

# Barriers to Reporting Elder Abuse



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



In Partnership With:



Elder Abuse  
Prevention  
Ontario

Prévention de la  
maltraitance envers  
les aînés Ontario

The Seniors Safety Line is a 24/7,  
confidential and free resource:

**If you would like to talk, we are  
here to listen - day or night.**

Call us

**1-866-299-1011**

## Seniors May Not Report Because of:

- fear of retaliation – afraid of what the abuser will do to them if they report the abuse
- dependence on the abuser for food, shelter, clothing, and health care
- inability to communicate due to language barrier or health/illness such as dementia
- belief the police and/or social agencies cannot help them
- a lack of understanding of their legal and human rights or the justice system
- being unsure of what can be done to help resolve the situation

## Some Seniors Experience Feelings of:

- hopelessness and powerlessness especially when the abuser is very controlling
- fear that they will be put in an institution, such as a Long-Term Home
- embarrassment from telling anyone that a family member is harming them, or stealing their money
- concern and not wanting to get involved in other people's family problems

## Service Providers May Not Report Elder Abuse Because They:

- feel they have a confidential relationship with their client and cannot tell anyone else about what happens in the client's home.
- do not know that assault, theft, or serious neglect in the family or in a long term care is an offense.
- are not aware of who to speak to within their organization or community

## Prevention: STAY ACTIVE And CONNECTED

- Maintain regular contact with friends, family and support networks.
- Stay active in the community – volunteer, go on outings with friends and visit neighbours. Isolation increases vulnerability to abuse.
- Have your own phone and open your own mail.
- Familiarize yourself with services for seniors, attend local health fairs to ask questions and pick up written materials.
- Take control of your own decisions and health care.
- If something feels wrong and you think you may be abused, tell someone you trust