

Creating Safe Communities for Older Adults: A Five Year Strategy for the Northwest Territories 2015-2020

*Strategic priorities and actions to prevent, reduce,
and eradicate abuse of older adults throughout
the NWT*

Prepared by the

NWT Network to Prevent Abuse of Older Adults

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Acknowledgements

The NWT Network to Prevent Abuse of Older Adults (NWT Network) is thankful to the many people supporting our work throughout the Northwest Territories. Your involvement in our workshops, community events, conferences, and research, as well as the support of our sponsoring agency, the NWT Seniors' Society, are invaluable. Thank you for sharing our vision and working toward a territory where all older adults can live safely and without abuse.

We also thank our funders who have significantly contributed to our work, in particular:

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A Message from the NWT Network to Prevent Abuse of Older Adults

The abuse of older adults is an appalling and alarming reality for many individuals and families around the world. The NWT is not exempt; every day older adults throughout the territory are affected by mistreatment and/or neglect. The problem of abuse will likely grow in proportion to the growth of the older adult population.

The NWT Network to Prevent Abuse of Older Adults (NWT Network) was formed in 2011 during a symposium in Yellowknife where over 100 delegates declared their wishes to address this serious issue. Today, the NWT Network has 73 individual and agency members from government, non-government organizations (NGO), First Nations, and community organizations throughout the NWT. Over the past four years, the NWT Network has led training, education and awareness campaigns, research, workshops and advocacy activities to address abuse of older adults. In these activities, we have worked closely with the NWT Seniors' Society and built on their two decades of work to prevent abuse of older adults.

The NWT Network is pleased to present our five year strategy to create safe communities for older adults. Our strategy recognizes that abuse of older adults requires sustained attention by all community members and solid commitment and priority from governments to work in partnership to prevent and respond to the abuse of older adults.

The NWT Network's strategy has four priorities. These priorities build on our successes and recognize the need to continue to be proactive in our public engagement, community responses, education and training, and policy and legislative actions to prevent abuse.

The NWT Network is proud of our efforts to:

- Form community and regional support networks.
- Offer *Creating Safe Communities for Older Adults* workshops throughout the NWT.
- Promote awareness and present "*It's Not Right! Neighbours, Friends and Families for Older Adults*" materials to diverse audiences.
- Work with the RCMP and others to create awareness of financial and other forms of abuse of older adults.
- Develop an inventory of electronic and paper resources to help older adults and others collaborate to prevent abuse.

- Fund intergenerational projects to strengthen relationships between older adults and youth.
- Advocate to governments and other agencies to give priority to keeping older adults safe.
- Investigate legislative and policy options to keep vulnerable and at-risk older adults safe.
- Assess, advocate for, and deliver front-line worker training on abuse of older adults.
- Fund capacity-building pilot projects to address community and regional efforts to intervene in abuse of older adults.

We know that if we continue to build on and learn from our work, more older adults can live safely in their homes and communities. We invite all northerners to work with us to achieve our vision of safe and secure communities for older adults.

Terry Rideout,
Co-Chair, NWT Network



Leon Peterson
President, NWT Seniors' Society



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The NWT Network's Strategy at a Glance

Almost three-quarters of older adults see abuse of themselves or their peers as a problem in NWT communities. The NWT Network envisions older adults living in safe, secure and caring communities where there is zero tolerance of abuse. This vision will be realized by adhering to eight principles; working on four strategic priorities; and completing 20 specific actions.

Vision

The NWT Network envisions *all* older adults living in safe, caring communities where there is zero tolerance of abuse.

Principles

The NWT Network's strategy is guided by eight principles:

1. *Abuse of older adults is recognized as a wide-spread problem.*
2. *All older adults are at risk of abuse.*
3. *Safety and security are basic human rights.*
4. *Safe communities are the foundation for the safety and security of all individuals.*
5. *Partnership and collaboration among older adults, families, caregivers, service providers, government agencies, indigenous and non-government organizations, and others contribute to safe communities.*
6. *Responses to abuse of older adults are appropriate to the individual and his/her culture and circumstances.*
7. *Older adults, their families, and communities are supported to take action to prevent and respond to abuse.*
8. *Governments recognize and give priority to preventing and responding to abuse of older adults.*

Strategic Priority: Public Engagement	Strategic Priority: Community Responses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote the benefits and expectations of involvement in the NWT Network to Prevent Abuse of Older Adults. 2. Ensure the healthy functioning and sustainability of the NWT Network by secure financial support for a full time position to carry on the work. 3. Seek public and government support and partnerships to implement the NWT Network's strategy. 4. Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the NWT Network's strategy. 5. Continue to undertake research and develop public resources on abuse of older adults. 6. Advocate for the official proclamation for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, Senior Citizens' Month, and Intergenerational Day. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Engage GNWT Government Service Officers (GSOs) and other key local advocates and knowledge holders as active champions of preventing abuse of older adults. 8. Support local champions to take culturally and community specific action against abuse of older adults. 9. Build on <i>Creating Safe Communities</i> and other community-based workshops to develop strong, functional community and regional groups and networks to prevent and respond to abuse of older adults. 10. Support community-based interagency committees as a way to connect service providers and share resources and information on abuse of older adults. 11. Create plain language information on community services available for older adults experiencing abuse. 12. Advocate for expanded continuing care facilities and services including long-term, extended, home, and respite care as one set of tools to intervene in abuse of older adults.
Strategic Priority: Education and Training	Strategic Priority: Policy and Legislation
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Continue to work with others throughout Canada on education and training materials to prevent and respond to older adult abuse in the NWT. 14. Develop and promote education and training materials and approaches to creating safe communities for older adults that reflect NWT cultural practices and preferences. 15. Advocate for education and training on abuse of older adults in the NWT for front-line workers and policy makers within the GNWT Departments of Health and Social Services, Justice, and Executive. 16. Advocate for the inclusion of abuse of older adult prevention and awareness information in the Aurora College curriculum for nursing, social work, and personal support worker students. 17. Ensure RCMP officers and other front-line human services staff practicing in the NWT receive "<i>It's Not Right!</i>" <i>Neighbours, Friends and Families of Older Adults</i> awareness training and information on good practices for responding to abuse of older adults. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 18. Implement a centralized data reporting system for all cases of abuse of older adults in the NWT. 19. Update the 2011 <i>Researching the Need for Older Adult Protection Legislation for the Northwest Territories</i> report. 20. Advocate for best policy and/or legislative actions to protect at-risk, vulnerable older adults from abuse.

Completing the above 20 actions over the five year period of this strategy will have many outcomes, including:

- Ensuring the work of the NWT Network continues to engage all northerners in creating safe, secure and caring communities.
- Promoting understanding, skills, and knowledge to address abuse of older adults.
- Building community capacity to respond to abuse of older adults.
- Strengthening policy and/or legislative actions to protect at-risk, vulnerable older adults.
- More older adults living safely and securely in their homes and communities.

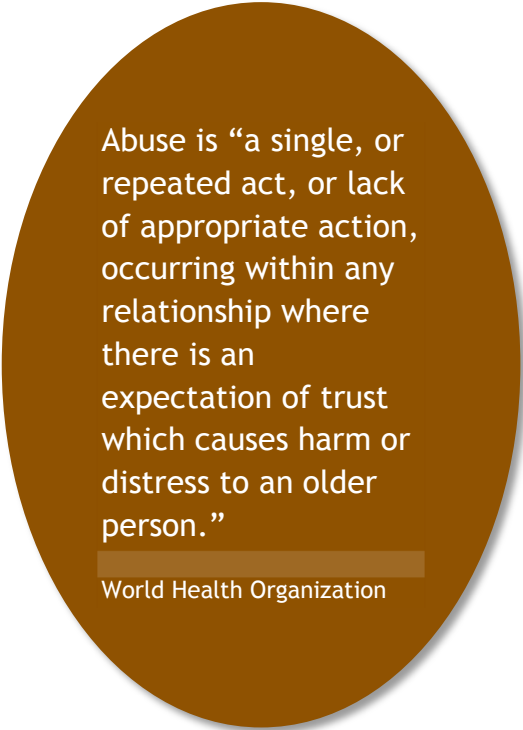
Why an NWT Strategy to Create Safe Communities for Older Adults?

In Canada, older adults are people 60 or more years of age but the NWT Network recognizes individuals 50 or more years of age as older adults. The NWT Bureau of Statistics forecasts a significant growth in the population 60 or more years of age, growing from 4,342 in 2011 to 8,950 in 2031.¹ The problem of abuse will likely grow in proportion to the older adult population.

What is Abuse of Older Adults?

Abuse of an older adult stems from the misuse of personal or professional power to cause harm to an individual who is weaker or in a vulnerable position. It can happen to any older adult. Abuse can take place in the home, a care facility, or in the community. Most often perpetrators of abuse are individuals in a position of trust or who the older adult depends on. Abuse of older adults can take many forms, including:

- *Emotional abuse*: actions or statements that cause emotional anguish, fear, intimidation, humiliation, or diminished self-esteem or dignity.
- *Financial abuse*: the misuse of an older adult's funds or property through fraud, scams, misuse of a power of attorney trickery, theft, or force.
- *Medication abuse*: the intentional or unintentional misuse of medications and prescriptions, such as withholding or providing doses that cause bodily harm, sedation or other adverse effect(s).
- *Physical abuse*: actions that cause physical discomfort, pain, or injury.
- *Sexual abuse*: unwanted sexual behaviors including sexual comments, exploitive use of pornography, fondling, or sexual assault.
- *Neglect*: intentional or unintentional failure to provide an older adult with a basic level of care.



Abuse 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 person.”

World Health Organization

¹ NWT Bureau of Statistics *Population Projections, by Age, Sex and Ethnicity, 2011 to 2031*
<http://www.statsnwt.ca/population/community-projections/>

- *Abusive control*: restricting cultural or spiritual practices, censoring mail, or denying access to visitors.

