

Hidden in the Cultural Fabric: Older Adult Abuse and Neglect in Ethno- Cultural Communities in Alberta

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Introduction

- ◆ Older adult abuse and neglect in ethno-cultural communities is both a “hidden” and “un-hidden” issue.
- ◆ Personal experience, cultural practices, and beliefs may make it difficult for ethnic community members to recognize and define older adult abuse and neglect incidences.

Project Background

- ◆ This is a provincial partnership project aims at educating ethnic/immigrant seniors about elder abuse and neglect through culturally and linguistically appropriate education materials.
- ◆ Focus group consultations with seniors from five identified ethnic groups (based on sub population size when the proposal was developed) have been done in five Alberta cities. Key informants/service providers focus groups were included.

- ◆ The newly developed community education material – Say ‘No’ to Elder Abuse – is based on the focus group consultation findings and knowledge translation development of research evidence based resources and tools.
- ◆ Ultimately the developed material would be widely distributed to ethnic seniors and community to inform them about what elder abuse and neglect is and what they can do about it.

Target Population

- ◆ Five ethno - cultural communities: Arabic, Chinese, Punjabi, Spanish, Vietnamese
- ◆ Five cities in Alberta: Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and Red Deer

Project Objectives

- ◆ This project aims to explore and understand elder abuse and neglect issues in the ethno-cultural communities in Alberta
- ◆ To provide culturally and linguistically appropriate education material on elder abuse and neglect for ethnic/immigrant seniors/communities

Partners

- ◆ Calgary Chinese Elderly Citizens' Association
- ◆ Dr. Daniel Lai, Professor & Associate Dean, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary
- ◆ The City of Calgary, Seniors Services Division
- ◆ The City of Edmonton
- ◆ The City of Lethbridge, Community and Social Development
- ◆ Golden Circle Senior Resource Centre, Red Deer
- ◆ Calgary Connecting Seniors Cultural Council
- ◆ Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society

Project Implementation

2009-2012

Project scope

- ◆ Identify existing resources/literature related to elder abuse in the ethno-cultural communities
- ◆ Data collection – listen to ethnic older adults about the issue and consult their idea about effective way to educate ethnic older adults
- ◆ Evaluation on newly developed educational tool

Data collection

- ◆ Method:
 - Focus group consultation
 - Key informant interview

Recruiting facilitators

- ◆ Identifying focus group facilitators who speak the language of the participants
- ◆ Training and support
- ◆ Alternative back up – interpreter

Recruiting participants

- ◆ Through steering committee members in five cities
- ◆ Through existing community contacts
- ◆ Through extended contacts
- ◆ To make contact through web search to identify local organizations in the identified cities

Conducting focus group session

- ◆ Participants' transportation arrangement
- ◆ Convenient/accessible/familiar location for meeting
- ◆ Participant consent/process recording
- ◆ Group rules
- ◆ Attention span of participants
- ◆ Dynamics of individual participants
- ◆ Use of interpreter

Focus Group Consultation

◆ *The older people are suffering a lot but no one wants to talk about their sufferings. We cannot do much as we cannot interfere in somebody's family life.*

- Quoted from a participant in the Punjabi community

You also have to be strong and willing to say NO when your child wants to dictate in your live, you must say "No, you can't command me".

- Quoted from a participant in the Latin American community

Because of the face issue, the seniors don't want others to look down upon them. Also, there is an old saying for Chinese—"Not spreading shameful family matters to outsiders". If someone knows their family matters but not showing sympathy towards the seniors, it will make them lose their face.

- Quoted from a participant in the Chinese community

Purpose of the focus groups

- ◆ To explore and understand older adult abuse and neglect issues in ethno-cultural communities in Alberta and to identify strategies for promoting awareness of the issues.

Methodology

- ◆ Focus group and key informant interviews
 - ◆ Eleven focus group consultations - 126 participants (65 and older from culturally diverse communities)
 - ◆ Five key informant interviews - 6 participants (3 older adults from culturally diverse communities and 3 service providers)
- ◆ Calgary, Edmonton, Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, and Red Deer from end of 2010 to early 2012
- ◆ Ethnic background: Chinese (Mandarin & Cantonese), Vietnamese, Latin American, Punjabi, Filipinos, Bhutanese, Black.

Be with children

- ◆ Older adults from different ethnic groups have a common need, the need or desire to be with their children.

I think female elderly Chinese are more vulnerable as compared with mainstream seniors. It is because traditional Chinese put forth their off-springs' ultimate benefit first that makes parents willing to sacrifice for their children. The Chinese parents are so ready to give almost everything for their children and they expect their children to care for them in their aging years. (A female participant, Chinese, Calgary)

Be with children (cont'd)

We will realize the value of family when we do not have family and we need them. We have come to live in a system....we get mistreatment but still we do not want to live alone. (A male participant, Punjabi, Edmonton)

Abuse/mistreatment

- ◆ Some of these older adults are not living in the kind of life that they once dreamed for. Some have experienced elder abuse or mistreatment by their children or in-laws.
- ◆ Older adult abuse is not uncommon to recognize, participants have heard about incidences about not treating parents the way their community would expect.

Fear

- ◆ Older adult in abuse are afraid of their abuser, mostly are their own children.
 - ◆ They fear about their children would desert them and could no longer be with them;
 - ◆ No longer be allowed to see their grandchildren;
 - ◆ Treat them even worse;
 - ◆ Have to flee for life if they make the abuse known to outsider or to the authority;
- ◆ This fear is a pulling force to keep them from revealing the abuse.

Fear (cont'd)

And there are times that we don't report it out of fear like when it happened to my daughter, I didn't report it because I was afraid they wouldn't let me see my grandchildren. (a female Latin American participant in Edmonton)

Some of the elderly people are uneducated and are unable to express their problems. Some of our elderly people do not talk as they are afraid of their family. (a Punjabi participant in Calgary)

Hiding the abuse

- ◆ “do not want outsiders to know about things inside their family.”
- ◆ “to avoid damage to the image of the home”
- ◆ “have to protect children’s reputation”.

Hiding the abuse (cont'd)

Bring shame to family if it gets out to the public. But I think the fear factor is a big one if I tell then everybody knows about this. I think this is to do with the elderly too as they are the dependents on the care takers, the children, their own children or hired caretakers. They depend on them for care whether it is food or whatever. The fear factor kicks in that I better not let anyone know; because this will treat me worse, so just take it. (a female participant, Red Deer)

Hiding the abuse (cont'd)

*The biggest problem is that people whether old or young do not talk about their problems in their own community because of the image of their family. It is very common in our Punjabi community. The elderly people keep on suffering from elder abuse and neglect but they do not talk about their issues to their own relatives or members of their community.
(a Punjabi participant in Calgary)*

Lifestyle & value systems

- ◆ Differences in lifestyle and value systems play an important role in family conflicts

Not only the Vietnamese community but also other communities face such situations. For the Vietnamese, I think there are differences between ways of life / lifestyles in Vietnam and here..... Once here older people from Vietnam might not be able to adjust to life / lifestyles here. It's impossible for them to live by themselves – Yet, living together with their children will likely lead to certain conflicts. (a female Vietnamese participant in Calgary)

North American societal attitude

- ◆ North American societal attitude toward parents might be a factor in the children's changing value to their dependent aging parents.

Barriers

- ◆ Language barrier, isolation, lack of knowledge about the Canadian system and their rights, not knowing resources or access to services/resources.

There is also language problem. A person who does not know English has no choice but to live with the children. A person who does not know how to drive depends on his children. He cannot go out due to weather conditions. He keeps on getting ill-treatment because of these reasons. (A male participant, Punjabi, Edmonton)

Barriers (cont'd)

It is worse here when it comes to mistreatment and neglect of elderly people. In India, the neighborhood and relatives reprimand the children if they try to mistreat the elderly people. Here in Canada, all houses are closed. The next-door neighbor does not know what kind of treatment the elderly people get at home. (a participant in the Punjabi group in Calgary)

Parents' understanding

- ◆ Parents need to recognize the struggles and stress (taking 2 jobs, financial or caregiving for kids) that challenge their adult children.

As far as I can see, tight financial situation is often what is experienced by the children who sponsor their parents. They have to provide for their children and now for their parents too... However, some parents are kind of demanding; they want to spend for certain things and this could lead to conflicts resulting in the family losing its harmony. So, the first thing is about money. (a Vietnamese participant in Calgary)

Parents' understanding (cont'd)

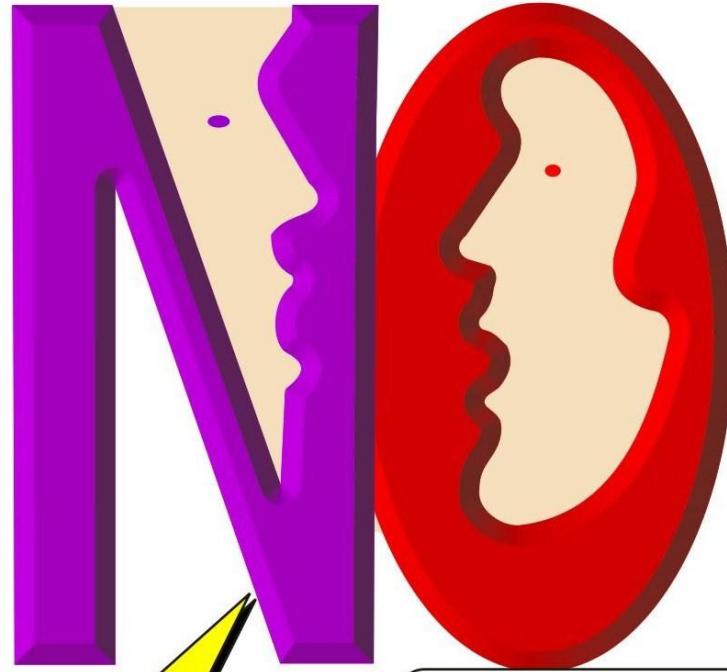
In my country, older people have in mind that their children will take care of them. Probably, when they come here, they are expecting their children will continue to take care of them. But here is totally different situation. For older people it is very hard for them to understand them (children). For here, every member of the family has to work. They put up money for things. It is hard for the parents to comprehend, for them, quite lay back in life Immigrants have 2 jobs and it is hard for the parents to understand this. They put pressure on the younger generation. (a female Latin American participant in Red Deer)

Male dominance

- ◆ Male dominance is believed to be another contributing factor to abuse as the societal norm may normalize incidences of violence and abuse. Migration to Canada brings up another perspective on redefining relationship which values human rights and equality.

Promotion Material

Say "NO" to Elder Abuse



向虐老說"不"

Nói "KHÔNG" với
Ngược Đãi Người Cao Tuổi

Diga "NO" al Maltrato
al Anciano

قل "لا" للعنف ضد المسنين

ਬਜ਼ੁਰਗਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸ਼ੋਸ਼ਣ ਨੂੰ "ਨਾਂ" ਕਰੋ

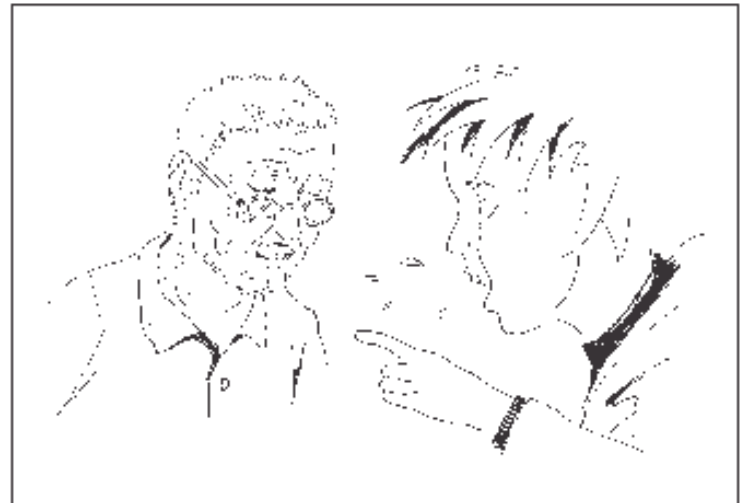
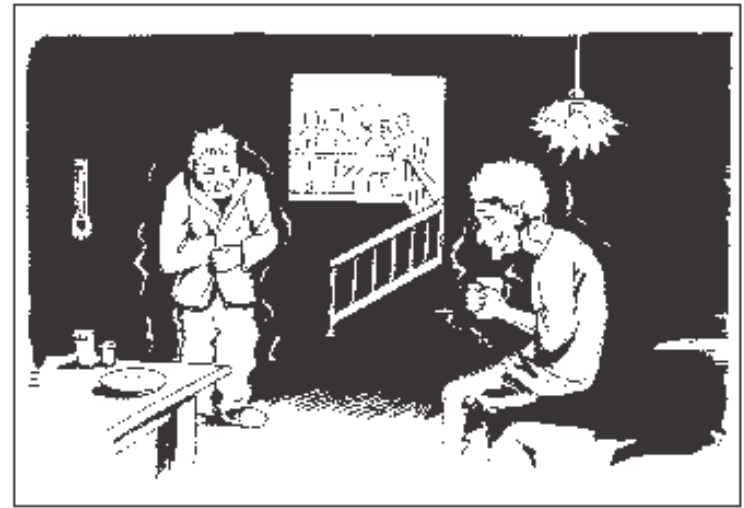
Booklet: Say 'No' to Elder Abuse

- ◆ Rationale: Easy to read, key themes are expressed in both pictures and simple words
- ◆ A cartoon booklet is displayed in six languages: Arabic, Chinese, Punjabi, Spanish, Vietnamese and English
- ◆ Local artist was identified to draw the cartoon of general older adult population (not seniors from ethno-cultural groups)
- ◆ Five themes were chosen – awareness, protect your well being, understand your rights in Canada, ask for help and Elder Abuse is not your fault

A. Awareness

- ◆ Isolation/neglect
- ◆ Verbal abuse/threats
- ◆ Financial abuse
- ◆ Physical abuse

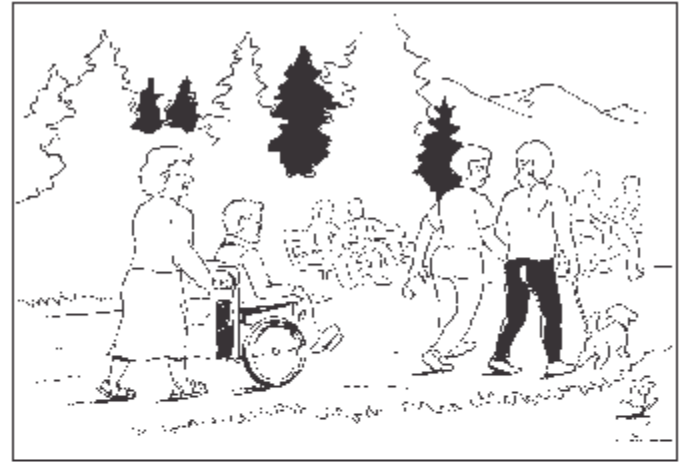
A. AWARENESS



B. Protect Your Well-Being

- ◆ Maintain physical/mental health
- ◆ Make more friends
- ◆ Join community events
- ◆ Protecting yourself

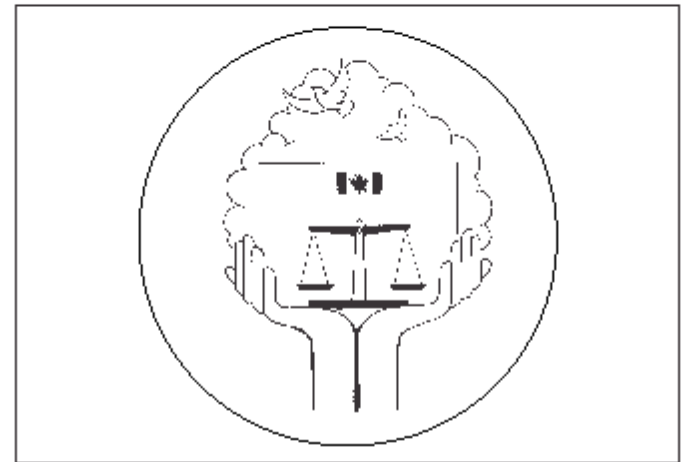
B. *P*ROTECT YOUR WELL-BEING



C. Understand Your Rights in Canada

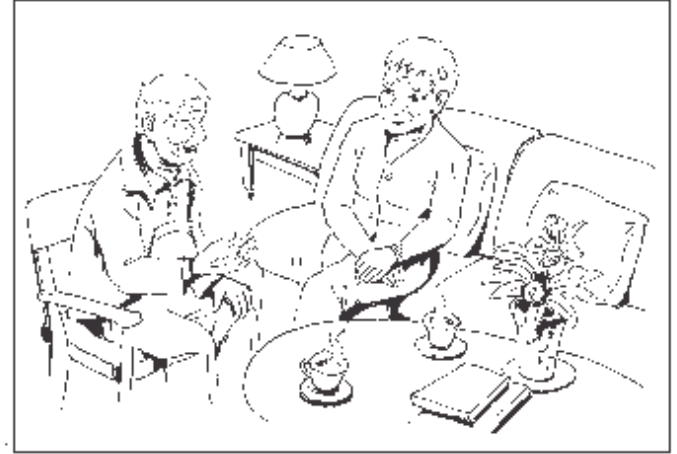
- ◆ Watch TV/Radio/ Newspaper for information
- ◆ Know about human rights/laws, etc.

C. UNDERSTAND YOUR RIGHTS IN CANADA



D. Ask for help, You are not alone Take action to end abuse

D. **ASK FOR HELP, YOU ARE NOT ALONE.
TAKE ACTION TO END ABUSE**



15

- ◆ Talk to friends/relatives
- ◆ Talk to community agencies
- ◆ Talk to professionals/
faith leaders
- ◆ Report to Police

E. Elder Abuse is not your fault

- ◆ Statistics on elder abuse
 - ◆ One in ten seniors experience some form of elder abuse (Statistics Canada)
 - ◆ Incidence of elder abuse is under reported
 - ◆ Police reported violent crime on senior in 2009 (Dept. of Justice) – 35% were committed by a family member
 - ◆ Federal government will introduce tougher sentences for those convicted of elder abuse

Community Resources

- ◆ Resources in five cities –
 - ◆ Any shelter in Alberta
 - ◆ Calgary Kerby Elder Abuse Line
 - ◆ Edmonton Seniors Abuse Help Line
 - ◆ Lethbridge Senior Citizens' Organisation
 - ◆ Medicine Hat Community Response to Abuse and Neglect of Elders (CRANE)
 - ◆ Red Deer, Helping Elder Abuse Reduction (HEAR)
 - ◆ Alberta Elder Abuse Awareness Network:
<http://www.albertaelderabuse.ca>

You're not alone, help is Available!

你並不再孤軍作戰，有人可以幫你!

Quý vị không đơn độc – Luôn có sự giúp đỡ dành cho quý vị!

Usted no está solo, hay ayuda disponible!

لستم وحدكم، المساعدة متاحة للجميع!

हमनी छिक्के नहीं है,सुहाणे कडी सहायिका उपलब्ध है!

For local resources

Hidden in the Cultural Fabric:
Elder abuse and neglect in ethno-cultural communities in Alberta
Funded by the Government of Canada, New Horizon for Seniors Program
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Evaluation

Evaluation of the community education tool

Say 'No' to Elder Abuse

- ◆ Evaluation questionnaire
- ◆ Respondents

**Hidden in the Cultural Fabric: Elder abuse and neglect in ethno-cultural communities in Alberta
Evaluation Questionnaire for *Say No to Elder Abuse* booklet**

The purpose of the *Say No to Elder Abuse* booklet is to promote the understanding of elder abuse and neglect in ethno-cultural communities. Please tell us your opinion about the booklet when you have finished reading it.

