



Report for Fort Good Hope on Creating Safe Communities for Older Adults

The event took place in the band complex in Fort Good Hope on Nov. 25th and 26th, 2020. It was organized by Valerie Erutse, community facilitator for Working Together with Elders project and facilitated by Suzette Montreuil. Eleven elders attended the workshop as did one homecare support worker and the local coordinator for Victim Services. GSO Celine Proctor also attended the workshop. The RCMP was invited to participate and sent two officers came on the second morning. The workshop was translated into Sahtúot'ine Yatí by Lucy Jackson.



Band complex

First Day

The event started with an opening prayer by elder Thomas Manuel. Roundtable introductions were then completed.

Suzette reviewed the agenda for the first day and then offered a short introduction on the *NWT Seniors' Society* and the *NWT Network to Prevent the Abuse of Older Adults*. Resources on both of these were provided to the participants.

The whole group was then divided into three subgroups and invited to draw or write what abuse of older adults in Fort Good Hope looks like. Their responses are presented below.

Response from Group A:

- Harassment
- Cursing
- Scared
- Yelling
- Stressed out
- Nagging
- Verbally abusing
- Drinking and bothering
- Embarrassment
- Using elders for childcare
- Fighting
- Arguing
- Pushing



Whole Group

- Shoving
- Abandonment



- Financial
- Sleeplessness
- Neglect
- Drugs
- Alcohol
- Drunk drivers
- Uninvited visitors – drinking, drugs, hanging out
- Stealing

Response from Group B

- Bother the elders at night
- Denial
- Break into homes
- Fear
- No respect
- Come for money at night
- Noise at night like skidoo and 4-wheeler

Response from Group C

- Elders allow or won't say anything about children abusing them
- Youth using elders' income for drugs, alcohol and cigarettes
- Taking advantage of vehicle, quad and skidoo
- No respect during the night
- Verbal abuse/lying
- They threatened elders to buy stuff or money
- TV, phone, cell, internet being billed to elders
- Children and grandchildren charging on elder's account
- Stealing from parents and grandparents (money, quads, trucks, skidoo, etc)



Our Lady of Good Hope church

Suzette then presented the *It's Not Right Neighbours, Friends and Family* materials. This material covers the role of ageism, warning signs of abuse, types of abuse, obstacles to getting involved, and the three steps that bystanders can take: See it, Name It and Check It. It also discusses two aspects to consider when approaching an elder, namely safety and respect. The main goal is to keep the door open for communication with the elder and decrease their sense of isolation.

After the first part of the *It's Not Right* slide show, the group viewed a scenario on abuse showing a grandson taking money from his grandmother.

The whole group then viewed two types of responses to the grandmother. The first response showed a visitor asking the grandmother to stop giving her grandson money and to call the RCMP if she did not know how to take action. The second response showed a visitor who did not have all the answers but



showed concern for the grandmother. Each group was asked to explore the difference between the two responses. They wrote the following:

Response 1:

What did the visitor do wrong?

- No compassion
- No respect
- No concern
- Demanding
- Facial expression
- Fear in voice sound
- Anger
- The way the friend approached her, just by the tone of her voice



Reporting back

How did the grandmother feel?

- Scared
- Sad
- Alone
- Shocked
- Worried
- Afraid
- Startled
- Fear X3
- Guilt
- Cringe
- Excuse and protection
- She felt hurt and scared
- Puzzled

Response 2:

What did you like about the visit?

- Concern x2
- Worried
- Soft volume
- Eye contact x2
- Willing to talk
- Asking question
- Sympathy
- Understanding
- Her tone was more gentle and caring to her friend
- Offering to listen/talk
- Tone was of concern
- Offering help
- Worried about her friend and let her know
- Communication was open
- Non-judgemental
- Visitor was concerned



How did the grandmother feel?

- Responsible with no choice (for her grandson)
- Opened
- Relieved – she can talk about what she is doing
- Was willing to talk about her grandson
- Felt more relief and comfortable and willing to talk

The responses show the group was able to identify the difference between the two responses and how the second approach would be more helpful to the elder.

