



MONDAY MEETING

Location: Newton Senior Center

Date: 05/11/2026 @ 1:00pm

Attendees: 21 members

Chairperson: Angus Glass

Speaker: Linda Yauk

House Keeping

1. Alta called the meeting to order at 1:00pm and reminded members that they should have scanned your membership cards at the front desk as you came in to check in. This is how the City keeps track of how the attendance are at various centres. There has been talking about eliminating the last senior center in Surrey. If you don't scan your card, we are going to lose the centre, so it is REALLY IMPORTANT to do that.
2. Please silent your smartphone.
3. We have 1 new member today.
 1. Athena read the minutes of May 4th Topics: Crime Stoppers
 4. No errors or omissions noted. Seconded by Joan Danis.
 5. Reminder to save the date for AGM is at 1:00 pm on Monday, June 1st. There will be computer related door prices. All executive positions will be open for nominations. Alta will step aside and withdraw his name from any nomination after 4 years of services. Encourage someone else should step up and take a turn at supporting our president and chairperson. We will also need a nominating chair for that AGM meeting on June 1st.
 6. BBQ is at 11:00am on Monday June 8th in a Hazelnut Meadows Community Park on 70th Avenue. We will have 2 barbeque machines. We will need some chefs, choppers, volunteers to set up, clean up, etc. **Cost is \$7.00**. Athena will collect your \$7.00 starting in May.
 7. Brian Gibson will be the speaker on May 25th to discuss AI via YouTube.

Main topic started around 13:10pm

Topic: Elder Abuse & Neglect

The speaker, Linda Yauk works for Senior's first BC on the public education and outreach division. she get the fun job of coming out and talking to groups at senior centers or libraries and other places. Part of her talk today is providing a brief overview about **elder abuse and neglect**.

Seniors First BC has been around since 1994, we are a charitable, non-profit organization. We get funding through the Ministry of Health, as well as the Law Foundation. and other grants and donations.

May 30th, 9:30am - 2:30pm, City of Surrey is hosting a Health and Wellness Fair at Newton Seniors Center for people 55+. <https://www.surrey.ca/news-events/events/55-safety-health-and-wellness-forum>

Monday, June 15th is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

We are not just about stopping abuse, but also supporting people to maintain their independence. So our original statement is that older adults in BC have the right to live with dignity and to be free from abuse. Here are our four mission statements and reflect our program areas.

- Protecting the legal rights of older adults label;
- Increasing access to justice for older adults;
- Talking to people in the public about elder abuse and;
- Providing supportive programs for older adults who have been abused.

When we talk about **abuse**, I mean the deliberate mistreatment of an older adult results in harm, we can also have theft.

And then there's **self-neglect**, and this is confusing sometimes because a lot of times this is because of someone's situation, maybe financial constraints or health issues. But for whatever their reasons, it's a failure or the lack of being able to look after themselves and then that results in neglect and causes harm.

We don't have a specific crime called elder abuse in Canadian Criminal Code. So we look at the crimes that are associated with abuse which can include physical assault, failure to provide necessities, stalking somebody, forgery, or theft. Or Non-Criminal Abuse, statements like these, "you don't know what you're talking about," "that's not what happened", which is denying what the person thinks and over time it can create a lot of self-doubt, or frightening.

Social isolation. You come to the club like this is a powerful way to build social connection and prevent isolation from happening.

Dependency is another big factor. If someone depends on another person for their care and assistance, such as financial support, you can create this dependence relationship, and then that can lead to situations of abuse.

Family conflict, there's a lot of patterns we have in our families so the conflict/abuse doesn't just suddenly stop when we hit 65 or whatever age.

Mental health and substance use can also make it difficult whether it's the victim or the alleged abuser. It interferes with their ability to cope with stress and things that are changing.

Cultural factors. Not everybody has the same idea or just how we might want to keep things within the family. We don't want to let other people know what's happening and protecting what's going on.

Language barriers. If you don't speak English, how do you tell someone or how do you learn about your health, or your situation?

Physical communication barriers. Maybe someone has had a stroke, or Parkinson's, or cognitive declining, and they're not able to verbalize what's going on for them.

Caregiver stress. That's another big factor that can lead to a situation of unintended abuse.

