

CARP Action Against Elder Abuse

- Facts & Recommendations -



CARP calls for a comprehensive strategy against elder abuse

CARP is calling for a comprehensive strategy to detect and punish the most egregious manifestations of elder abuse but also to prevent the abuse from occurring in the first place.

Elder abuse is “a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within a relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person,” according to the World Health Organization.

- **Elder abuse is a breach of trust, usually in a close relationship** - Most abused seniors are dependent on the abuser, usually a family member, caregiver, or friend
- **Elder abuse cases will continue to increase if nothing is done** - Half a million seniors in Canada today experience some form of elder abuse and if nothing is done the number will only increase as the population ages
- **Elder abuse is more prevalent than statistics show** – Studies show 10% of seniors experience elder abuse but this number jumps to 40% when people are asked whether they know of someone who has been victimized. Underreporting can be attributed to fear of reprisal from the abuser and not having a safe place to turn for help

Elder abuse needs to be exposed and eradicated: Everyone has a role

CARP calls on governments to eradicate elder abuse with a comprehensive strategy that includes:

1. **Elder abuse hot line** – A single point of first contact: 911, 211, a 1-800 national line that can re-direct to local service agencies and is sensitive to cultural and linguistic needs
2. **Duty to report** – Calls for social responsibility to expose the hidden crime and protection for whistle blowers, including clear guidelines for action and intervention, protection, and a professional investigative capacity
3. **Added caregiver support** – Greater support for the 3.8 million Canadians now caring for loved ones by providing targeted financial support, training, and clinical support
4. **Specialized investigative support** for existing criminal offenses
5. **New criminal offence of elder abuse** – if warranted following a review
6. **Victim support services and elder shelter** – ensure uniform and adequate access to specialized support across the country

For references and more information, contact Sarah Park, Policy Researcher: s.park@carp.ca