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**Our Vision**

Positive Aging for All in an Age Friendly Community

Promoting Dignity, Health, Independence through Programs, Services, Education and Awareness

**Positive Aging for All**  
 Promoting the dignity, health and independence of older adults in Saskatoon and area through programs, services, education and awareness.

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**WHO WE ARE**

- The Saskatoon Council on Aging’s vision is positive aging for all. SCOA works to promote a better quality of life for older adults, and provides leadership in creating an age friendly Saskatoon.
- SCOA’s initiatives include:
- A Positive Aging [Resource Centre](#) designed to support and enable older adults to access relevant information, programs and services
- A Caregiver Information Service that provides education and support to caregivers.
- Research and policy development on important issues that affect older adults.

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# Bullying isn't just between kids

Building Respectful Communities



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## Acknowledgements:

- Cheryl Loadman of the Saskatoon Council on Aging
- Building Respectful Communities of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority



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## Objectives

- Provide background information on the project
- Discuss possible interventions
- Encourage research specific to lateral violence between older adults



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## What is Bullying?

- Many definitions
- Intentional aggressive behaviour involving an imbalance of power or strength.
- Frequent and systematic cruelty deliberately aimed at a person by a person or persons with the intent of gaining power over another by regularly inflicting psychological and/or physical pain.
- When bullying takes the form of two or more individuals targeting a victim, it is sometimes referred to as "mobbing".



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## Bullying

- This may be:
  - Verbal
  - Physical
  - Antisocial behavior
- Let us ask ourselves how this differs from criminal behaviors?



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## Prevalence of Aggression

- It is estimated that 10 to 20% of older adults in senior settings experience some type of abuse from fellow residents or community members.
- The true prevalence is not possible to quantify and yet is a very common topic of conversation amongst staff and residents.



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## Participants

- Older Adults who Bully
- Older Adults Experiencing Abuse
- The “Bystander”
- The “Upstander”



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## Older Adults Who Bully

- Why does one person “bully” another?
  - Always a bully. As a young person found that these tactics worked and always used them.
  - New person in a new environment. Feelings of powerlessness lead to aggressive behavior. Unmet needs.
  - Physical health changes (pain)
  - Mental health and cognitive changes (dementias)



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## Older Adults Experiencing Abuse

- Why does one person become a “victim”?
  - Always been someone on the receiving end of bullying. Doesn’t have skills to stop it.
  - New person in a new environment. Feelings of powerlessness lead to shrinking in behaviors. Unmet needs.
  - Physical health changes
  - Mental health and cognitive changes



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## The Bystanders

- These are people who see the bullying and do nothing about it. However, they may be profoundly affected by it.
- Bullies depend on our fear, sense of powerlessness and silence to continue their behavior.



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## The Upstanders

- These are people who see the bullying and make some attempts to intervene.
- This may include going for help or verbally or physically intervening.



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## What About Staff

- The focus of our work is bullying between older adults.
- There are reports of staff abusing older adults, older adults abusing staff or staff turning a blind eye to bullying. However, that is not the focus of our work.
- As this project progresses, we may find that staff is well placed to help find or support solutions.



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### Examples of Bullying Behaviors

- Divorced lady accused of plying her wiles to take away another woman's husband
- Popular lady who had a stroke. Only deficit is loss of speech. Now ostracized.
- We don't allow those people here (blind, lesbian couple, anyone not Ukrainian, but really anything "other")
- Not allowing new residents to sit with them



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### More examples

- Issues around the laundry room
- Issues around recycling
- Pushing, shoving, name-calling
- Physical fighting



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### Why are we Choosing to Address This

- Without help or support, abuse gets worse.
- We believe that it is the same for bullying.
- We just can't stand by and do nothing.
- Therefore, we feel we need to do something to address the anecdotally very common issue.



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## Our Approach

- Lateral violence between older adults is a significant problem, although statistics are lacking.
- Research to support planning is also lacking.
- We will use the lessons learned from more developed work in both childhood and workplace bullying.



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## Lessons Learned from “It’s Not Right”: Neighbors, Friends and Family

- Each of us has our own power. Many people forget this or are taught against this.
- SyNC it conversations are a powerful tool both for those bullied and those who see it.
- These concepts will be incorporated into workshops and other future discussions.



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## Beginnings

- A workshop in June with a target audience of older adults, their families, resident services coordinators in congregate housing, community social workers and other professionals.
- From this beginning, we hope to gather interested and informed individuals to further work with us.



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## Awareness and Education

- Educational workshops in seniors' complexes, church groups and other opportunities as they arise



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## Next Steps

- Invite people to create strategies appropriate to the individual buildings or groups.
- Incorporate informal focus groups with these workshops to learn from their wisdom and experience.
- Consider ways of supporting the bully to stop his or her behavior.



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## Potential Strategies

- Improve the environment through the Eden Philosophy.
- Consider peer support programs (SNCit conversations) to help empower and support older adults and change bystander behavior.
- Having a friend is one of the strongest defenses against bullying.



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## Potential Strategies

- Have a bulletin board of star residents who have been “caught” being kind or helpful.
- Work with residents to develop an agreed upon set of expected behaviors that will be shared with all new residents. (ie.) The Building “X” Code of Ethics.




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## Conclusion

- Bullying exists in every age group.
- There is a lack of research into statistics and strategies specific to bullying and older adults.
- In the absence of greater wisdom (for now), we will begin to use the approaches found to be successful in other age groups.




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[www.scoa.ca](http://www.scoa.ca)

[www.saskatooncaregiver.ca](http://www.saskatooncaregiver.ca)



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