

7. Collaborate to develop an individualized plan of care.

An individualized plan of care incorporates approaches, such as discussing and explaining options, helping older adults to set goals, and identifying which interventions they think would be most useful to them. Collaboration will involve the older adult, family and interprofessional team, as appropriate.

WHY THIS MATTERS An individualized plan of care addresses the uniqueness and complex dynamics of each situation.

PRACTICE AREA: IMPLEMENTATION

8. Respond to alleged or suspected abuse and neglect.

You must respond to abuse and neglect according to relevant laws, policies and procedures that you already identified in the Planning phase. This includes recognizing that reporting is not always mandated or appropriate, and determining what other supports can be offered to the older adult.

WHY THIS MATTERS Nurses and other health-care providers who follow evidence-based practice recommendations will be well-prepared to respond to abuse and neglect, and provide effective interventions, while upholding their legal and professional responsibilities.

9. Implement an individualized plan of care that incorporates multiple strategies.

While there is limited evidence to support specific interventions, overarching interventions that may be effective include education, interventions for those that

abuse, and thoughtful provision of resources and supports to older adults and family members. Also, a safety plan may be needed.

WHY THIS MATTERS The literature supports an approach that includes multiple strategies or interventions to address abuse and neglect.

PRACTICE AREA: EVALUATION

10. Collaborate to evaluate and revise the plan of care.

It is important to collaborate with the older adult, with the family and the interprofessional team, as appropriate, to evaluate and revise the plan of care.

WHY THIS MATTERS Evaluating the plan of care is necessary in order to identify additional learning needs, and compare actual outcomes to anticipated outcomes. Nurses and other health-care providers should know that some instances of abuse and neglect will not resolve easily, in which case a focus on reducing harm and offering ongoing support may be needed.

For a list of references, see the Best Practice Guideline.

Visit [RNAO.ca/elder-abuse](https://rnao.ca/elder-abuse) to get greater insight into these 10 practice recommendations.

You will also find many more tools designed to help you prevent and address abuse and neglect of older adults.



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10 STRATEGIES

Nurses & Other Health-Care Providers Can Use to Address Abuse and Neglect of Older Adults

Nurses and other health-care providers are in a pivotal position to help identify and address cases of abuse and neglect of older adults. Here are 10 evidence-based strategies that can assist you in providing appropriate health care for older adults at risk.*

*These abbreviated practice recommendations from the Best Practice Guideline *Preventing and Addressing Abuse and Neglect of Older Adults* are available in full at [RNAO.ca/elder-abuse](https://rnao.ca/elder-abuse). Nurses and other health-care providers will find an array of additional free tools there including an eLearning course.



ADDRESSING ABUSE OF OLDER ADULTS
AN RNAO INITIATIVE

10 STRATEGIES THAT WILL ASSIST YOUR PRACTICE

Boost your knowledge and preparedness in key practice areas, and gain a greater level of confidence when it comes to reducing the risk of harm to older adults. Read the full Best Practice Guideline at RNAO.ca/elder-abuse.

PRACTICE AREA: ASSESSMENT

1. Establish and maintain a therapeutic relationship.

Therapeutic relationships—including therapeutic communication and person-centred care—are essential when addressing issues of abuse and neglect. Establish a therapeutic relationship that includes caring attitudes and behaviours, such as trust, respect and empathy, with all older adults.

WHY THIS MATTERS Literature suggests that establishing therapeutic relationships helps older adults to disclose and discuss issues of abuse and neglect.

FIND IT IN THE GUIDELINE



Barriers to disclosure of abuse and neglect, page 24.

2. Ensure privacy and confidentiality.

Nurses and other health-care providers should maintain privacy and confidentiality and obtain consent from the older adult or substitute decision maker before sharing information with others. Consult your local legislation and professional practice standards to ascertain when sharing private information is appropriate and/or required.

3. Be alert for risk factors and signs of abuse and neglect.

A holistic assessment may be the most comprehensive way to identify risk factors however, brief assessments are important too. In addition to identifying risk factors and signs, also look for the older person's strengths, capacities and effective coping techniques.

WHY THIS MATTERS All encounters with older adults provide unique and important opportunities for you to identify risk factors, and signs of abuse and neglect, especially when the older adult is isolated and controlled by someone abusing them.

FIND IT IN THE GUIDELINE



Risk factors, and signs of abuse and neglect, page 27-28.

4. Carry out a detailed assessment collaboratively.

When abuse and neglect are suspected, a detailed assessment may include assessment of the older adult's immediate safety, diagnostic testing, use of assessment tools, and referrals and consultations. The assessment you conduct should be in collaboration with the older adult, and as appropriate, with the family and interprofessional team.

WHY THIS MATTERS A detailed, collaborative assessment facilitates treatment and support for the older adult.

5. Identify rights, priorities, needs, and preferences of the older adult.

Understanding the perspective of older adults, clarifying their wishes, supporting their independence, and recognizing their strengths (and more), is required to address abuse and neglect effectively.

WHY THIS MATTERS Evidence shows that interventions are more likely to be successful if they align with cultural norms and are respectful of the older adult's rights and wishes. However, be aware that in some situations organizational policies and laws may override older adult's preferences.

PRACTICE AREA: PLANNING

6. Collect information and resources needed to respond.

The information you collect needs to be compatible with the law, your organization's policies and procedures, and professional practice standards. At this stage, you also need to identify the people to be involved in decision making, such as whether or not family members should be involved and considerations for older adults who lack mental capacity.

WHY THIS MATTERS Nurses and other health-care providers must uphold their legal and professional responsibilities with regard to responding to abuse and neglect.

FIND IT IN THE GUIDELINE



Key points about mental capacity, page 34.
Considerations for family involvement, page 32.