Abuse of older adults undermines independence, dignity, health, and security. It is wrong; a violation of the basic human right to safety; and in many instances, it is a criminal offense.

Abuse of older adults is a multifaceted issue. In the NWT, it is exacerbated by housing shortages, overcrowding, poverty, isolation, substance abuse, loss of traditional lifestyle, and the legacy of residential schools and other expressions of colonialism.

Is Abuse of Older Adults Really a Problem in the NWT?

“They come around and ask for cigarettes, money, money, money, money, cigarettes, cigarettes, cigarettes nonstop just over and over again and if they don’t get it, she doesn’t have it, they get mad about it.”

(NWT elder speaking through an interpreter during a focus group for the 2014 *Influence on Quality of Life of the Older Adult in the Northwest Territories* study)

Yes, it is! The problem of abuse of older adults is not unique to the NWT. It is a problem throughout the country. Many jurisdictions are developing strategies and policies to respond to it.

Canada

In 2007, an estimated 4% to 10% of older adults in Canada were thought to experience some type of abuse.² Between 2004 and 2009, the rate of family violence against seniors in Canada increased by 14%.³

In 2011, the rate of senior victims of police reported family violence in Canada was 61 per 100,000 persons, but 1,543 per 100,000 in the NWT, 25 times the national rate in that year.⁴ Even with these high numbers, it is estimated that 7 out of 10 crimes against older adults in Canada are never reported to the police.⁵

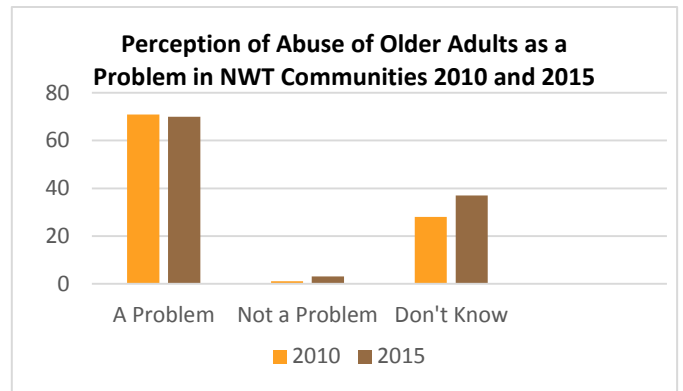
² *Elder Abuse in Canada: Preliminary Overview of the Issues*. National Seniors Council. (unpublished) 2007.

³ *Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile*. Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. 2011.

⁴ Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 seniors (65 to 89 years). Populations based on July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. **Note:** Senior victims refer to those aged 65 to 89 years. Family violence refers to violence committed by spouses (legally married, separated, divorced and common-law partners), children, siblings, and extended family. Data exclude incidents where the victim's sex and/or age was unknown. Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 seniors (65 to 89 years). Victims aged 90 years and older are excluded from analyses due to instances of miscoding of unknown age within this age category. *Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey*. Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. 2011.

⁵ *Briefing on Elder Abuse*, CARP. 2012.

A recent study based on 2013 data found that “senior victims of family violence were most likely to be victimized by their own adult children. About 4 in 10 senior victims of police-reported family violence indicated that the accused was their grown child; spouses (28%) were the second most likely family members to be identified as perpetrators of family violence against seniors.”⁶



NWT

The Seniors’ Information Line, administered by the NWT Seniors’ Society, receives an average of two calls per month related to abuse of older adults. The calls have increased in the last three years and the incidents have become more complex and severe. Qualitative data from the study *Influences on Quality of Life of the Older Adult in the Northwest Territories* found that abuse is a significant life struggle affecting quality of life.⁷

In the 2010 and 2015 NWT studies into abuse of older adults, the lack of reliable, comprehensive data on abuse of older adults was identified as a barrier to understanding the nature of the problem.⁸ A majority of older adults surveyed in the NWT in 2010 and 2015 believe that abuse of older adults is a problem in their community. But about one-quarter don’t know if abuse of this population is a problem.

21% of NWT older adults surveyed in 2015 said they did not know they had the right to live without abuse and 51% did not know how to protect themselves from abuse.

All forms of abuse exist in the NWT but financial abuse and neglect are the most common.

⁶ *Family violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile* Statistics Canada. Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. 2015. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2014001/article/14114-eng.pdf>

⁷ *Influences on Quality of Life of the Older Adult in the Northwest Territories*, prepared by Dr. Pertice Moffitt and Braine Timpson, Aurora Research Institute (2015)

⁸ *Networking to Prevent Older Adult Abuse: A Comparative Research Study*. Lutra Associates Ltd. for the NWT Network to Prevent Abuse of Older Adults and NWT Seniors’ Society. 2015.

