

LAKE COUNTRY CARES: Community Action & Response to Elder Abuses

ELDER ABUSE TOOLKIT



www.lakecountryhealth.ca

778-215-5247

Canada 

Lake Country 
HEALTH
Planning Society *...supporting
Community
Wellness
since 1982*

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INTRODUCTION

Lake Country Health Planning Society Vision Statement:

To create a healthier Lake Country by promoting wellness and community connections.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Lake Country Health Planning Society volunteers, Lake Country elder abuse focus group participants for supporting the development of this toolkit, and the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program for providing funding. The Lake Country CARES volunteer committee and University of British Columbia - Okanagan nursing students were particularly helpful in the facilitation of focus groups, direction of the project, increasing public awareness of elder abuse and in the dissemination of the toolkit. Lake Country residents, including adults, seniors, local government representatives and secondary school students who participated in the elder abuse focus groups provided valuable insight into the community's knowledge of elder abuse, and solutions to better support those at risk or persons affected by elder abuse.

Lake Country Health Planning Society would especially like to acknowledge and thank the Nelson and District Seniors Coordinating Society and Friends of Nelson Elders for sharing their "produced works" and Prevention of Elder Abuse: A Nelson and Area Resource Manual. These tools have been very helpful in the development of our toolkit. www.nelsonelderabuse.org

This toolkit is intended to provide information about elder abuse, and resources to assist seniors in the prevention and response to elder abuse. Many additional resources exist in the Central Okanagan, in British Columbia and across Canada to support seniors, and it was not possible to include them all. We encourage individuals to seek additional resources if their needs are not met by resources in our toolkit, and we apologize if a local organization or resource has been missed. We encourage community leaders, local groups and organizations to use the information in this toolkit to assist and support Lake Country seniors by increasing public awareness and learning more on how to prevent and respond to elder abuse.

Please note that this toolkit can be found on our website and printed and/or copied to share with others.

To receive a copy of this toolkit or for further information contact:

LAKE COUNTRY HEALTH PLANNING SOCIETY

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Disclaimer

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WHAT IS ELDER ABUSE?

Elder abuse is any action by someone in a relationship of trust that results in harm or distress to an older person. Types of elder abuse include physical abuse, emotional abuse, financial abuse, sexual abuse and neglect or self-neglect. Often, more than one type of abuse occurs at the same time. Abuse can be a single incident or a repeated pattern of behaviour.ⁱ

The nature and consequences of abuse may differ depending on the individual's situation. An older adult's experience of abuse, for example, may be related to their living arrangement (they may be living alone, with family members or others, or in an institution.)

Their experience may also be linked to their level of reliance on others, including family members or other care providers, for assistance and support in daily living.

Abuse of older adults may occur at the hands of:

- ◆ spouses
- ◆ children
- ◆ other family members
- ◆ friends
- ◆ caregivers
- ◆ service providers or
- ◆ other individuals in situations of power or trust

Abuse of older adults is sometimes described as a misuse of power, or a violation of trust.

Abuse may be intentional or unintentional.

Abusers may use a number of different tactics to exert power and control over their victims.

Abuse may happen once, or it may occur in a repeated and escalating pattern over months or years.

Abuse may take different forms, which may change over time. Abuse or neglect can happen to any older adult. In fact, contrary to commonly held beliefs, most older adults who experience abuse or neglect are mentally competent, are not dependent on other people, and do not require constant care.ⁱⁱ

Abuse is not limited to older adults of any particular culture, ethnic group, social background, or religion.

Spousal abuse can "grow old". It can start earlier in a relationship and continue into later life.

One in every twelve seniors (8%) in British Columbia experiences abuse.ⁱⁱⁱ

Older women are the victims in about two-thirds of the cases of abuse or neglect that come to the attention of community agencies.^{iv}

TYPES OF ELDER ABUSE^v

Physical Abuse includes actions that injure or risk injuring an older person or cause them physical pain and may include:

- ◆ striking
- ◆ hitting
- ◆ pushing
- ◆ shaking
- ◆ burning
- ◆ inappropriate physical and chemical restraints or
- ◆ harm created by over or under medicating

Emotional abuse includes actions that decrease their sense of self-worth and dignity, and may include:

- ◆ insults
- ◆ threats
- ◆ intimidation
- ◆ humiliation
- ◆ harassment
- ◆ prevention of a person from practicing his/her faith
- ◆ treating them like a child or
- ◆ isolating them from family, friends or regular activities

Financial abuse includes actions that decrease the financial worth of an older person without benefit to that person and may include:

- ◆ misusing or stealing a senior's assets, property or money
- ◆ cashing an elderly person's cheques without authorization
- ◆ forging an elderly person's signature
- ◆ unduly pressuring seniors to make or change a will, or to sign legal documents that they do not fully understand or
- ◆ sharing an older person's home without paying a fair share of the expenses when requested

Financial abuse is considered the most common type of elder abuse.