There's no typical profile of someone who experiences abuse, the same can be said about someone who commits abuse. The calls that we receive to our phone line show that it is often a family member, which can include a partner or spouse, an adult child or a grandchild. It can also be a neighbour or a friend, a caregiver, can also be people in a professional capacity, a landlord or a building manager, a healthcare professional, someone who's making decisions for a person, like a lawyer or a substitute decision maker. So really anything who's in a position of control or authority, there's a potential there.

People are often reluctant to tell somebody what's going on for them. There's many reasons which are understandable. Some are feeling embarrassed, where they feel ashamed, or they feel guilty. They should have done something differently, or it's their fault that they've allowed themselves to get into this situation. There's also a real fear of if they report or tell somebody that there could be retaliation from the alleged abuser, that abuse could get worse.

Fear of losing access to family members, particularly grandchildren. So if you report, then people might say, well, no, we can't have the grandchildren visiting. And then the same thing gives a bad impression of the family, reflects poorly and so people don't want that to happen. The lack of mental capacity, so again, something's happening to someone and they don't have a mental capacity to understand what's happening or to be able to tell someone about it, or they might not know that what's happening to them is considered abuse.

People might have also had poor experiences with people that they might tell, like the healthcare worker or the police, if they've had a bad experience in the past, they may not feel confident that these people will be able to help them, finally, one of the things that challenges is also people getting justice.

Seniors First BC has four programmed areas.

1. Phone line
2. Victim service support
3. Public education and Outreach which is me,
4. Legal programs

Phone Line: 604-437-1940 or **1-866-437-1940** (toll free). We're open from 8am to 8pm weekdays (Mon – Fri), excluding holidays.

The **Seniors Abuse and Information Line**. We also call it **SAIL** for short. So it is a safe place for people to call and speak with a trained worker, confidentially. We get probably 7 to 8,000 calls a year on our phone line now, and I think it's about 40, 45% that are directly related to abuse concerns. When you call our phone line, they'll listen to what the question or concern this or someone's looking for information, what do they need? And then they can complete an intake over the phone to one of our programs, if one of our programs is able to assist in this situation. But if we're not able to help or in support of our services, our phone staff can also connect people to community and social and government services.

We don't actually report cases. There are different bodies that do that, but we would help people understand this is a situation where you should call the police, where this is a situation where you might want to call the public guardian and trustee whom look after issues of the financial reliefs. Or this is a situation where it might be good to call the health authority because they have a specialty that investigates reports of abuse and neglect. Here's the contact information

We do provide language interpretation. So if somebody calls and they prefer to speak in a language other than English, they're more comfortable. They just need to tell us us what language. And then many of our staff do speak other languages, but if we don't have someone available, we will connect the caller to a translation service or interpretation service in over 200 languages and we also can help people who might use American sign language. When you leave the voicemail message, you can also say if you want to speak in other language.

We call back from a private number and that's for safety concerns, because we don't know the situation when we're calling, and we also won't leave a message unless the person's message says, it's okay to leave a message, we will make multiple attempts to reach somebody who's called us. Our phone staff, first of all, would try to determine, are there any immediate safety risks for this older ad? when somebody's calling and one of the services that might be offered, if they're experiencing abuse of family violence, is victim service support. And this is for people who are 55 and over, who have experienced abuse of family or sexual violence. This service is also province wide, you don't need a formal referral. Everything goes through our phone line.

Our **victim service worker**, this can be more ongoing and they're establishing trust in a relationship with the client. Our worker can also, if someone's eligible for the crime victim assistance program, we can help with that application.

Example of call to SAIL

Over the course of the living together, however, the son has become more emotionally abusive, yelling and swearing at the mom. He stole money and claimed he was getting groceries and what ultimately happened is that the mother was served an eviction notice. She was connected to our victim's service worker. Our worker did provide some assistance not only to the older but also to the son.

Public education and Outreach

We also have advance planning, so looking at making wills, power of attorney, and representation agreements, government benefits for older adults, and residential tenancy. We also do our research and produce some publications. We also have a fairly regular newsletter. We just have one come out last week. And then, of course, our [website](#), which has lots of different information about different resources, more information about specifics about what we do. Our website is currently available in five languages. We have English, French, Chinese, RC, and Punjabi.

It also has sections on resident rights, family councils when you're living in care facilities. It has information about resolving problems and disputes and who to contact what's the process for that.

Legal programs

We have three parts to our legal services, Elder law clinic which is our lawyers. We have legal advocates, and then outside the lower mainland.

Elder Law clinic, our legal service services can range from just general legal information, referrals, offering summary advice which can often be done just over the telephone. In some cases, we may be able to represent somebody in court.

Our legal advocates can help people understand their rights and responsibilities as a tenant, what forms might be needed, what's the process and deadlines, even attending residential tenancy branch hearings to support clients. They can also be involved in looking at your issues around debt, helping the repayment plans if you owe a lot of money for taxes, for example.

Accessing government benefits, making sure people are aware of the benefits they're eligible for, helping them understand. Those benefits can include the whole range of Canada pension plan and its related benefits, old age security, guaranteed income supplement. provincial program for a shelter aid for LW renters. Some of the areas that our lawyers might have with is financial exploitation, and this, we mentioned called the frauds and scams is one form of abuse, but a lot of the calls that we get involved in financial exploitation, are things like the misuse of a power of attorney, or an older adult feeling

pressure to make a change, maybe to their will or their power of attorney, or to sell property, because the beneficiaries don't want to wait until someone passes

Two areas that we're not able to assist with are Family law and Criminal law, but we would connect people to those services as needed.

Our legal services eligibility is based on age, income, and assets.

Age: 55+

Income: the maximum for one person is \$45,000 per year before tax (gross)., plus \$20,000 for any additional household member.

Assets, we're looking at under \$250,000.

In any case, though, we can make exceptions, whether it's the age or the income or even perhaps assets. That's always determined by the lawyers about whether they can take on a case or not, or if we can make exceptions. So the best thing to do would be to contact our seniors abuse and information line for more information and that and also be how you would need to arrange an appointment to speak with someone on our legal too. As you can imagine, the legal services are in high demand, so please note that once you talk to one of our phone staff, and if we referral is made, it can take up to four weeks, or one of the lawyers or the advocates to call back.

It is good that you don't need our services, but please share with others because we never know who may need it one day. Here's an example. an older gentleman who called and expressed concerns about his daughter-in-law, who was his designated power of attorney, and he was concerned that she was abusing this power of attorney. She wasn't letting him spend his own money, she was choosing his activities on how or where he'd like to go, he was also concerned that she was going to get more and more controlled. So he called our phone line, and he was referred to one of our lawyers for more information about the power of attorney.

The lawyer talked to this gentleman and said, first of all, he can cancel or revoke the power of attorney at any time, provided that that you have the mental competence. And you just need to put it in writing and give that to the power of attorney, plus any financial institutions that that power of attorney was dealing with. But the lawyer suggested, you know, "Before you go to that that action of cancer, you're changing your power of attorney, would it be possible to sit down and talk with the daughter-in-law and have a conversation about what the responsibilities of a power of attorney are, and the scope of the role?"

A senior legal advocate estimated probably 90% or even higher, of all calls right now is about eviction and tenancy issues. An example, a woman who was living in a suite in a building had been served a day notice. So she wanted some assistance with understanding it and maybe how to dispute it. She talked about how the landlord had been harassing her both verbally and even on one occasion he pushed her; The landlord had changed the locks on the main door, he came in into her apartment without giving the required 24 hour notice. She was referred to our legal advocate. Now, I don't know all of the details on there, but she was given some legal remedies for having to deal with the landlord, and then if she decided that she didn't want to relocate, that would be off some

resources for looking at housing. *I want to clarify that we don't do the housing navigation. We will connect people to resources. What our advocate does, again, is helping people understand their rights and responsibilities.*

We also run a clinic every month here at Newton's New Senior Centre. You still have to call SALE and go through the intake process and make an appointment if you're eligible, then we can set up a time. It runs every 1st Tuesday morning from 10 am-12pm. So that's when one of our legal staff will come up here and help people with their legal documents.

Linda also provided us with 3 very helpful digital literacy resources she had mentioned in the meeting:

- Connected Canadians: <https://www.connectedcanadians.ca/>
- Cyber Seniors: <https://cyberseniors.org/>
- Brella Community Services: <https://www.brellasociety.ca/tech-buddies-computer-lessons>