



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 15, 2021

B.C.'s Seniors Advocate Statement on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2021

Victoria, B.C.— World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) is marked each year on June 15th to raise awareness of the effects of abuse and neglect on seniors in our communities and the need for prevention and response to these issues. It was officially recognized by the United Nations General Assembly in 2011 at the request of the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA).

Elder abuse is any act that causes harm to an older person and may be carried out by someone they know and trust, such as a family member or friend. The abuse may be physical, emotional/psychological, sexual, financial and can include mistreatment, neglect and self-neglect.

“On this day, let us take the time to reflect on how we can help make a difference and take steps in preventing elder abuse and neglect in our communities. This past year has reminded us all how much we depend on our family, friends and neighbours. By coming together and supporting each other, we can make great progress toward ending elder abuse and neglect.”

To mark this important day, communities will be lit in purple to symbolize the need to spread awareness on the prevention of elder abuse and neglect.

“Today, I encourage you to wear purple clothing or a purple ribbon to honour WEADD and show your commitment in the support to prevent elder abuse and neglect. Take a picture and post #WEAAD2021 on your social media to help spread awareness.”

To learn more about elder abuse and how you can help visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/seniors/health-safety/protection-from-elder-abuse-and-neglect>

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BACKGROUND

Elder abuse and neglect is any action by someone in a relationship of trust, such as a family member (adult child or spouse), friend or caregiver, that results in harm to a senior. The common types of elder abuse include physical, emotional/psychological, sexual, financial, neglect and self-neglect. A senior may experience more than one type of abuse.

- **1 in 6 people over the age of 60 are victims of elder abuse** (World Health Organization)
- **In Canada, a 2015 study estimated that 7.5% of Canadians 55 and older experienced abuse** (Into the Light National Survey on the Mistreatment of Older Canadians, National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly, 2015)

Preventing Elder Abuse and Neglect

- **Reporting to the Police:**
If you think a senior is being abused, taken advantage of or neglected, and you believe that the senior is in immediate danger, call the police (9-1-1)
- **Designated Agencies (Regional Health Authorities)**
Designated agencies under *the Adult Guardianship Act*, have a responsibility to investigate reports of suspected abuse or neglect of vulnerable adults and seniors. To report abuse, neglect or self-neglect, whether in a health facility or in the community, of an older adult go to: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/partners/health-authorities/regional-health-authorities>
- **Financial Elder Abuse**
Information about financial elder abuse and what it looks like can be found in a [video by the BC Securities Commission and Office of the Seniors Advocate](#).
- **Public Guardian and Trustee**
If you have concerns about the financial and legal affairs of a vulnerable adult or senior: <https://www.trustee.bc.ca/services/services-to-adults/Pages/assessment-and-investigation-services.aspx>
- **Seniors First BC: Seniors Abuse & Information Line (SAIL)**
SAIL is a safe place for older adults, and those who care about them, to talk to someone about situations where they feel they are being abused or mistreated, or to receive information about elder abuse prevention.
Telephone: 1-866-437-1940 (toll-free) or 604-437-1940
Website: <http://seniorsfirstbc.ca/>
Seniors Abuse & Information Line (SAIL):
TTY: 604-428-3359 TTY Teletype for the deaf
- **Government of BC – Scams and Frauds**
Website: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/seniors/financial-legal-matters/scams-and-fraud>