Sexual abuse includes any sexual behaviour directed towards a senior without that person's full knowledge and consent and may include:

- ◆ sexual assault
- ◆ sexual harassment or
- ◆ use of pornography

Neglect includes inactions that may result in harm to an older person and may include a caregiver or family member not providing appropriate:

- ◆ water or food
- ◆ shelter
- ◆ clothing
- ◆ medication or medical attention or
- ◆ assistance with basic necessities

Seniors most vulnerable to neglect include those who are socially isolated, and those with serious health conditions. Neglect by a caregiver may also occur because of a lack of experience, information, or ability.

Self-neglect includes actions and/or inactions by a senior which can create an unsafe or unhealthy living situation and result in:

- ◆ malnutrition
- ◆ dehydration
- ◆ illness or
- ◆ injury

WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE IN ELDER ABUSE

There is usually an element of emotional abuse in all abuse situations.

What Might You See With Physical, Emotional or Sexual Elder Abuse?

You may see one or more of these signs in an abuse situation:

- ◆ Elder seems nervous around caregiver or avoids caregiver
- ◆ Elder waits for the caregiver to respond to all questions
- ◆ Difficulty calling, visiting or contacting the elder or a caregiver's refusal to allow visitors
- ◆ Appears isolated and often makes excuses for social isolation
- ◆ A sudden change in behaviour
- ◆ Says or hints at being afraid
- ◆ Vague, chronic complaints
- ◆ Delay in seeking medical help
- ◆ Not following through on a treatment plan or medical care
- ◆ Missing appointments
- ◆ Repeated "accidental" injuries or falls
- ◆ Broken eyeglasses
- ◆ History of alcohol or drug use (including prescription drugs)
- ◆ Being "difficult", agitated or emotionally upset
- ◆ Being withdrawn, non-communicative, non-responsive
- ◆ Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness
- ◆ Difficulty sleeping or needing excessive sleep

- ◆ Unusual behaviour such as sucking, biting or rocking
- ◆ Depression, fear, anxiety or passivity
- ◆ Talks about or attempts suicide
- ◆ Injuries to the scalp, evidence of hair pulling
- ◆ Signs of being restrained such as rope, belt or grip marks
- ◆ Injuries such as cuts, burns, bruises, swelling or restricted movement that do not match the explanation given by the elder or others

What Might You See With Financial Abuse?

In financial abuse you may see some of the emotional signs listed previously. Additionally, you may see:

- ◆ Unexplained disappearance of money or valuable possessions
- ◆ Complaints about not knowing where money/assets have gone
- ◆ Power of Attorney granted under unusual circumstances
- ◆ Family member or representative refuses to spend money on the elder's behalf
- ◆ Refusal to spend money without the permission of the caregiver
- ◆ Sudden appearance of previously uninvolved relatives
- ◆ Unexplained or sudden difficulty in paying bills despite adequate funds
- ◆ Disproportionately high contribution toward household expenses
- ◆ Sudden accrual of debts
- ◆ Sudden changes in types and amounts of withdrawals
- ◆ Has given someone else a bank card PIN (personal identification number)
- ◆ Unexplained transfer of funds or large withdrawals to someone in or outside the family
- ◆ Sudden change in lifestyle and living conditions
- ◆ Absence of hearing aids, glasses, dentures, mobility aids
- ◆ Abrupt changes in wills/accounts
- ◆ Inclusion of additional names on bank account
- ◆ Sudden sale or change in property title
- ◆ Withdrawal, or threat of withdrawal, of sponsorship for immigrants

What Might You See With Neglect or Self-Neglect?

