



It's Not Right!

Neighbours, Friends & Families for Older Adults

Lessons Learning



It's Not Right!

Neighbours, Friends & Families for Older Adults



**Government
of Canada**

Public Health Agency of Canada
New Horizons for Seniors - ESDC



Ontario

Ministry for Status of Women
Ministry of Seniors Affairs
Ministry of Community & Social
Services

**TEACH EVERYONE to recognize
warning signs and risk factors!**



A map of Ontario, Canada, with several location pins in red and teal. The pins are scattered across the province, with a higher concentration in the southern part near the US border. The map shows major cities like Toronto, Ottawa, and Kingston, and neighboring provinces like Quebec and New Brunswick.

I am a Supporter
I offered my support to a
person I believe is experiencing
abuse

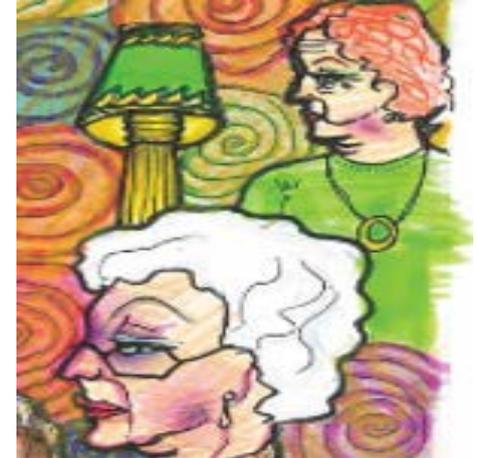
I had a SNCit conversation in
Lac Seul First Nation, Ontario

I gave a presentation in
Kensington, Brockville,
Ontario
for 39 people
Date: June 5th, 2017

I'm an advocate. I have told 6
people about It's Not Right!
in Belleville

People Reached: 10,616 / 10,000

Neighbours Friends and Families



Recognizing warning signs and responding – gaps in understanding experience of older adults

- Ailing health / situations of caregiving
- Where children are the offenders
- Full impact of ageism, intersections with other forms of discrimination

It's Not Right!

Neighbours, Friends & Families for Older Adults

Change social norms

- Mind your own business
- There's nothing we can do about it
- Aging diminishes your value

Bystander approach

- Everyone has a role to play
- Small actions make a difference



What are we learning?

- Unique needs of older women and families
- Ageism is reflected in lack of research
 - Dr. Patricia Brownmiller – international study ..
- Complexity of DV in older couples
- Opportunities – early intervention



Ageism is a Social Norm

“To the extent to which older people do not fit the perceived social norm, they are treated as “less”, which may include being less valued and less visible. They become relegated to a second class status; their needs and their lives are treated as if they do not matter as much.



Ageism is a Social Norm

As a society, we seldom think to question the basis for our attitudes and beliefs. People simply incorporate the societal “norms” and values into their own way of thinking about and behaving towards older adults.”

Charmaine Spencer

Ageism And The Law: Emerging Concepts And Practices In Housing And Health



What do we know?

Two distinct areas research and practice: VAW / EA

VAW grassroots evolution

- Immediate protection / long term solutions that acknowledge DV is a public, criminal issue
- social structures perpetuate power imbalances

EA defined by health care and social service professionals

- EA broader – perpetrators include non-family
- Focus on cognitive and physical functioning are central concerns –
- Identified as happening to “frail” older people

Elder Abuse in Canada – A Gender Based Analysis

Peggy Edwards

What do we know?

- Published reports on general population surveys – little analysis on gender and age – less on diversity related to socio-economic, ability or race
- Publications that focus on gender often fail to provide aging lens
- Overview documents – Stop Family Violence mostly gender-neutral
- Concerns about suspicious deaths of older adults not taken as seriously



Definitions

Domestic violence: any form of physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse, including financial control, stalking and harassment. It occurs between opposite or same-sex intimate partners.

CREVAWC

Family Violence: Family violence is any form of abuse or neglect that a child or adult experiences from a family member, or from someone with whom they have an intimate relationship. It is an abuse of power by one person to hurt and control someone who trusts and depends on them.

Public Health Agency of Canada



Why Gender and Intersectional lens?

- WHO – violence against women global epidemic
- PHAC recognizes gender as a determinant of health
- Different groups experience violence differently – need differential approaches to be effective
- Each of us has a complex identity with both social privilege and disadvantage



Continuum of Violence



Lower risk
Situational

Higher risk
Coercive Control

What makes you feel uncomfortable?