Most Common Forms of Older Adult Abuse by Percentage of Older Adults Surveyed in NWT in 2015⁹

- 67% Stealing money, taking pension cheques or other financial abuse
 - 53% Loneliness, lack of care, over/under use of medication and other neglect
 - 47% Disrespect, threats, blaming, 'put downs' or other emotional abuse
 - 45% Yelling, name calling, swearing, or other verbal abuse
 - 33% Hitting, kicking, beating, slapping or other physical abuse
 - 11% Forced sex, rape, or other sexual abuse
 - 21% Don't know
-

Between 2010 and 2015, awareness of abuse related issues and willingness to take action on abuse increased among older adults in the NWT. Still, there continues to be a high level of uncertainty and silence about abuse which affects efforts to prevent and respond to it.

NWT Older Adults Surveyed Said About Elders/Seniors in their Community ...

In 2010

- 40% aware of right to live without abuse.
- 47% don't know how to protect themselves from abuse.
- 36% don't know where to go for help.
- 52% don't speak out about abuse.
- 41% unsure that abuse is a crime.
- 38% want to work with others to stop abuse.

In 2015

- 45% aware of right to live without abuse.
- 51% don't know how to protect themselves from abuse.
- 47% don't know where to go for help.
- 35% don't speak out about abuse.
- 24% unsure that abuse is a crime.
- 62% want to work with others to stop abuse.

⁹Networking to Prevent Older Adult Abuse: A Comparative Research Study.

Efforts to Prevent Abuse of Older Adults

Throughout the NWT, family members and front-line workers are responding as best they can to cases of abuse of older adults. Families struggle to provide support and protection while honouring the independence and rights of older adults.

Similarly, front-line workers try to respond even though they tend to lack legislative authority or policy guidance to do so. Often responses are informal or ad hoc. In many cases, the success of efforts to deal with abuse of older adults is dependent on family or agency capacity at any given point in time.

Naming and speaking out about abuse of older adults are clearly the first steps to preventing it. These two steps together with the advice provided by older adults and front-line workers involved in the NWT Network's work¹⁰ inform the four priorities in this strategy to create safe, caring communities for older adults.



Strategic Priorities for Creating Safe Communities for Older Adults in the NWT

Public Engagement

Key elements of public engagement on abuse of older adults are: research, information sharing, creating awareness, and bringing older adults and other community members together to work together to fight it. The NWT Network through the NWT Seniors' Society, has led a variety of initiatives to engage older adults, helping agencies, and the general public on the issue of abuse. For example,

- The NWT Network connects and shares information among over 70 individual and agency members from government, non-government, First Nations, and community organizations across the territory. The NWT Network is an appropriate mechanism to bring northerners together to address abuse of older adults.¹¹
- Research conducted in 2010 and 2015 on abuse of older adults and quality of life of older adults has helped to inform NWT Network, NWT Seniors' Society, and community gatherings and workshops as well as information

¹⁰ *Networking to Prevent Older Adult Abuse: A Comparative Research Study.*

¹¹ *ibid.*

campaigns and action plans. The recent *Walking Together* conference is an example.¹²

- Collaboration among members of the NWT Network to develop and promote awareness, for instance through *The Together We Can Stop Elder Abuse* campaign,¹³ World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, Senior Citizens' Month, and Intergenerational Day.¹⁴
- Funding community-based intergenerational projects to bring older adults and youth together to build supportive relationships.
- Promoting the Seniors' Information Line that enables callers to inquire about issues of concern and receive relevant information and advice, including about abuse of older adults.

The NWT Network is aware that public engagement activities must be sustained and highly visible to make a difference.


"We are not starting from scratch, we are building on the work completed to date...We are not trying to push a big rock, it has already started moving."

(Leading the Way – The Work Continues: Planning for a Territorial Network to Prevent Older Adult Abuse Conference Facilitator 2011)

Community Responses

The most successful responses to abuse of older adults reflect local traditions, circumstances, and experiences. The NWT Network respects family and community diversity and their responses to abuse of older adults and continues to build their capacity to respond. Some of our successes are:

- Encouraging and supporting local peer, community, and elders and seniors groups and networks, which today are present in many NWT communities.
- Providing information and resource materials for local activities and events such as for *World Elder Abuse Awareness Day*.
- Leading *Creating Safe Communities for Older Adults* workshops.¹⁵



In the last three years, workshops on abuse of older adults have been held in 20 NWT communities.

¹² <http://www.nwtnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Walking-Together-Final-Report.pdf>

¹³ <http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/social-services/family-violence-resources/types-abuse/abuse-older-adults/together-we-can-stop-elder-abuse-campaign>

¹⁴ http://www.nwtSeniorssociety.ca/?page_id=151

¹⁵ http://www.nwtnetwork.com/?page_id=119

- Funding pilot projects such as a community and regional older adult advocate position and a network coordinator to respond to particular local needs and circumstances.
- Producing guides to finding community services that respond to abuse of older adults.
- Advocating to decision makers for equal access to quality continuing, respite, and home care services and facilities for all older adults in need of them.
- Collaborating with front-line workers and their parent agencies to share information, advocate, intervene, and support individual, family, and community efforts to create safe communities and prevent abuse of older adults.