In neglect or self-neglect you may see some of the emotional signs listed previously. Additionally, you may see:

- ◆ Malnourishment, dehydration, emaciated or significant change in weight
- ◆ Confusion
- ◆ Inadequate or inappropriate clothing
- ◆ Uncharacteristic neglect of pets
- ◆ Hazardous, unsafe or unclean living conditions
- ◆ Grossly inadequate housing or homelessness
- ◆ Signs of excessive drugging, refusal to take medication or other drug misuse
- ◆ Absence of required hearing aids, glasses, dentures or mobility aids
- ◆ Skin sores
- ◆ Poor personal hygiene

- ◆ Unattended or untreated health problems
- ◆ Unexplained or unexpected deterioration of health
- ◆ Report of the elder being abandoned or deserted
- ◆ Confinement of a senior
- ◆ Not being allowed to participate in decision making about their own affairs
- ◆ Lack of confidentiality in the use of health care information

WHAT IS ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF OLDER ADULTS IN INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS?

Institution typically refers to a wide range of regulated and unregulated settings that provide assistance and care to older adults, including hospitals, long-term care facilities, retirement homes, nursing homes and homes for older adults.^{vi}

The abuser has a financial or contractual obligation to care for the older adult. Abuse or neglect in an institutional settings may occur by people who work, visit or reside in that setting which may include: nursing or care staff, volunteers, doctors, support staff, family, or other residents. In some cases, abuse by family which had been occurring in the community will continue after the senior moves into a facility.

In institutional settings, some forms of abuse are not always obvious, and may include things such as treating older people like children and disregarding their wishes. In institutions, everyday practices and lack of sensitivity may create abusive or neglectful situations for older adults. For example, abuse or neglect may occur where there is not sufficient number of staff to meet the resident's needs e.g. when there is routine use of incontinence briefs instead of helping the senior to the washroom because the facility does not have enough staff. This is also an example of systemic abuse and neglect.

Elder abuse and neglect in an institution can include physical, emotional, sexual and financial, similar to in the community, but institutional abuse may also include a risk of:

Medical Abuse

- ◆ Over or under medical treatment
- ◆ Poor documentation of medical records
- ◆ Improper administration of drugs
- ◆ No reason for treatment given
- ◆ Inappropriate use of restraints or
- ◆ Excessive use of medications.

Violation of Rights

- ◆ Difficulty visiting, calling, or contacting older persons
- ◆ Not permitted to manage their own financial affairs
- ◆ Failure to comply with reasonable requests
- ◆ Lack of choices in life or
- ◆ Lack of privacy.

WHAT IS SYSTEMIC ABUSE?^{vii}

Systemic abuse refers to practices that take away a person's independence and dignity. Government can also be involved in systemic abuse. Our society, and the systems that develop within it, can generate, permit or perpetuate elder abuse. Most common is discrimination against seniors due to their age and often combined with any of these additional factors: gender, language, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, ability, economic status, or geographic location.^{viii}

WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT SYSTEMIC ABUSE

- ◆ Always document your actions including date, the names of people involved and the content of the discussion
- ◆ Deal with the individual directly, but if you do not get results, speak with a person in charge.
- ◆ Institutions, organizations, agencies and government should have a staff/department that is responsible for concerns, issues and/or complaints.
- ◆ If you think a provincial government ministry, public agency, or local government has treated you unfairly, contact the Office of the BC Ombudsperson by calling 1-800-567-3247.
- ◆ The Office of the Ombudsperson receives enquiries and complaints about the practices and services of public agencies. Their role is to impartially investigate these complaints to determine whether public agencies have acted fairly and reasonably, and whether their actions and decisions were consistent with relevant legislation, policies and procedures.

ELDER ABUSE ACTS AND LAWS

British Columbia has four laws that promote every adult's right to self-determination, and provide support and protection for those who are vulnerable to abuse or who are no longer capable of making their own decisions.

