

Ottawa Police Service
Elder Abuse Section
Detective Brenda McGillvray
Detective Christina Wolf

613-236-1222 ext 5650

ottawapolice.ca



OTTAWA POLICE SERVICE
SERVICE DE POLICE D'OTTAWA

Working together for a safer community
La sécurité de notre communauté, un travail d'équipe



Background

- Elder Abuse Section launched January 24th, 2005
- 1 supervisor
- 2 investigators
- Victim Crisis Unit (VCU)
10 civilians available ext: 5822



Our mandates:

- 1 - Investigate all allegations of abuse
Existing/Pre-existing relationship
Dependency and trust factor

- 2 – Educate & Raise Awareness
Caregivers, police, seniors



Police Approach:

- Soft, informative and helpful approach where Seniors safety is the paramount concern
- Plain clothes, unmarked vehicle used by Investigators when we attend a location to investigate
- VCU trained social workers and counselors available to assist
- Explore alternative solutions to the problem; coordinating police involvement with appropriate health, social and community service agencies



What happens when you report:

- Risk/Needs assessment (patrol response vs. call intake)
- Documented (tracking)
- General Investigation
- If evidence permits, police can lay charges and provide subsequent protective measures for the victim (bail conditions)



Statistics To Date (2005-2009)

- 548 investigations
- 302 family/community related
- 93 within private institutions
- 117 within LTC
- 36 home support
- -----
- 69 arrested
- 660 charges laid



Abuse of Older Adults

What is it?

- Act/gesture
- Harms/threatens to harm
- Safety/wellbeing
- Older adult



Types of Abuse

- Physical (including sexual assault)
- Psychological/Emotional
- Neglect
- Financial



Types of Abusers:

- Addiction issues (drugs, alcohol, gambling)
- Chronic unemployment
- Mental health problems (co-dependancy)



Financial Abuse

- Seniors hold 70% of the nation's wealth
- Financial abuse makes up approx 70% of our work
- Most victims are mentally competent and capable of making decisions on their own



Power of Attorney for Property:

Effective immediately upon signing and 2 witnesses

Gives POA transactional authority but NOT transfer of ownership authority

POA is to act in the interests of the senior; not to benefit themselves



POA for Property cont'd:

Criminal code recognizes 'Theft by POA' as a crime

POA is powerful document and can be used to access your \$\$ without your permission

May be presented as though they are going to 'help' you with your bills and other matters



What to do?

- Notify police, bank or someone you trust
- Revoke POA (revocation letter or assign a new POA)

Enter a triggering clause (specifying conditions as to when, where, how and by whom the POA should be invoked)

Joint POA ensures accountability

Don't sign too many and confuse the issue

Store a 2nd copy of POA/Will with lawyer or friend



Banking:

- Sharing PIN #'s or using obvious ones can enable a person to drain your bank accounts
- Joint accounts may be used for illegitimate money transfers (shared bank accounts and property not a good idea)
- Supplemental credit cards can be misused, leaving the initial cardholder on the hook
- Don't give access for the sake of convenience



What to do?

- Shared/joint bank accounts are **NOT** a good idea.
 - let bank staff help you set up direct debit, automatic WD's, bill payments, set limits, red flag accounts etc.

Check your bank account activity regularly and inquire about any unusual withdrawals or transfers

ATM cards; if you have no need for one, don't get one and never leave your PIN# with your card



Identity theft

- Someone uses your name and personal info to commit fraud or theft
- Use this info for a financial advantage
- May steal ID cards, mail, credit info
- Result: bad credit, debts in your name
- Real estate



What to do?

- Invest in a document shredder!
- Take immediate action
- Call banks and agencies you deal with and put them on notice
- Contact Credit bureaus to advise
- Report to police



Frauds and Scams

- Con artists come in all shapes and sizes
- May involve friends, family or strangers who may appear trustworthy and helpful
- Target you via phone, computer, mail or in person
- Lottery/sweepstake, fake charities, renovation scams



What to do?

- Verify identity and info of the person
- Ask lots of questions
- Don't rush into anything; get a 2nd opinion
- When you're in doubt; **JUST SAY NO**
- If an offer appears to be too good to be true.... **IT PROBABLY IS !**



What to do?

