



## Recognizing Situations of Abuse

According to the Government of Quebec, abuse/mistreatment is "a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older adult, whether the person deliberately wants to cause harm or not."

There are seven types of abuse:

- **Psychological abuse:** humiliation, blackmail, manipulation, threats, rejection, isolation.
- **Physical abuse:** physical assault, bullying, deprivation of comfort or security.
- **Sexual abuse:** sexual remarks or assaults, deprivation of privacy.
- **Material or financial abuse:** embezzlement of funds, pressure to modify the will.
- **Organizational abuse :** conditions or practices that result in the ill-respect of rights.
- **Violation of rights:** denying the right to choose, imposing medical treatment.
- **Ageism :** prejudice, contempt for age, infantilization.

### As a companion, you can be a valuable advocate and partner

It is not your responsibility to detect abuse, but rather to listen to and take an elder's testimony seriously. The mere fact of talking about it is a first step towards a request for help. You will find advice on the back of the tip sheet for filing a request and taking action if you witness abuse.

Although choosing to do nothing is not an option, you are not expected to intervene but rather to provide comfort and an attentive ear.

### Providing good care

Good care takes into consideration a person's well-being, the respect of dignity, fulfillment, self-esteem, inclusion, and security. It is expressed through thoughtful gestures, attitudes, actions, and practices that respect the values, culture, beliefs, life journeys, uniqueness and rights and freedoms of the elderly.

**Note : Good care alone does not stop abuse.**

We wish you pleasant reading.

Little Brothers

## Providing good care

- Consult the elderly person regarding any decision which may affect them;
- Inform the person of their rights and choices;
- Respect confidentiality;
- Communicate in a respectful manner;
- Adapt services according to their needs;
- Organize the physical space to respect privacy.



## Good practices

- Listen with empathy, encourage the elderly person to come up with their own solutions;
- Ask open-ended questions to encourage the person to share what they are experiencing. For example, ask for details about how they feel.
- Use the reflection technique to identify the person's feelings. For example, by asking whether they are upset by the situation;
- Rephrase their statements to validate your understanding. For example: If I understood correctly, you are telling me that...;
- Inform the senior of the resources and support available to take action;
- Remind the person of the limits of your role as a volunteer.

**If you witness abuse, you must report the situation to your coordinator or the appropriate staff member immediately.**



## Attitudes to adopt



- Keep in mind that each person is unique and deserves respect.
- Try to reduce the reluctance to seek help, explain existing resources, provide documentation, inform, and reassure.
- As a volunteer companion, consult your coordinator before taking action. Share your observations: you are not alone.
- As a caregiver in an emergency situation, you are obliged to talk about it. If you are seriously concerned, contact emergency assistance resources yourself to talk to a counsellor, be informed of the procedure to follow, and find support.



## Things to avoid

- Putting yourself in danger;
- Judging the person or the situation;
- Denying the facts, remaining silent, isolating yourself;
- Taking on the role of a counsellor;
- Staying silent.

## Additional resources

### Phone

Elder Abuse Helpline: 1-888 489-ABUS (2287)  
From 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week. Free, confidential, bilingual and professional service.

Info-Social : 8-1-1 (option 2)

Info-Santé: 8-1-1 non-emergency (option 1)

TELAÎNÉ : 514-353-2463

L'APPUI : 1- 855 852-7784

or <https://www.lappui.org/en/>

### Online

Research Chair on Mistreatment of Older Adults,  
<https://maltraitancedesaines.com/en/>

Government of Quebec, *Find the CLSC in your region*, <https://www.sante.gouv.qc.ca/en/repertoire-ressources/clsc/>