The NWT Network is aware that cultural, family, and community specific responses to abuse of older adults need to be acknowledged and supported.

Education and Training

The NWT Network, its members with various GNWT departments such as Health and Social Services, Justice, and the Executive, and its sponsoring agency, the NWT Seniors' Society, have given priority to front-line worker education and training on abuse of older adults. Education and training activities are informed by research such as *Service Provider and Front-Line Worker Training for Responding to and Preventing Older Adult Abuse in the Northwest Territories (2013)*¹⁶ and the 2015 *Networking to Prevent Older Adult Abuse: A Comparative Research Study*.

The NWT Network has advocated for, and delivered education and training. It has become the 'go to' resource for education and training on abuse of older adults. Some of our successful education and training initiatives are:

- Ongoing development of an online repository of resources about abuse of older adults.
- Presentations of "*It's Not Right!*" *Neighbours, Friends and Families for Older Adults*¹⁷ to diverse audiences in every region of the NWT.
- YOU Power facilitator training so more people have the skills to educate others about abuse of older adults and appropriate responses.
- Co-sponsorship of a territory-wide response-based practice training conference.

¹⁶ Completed by Lutra Associates Ltd. for the NWT Seniors' Society

¹⁷ Produced by the Centre for Research and Violence Against Women and Children <http://itsnotright.ca/>

- Collaboration with national and territorial organizations to advocate for greater personal, professional, and public education and skills to address abuse of older adults.

The NWT Network is aware that education and training about abuse of older adults must be ongoing on several fronts - personal, professional and public – and research and material development must be regularly updated and revamped.

Policy and Legislation

In both the 2010 and 2015 NWT studies into abuse of older adults, the lack of reliable, comprehensive data was identified as a barrier to understanding the problem and developing appropriate policy and legislative responses. The NWT Network has advocated to address these gaps by:

- Preparing *Researching the Need for Older Adult Protection Legislation for the Northwest Territories* (2011) and presenting it to the GNWT.¹⁸
- Developing and testing data collection tools on the incidence of abuse of older adults.
- Working through the Coalition Against Family Violence and with the RCMP to collect data on abuse of older adults.¹⁹
- Sharing information on existing legislative tools including *NWT Public Trustee and Powers of Attorney Acts*, *The Protection Against Family Violence Act*, and the Criminal Code of Canada.
- Conducting comparative research for example in 2010 and 2015 to assess changes in policy, legislation, and data collection.
- Continuing to advocate for political and public priority to naming, quantifying, and assuring response to abuse of older adults.

In spite of its efforts, the NWT Network has found that little has changed between 2010 and 2015. Abuse of older adults is not recognized in data, policy or law as the wide-spread, pervasive problem that it is.

¹⁸ <http://www.nwtnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Research-Findings-for-Older-Adult-Protection-Legislation-for-the-Northwest-Territories.pdf>

¹⁹ The RCMP's G Division has a divisional code for elder/older adult abuse but data run for the 2015 *Networking to Prevent Older Adult Abuse: Comparative Research Study* found that the code is not used consistently so data are unreliable.



NWT Network members and supporters identifying actions they will take to prevent abuse of older adults at the *Walking Together Conference* in February 2015.

NWT Network to Prevent Abuse of Older Adults - Five Year Strategy to Create Safe Communities for Older Adults

Vision

The NWT Network envisions *all* older adults living in safe, caring communities where there is zero tolerance of abuse.

Principles

The NWT Network's strategy is guided by eight principles:

- 1. Abuse of older adults is recognized as a wide-spread problem.*
- 2. All older adults are at risk of abuse.*
- 3. Safety and security are basic human rights.*
- 4. Safe communities are the foundation for the safety and security of all individuals.*
- 5. Partnership and collaboration among older adults, families, caregivers, service providers, government agencies, indigenous and non-government organizations, and others contribute to safe communities.*
- 6. Responses to abuse of older adults are appropriate to the individual and his/her culture and circumstances.*
- 7. Older adults, their families, and communities are supported to take action to prevent and respond to abuse.*
- 8. Governments recognize and give priority to preventing and responding to abuse of older adults.*

Strategic Priorities and Actions

The NWT Network's strategy has four priorities and 20 specific actions to create safe, caring communities for all older adults.

1. Public Engagement

Over a four year period, the NWT Network has evolved as an important mechanism to engage northerners on the issue of abuse of older adults. But the NWT Network needs to be stronger and more proactive to improve its

effectiveness in preventing abuse of older adults.²⁰ Four actions are designed to achieve these ends:

- 1. Promote the benefits and expectations of involvement in the NWT Network.**
- 2. Ensure the healthy functioning and sustainability of the NWT Network.**
- 3. Seek public and government support and partnerships to implement the NWT Network's strategy.**
- 4. Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the NWT Network's strategy.**

The paucity of current information on abuse of older adults in the NWT contributes to denial and lack of priority to addressing this issue. The NWT Network and the NWT Seniors' Society's research and dissemination of current and relevant information materials on abuse of older adults have been instrumental in bringing attention to the issue. As such, under this strategy the NWT Network will:

- 5. Continue to undertake research and develop public resources on abuse of older adults.**

The NWT Network and the NWT Seniors' Society recognize and support public engagement in World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, Senior Citizens' Month, and Intergenerational Day as these are ways to draw attention to the need for safety and security of older adults and create environments that honour and respect older adults. Greater recognition and support by governments at all levels are needed to recognize and support these important benchmarks. The NWT Network will:

- 6. Advocate for the ongoing recognition and official proclamation for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, Senior Citizens' Month, and Intergenerational Day.**

²⁰ *Networking to Prevent Older Adult Abuse: A Comparative Research Study.*

Community Responses

Individuals, families, and communities who take ownership of abuse of older adults, can prevent it and respond more appropriately. Building local capacity within a safe, caring environment empowers northerners to address abuse of older adults. Six actions are designed to improve local capacity to prevent and respond to abuse of older adults:

- 7. Engage GNWT Government Service Officers (GSOs) and other key local advocates and knowledge holders as active champions of preventing abuse of older adults.**
- 8. Support local champions to take culturally and community specific action against abuse of older adults.**
- 9. Build on *Creating Safe Communities* and other community-based workshops to develop strong, functional community and regional groups and networks to prevent and respond to abuse of older adults.**
- 10. Support community-based interagency committees as a way to connect service providers and share resources and information on abuse of older adults.**
- 11. Create plain language information on community services available for older adults experiencing abuse.**
- 12. Advocate for expanded continuing care programs, facilities and services including ageing in place supports, palliative care at home, long-term, extended, respite care, and home care as examples of tools available to intervene in abuse of older adults.**

Education and Training

Organizations²¹ across the country continue to develop and promote materials and approaches to educate and train older adults, professionals, and the general public to prevent and respond to abuse of older adults. Members of the NWT Network

²¹ Some organizations the NWT Network works with are: the Canadian Network for the Prevention of *Elder Abuse* www.cnpea.ca/; Canadian Centre for Elder Law (CCEL) <http://www.bcli.org/ccel> ; Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children (CREVAWC) <http://www.learningtoendabuse.ca/>; and Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario <http://www.elderabuseontario.com/community-partners/registered-nurses-association-of-ontario/>

continue to work closely with these organizations to learn from, adopt, and adapt these materials and approaches for the NWT. Collaborating with experts across the country for the benefit of northerners is inherent in the NWT Network's five actions to promote understanding, skills, and knowledge to address abuse of older adults.

- 13. Continue to work with others throughout Canada on education and training materials to prevent and respond to older adult abuse in the NWT.**
- 14. Develop and promote education and training materials and approaches to creating safe communities for older adults that reflect NWT cultural practices and preferences.**
- 15. Advocate for education and training on abuse of older adults in the NWT for front-line workers and policy makers within the GNWT Departments of Health and Social Services, Justice, and Executive.**
- 16. Advocate for the inclusion of abuse of older adult prevention and awareness information in the Aurora College curriculum for nursing, social work, and personal support worker students.**
- 17. Ensure RCMP officers and other front-line human services staff practicing in the NWT receive "*It's Not Right!*" *Neighbours, Friends and Families of Older Adults* awareness training and information on good practices for responding to the abuse of older adults.**

Policy and Legislation

In the NWT, the GNWT considers abuse of older adults within the context of family violence. This practice differs from other Canadian jurisdictions. Since the first NWT Family Violence Action Plan in 2004, abuse of older adults has had limited focus by government departments in efforts to combat family violence. While the NWT Network and the NWT Seniors' Society have intensified efforts in the last half decade to bring attention to the pervasive and wide-spread problem of abuse of older adults, systematic and consistent collection of data or policy or legislation specific to abuse of older adults remain significant gaps. Three actions seek to address these gaps:

18. Implement a centralized data reporting system for all cases of abuse of older adults in the NWT.
19. Update the 2011 *Researching the Need for Older Adult Protection Legislation for the Northwest Territories* report.
20. Advocate for best policy and/or legislative actions to protect at-risk, vulnerable older adults from abuse.

Drawn by a Grade 7 Student, Fort Providence, NT



Action Plan to Create Safe Communities for Older Adults 2015-2020

The following plan details outputs/outcomes, lead responsibility, timing and requirements associated with the NWT Network's priorities and 20 action items.

Action	Expected Outputs/Outcomes	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe	Requirements
Public Engagement				
1. Promote the benefits and expectations of involvement in the NWT Network to Prevent Abuse of Older Adults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Clear statement of benefits and expectations of membership in the NWT Network -A more proactive NWT Network -More active NWT Network members -Engagement of all NWT regions in the NWT Network -Involvement of community champions in the NWT Network -Clear roles and responsibilities of NWT Network members -Active public and indigenous government participation in the NWT Network 	NWT Network	2015 - ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Shared responsibility for articulating and promoting the benefits and expectations of NWT Network membership. -Time commitment of all members to educating others and inviting and supporting active participation in the NWT Network. -Update website to include clear statement of benefits and expectations of membership.

Action	Expected Outputs/Outcomes	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe	Requirements
	-Broad public understanding and support for the NWT Network			
2. Ensure the healthy functioning and sustainability of the NWT Network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Plan for resourcing the NWT Network with secure funding for a full time person-year (PY) -Secure long-term funding for the NWT Network -Strong NWT Network sponsorship -Committed NWT Network leadership -Strong NGO-community-government collaboration and partnerships -NWT Network bolstered and strengthened to carry on the work for the next five years -Higher NWT Network profile 	NWT Network with the GNWT Health and Social Services and other partners	2016 -2018	-Time commitment to develop funding plan and proposals; and negotiate sponsorship, leadership, and partnership arrangements.
3. Seek public and government support and partnerships to	-NGO-community-government commitment to implement the NWT Network's strategy	NWT Network	2015 - ongoing	-Public education materials and time commitment to building partnership and other collaborative arrangements to implement the NWT

Action	Expected Outputs/Outcomes	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe	Requirements
implement the NWT Network's strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Strong NGO-community-government collaboration and partnerships -Greater public understanding and support for addressing abuse of older adults -Commitment to creating safe and secure communities for older adults 			Network's strategy.
4. Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the NWT Network's strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Monitoring framework -Strategy evaluation with recommendations for follow-up 	NWT Network	2015 – ongoing with evaluation completed by March 31, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Time commitment to developing monitoring framework. -Resources to complete evaluation
5. Continue to undertake research and develop public resources on abuse of older adults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ongoing updating of information on abuse of older adults in the NWT -NWT specific information and analysis of cases of abuse of older adults in the NWT -Online repository of data on abuse of older adults in 	NWT Network and partners	2016-ongoing	-Commitment to regular research, analysis and posting of national/ territorial research on abuse of older adults.

Action	Expected Outputs/Outcomes	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe	Requirements
	the NWT			
6. Advocate for the official proclamation for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, Senior Citizens' Month, and Intergenerational Day.	-GNWT and indigenous ²² government recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day -GNWT and indigenous government recognition of Senior Citizens' Month -GNWT and indigenous government recognition of Intergenerational Day -More public awareness of issues facing older adults	NWT Network and partners	2017-18	-Time commitment to preparing rationale, petitions, formal requests, and lobby efforts.
Community Responses				
7. Engage GNWT Government Service Officers (GSOs) and other key local advocates and knowledge holders as active	-All GSOs championing safe communities and prevention of abuse of older adults -Champions of safe communities and prevention of abuse of older adults in every NWT	NWT Network and GNWT Department of the Executive and other partners	2015/16 GSOs 2016-20 engaging other champions	-Time commitment to advocating for inclusion of abuse of older adult prevention in GSO job description, and identifying and engaging other local champions. -Supporting older adults by eliminating isolation and preventing abuse.

²² Indigenous governments in the NWT are the: Akaitcho Territory Government; Dehcho First Nations; Tlicho Government; Deline government; Sahtu Secretariat Inc.; Gwich'in Tribal Council; and Inuvialuit Regional Corporation.

Action	Expected Outputs/Outcomes	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe	Requirements
champions of preventing and supporting older adults who are abused or neglected.	community -Champions and seniors and elders committees and groups actively engaged in the NWT Network			
8. Support local champions to take culturally and community specific action to address abuse of older adults.	-More cultural and community specific responses to abuse of older adults -More active outreach to older adults -More older adults engaged in preventing abuse -More community ownership/ responsibility for preventing abuse of older adults -More diverse and appropriate responses to abuse of older adults -More actions to address the root causes of abuse - More supportive programs and services for the perpetrators of abuse of older adults	NWT Network and indigenous governments	2016-ongoing	-Consultations and research to identify and promote cultural and community-specific resources.

Action	Expected Outputs/Outcomes	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe	Requirements
9. Build on <i>Creating Safe Communities</i> and other community-based workshops to develop strong, functional community and regional groups and networks to prevent and respond to abuse of older adults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More NWT communities hosting <i>Creating Safe Communities</i> workshops and related workshops -More NWT communities forming groups and networks to address abuse of older adults -Active support for community-based groups and networks addressing abuse of older adults -More older adults and families working together to prevent abuse 	NWT Network and partners	2015 - ongoing	-Resources to facilitate and follow-up on <i>Creating Safe Communities</i> workshops and encourage related and complementary community workshops.
10. Support community-based interagency committees as a way to connect service providers and share resources and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Part-time support personnel for community-based interagency committees - Functional interagency committees in more NWT communities -More interagency committees working on creating safe communities 	NWT Network and partners	2016 - ongoing	-Multi-agency meetings to negotiate supports and investment in community-based interagency committees.

Action	Expected Outputs/Outcomes	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe	Requirements
on abuse of older adults.	for older adults -Great capacity among front-line workers to respond to abuse of older adults -More front-line workers involved in the NWT Network			
11. Create plain language information on community services available for older adults experiencing abuse.	-Names and contact information of first and follow-up responders to abuse of older adults in each community -More older adults aware of where to get help in cases of abuse	NWT Network with GSOs and other community champions	2015- ongoing	-Coordination to develop and maintain current information.
12. Advocate for expanded continuing care facilities and services	- More older adults able to access required care and live safely in their communities and regions -More communities with	NWT Network and GNWT Health and Social Services	2015-ongoing	-Regular meetings to monitor and advise on priorities set out in the GNWT <i>Our Elders, Our Communities</i> (2014) ²³ and other GNWT Health and Social Services care initiatives.

²³ <http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/default/files/our-elders-our-communities.pdf>

Action	Expected Outputs/Outcomes	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe	Requirements
including long-term, extended, home, and respite care as one set of tools to intervene in abuse of older adults.	appropriate care to keep older adults safe -More older adults able to live safely at home with supports			
Education and Training				
13. Continue to work with others throughout Canada on education and training materials to prevent and respond to older adult abuse in the NWT.	- Cost effective education and training materials -Strong national-territorial relationships around abuse of older adults -More train-the -trainer opportunities for northerners	NWT Network	2015 - ongoing	Active participation with the Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, Centre for Research & Education Against Women & Children, and other national agencies.
14. Develop and promote education and training materials and	-Cultural and community appropriate materials and approaches -More older adults and community members	NWT Network with community champions	2015-ongoing	Active engagement and support for community champions to adapt or adopt national and territorial education and training materials on abuse of older adults for local needs

Action	Expected Outputs/Outcomes	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe	Requirements
approaches to creating safe communities for older adults that reflect NWT cultural practices and preferences.	<p>learning about and responding to abuse of older adults</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -More older adults speaking out about and seeking solutions to abuse -Validation of community-specific solutions to abuse of older adults -More support for community-specific solutions to abuse of older adults 			and circumstances.
15. Advocate for education and training on abuse of older adults in the NWT for front-line workers and policy makers within the GNWT Departments of Health and Social Services, Justice, and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Greater understanding and capacity to respond to abuse of older adults among GNWT front-line workers and policy makers -More support for community-specific solutions to abuse of older adults -Stronger GNWT policy and program support for preventing and responding to abuse of older adults 	NWT Network with GNWT Departments of Health and Social Services, Justice, and Executive	2016-ongoing	Active, ongoing lobbying and meetings to identify targets, share information, and participate in education and training activities.

Action	Expected Outputs/Outcomes	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe	Requirements
Executive.				
16. Advocate for the inclusion of abuse of older adult prevention and awareness information in the Aurora College curriculum for nursing, social work, and personal support worker students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Greater understanding and capacity to respond to abuse of older adults among Aurora College social programs graduates -More skills to support community-specific solutions to abuse of older adults -More older adults confident in responses to prevent and respond to abuse -More older adults speaking out about and seeking solutions to abuse 	NWT Network and Aurora College	2016-ongoing	Active, ongoing lobbying and meetings to amend existing or develop new curriculum modules to include abuse on older adults in the NWT.
17. Ensure RCMP officers and other front-line human services staff practicing in the NWT receive "It's Not Right!" Neighbours,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -More awareness and willingness to prevent and respond to abuse of older adults -More older adults confident in responses to prevent and respond to abuse -More older adults speaking 	NWT Network	2016-ongoing	Meetings to commit public agencies to require staff to attend "It's Not Right!" sessions. Annual schedule and dedicated personnel to deliver "It's Not Right!" information on a regular basis.

Action	Expected Outputs/Outcomes	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe	Requirements
<i>Friends and Families of Older Adults</i> awareness training and information on good practices for responding to abuse of older adults.	out about and seeking solutions to abuse			
Policy and Legislation				
18. Implement a centralized data reporting system for all cases of abuse of older adults in the NWT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Functioning centralized system to consistently collect data on abuse of older adults -Commitment to consistently collect data on abuse of older adults -Improved understanding of the extent of abuse of older adults -Quantitative evidence to give priority to preventing and responding to abuse of older abuse 	NWT Network and all government partners	2017-ongoing	Advocacy and design and policy meetings to agree on elements of a data system based on good collection and reporting practices.
19. Update the	-Research on policies and	NWT Network	2015-2017	Personnel to undertake research to

Action	Expected Outputs/Outcomes	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe	Requirements
2011 <i>Researching the Need for Older Adult Protection Legislation for the Northwest Territories</i> report.	legislation on abuse of older adults -Evidence to make decisions about policy and legislation on abuse of older adults			update the 2011 report followed by presentations and meetings with partners.
20. Advocate for best policy and/or legislative actions to protect at-risk, vulnerable older adults from abuse.	-Clear guidance for front-line responses to abuse of older adults -More front-line workers confident in their authority to respond to abuse of older adults -More older adults confident in responses to prevent and respond to abuse of older adults	NWT Network	2015-2017	Advocacy and meetings to develop policy and/or legislative solutions to secure the safety of at-risk, vulnerable older adults.