- Never give out your personal information (account #'s c/c #'s, your address) *Exception- if you have initiated a call yourself to a legitimate business.
- If over the phone, ask them to mail you literature
- However, don't believe everything you see in writing either (illegitimate documents are made to look official)



Extra Fraud tips

- Never send \$\$ to get more \$\$ = scam
- Legitimate lotteries will NOT require you to pay money to receive your prize
- Only enter credit card info on SECURED web sites. Look for a lock symbol and (https://)



Physical Abuse / Neglect:

- Hidden crime; under reported
- Similar to domestic violence
- Majority of physical abuse cases, the abuser is a family member
- Rough handling = assault



Safety Planning

Keep emergency phone numbers stored in a safe place

Emergency kit; clothing, house/car keys, important documents (POA, I.D, bank books/cards, immigration papers, etc.), emergency money, assistive devices.

If you fear for your safety or have been assaulted, notify police immediately (9-1-1). If you're not in immediate danger, but have been abused, call police (613-236-1222 ext 7500) or tell someone you trust.



Long Term Care vs. Retirement Homes

- You have the same rights and protections as living in your own private home
- Long term care homes (LTC)
regulated & mandated to report ‘unusual occurrences’
- Retirement Homes
privately owned and operated as a business
not regulated by any governing legislation



Street Safety

- Don't carry large sums of money or valuables
- Purse snatching – don't resist the attacker; consider wearing a money belt as an alternative
- ATM machines – cover your PIN and don't accept help to input it
- Don't leave your purse unattended in shopping carts or on store counters
- When you go out, the “Buddy System” is best
- Make sure someone knows where you're going and when you expect to return



Home Safety:

- Good locks, peephole and lighting
- Answer through your locked door. It's not impolite; it's safer
- If you live alone, don't advertise it
- Make your home look lived in
- Should a stranger, request to use your phone, do not allow them to enter your home; offer to make the call for them



You have the right to:

- Access your own medical records, bank records
- To remain involved in your decisions while you have a POA and can revoke POA at any time
- Say NO to people trying to sell you something
- Not to give personal info to agencies requesting it until you've researched them first or initiated contact yourself



You have the right to:

- Not be bullied into signing anything by family, salespersons etc
- Have suspect removed from your home
- Use hidden cameras in your home/room
- Block visitors access to your home (strangers and family)



Local Contact list:

- [Fraud Against Seniors](#) (OPS Fraud Section website)
- [Crime Stoppers](#) - 233-Tips (8477)
- [Senior Crime Stoppers](#)
- Council on Aging 789-3577
www.coaottawa.ca
- Elder Abuse Response and Referral Service (EARRS)
a community based service 596-5626 x 253
- [Services for Seniors: Helping Ottawa Seniors Thrive](#)



Provincial Contacts:

- The new Seniors Safety Line (ONPEA)
1-866-299-1011 (Province-wide in 150 languages,
24/7)
Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse
- Advocacy Center for the Elderly (ACE) and
Community Legal Education of Ontario (CLEO)
- www.SeniorsInfo.ca or www.ontarioseniors.ca. Toll
free INFO line – 1-888-910-1999
- Background information on Long Term Care Homes
in your area



Contacts cont'd:

- Canadian Revenue Agency at www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tax/charities for a list of registered charities in Canada
- Credit bureaus:
Equifax – 1-800-465-7166, 1-800-525-6285
TransUnion 1-800-663-9980, 1-877-525-3823
- Replace ID cards:
1-800-O Canada
- Phonebusters 1-888-495-8501



Considerations:

- Victim has the right to self determination
- What are the victims wishes throughout the investigation and possible judicial process?
- What services will the victim need throughout and following the investigation

Ottawa Police Service
Elder Abuse Section
Detective Christina Wolf
Detective Brenda McGillvray
(613)236-1222 ext 5650

ottawapolice.ca



OTTAWA POLICE SERVICE
SERVICE DE POLICE D'OTTAWA

Working together for a safer community
La sécurité de notre communauté, un travail d'équipe