

## What Can We Do

Financial abuse can be prevented when we understand the root causes. Education is important for protecting each other, but there are other solutions we can take. Society is like a structure. A just society means having strong foundations and multiple supports that help keep all of us strong, and safe from harm. We need education, but we also need social support and reporting.

Research has shown that social support can reduce the risk factors associated with financial abuse so we should recognize the significance of social settings like libraries, parks, and community centres in protecting communities.

When we are given opportunities to socialize and engage in our communities, (libraries, community centres) there are more opportunities for people to recognize financial abuse signs and prevent and intervene.

Another way we can support each other as we age is to encourage our local government representatives to invest in social settings that build a stronger community supports, and advocate for policies that hold financial abusers accountable and deter crime.

For more information  
**Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario**  
416-916-6728 | [www.eapon.ca](http://www.eapon.ca)  
[admin@eapon.ca](mailto:admin@eapon.ca) | [@EAPreventionON](https://twitter.com/EAPreventionON)

## RESOURCES

### Advocacy Centre for the Elderly (ACE)

A community based legal clinic for low income senior citizens.

1-855-598-2656

[www.advocacycentreelderly.org](http://www.advocacycentreelderly.org)

### Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre

Report frauds and scams.

1-888-495-8501

[www.antifraudcentre-centantifraude.ca](http://www.antifraudcentre-centantifraude.ca)

### Crime Stoppers

Report crimes anonymously.

1-800-222-TIPS (8477)

[www.canadiancrimestoppers.org](http://www.canadiancrimestoppers.org)

### Law Society Referral Service (LSRS)

30 minutes of free legal consultation.

1-800-268-8326 | [www.lsuc.on.ca](http://www.lsuc.on.ca)

### Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee (OPGT)

Intervene if a person is believed to be mentally incapable and is at risk of harm or experiencing harm.

### Investigation Unit

1-800-366-0335

### Ontario Association for Family Mediation

A mediator helps people identify issues and work out their own solutions.

1-844-989-3026

### Seniors Safety Line (SLL)

A 24/7 crisis and support line for seniors, available in over 200 languages.

1-866-299-1011 | [www.awhl.org/seniors](http://www.awhl.org/seniors)



Elder Abuse  
Prevention  
Ontario



# Preventing and Addressing Financial Abuse

## A just society preserves the safety and dignity of all its members, across the lifespan. It is a shared responsibility in our communities.

Financial abuse occurs when someone steals, withholds, or misuses an older adult's money, property or valuables for personal gain or profit. Financial abuse is often done by trusted individuals.

### Know the Signs

Unlike strangers, family, caregivers, neighbours and friends are in positions of trust and have ongoing relationships with the older adult. In order to protect each other from financial abuse, we must know the signs. These can include:

- Taking older adult's money (sometimes by force), or selling property or valuables
- Borrowing money without any intention of paying it back
- Denying services or care
- Giving away or selling the older adult's possessions or property without their permission
- Signing or cashing pension cheques without permission

- Misusing bank and credit cards
- Forging signatures
- Unauthorized sale of items such as a family heirloom
- Threats to harm property if money is not provided

### Be Aware of Family Financial and Legal Arrangements

Sudden changes to legal documents, such as:

- Power of Attorney
- Joint bank accounts
- Deed or title transfers for homes/cars
- Living Trust or Will

### Financial Abuse Tactics

Tactics often used include deceit, coercion, intimidation, emotional abuse, empty promises of lifelong care, and isolation from friends, family, and others.

These actions can prevent supportive people from asking about the older adult's well-being, preventing them from seeking advice or referral on important decisions and often leaving the older adult with the impression that no one else cares about their well-being.

### Power of Attorney for Property

This legal arrangement gives appointed person(s) the authority to manage the older adult's affairs on their behalf. Misuse occurs when the attorney takes action which benefits themselves, to the detriment of the older adult, uses the power after it has been terminated, or uses the power for purposes other than that for which it was intended.

### Impacts of Financial Abuse

Financial abuse not only impacts the individuals who experience it, but the broader community as well. Lost incomes from financial abuse can compromise a person's standard of living, especially when we are older and may be living on a fixed income. It can also cause physical and emotional distress which can cost our broader society in health care and social service costs.

