEARCH

The following section includes questions that could help direct data collection.

What type of information/data should be included in order to develop senior abuse policies? Please indicate your agreement/disagreement with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Unsure / Don't know
Q9. Information/data pertaining to senior victim characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity, income) is essential.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Q10. Information/data on impacts of abuse on seniors is essential (physical, emotional, financial impacts).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Q11. Information/data pertaining to perpetrators of senior abuse is essential (age, sex, relationship to the victim, family member, authority figure, person of trust).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Q12. Information related to where the senior abuse occurred is essential (private residence, long-term care/short term care facility, etc.).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Q13. Information/data related to the frequency and duration of the senior abuse is essential.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Q14. Information pertaining to senior abuse can be obtained from a witness/third person in the event the victim is cognitively impaired.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Q15. Information on senior abuse collected from institutions (both private and public) is essential.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Q16. Information on whether or not the victim or third party reported their victimization to any authorities is essential.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q17. Data related to the victimization of seniors should be collected through which methods/mechanisms? Choose all that apply.

- ☐ Police
- ☐ Nursing, Senior residence records
- ☐ Hospital records
- ☐ Self reported victimization reports from seniors
- ☐ Proxy reporting (in instances where senior is unable to respond for themselves)
- ☐ Other, please specify:
- ☐ Prefer not to answer
- ☐ I do not know

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

As we encourage responses from all Canadians, the last few questions are to get a sense of who is participating in our consultation process. All responses will remain confidential and anonymous.

Q18. Are you participating in this consultation as an individual or as a representative of an organization? Choose one.

- ☐ Individual (answer question 19 to 26)
- ☐ Representative of an organization (answer question 27 to 30)

Q19. If "Individual" selected in Q18, where do you live?

- ☐ British Columbia
- ☐ Alberta
- ☐ Saskatchewan
- ☐ Manitoba
- ☐ Ontario
- ☐ Quebec
- ☐ New Brunswick
- ☐ Nova Scotia
- ☐ Newfoundland and Labrador
- ☐ Prince Edward Island
- ☐ Yukon
- ☐ Northwest Territories
- ☐ Nunavut
- ☐ Other, please specify
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Q20. If "Individual" selected in Q18, what are the first three digits of your postal code? (Optional)

- ☐ The first three digits of your postal code
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Q21. If "Individual" selected in Q18, in which age category do you fall?

☐ 18 to 24
☐ 25 to 34
☐ 35 to 44
☐ 45 to 54
☐ 55 to 64
☐ 65 to 74
☐ 75 to 84
☐ 85 or older
☐ Prefer not to answer

Q22. If "Individual" selected in Q18, do you identify as:

☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ Non-Binary
☐ Prefer not to answer

Q23. If "Individual" selected in Q18, do you identify as any of the following? Choose all that apply.

☐ First Nations
☐ Inuk (Inuit)
☐ Métis citizen
☐ Indigenous - other
☐ A member of an ethno-cultural or a visible minority group
☐ A member of the LGBTQ2 community
☐ A person with a disability
☐ A member of an official language minority community (French-speaking communities outside Quebec and English-speaking communities in Quebec)
☐ None of the above
☐ Prefer not to answer

Q24. If "Person with a disability" selected in Q23, as a person with disability, do you identify with any of the following disability types? Choose all that apply.

- ☐ Physical
- ☐ Mental
- ☐ Intellectual
- ☐ Cognitive
- ☐ Learning
- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Sensory impairment
- ☐ Other, please specify:
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Q25. If "Individual" selected in Q18, are you a caregiver for a relative or friend who you consider to be a senior?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Q26. If "Individual" selected in Q18, do you identify as a person with lived experiences of senior abuse?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Q27. If "representative of an organization" selected for Q18, what is the name of the organization that you represent: (Optional)

Q28. If "representative of an organization" selected for Q18, what location(s) does your organization mainly serve? Choose all that apply.

- ☐ National
- ☐ British Columbia
- ☐ Alberta
- ☐ Saskatchewan
- ☐ Manitoba
- ☐ Ontario
- ☐ Quebec
- ☐ New Brunswick
- ☐ Nova Scotia
- ☐ Newfoundland and Labrador
- ☐ Prince Edward Island
- ☐ Yukon
- ☐ Northwest Territories
- ☐ Nunavut
- ☐ Other, please specify
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Q29. If "representative of an organization" selected for Q18, what is your organization's primary area of focus?

- ☐ Culture and recreation
- ☐ Education and research
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Human rights, diversity and inclusion
- ☐ Social services
- ☐ Environment
- ☐ Development and housing
- ☐ Law, advocacy and politics
- ☐ Philanthropic intermediaries and voluntarism promotion

☐ International
☐ Religion
☐ Business and professional associations
☐ Unions
☐ Other, please specify:
☐ Prefer not to answer

Q30. If "representative of an organization" selected for Q18, what population group does your organization serve? Choose all that apply.

☐ Seniors
☐ Women
☐ LGBTQ2
☐ Survivors of gender-based violence (i.e., any violence directed towards or against someone due to their gender expression, gender identity or perceived gender, such as intimate partner violence)
☐ People with disabilities
☐ Indigenous communities
☐ Immigrants
☐ Veterans
☐ Visible minorities
☐ Other, please specify:
☐ Prefer not to answer

The survey is now complete. Thank you for your participation.

Should you require additional information please contact: nc-stakeholder_relations_intervenants-gd@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca