

Healthy Families Healthy Nations  
**Domestic Violence Training**

for Professionals and Service Providers

Theme - Improving Our Communities - Understanding Violence

Equay-wuk (Women's Group)

16 Fourth Avenue  
P.O. Box 1781  
Sioux Lookout ON  
P8T 1C4

Phone: (807) 737-2214  
Toll Free: 1-800-261-8294  
Fax: (807) 737-2699

E-Mail: [equaywuk@bellnet.ca](mailto:equaywuk@bellnet.ca)  
Website: [www.equaywuk.ca](http://www.equaywuk.ca)

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# Types of Abuse



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2009







We are all equal and deserve respect and to be treated equally in every community. No one person's 'rights' are more important than another person's 'right.' Every person has the right to say 'no' to any form of sexual touching in any situation.

No person deserves to be sexually abused. No person asks to be sexually abused, regardless of what they wear, where they go, or who they talk to. A person who is sexually abused is not to blame and should not have to live in fear.

People do not like to talk about sexual abuse, but as a community, we should begin to show concern and start the healing process.

**Domestic Abuse Can Be:**

<b>Type</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>Physical</b>	any use of force or attempted use of force	hitting, slapping, choking, pinching, use of a weapon
<b>Emotional</b>	attacking a person's sense of self	insults, threats, isolating, puts victim in a state of fear
<b>Mental</b>	attempt to control the victim's thinking and feelings	blaming, inconsistent, negative messages
<b>Sexual</b>	any forced sexual act on a person who has not given consent	rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment
<b>Financial</b>	using money to control another person	not allowing partner to work, controls all spending, no access to money
<b>Spiritual</b>	controlling a person's belief systems	forced to choose different religion, not allowed to pray

## Why Do Women Stay?

- she fears for her life
- she cannot afford to move out
- she feels it's her responsibility to keep the family together
- she wants her children to grow up with their father
- extended family pressure on her to 'stick it out'
- she feels guilty, that it is her fault (blames herself)
- she doesn't feel confident that she can make it on her own
- she believes things will get better, things will change
- she believes him when he says "It will never happen again"
- she believes she must stay with her partner regardless
- she thinks the abuse is 'normal'
- she minimizes the abuse ("It's not that bad")
- she thinks there is no help or support available
- she loves him
- she is caught up in the cycle of violence (lack of knowledge)

It is important for women to know that they cannot force 'change' on their partners. No person has the 'power' to change another person. We cannot stop a person from choosing to be violent, but we can choose to be safe.

Children are not capable of giving 'consent' to any type of sexual activity. The age that a child can give legal consent is 16 years.

These types of abuse do exist in First Nation communities. Traditionally, women and children were highly respected and protected from harm. Over the course of time, Aboriginal women and children in communities was perceived as less valuable, which made them vulnerable to sexual abuse. The trauma and confusion in communities put women and children at risk of being abused.

### Types of Sexual Abuse:

<b>Sexual Harassment</b>	any unwanted sexual advances, looks, or jokes from a person in the workplace
<b>Date Rape</b>	forced intercourse by a person known to the victim
<b>Marital Rape</b>	forced intercourse between a couple
<b>Stranger Rape</b>	forced intercourse by a person not known to the victim
<b>Gang Rape</b>	forced intercourse on a person by two or more people
<b>Incest</b>	forced sexual contact between family members
<b>Sexual Exploitation</b>	a term used to describe any rape, child sexual abuse, or sexual harassment, including child pornography and child prostitution
<b>Sexual Exploitation by Adult in Authority</b>	inappropriate sexual advances, conversations, suggestions, or relationships by a trusted community service provider (counsellor, Elder, police, priest, doctor, etc)
<b>Child Sexual Abuse</b>	tricking, forcing, manipulating a child, older child, or teenager into sexual activities; sexual contact with a child under the age of 16 years

Any kind of sexual assault is a crime, even if in a marriage or relationship. A spouse can be charged for sexually assaulting their partner. In Canada, sexual assault is a crime and is punishable by law.

**One in three women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime.**  
 Source: Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, 1993

Sexual abuse can happen to men, women, children, Elders, community workers, etc. Sexual abuse can happen to anybody at anytime, and anywhere. It is important that we keep ourselves safe, as well as our children.

**Approximately 82% of victims were women and 98% of accused were men.**  
 Source: Juristat: Canadian Crime Statistics, 1998

For sexual contact to be okay, both people must be able to understand and consent to participate. They must be able to agree without feeling fear of being harmed, feeling pressured, or threatened.

People who are tricked into having sex; people who are under the influence of drugs/alcohol; and anyone who is scared of being harmed if they don't say 'yes' are not capable of giving consent.

Myth	Fact
women deserve to be abused, they 'ask for it'	no person deserves to be abused
women enjoy being abused	she feels responsible to keep family together
women can leave the situation if she wants to	most times a woman hopes things will improve
abuse is a result of a 'bad' relationship	abuser is responsible for their own actions
abuse happens only in Aboriginal homes	abuse happens to all ages and races
children do not know what is going on	children begin to think it is normal
abuse is only the women's problem	abuse is a problem for all community members

Change must occur with each individual. The individual must want that 'change' in their lives.

We are all responsible for our own actions and behaviours. We can create positive changes in our lives. We do not need to live a life where there is abuse.

## What Is Elder Abuse?

### Elder Abuse:

- any harm done to an Elder
- can be caused by family member, a friend, community worker
- victims often know their abuser
- victims sometimes depend on people who abuse them

People who abuse Elders often have control or a lot of influence over the Elder. It is becoming more and more common in Canada.

### Other Reasons Child Abuse May Happen:

- financial difficulties
- overcrowding
- single parenting
- marital problems
- too many children
- accepted community violence
- difficulty controlling anger
- low self-esteem
- vulnerable children (children with disabilities)
- special needs children
- challenging personalities
- unwanted children

Child abuse can be treated, eased, and prevented. First, people have to understand more about it and commit themselves to making a change. The cycle of abuse can continue from generation to generation if it is not stopped.

## What Is Sexual Abuse?

### Sexual Abuse:

- also known as 'sexual assault'
- any unwanted sexual contact (hugging, kissing, touching, intercourse)
- a violation of a person's personal space when it is not wanted
- any forced or unwanted sexual activities to dominate, manipulate, threaten, injure, or control another person

## Child Abuse Can Be:

Child abuse can happen anywhere. It can happen in large cities, small towns, in Aboriginal homes, in poor homes, in well-to-do homes. Child abuse occurs in all parts of the world. A child who has experienced one type of abuse may also be experiencing other types of abuse.

It is difficult to think that child abuse happens often. It is very harmful to the children, families, and the communities. It is hard to figure out how many children are being abused in communities. This may be because they do not say anything until they are adults, or they never say anything to anybody.

Child abuse is often a reaction to past or present problems or stresses that a family cannot cope with. Most parents are very 'normal' and few are 'criminal' or 'mental'.

## Why Does It Happen?

<b>Immaturity</b> -young parents do not understand needs of children	<b>Unrealistic expectations</b> -expecting children to act like 'little adults'	<b>Unmet emotional needs</b> -expecting children to take care of caregivers; give them love	<b>Frequent crisis</b> - take stress and problems out on child; poor coping skills
<b>Lack of parenting skills</b> -no role models, don't know how a child develops	<b>Isolation</b> -a feeling that there is nobody to help with the children	<b>Past childhood experiences</b> - abuser may have experienced abuse as a child; learned that violence was the way to solve problems	<b>Alcohol/drug/solvent abuse</b> -these problems limit the parent's ability to care for a child; makes it hard to control behaviour

## Elder Abuse Can Be:

Type	Definition	Example
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	any physical act towards an Elder	hitting, slapping, pinching, choking, pushing
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	any unwanted sexual activity	sexual assault, rape
<b>Financial Abuse</b>	controlling money matters	stealing cheques, spending money, fraud, selling property
<b>Neglect</b>	not providing basic needs	abandoning Elder, no food
<b>Mental Abuse</b>	attempt to control person's thinking	instilling fear in Elder, threatening, ignoring, isolating
<b>Spiritual Abuse</b>	controlling a person's beliefs	not allowed to pray, isolating, confined to home, no connections to land

Abuse towards an Elder is likely to happen when the family is going through a difficult time. This may include stress when caring for an Elder.

Traditionally, Elderhood was an honoured stage of life because of all the life experiences and wisdom gained throughout the life. Elders were highly respected members of traditional communities.

“Knowledge always came to the children from the top down; from the creator, to the elders, to the parents, to the children. In this way, children were taught to respect their Elders.”

Morris Lewis

Old age is a difficult and sometimes stressful time, for everybody. It could bring times of unhappiness for the Elder and may damage relationships with family members.

Most victims are mentally competent and are able to make logical decisions for themselves. Most Elders are capable of caring for themselves and do not need constant care. However, if they are mentally or physically dependent on someone, they become more likely to fall victim to an abuser.

## What Is Child Abuse?

### Child Abuse:

- any repeated abuse done to a child that causes injury and harm
- can be harm to a child’s physical, emotional, or mental well-being
- failing to protect a child from harm; neglect; abandoning child
- can happen to both boys and girls from as early as infancy to adolescence

Abuse happens by parents or other caregivers, like extended family members or babysitters. It could involve one parent or both parents. Children can be abused by any member of the community.

Anybody under the age of 18 is considered a child under Canadian Law.

Child abuse can also be exposing a child to woman abuse or violence in the home.

Children are often hurt accidentally when there is family violence. They could be protecting a parent or trying to stop the violence. Sometimes, these accidents have led to the death of a child.

### **Why Does Parent Abuse Happen:**

- media - exposure to violence (video games, music, tv)
- exposure to violence against women
- children generally find it easier to express feelings towards primary caregivers (including anger)
- child's self image - need to be 'tough' or 'in control'
- learned behaviour, see it as normal (child witnessed family violence)
- experienced abuse by the parent/s (common reaction to abuse is abuse)
- unhealthy relationship between parent and child
- divorce or separation of parents
- child may have disorder or condition (research says most children are not mentally ill)
- parents deny or minimize abuse, so it continues (often, parents do not involve police)

Parents are legally responsible for their child until they are no longer 'minors.' The age of majority varies from province to province. In Ontario, the age of majority is 18 years.

Abusive children and youth can be charged for abuse against their parents: physical abuse, threats, thefts, and/or damage to property.

"Think positive in everything you do, for you and your family and if you ever need to talk, talk to one you have trust in."

NAN Member 2006

### **Why Is Elder Abuse Not Reported?**

- fear, afraid of what will happen
- isolation and under complete control of the abuser
- may be feeling ashamed or guilty (may blame themselves)
- feel that there is no help or support
- lack of knowledge (not aware that they are being abused)
- love for family member especially grandchildren
- parents deny or minimize abuse, so it continues (often, parents do not involve police)

### **What Do Victims Need:**

- to regain respect from all community members
- for the abuse to stop
- a safe place
- support from community (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual)
- to be involved in community (social time)
- more information

## What Is Parent Abuse?

### Parent Abuse:

- any type of abuse towards a parent by a child
- intended to gain power and control over the parent
- can happen to any parent at any age
- is more common today than ever before

Parent abuse is becoming more and more prevalent in communities. It does not only happen in Aboriginal communities, it is happening all over the world.

It may be that there is confusion over the roles of parents and children. Both boys and girls are capable of abusing their parents. It is more likely for boys to become physically abusive than girls. Girls are increasingly becoming more and more aggressive.

Parent abuse usually will happen during the 'teenage' years, but can happen at an early age (young child). An early indicator may be 'temper tantrums', when a child is crying, shouting, and fussing until they get their way with their parents.

## Parent Abuse Can Be:

Type	Definition	Example
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	any physical force towards the parent	hitting, punching, slapping, pushing
<b>Mental Abuse</b>	attempt to control thinking	blaming, threats, negative messages
<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	attacking the parent's sense of self	name calling, criticizing, creating fear, running away
<b>Financial Abuse</b>	attempting or controlling money matters	stealing, bribing, damage to home/possessions, demanding things parent cannot afford

Children who abuse their parents may have witnessed abuse or have been victims of abuse themselves. Some children suffer from behavioural problems such as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Bipolar Disorder, to name a few. Children who abuse may also abuse younger siblings or pets.

The abused parent is often the mother, but can sometimes be the father. Most times, victims are mothers, the primary caregivers. Often, abused mothers are single parents. Other abused parents may include elderly parents or parents with disabilities.