

# Taking Action

## A toolkit for becoming politically involved



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## Toolkit Overview

The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) is well known for pushing political agendas and making strides in favour of enhancing Medicare, improving nursing practice, and advancing the social and environmental determinants of health. RNAO is able to make progress on political issues due to the support of its vast membership. RNAO members bring issues forward, respond to calls for action and move the mission of the organization forward. Throughout this toolkit, a range of RNAO examples on a variety of topics are provided to illustrate key points.

### Purpose

This toolkit was developed to support effective political action by providing practical instruction, examples and templates to guide advocacy efforts. The intent of the toolkit is to build capacity in every nurse (and others-see below) to feel confident speaking out on issues that matter to them.

### Structure

The toolkit starts with a general overview of political action, outlines how RNs, NPs and nursing students can get involved, provides direction on how to frame an issue and develop a strategic plan, gives advice on forming coalitions, presents strategies on working with senior leaders, offers approaches for media strategies (including social media) and describes ways to become active in elections.

### Audience

This toolkit is intended to support RNAO members - registered nurses (RN), nurse practitioners (NP) and nursing students - in their political action endeavors. However, the content and principles presented can be adapted and used by anyone interested in becoming more politically active.

## Elder Abuse as an Example

One topic that can benefit from advocacy efforts is elder abuse. For the past several years RNAO has been engaged in addressing elder abuse in a variety of ways, including the development of a Best Practice Guideline, *Preventing and Addressing Abuse and Neglect of Older Adults: Person-Centred, Collaborative, System-Wide Approaches* (RNAO, 2014).

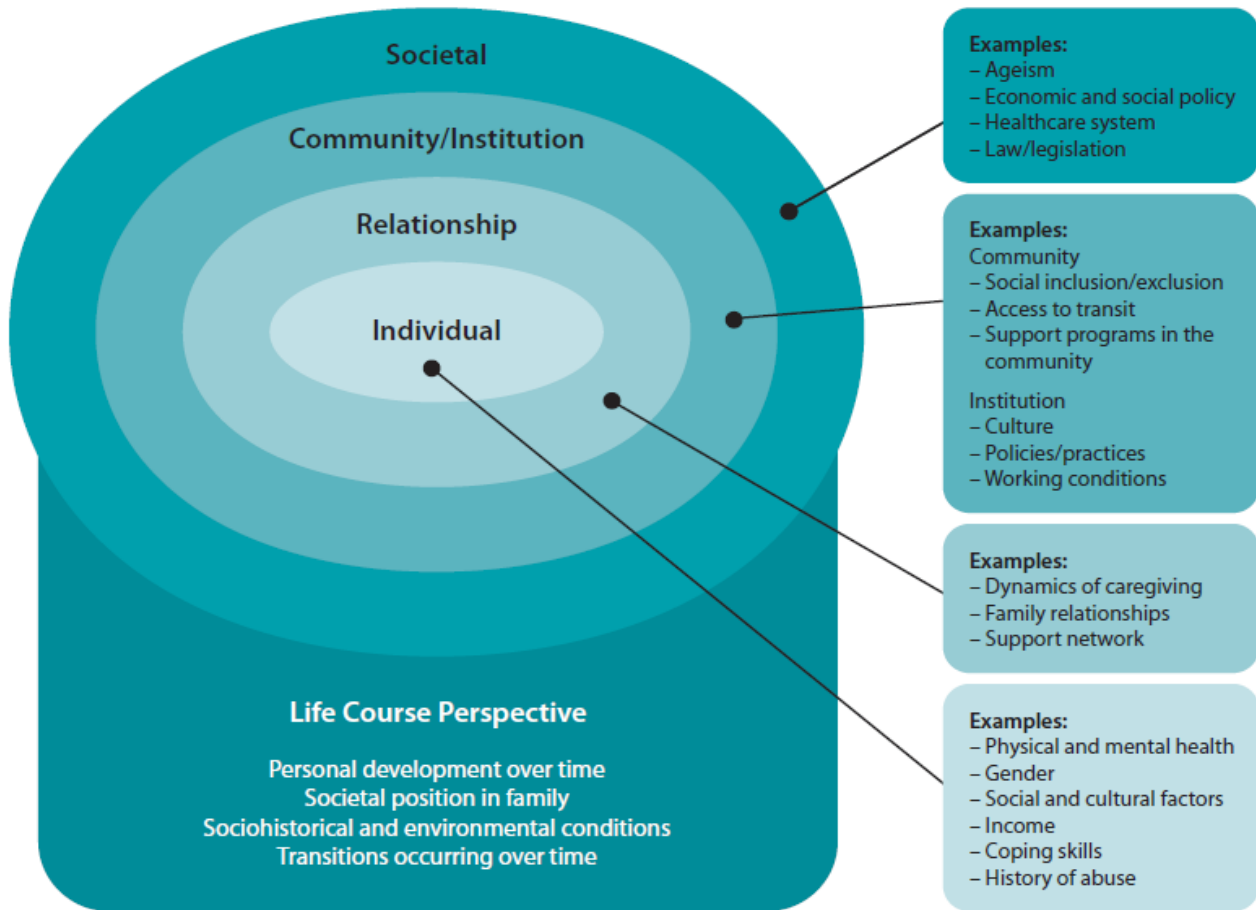
The guideline explains that elder abuse is a complex issue that requires prevention and intervention activities—including advocacy—at individual, organizational and systems levels (see the model developed for the guideline below, you can read more about this on page 20 of the guideline which can be accessed for free at [www.RNAO.ca/bpg](http://www.RNAO.ca/bpg)). One recommendation from the guideline is that nurses and others advocate for the changes and resources needed to effectively prevent and address elder abuse (see Recommendation 6.8 for more details).

To support this guideline recommendation, the Taking Action toolkit includes examples on the topic of elder abuse and highlights some of RNAO's advocacy work completed to date. To access the guideline and other elder abuse resources, and to find out about RNAO's Initiative, Addressing Abuse of Older Adults, visit [www.RNAO.ca/elder-abuse](http://www.RNAO.ca/elder-abuse)

This icon has been used throughout the toolkit to indicate examples related to addressing the abuse and neglect of older adults.



Figure 1: Ecological/Life Course Model



(McDonald & Thomas, 2013; Parra-Cardona, Meyer, Schiamberg, & Post, 2007; Schiamberg et al., 2011; Schiamberg & Gans, 2000; WHO, 2002)

Reference

Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario. (2014). *Preventing and Addressing Abuse and Neglect of Older Adults: Person-Centred, Collaborative, System-Wide Approaches*. Toronto, ON: Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario.