



**Canadian Association of  
Occupational Therapists**

## Strategies for addressing elder abuse/mistreatment

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**Canada**



### Strategies for addressing elder abuse/mistreatment

**Objective:** learn how this document will help  
build practitioners' capacity and confidence to  
deal with elder abuse/mistreatment



### Agenda

1. Introduce document
2. Prevention
3. Detection
4. Intervention/Taking action
5. Resources

### Overview of strategy document

- Overview and indicators
- First steps
- Taking Action
- [www.caot.ca/elderabuse](http://www.caot.ca/elderabuse)



### Responding to elder abuse: Guiding principles

- Respect personal value
- Recognize right to make decision
- Seek consent or permission
- Avoid ageism
- Know that abuse can happen anywhere
- Involve older adult in decision making
- Respect autonomy
- Respond appropriately



### Detection

Types abuse/mistreatment

- physical/sexual,
- financial,
- psychological,
- neglect,
- denial of entitlements protected by law



## Example: Financial abuse

any improper conduct, done with or without the informed consent of the older adult, which results in a monetary or personal gain for the abuser and/or a monetary or personal loss for the older adult. The misuse of another individual's funds or property through fraud, trickery or force is financial abuse.



## E.g. Identifying financial abuse

E.g. changes in a bank account or banking practices; unauthorized ATM withdrawals;

*Ethan persuaded his aunt to open a joint bank account. Ethan said that the joint account "would be easier for everyone". All the money belonged to his aunt. She didn't know that a joint account would allow the other person to spend all her money. Once the account was set up, Ethan used some of the money to buy a car.*



## Example Scenario #1

The occupational therapist, who is consulting in LTC, has been seeing Mr. J. weekly. He recently has become very withdrawn, with no change in his medical status and he is oriented to person, place and time. He appears anxious and told his nurse yesterday that he wants to sell his home to be able to make payments for a semi-private room for himself at the nursing home. He said that his daughter lives in the house and is refusing to help him sell it.



## Reflective questions

- Why might this situation cause some concern?
- If there is abuse/mistreatment occurring, how do your observations relate to the definitions of abuse? How do they relate to the signs/indicators of abuse?
- It is possible that his daughter is not aware that she is a possible perpetrator of abuse/mistreatment. How can the definitions of abuse/mistreatment help in this scenario?



## First steps

- Barriers to disclosure
- Types of information needed
- Strategies for approaching a discussion with a vulnerable older adult
- Clinical scenarios and reflective questions
- Documentation



## First steps: Barriers to disclosure

- does not recognize the situation as abusive;
- does not know where to get help;
- fears it will escalate;
- worries about what will happen if the abuse becomes known;



## Scenario #2

Mrs S. has Parkinson's disease and lives with her son and daughter-in-law. The OT noticed that she is frail and unkempt. Mrs S.'s son calls the OT & states that he didn't want to say anything during the visit but his wife has started yelling at his mother, and discourages her from coming out of her room to eat with the family.

### First steps: Types of information needed

1. Risk of imminent harm
  2. Cognitive capability – awareness of situation, consent, capability to consent
- Note: section on mental capacity and consent- legal information

### First steps: suggested resource

Ethical Decision-making tool (N.I.C.E. website):  
Does the older adult have capacity to understand the situation

- Yes-> does the older adult accept the intervention
- No-> one of the following observed: person overwhelmed and intolerable risk, safety at risk, capacity challenged

-> protective intervention



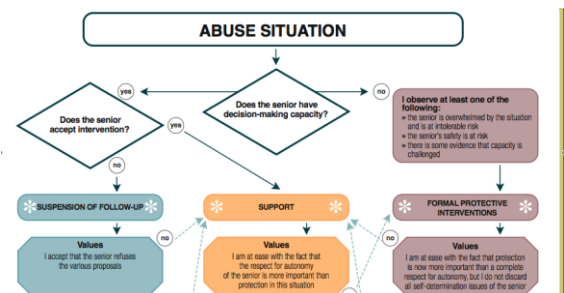
## Reflective questions

- Why might this situation cause some concern?
- If there is abuse/mistreatment occurring, how do your observations relate to the definitions of abuse? How do they relate to the signs/indicators of abuse?
- How might knowledge of the barriers to disclosure help the OT in this situation?



### First steps: Strategies for approaching the discussion

- Therapeutic environment, non-judgemental
- Possible interview questions:
- Resources for standardized interview
- Documentation suggestions: objective observations, verbatim comments, determination of two key points of information, any actions taken or referrals

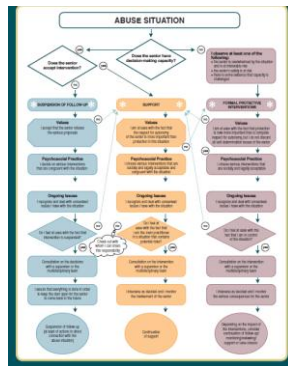


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### Screen shot of full tool

- Provides questions to ask throughout involvement
- balance autonomy and risk

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### Taking action

- Reporting and disclosure of information- key point...can disclose for purpose of investigation
- Mandatory Reporting-
  - Document provides a regional information tool for each province/territory



### Taking action

Ontario:

- Community:
  - general rule: no duty to report
  - exception: regulated health professionals
- Long-term care: duty on everyone to report abuse, neglect as well as risk of harm of residents. Report to Ministry of Health and Long Term Care
- Resources: Senior's Safety Line, ONPEA

### How can I access the strategy document?

Go to: [www.caot.ca/elderabuse](http://www.caot.ca/elderabuse)



### How can I adopt the strategies?

- Discuss the case scenarios & questions
- Set up a COP
- Attend a Webinar/workshop, register at [www.caot.ca](http://www.caot.ca)
- Build your own resource kit (build networks, identify supports)



### Expected outcome

- Created for all OTs
- Increased awareness,
- Increased knowledge in in responding and managing situations
- Overall increased comfort, confidence if a situation arises



Les ressources sont disponible en français dans les dépliants et sur le site Web



## Advisory Committee

- Project Coordinator, Alison Douglas
- Representing older adults, Rosemary Lester
- OT with expertise in elder care and elder abuse intervention, Sandra Hobson
- OT regulator, Cathy Pente
- OT practitioner, Lisa Paton
- OT educator, Michèle Hébert
- Law enforcement, Patricia Fleischmann
- Researcher/Lawyer with expertise in elder abuse, Charmaine Spencer
- CAOT, Janet Craik



## Next Steps

Please address any questions or feedback to [practice@caot.ca](mailto:practice@caot.ca)