The four acts that comprise the adult guardianship legislation are:

- ◆ The Representation Agreement Act
www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/ID/freeside/00_96405_01
- ◆ The Health Care (Consent) and Care Facility (Admission) Act
www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96181_01
- ◆ The Adult Guardianship Act
www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96006_01
- ◆ The Public Guardian and Trustee Act
www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/ID/freeside/00_96383_01

For inquiries, call Service BC and ask to be transferred to the Public Guardian and Trustee:

Toll Free 1-800-663-7867

Elder Abuse and the Criminal Code

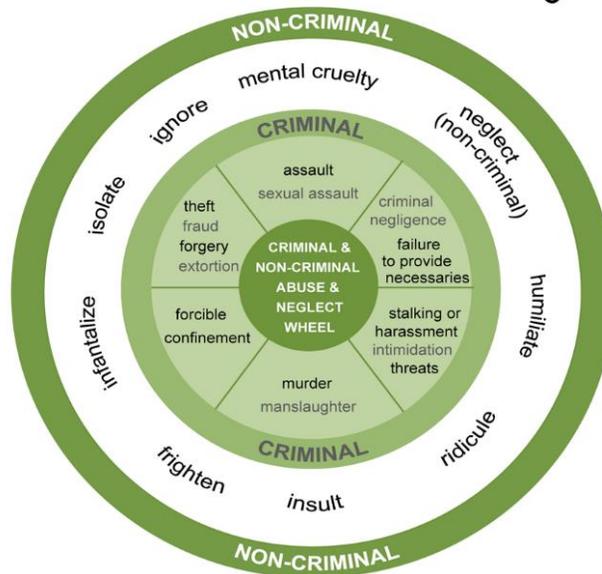
Some abusive acts are crimes, and should be reported to the police.

Some acts might not be criminal even if they are very harmful.

Non-criminal abuse, neglect and self-neglect is to be reported to a Designated Agency – Interior Health by calling 250-980-1400.

In January 2013, The Protecting Canada's Seniors Act (Bill C-36) came into force which better protects seniors by ensuring tougher sentences for those who take advantage of elderly Canadians. Under the amendments to the Criminal Code, evidence that an offence had a significant impact on the victims due to their age, and other personal circumstances such as their health or financial situation, will now be considered an aggravating factor for sentencing purposes.^{ix}

Criminal and Non-Criminal Abuse & Neglect Wheel



Abuse tends to escalate and crimes often overlap and blend together.

ADAPTED, WITH PERMISSION, FROM ELDER ABUSE: THE HIDDEN CRIME — ADVOCACY CENTRE FOR THE ELDERLY, TORONTO

HOW CAN WE PREVENT ELDER ABUSE AND NEGLECT?

Attitudes and values play a large role in how a community responds to the issue of abuse, neglect and self-neglect of older adults. It is important to accept that this issue is very complex and that there is no “quick fix.” The main focus of any community effort must be to promote the well-being of older adults and strengthen their right to self-determination, respect and dignity. The most effective way the community can assist seniors is to support activities that promote independence and prevent isolation. Caregivers must also be supported. As a community, we must:

- ◆ **Educate older adults** about abuse and risk factors, options for advance planning, and where to turn for help. Knowledge is power.
- ◆ **Be prepared** in the event that you become frail or disabled. Talk with family and friends, and identify people you can trust to make health care and/or financial decisions for you in the event that you cannot.
- ◆ If you are an older adult and feel confused or overwhelmed, **reach out for help**. You do not have to live in fear of what might happen to you and there are people who care.
- ◆ **Educate the community** about abuse and risk factors, what to look for and how to respond. Ensure that community agencies, businesses, organizations and groups take a whole community approach to the prevention of elder abuse, neglect and self-neglect.
- ◆ **Be proactive**, and offer support and encouragement to the older adult. Be aware of community resources that promote health and independence so you can share this information with the older adult and his/her caregiver.
- ◆ By **raising community awareness** and encouraging conversations about elder abuse and neglect we create an environment that allows older adults to speak out and get help.
- ◆ **Support families** by identifying high risk situations before abuse occurs and enable early interventions. Social isolation can provide a clue that a family may be in trouble, and may be a result of the stresses of caring for a dependent older family member or a way to keep the abuse and neglect a secret.
- ◆ **Caregiver support** is available and can be informal (family and friends), or formal (community resources and programs.) Support can include:

Respite care is when someone else cares for an elder for a period of time, and can reduce caregiver and family stress. It can take place in the home, daycentres or as a short stay in a care facility.

Caregiver support groups offer peer support, a safe place to talk about feelings and to learn that the caregiver is not alone. Support programs and counselling are also available to individuals and families to help cope with problems that contribute to abuse.

Social contact and community support for the older person, family members and caregivers is very important and can assist in decreasing stress and sharing solutions. In addition, where there is a larger social circle, abuse is less likely to go unnoticed.^x

HOW CAN WE PREVENT SELF-NEGLECT?