Second Day

The second day was again started with an opening prayer by elder Florence Barnaby.

Suzette presented a quick summary of the work from the day before. The points covered included:

- Types of abuse
- Three steps: See It, Name It, Check It
- Risk factors – What makes it more likely to happen
- How to approach an elder and what types of questions to ask
- Safety and respect
- Start from the heart



Mackenzie River

Suzette continued with the presentation of It's Not Right including the connections that can be made between parts of community and places to look for help or more information if needed.

RCMP Visit

Constable Elisa Huneault and Constable Braeden Barut attended the workshop. They explained that the RCMP can help with any illegal action. They can also have a serious talk with an abuser if they are psychologically abusing an elder and if causes harm to the elder. They can be involved in cases of willful neglect like not giving you your medication.

In terms of financial abuse, they advised that elders not give their PIN number to anyone they do not trust. If you do give your PIN number, it is not illegal for the person to use it. If someone steals from you, you can contact the RCMP and they can help. Sometimes the person tricks you and spends money on alcohol or drugs instead. You can report this to the RCMP as it can be a case of fraud.

RCMP involvement does not always have to lead to charges but good to call them if you feel unsafe.



Community Response

The group agreed to the idea that it is better to work together to address elder abuse. In small groups, they answered these related questions.

Who will you invite to your community support group?

- RCMP x2
- Nurse
- Clergy x2
- Mental health worker
- Front line workers
- Chief/leaders x3
- Income support officer
- Service Canada
- Victim services
- Wellness workers
- Justice coordinator
- All resources in and out of community when available
- Councillors
- Social worker
- Health worker
- Government resources
- School
- Interagency group
- Local business – Northern, Co-op
- Government Service Officer

What will your community support group do?

- Listen to the abused for support
- Can talk to the abuser
- Create awareness (repeatedly) X2
- Have a radio program X2
- Build trust
- Build a “to go to” person for elders
- Ask the chief and council for help
- Seek funding
- Share with elders, health, RCMP, Chief and leaders, wellness sector
- Plan what to do
- Elders Group
- Workshop for youth and elders
- Parent and youth should get more involved
- Traditional knowledge like story telling
- Monthly meeting with Interagency Group
- Check in on friends/family from by-law officer
- Request by-law officer to be part of community drive
- Support the elders



Neighbourhood in Fort Good Hope



- RCMP could help through the law
- For medication for elders (health centre)
 - Drive to store with elders
 - Cleaning up elders home
 - Old age – bills, groceries
 - Request food hampers
 - Anything that could help

It was decided that the group would meet once a month and start in mid- December.

Sharing Circle

Participants ended the workshop by gathering in a sharing circle. Participants mostly spoke in their own language but an elder reported that they really enjoyed the workshop.

Suzette explained that the NWT Seniors' Society could be contacted if more support was required.

Results of the Evaluations:

The participants were asked to evaluate themselves on the following statements prior to the workshop and after its completion:

I feel prepared to identify warning signs and risk factors of elder abuse

Prior average: 4 Post average: 4.9

I feel prepared to ask questions and/or engage in a conversation with someone whom I suspect is being abused.

Prior average: 3.8 Post average: 4.9

I feel prepared to provide referrals to someone who is experiencing elder abuse.

Prior average: 3.1 Post average: 4.4

I see the value in having the Neighbours, Friends and Families – It's Not Right information provided to my community.

Prior average: 3.8 Post average: 4.5

The following comments were also provided:

What will you take away with you?

- The whole issue of abuse



- Working together
- More knowledge and support
- Awareness
- Good information
- Liked the video

What had the greatest impact?

- The whole topic of elder abuse
- There is hope
- We are not alone
- Financial abuse
- Good information and lots of help
- The whole group and small group

Other Comments

- Indigenous population
- We work together. There is peace.
- We can work together and create awareness Leaders of the community
- We need more awareness in our community
- I will talk to some of the elders myself and tell them to get help
- Good breaks and way it was organized

Respectfully submitted by:

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