

## What is abuse?

Abuse is the deliberate mistreatment of an adult that causes the adult physical, mental or emotional harm, or causes damages to or loss of assets.

Abuse may include intimidation, humiliation, physical assault, theft, fraud, misuse of a power of attorney, sexual assault, over medication, withholding needed medication, censoring mail, invasion or denial of privacy or denial of access to visitors or other basic human rights.

## What is neglect?

Neglect is the failure to provide necessary care, assistance, guidance or attention that causes, or is reasonably likely to cause the person physical, mental or emotional harm or substantial damage to or loss of assets.

National First Nations

**re:act**

recognize, report and act  
on older adult abuse and neglect



It takes the strength of a community to prevent abuse and neglect of older adults and other adults who are more vulnerable due to illness, disability or medical conditions.

If you have concerns that an older adult is being abused or living at risk due to neglect or self-neglect there is help available.

## Who to call

Discuss the situation with someone at your local health clinic or social development office. Coordinating networks may be in place with contacts and referral sources.

Look for a Community Response Network. Designated Responders may include, but are not limited to:

- Community Health Nurse
- Community Health Representative
- Social Worker
- Elder Support Worker
- Home/Personal Care Worker
- Drug and Alcohol Counsellor
- Family Support Worker
- Social Development Worker
- Restorative Justice/Court Worker

If you have concerns that a vulnerable older adult is being abused, is living at risk due to neglect or self-neglect, or is having difficulty accessing support and assistance on their own, call your local designated responder.

For more information and to access the National First Nations React Manual visit:

[www.vchreact.ca](http://www.vchreact.ca)

Click here to insert your logo  
Use 'format' options in MS Word  
to fit your logo

Click here to insert your logo  
Use 'format' options in MS Word  
to fit your logo

## What is self-neglect?

Self-neglect is any failure of an adult to take care of himself or herself that causes, or is reasonably likely to cause within a short period of time, serious physical, mental, or emotional damage to or loss of assets and includes:

- (a) living in grossly unsanitary conditions
- (b) suffering from an untreated illness, disease or injury
- (c) suffering from malnutrition to such an extent that, without intervention, the adult's physical or mental health is likely to be severely impaired
- (d) creating a hazardous situation that will likely cause serious physical harm to the adult or others or cause substantial damage to or loss of assets
- (e) suffering from an illness, disease or injury that results in the adult dealing with his or her own assets in a manner that is likely to cause substantial damage to or loss of the assets

## Designated Agencies

When older adults are abused or neglected it can be difficult to know when to step in to offer help. Across Canada there are agencies in place to support and assist abused and neglected adults who are unable to seek support and assistance on their own due to restraint, physical handicap, illness, disease, injury or any other condition that affects decision-making ability.

Responses should be built upon the principles of self-determination and autonomy and on the presumption of capability. Adults should receive the most effective but least restrictive and intrusive support and assistance. Find out about the laws and agencies that have the responsibility and authority to act in your area.

### What to do

- Involve the older adult as much as possible
- Determine if the older adult is able to seek support and assistance on their own
- Ensure that the older adult has support and assistance and is in a safe place
- Refer to the designated responder in your area
- Follow the steps in the National First Nations React Manual

## Facing facts

- Victims of childhood abuse are often abused later in life
- Aboriginal people are 3 times more likely to experience violence than non-Aboriginal people
- The incidence of abuse and neglect increase with age, disability and dependence
- An estimated 8 out of 10 Aboriginal women have experienced family violence
- People who have mental illness, physical disabilities or substance addictions experience a higher incidence of abuse and exploitation
- Decreasing isolation in older adults decreases the risk of abuse
- Language barriers may prevent access to help

Click here to insert your logo

Use 'format' options in MS Word

to fit your logo