- ◆ **Find a balance** between ensuring safety, security and the well-being of the older adults while respecting their right to be as independent as possible.
- ◆ **Identify risk factors and seek supports to decrease these risks.** Older adults who neglect themselves usually have certain characteristics. For example, they are more likely to live alone, suffer from mental or physical illnesses, have decreased physical abilities, and/or have alcohol and drug problems. Seek supports to decrease these risks.
- ◆ **Social support by family, community and formal care providers** is very important in helping seniors remain safely in the community. By decreasing the likelihood of isolation of older adults, these support systems may help prevent self-neglect.

HOW TO RESPOND WHEN ELDER ABUSE IS SUSPECTED OR HAS OCCURRED

- ◆ If you feel a situation is an **emergency or urgent, call the police.** They will investigate and act in criminal matters. They also have connections with other organizations that can provide help.
- ◆ Some acts of abuse and neglect might not be considered criminal, even if they are very harmful and should be reported to the appropriate agency.
- ◆ In British Columbia, you can report abuse, neglect or self-neglect to what is called a “Designated Agency”, under Section 46 of the Adult Guardianship Act, and your identity **must not** be disclosed and the situation **must** be investigated.^{xi} In Lake Country, our Designated Agency is Interior Health.
www.interiorhealth.ca/reportabuse
250-980-1400
- ◆ You can call the Senior Abuse and Information Line (SAIL). It 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. The staff and volunteers who answer SAIL are trained to provide a listening, non-judgmental and supportive ear. They will refer callers with a legal question or problem to legal staff. Callers who are age 50+ and are victims of abuse or family and sexual violence, and who need practical and emotional support may be referred to the Victim Services Program which also provides information, support and referrals to services in the community.
www.bcceas.ca/programs/sail/
1-866-437-1940

ELDER ABUSE RESOURCES FOR THE CENTRAL OKANAGAN PREVENTION

STAYING HEALTHY AND CONNECTED

Two important factors that reduce elder abuse and are considered primary prevention activities for seniors are:

- 1) self-care and attention to physical and mental health needs,
- 2) having social contacts and supports.

RESOURCE	PHONE	WEBSITE	NOTES
Lake Country Family Practice	250-766-3938		Family doctors and walk in clinic
Interior Health	250-862-4200	www.interiorhealth.ca	To find health care providers and services
HealthLink BC	8-1-1	www.healthlinkbc.ca	24 hour resource for non-urgent health care advice
District of Lake Country	250-766-5650	www.okanaganway.ca	Social and recreational opportunities
LC Seniors Activity Centre	250-766-4220		Social and recreational opportunities
Schubert Centre	250-549-4201	www.schubertcentre.ca	Social and recreational opportunities in Vernon
Halina Seniors Centre	250-542-2877		Social and recreational opportunities in Vernon
Parkinson Seniors Society	250-469-8956	www.parkinsonseniors.com	Social and recreational opportunities in Kelowna
Rutland Senior Centre Society	250-469-8846	www.rutlandseniors.com	Social and recreational opportunities in Kelowna
Okanagan Mission Senior Centre Society	250-469-8798		Social and recreational opportunities in Kelowna
Kelowna Community Resources	250-763-8008	http://kelowna.cioc.ca/volunteer/	Volunteer opportunities database for Central Okanagan
Baha'i Faith	250-766-5710		Lake Country Faith Communities
Jehovah's Witnesses	250-766-5710		Lake Country Faith Communities
Lake Country Life Centre	250-275-5071		Lake Country Faith Communities
Lake Country Church	250-766-4433		Lake Country Faith Communities
Seventh Day Adventist Church	250-766-4266		Lake Country Faith Communities
St Edwards Catholic Church	250-766-3146		Lake Country Faith Communities
St Francis Anglican Parish	250-766-0919		Lake Country Faith Communities
Willow Park Church	250-765-6622		Lake Country Faith Communities
Winfield Community Church	250-766-2753		Lake Country Faith Communities
Winfield United Church	250-766-4458		Lake Country Faith Communities

SUPPORTING HEALTH

These are organizations that may provide education, support groups, tools, resources, reliable information and services specific to your health.