1. Language version that you read: Arabic Chinese Punjabi Vietnamese Spanish English
2. How did you get this material? from an agency by email from friends/relatives
 from website, which one? _____ others (specify) _____
3. Your city: Calgary Edmonton Medicine Hat Lethbridge Red Deer Other: _____
4. Are you a service provider? No Yes (please answer 4a and 9 to 17)
 - 4a. 1) from ethno-specific agency 2) from seniors serving sector
 3) from immigrant serving agency 4) from health sector
 5) from care facility 6) others, please specify _____
5. Are you a member of the following ethnic community? No Yes (please answer 5a to 17)
 - 5a. which one? Arabic Chinese Punjabi Vietnamese Spanish Other: _____
6. Your age: 18 to 40 41 to 64 65 and older
7. Length of residing in Canada: _____ year Not applicable
8. Your education: elementary junior high senior high college/university & above
 Other: _____
9. Would you recommend this booklet to your friends/relatives and to ethno-cultural older adults?
 Yes May be No (reason, please) _____

Please answer the following questions using this scale: 1= strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=partially disagree, 4=partially agree, 5=agree, 6=strongly agree, NA= not applicable

	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
10. The material is helpful both for education and the prevention of elder abuse and neglect for ethnic seniors.							
11. The content is significant and relevant to the seniors / ethnic communities.							
12. The language and reading level are appropriate for the target audience.							
13. The presentation is objective in content and appropriate in language use.							
14. The use of cartoon/picture is effective to tell the message.							
15. The material includes service links/information which is useful for the target audience.							
16. The booklet design is appealing and easy-to-understand.							
17. The booklet is a good tool to discuss about elder abuse and neglect matters.							

Thank you for your help in completing this evaluation questionnaire, please see page 2.

Evaluation respondents

- ◆ Stakeholders (ethnic older adults, ethno-cultural communities, service providers)
- ◆ Reconnecting with focus group participants (involve service providers of other cities) for their feedbacks and opinion on the developed material
- ◆ Through service providers/community agencies connecting to their existing members/clients/existing groups, etc.

Challenges/lessons learned

Lessons learned

- ◆ Engaging ethno-cultural communities
- ◆ Recruitment of diverse participants in multi-cities
- ◆ Conducting focus groups with diverse groups
- ◆ Conducting focus groups in various cities
- ◆ Examining a sensitive/thorny subject
- ◆ Provincial partnership

- ◆ Engaging ethno-cultural communities
 - Ethno-specific service providers in smaller cities
 - Service providers were supportive but unable to identify participants

- ◆ Recruitment of participants in multi-cities
 - Relying on local stakeholders
 - Fewer relevant providers to contact in non major cities
 - Out of priority area of service providers
 - Managing multiple contacts and persistence follow ups
 - Issues of dilemma
 - ◆ Recruited are not in the identified groups
 - ◆ Stakeholder could only identify one or couple participants at a time (not enough participants to form a group)
 - ◆ Participants recruited were with different ethnic groups meaning they speak different languages

- ◆ Conducting focus groups with diverse groups
 - Support and training to facilitators to run the focus group
 - Translation of materials
 - Flexibility in data collection process
 - Attention span of older adult participants

- ◆ Conducting focus groups in various cities
- Weather is always unpredictable – both affect the participants as well as the facilitator required to do long distance travel
- Additional resources required
- Unexpected interruption - last minute change

- ◆ Examining a sensitive/thorny subject
 - Buy-in in all level of support - Lead of service providers' support not necessarily getting a smooth sail
 - Buy-in with the area of discussion (sensitive issues) – elder abuse
 - Understand the subject of thorn and the perceived fear/worry in bringing up the discussion

- ◆ Provincial partnership
 - Common understanding
 - Commitment/support
 - 'Blind date'

Thank You

Floor Discussion