



## Overview of Abuse & the Older Adult

### Education for Health Care Professionals

#### Part 4: Abuse In the Health Care Setting



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## Risk Factors Associated with Abuse >>

Signs that an older adult may be at risk for abuse could be:

- physical or mental health issues (i.e. dementia or chronic diseases)
- social isolation
- history of domestic violence at home
- tendency to be aggressive
- low income
- aboriginal background
- language proficiency issues
- sexual orientation

(Robinson et al., 2016; National Senior Strategy, 2015)



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## Risk Factors Associated with Abuse

Caregivers or family members can also experience certain conditions that may influence their abuse of the older adult, such as:

- inability to cope with stress
- depression
- lack of support from work or other family members
- perception of work being burdensome while caring for the older adult
- substance abuse

(Robinson et al., 2016; National Senior Strategy, 2015)



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## Factors Contributing to Abuse by the HCP

- Factors resulting in abuse and neglect of older individuals from health care providers may include:
  - poor level of care
  - low staff-to-patient ratio
  - dissatisfaction
  - lack of continuing education
  - high staff turn-over rate
  - high workload
- There have been studies that have revealed that the HCP turn-over, burnout and stress affect the overall quality of care to older adults in the health care setting.

(Wangmo et al., 2016)



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## Reducing Stress in HCPs

- Some potential solutions for reducing stress among HCPs while caring for older adults may include:
  - highlighting the requirement to not respond to aggression with aggression
  - educating staff on conflict resolution with older adults
  - promoting support groups and counselling
  - listening to HCPs about their concerns about the workload and other problems that may contribute to stress and effects from work

***There is no justification for abuse.***

[\(Victims of Violence, 2017\)](#)

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## Continuing Education

- HCPs face challenges in defining, identifying, and addressing abuse of the older adult in the health care setting.
- Research has shown that continuing education for staff on how to detect abuse and neglect has shown positive outcomes.
- In order to prevent abuse of the older adult, it is important for HCPs to be aware of the policies and definitions regarding abuse. Also how to maintain therapeutic relationships with older adults, and practice within a good working environment.
- Understanding the causes and solutions to abuse of the older adult can benefit the well-being of caregivers, older adults, and anyone involved.

[\(Wangmo et al., 2016\)](#)

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## Assisting the Victim: the ABUSER Formula

**A**cknowledge any suspicion of abuse. Accumulate and document evidence.

**B**arriers need to be broken down for the older adult that may cause fear of retaliation, withdrawal of HCP support and breaches of confidentiality.

**U**rgent needs should be assessed immediately for potential risk of harm.

**S**creen for the individual's physical, emotional, and mental capacity to help themselves.

**E**mpower and education the older adult about their rights and establish a safety plan.

**R**efer the older adult to support or to consult with other HCPs.

[\(Retrieved and adapted from the National Institute for the Care of the Elderly \(NICE, 2010\).](#)



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## 10 Strategies to Address Abuse & Neglect of the Older Adult by the RNAO

### Assessment

1. Establish and maintain a therapeutic relationship.
2. Ensure privacy and confidentiality.
3. Be alert for risk factors and signs of abuse and neglect.
4. Carry out a detailed assessment collaboratively.
5. Identify rights, priorities, needs, and preferences of the older adult.

### Planning

6. Collect information and resources needed.
7. Collaborate to develop an individualized plan of care.

### Implementation

8. Respond to alleged or suspected abuse and neglect.
9. Implement an individualized plan of care that incorporates multiple strategies.

### Evaluation

10. Collaborate to evaluate and revise the plan of care.

[\(Retrieved from Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario \(RNAO, 2015\).](#)



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## Overview Summary

- ☑ Abuse falls under professional misconduct if perpetrated by a HCP.
- ☑ There are several legislation that protect older adults from abuse.
- ☑ Abuse can come in various forms and it can be presented financially, emotionally, physically and/or sexual as well as the form of neglect along with many others.
- ☑ Abuse of older adults in the health care setting is important to recognize and manage.
- ☑ By using the ABUSER mnemonic, you can use it to address abuse and neglect of the older adult as well as following the 10 strategies developed by the RNAO.
- ☑ Understanding the causes and the solutions to abuse of the older adult can benefit the well-being of caregivers, older adults, and anyone involved.