RESOURCE	PHONE	WEBSITE	NOTES
Alzheimer's Society	250-860-0305	www.alzheimerbc.org	Information, support, referral
ALS Society	1-800-708-3228	www.alsbc.ca	Information, support, referral, equipment
Arthritis Society	250-868-8643	www.arthritis.ca	Information, support, referral, exercise
CNIB (Canadian National Institute for the Blind)	250-763-1191	www.cnib.ca/en/bc-yukon	Rehabilitation, information, support, referral, equipment
Heart and Stroke Foundation	1-866-432-7833	www.heartandstroke.bc.ca	Information
Kelowna Community Resources	250-763-8008	www.kcr.ca/cioc/IH/index.html	Healthy Aging resource database
Multiple Sclerosis Society	250-762-5850	www.mssociety.ca/bc	Information, support, referrals, advocacy, exercise, equipment
Parkinson Society	1-800-668-3330	www.parkinson.bc.ca	Information, support, referral
Veterans Affairs Canada	1-866-522-2122	www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/contact/bc-yukon	Information, support, referral
Interior Health, Seniors Mental Health	250-870-5777	www.interiorhealth.ca/yourcare/mentalHealthSubstanceUse/Pages/default.aspx	Information, support, assessment, treatment, counselling, programs
Canadian Mental Health Association	250-861-3644	www.kelowna.cmha.bc.ca	Information, support, referral
Alcohol and Drug Information Referral Service	1-800-663-1441	www.bc211.ca/help-lines	Information, referral

SUPPORTING INDEPENDENCE

Knowing where to turn in your community so you can continue to be as independent as possible is an important part of coping with changing abilities. As we age we may need to learn new ways of obtaining food, housing, transportation and socialization.

RESOURCE	PHONE	WEBSITE	NOTES
BC Housing	1-800-834-7149	www.bchousing.org	Provides affordable housing options and adaptations
Lake Country Seniors Housing Society	250-766-1660		Provides affordable housing combined with support services and care to the senior population in need
The Society of Hope	250-862-8233	www.societyofhope.org	Operates affordable LC seniors housing
Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters	1-800-257-7756	www.bchousing.org/programs/SAFER	Financial aid for renters
LC Food Bank	250-766-0125		Food assistance
Lake Country Seniors Activity Centre	250-766-4220		Tuesday lunch buffet and frozen meal options
Blue Heron Villa	250-766-1660		Premade soups available for pick up
LC Lodge and Manor	250-766-3007		Housing options and respite care
Better at Home	778-215-5247	www.lakecountryhealth.ca	Assistance with non-medical support services
Hands In Service	250-861-5465	www.handsinservice.ca	Non-medical home care, referral and food assistance for persons aged 65 and under
Interior Health, Home and Community Care	250-980-1400	www.interiorhealth.ca/YourCare/HomeCommunityCare	At-home and community services for acute, chronic, palliative or rehabilitative health care needs
handyDART	250-762-3278	www.bctransit.com/kelowna/riderinfo/handydart/register	Accessible bus and taxi options
Lake Country Seniors Bus Society	Marg 250-766-3227		Scheduled group trips to social and recreational opportunities
Seniors Outreach and Resource Centre (Kelowna)	250-861-6180	www.seniorsoutreach.ca	Information, support and referral in the areas of: housing, financial, social, recreational, health, safety, legal and estate-planning
Nexus BC Community Resource Centre (Vernon)	250-545-0585	www.northokanaganaseniors.ca	Drop-in resource centre that assists seniors, their families, caregivers and the community to access services which enable seniors to maintain an independent lifestyle

SUPPORTING CAREGIVERS

Giving care to someone, no matter how much you love them, can become stressful. A caregiver has to look after themselves in order to be able to provide good care for someone else. Many health specific resources listed under “support and information” offer support to caregivers by providing programs, counselling, education and respite.

RESOURCE	PHONE	WEBSITE	NOTES
Interior Health	250-980-1400	www.interiorhealth.ca	Adult day programs, caregiver support, respite
BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support		www.bcceas.ca/information/elder-abuse-and-neglect/caregiver-resources/	Information, assessment tools
The Family Caregiver		www.thefamilycaregiver.com/bc/caregiving/caregiving	Information, resources

ORGANIZING YOUR AFFAIRS

Having a plan for your financial and legal affairs is an important step in preventing elder abuse. Speak with a representative at your bank and/or your financial planner about your plans.

