

Action Group on Elder Abuse Gaps in Service

This document represents interviews with members of the Action Group on Elder Abuse Steering Committee. Based upon their collective practice experience, the following were identified as significant gaps in the response to elder abuse in Calgary.

Ethno-Cultural and Diversity Awareness

- Challenge with sensitivity and awareness of to diversity issues among professionals. Both in context of recognizing abuse and in the intervention.
- Interpretation services are difficult to arrange quickly and the interpretation must be appropriate given the context of the work.
- Lack of knowledge dealing with same sex older couples.

Lack of Resources/Supports

- Many who experience abuse also experience isolation.
- Home support services are lacking both in terms of supporting the caregiver and in terms of offering alternatives to those most frail and at risk of abuse.
- Lack of affordable housing.
- Lack of awareness of services available by professionals.
- Many clients have turned to their clergy and haven't received what they need.
- Lack of an appropriate case management function.
- Lack of services for substance abuse for older adults
- Long term counseling and support.
- Lack of staff is an issue.

Shelters' Ability to Respond Appropriately

- Accessibility of these facilities poses challenges for seniors.
- Shelter accommodation unavailable to frail elderly or those with medical complications.
- Lack of appropriate transition housing.

Police Services Response

- No specialized investigative role.
- Lack of a joint police-social service response unit.
- Education and training with respect to working with senior population.

Research

- Scant Canadian research regarding best practices and prevalence of elder abuse.
- Research on elder abuse as it intersects with different populations is scant and usually from the same sources.

Education/Training/Awareness

- Lack of curriculum focus in post secondary education.
- Lack of awareness of services by older adults.

- Lack of awareness in general public of issue of elder abuse and seniors issues generally.
- Many service professionals unaware of how to respond appropriately. Lack knowledge and tools.

Other

- Ageism
- Transportation is a problem whenever you're trying to organize programming for older adults (financial issue or inability to use public transport, etc.).
- Difficult to access services on behalf of non-compliant clients