



Overview of Abuse & the Older Adult

Education for Health Care Professionals

Part 3: Neglect & Other Forms of Abuse



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Neglect & Other Forms of Abuse



- Abuse of the older adult can present in other forms as well, such as:

- neglect
- medical abuse
- systemic abuse
- rights violation



[\(Victims of Violence, 2017\)](#)



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Neglect



Neglect occurs in three different forms such as active, passive, and self-neglect.

- Active neglect may be presented as intentionally withholding basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing.
- Whereas passive neglect may be presented as failing to care for the older adult, which may be seen in an institutional setting and/or by family members. Desertion of an older person at an institution, such as a hospital, is also considered abandonment.
- Self-neglect may be presented when the older adult fails to care for themselves, such as discontinuing oral hygiene, being improperly dressed, or withdrawing from eating.

[\(Victims of Violence, 2017; Robinson, Saisan, & Segal, 2017\)](#)



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Medical Abuse



Medical abuse commonly occurs in an institutional setting. It refers to actions that are not accepted or legal within medical practice and may result in professional misconduct.

Some examples may include:

- evidence of over or under medicating an individual
- duplicate bills for the same medical service or device
- evidence of inadequate care
- reports of drug overdose or failure to medicate regularly
- problems within the care facility

[\(Victims of Violence, 2017\)](#)



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Systemic Abuse



- Systemic abuse occurs when there is a failure to recognize or deliver adequate and appropriate services.
- This type of abuse occurs when there are wrongful assumptions of older people that they do not have rights, which can result in discrimination.
- Factors for this type of abuse may include ageism, racism, colour, language, ethnic background, religion, sexual orientation, ability, economic status and/or geographic location.

(National Senior Strategy, 2015)

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Rights Violations



- The final type of abuse is rights violation. This occurs when the older adult's fundamental rights, as granted by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, are violated.
- Some signs of violation may include: withholding information, denying privacy, restricting liberty, censoring mail, and not informing the individual of their rights.

(Victims of Violence, 2017)

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