RESOURCE	PHONE	WEBSITE	NOTES
Seniors Outreach and Resource Centre	250-861-6180	www.seniorsoutreach.ca	Information, support, referral
Public Guardian and Trustee of BC	250-712-7576	www.trustee.bc.ca	May provide financial management services for adults incapable of managing their own affairs
Canadian Centre for Elder Law		www.bcli.org/elder-law-resources/tools-and-resources	Information, resources

ELDER ABUSE RESOURCES FOR THE CENTRAL OKANAGAN RESPONDING TO ABUSE

REPORTING ABUSE

In an abuse, neglect or self-neglect emergency if someone's safety or life is at risk, you must call 9-1-1.

If it is urgent but not an emergency and there is time to take action, you can contact other community agencies and trained responders.

RESOURCE	PHONE	WEBSITE	NOTES
Police, fire, ambulance	9-1-1		Immediate emergency help
Interior Health (Designated Agency for Lake Country)	1-844-870-4754	www.interiorhealth.ca/reportabuse ihadultguardianship@interiorhealth.ca	If you believe someone is being abused or neglected and is unable to get support and assistance on their own
BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support Seniors Abuse and Information Line (SAIL)	1-866-437-1940	www.bcceas.ca/programs/sail/	Confidential information, support, referrals and legal advice
Public Guardian and Trustee of BC	250-712-7576	www.trustee.bc.ca	If you suspect financial abuse, may provide financial management services for adults incapable of managing their own affairs

SUPPORTING THE ABUSED

If abuse, neglect or self-neglect is suspected or has occurred, the following agencies can provide assistance:

RESOURCE	PHONE	WEBSITE	NOTES
BC Association of Community Response Networks	250-718-5634	www.bccrns.ca	Stopping Adult Abuse and Neglect...Together Resource List for Vernon and Kelowna
Central Okanagan RCMP Victim Services	250-470-6242	www.regionaldistrict.com/services/crime-and-emergency-services/victim-services	Information and support for victims of crime
Canadian Centre for Elder Law		www.bcli.org/elder-law-resources/tools-and-resources	Information, resources
Crisis Line	1-800-784-2433	www.crisislines.bc.ca	Assistance with issues such as homelessness, mental health, addiction, abuse, poverty, suicide
VictimLink BC	1-800-563-0808	www.victimlinkbc.ca	Information and referrals to victims of crime, and information on safe or transition houses
The Office of the Ombudsperson	1-800-567-3247	www.bcombudsperson.ca	Enquiries and complaints about the practices and services of public agencies
The Office of the Seniors Advocate	1-877-952-3181	www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca	Monitors and reviews system-wide issues affecting the well-being of seniors, and provides referral to resources

SHELTERS

Emergency housing and shelter options:

RESOURCE	PHONE	WEBSITE	NOTES
The Road Home: Rescue and Safe Keeping Society	250-306-1221	www.theroadhome.ca	Assists with the care of pets who are temporarily homeless due to emergency circumstances
Kelowna Gospel Mission	250-763-3737	www.kelownagospelmission.ca	Shelter for men in Kelowna
Kelowna Women's Shelter	250-763-1040	www.kelownawomensshelter.com	Shelter for women in Kelowna
New Opportunities for Women	250-763-2263	www.nowcanada.ca	Shelter for women in Kelowna
Gateway Shelter, John Howard Society	Men's 250-260-2792 Women's 250-260-2786	www.jhsnok.ca/program-type/shelter	Shelter for men and women in Vernon
Howard House Men's Shelter, John Howard Society	250-542-4041	www.jhsnok.ca/program-type/shelter	Shelter for men in Vernon

LEGAL

Legal advice and information:

RESOURCE	PHONE	WEBSITE	NOTES
Legal Services Society: Legal Aid	1-866-577-2525	www.lss.bc.ca/	Information, advice, representation, mediation for people with low incomes
Lake Country RCMP	250-766-2288		Non-emergency inquiries
Canadian Bar Association-BC, Lawyer Referral Service	1-800-663-1919	www.cbabc.org/For-the-Public/Lawyer-Referral-Service	Referrals and consultation
BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support Seniors Advocacy and Information Line (SAIL)	1-866-437-1940	www.bcceas.ca/programs/sail/	Confidential information, support, referrals and legal advice

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