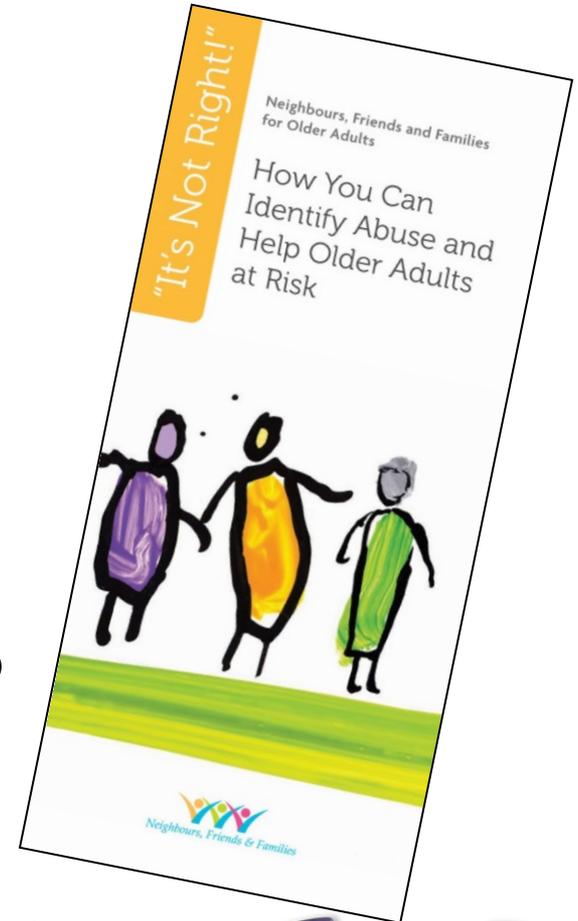


Watch for warning signs



What Did You See?

- Is it abuse?
- What are the warning signs?
- What are the risk factors?
- What tips the power balance?



Abusive Behaviour is Common



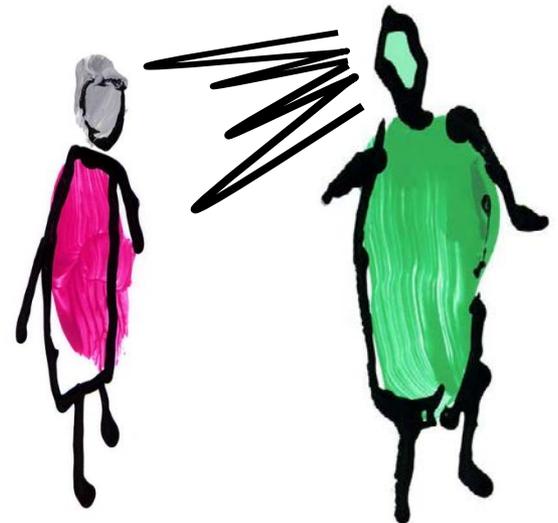
How might Michael justify his behaviour?

“Who, me – abusive?!!!”

How do you know if you are...?

- If the person is afraid of you
- If you are making all of the decisions
- If you think you know what is best for another adult
- If you take their money or possessions

What is your IMPACT?

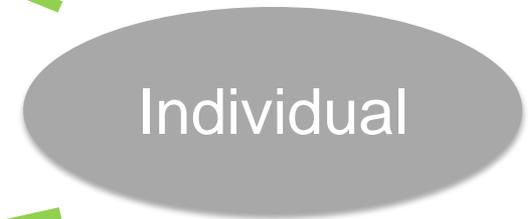


WHO – Ecological Model

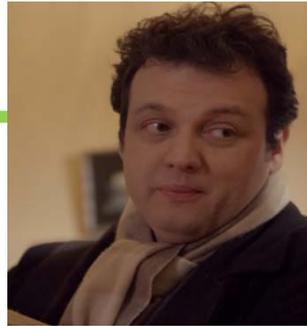


The Individual in Isolation

Carla 'allows' the situation



Michael must be a bad person



Entitlement

It's my choice
how I use my
power and
privilege

I am younger and a man.
This gives me social
advantage when I need
it...
Therefore, my needs
trump Mom's

Violence rates go up in
tough economies

Ageism



Economy / Job Market

Addiction / MH

Behaviour

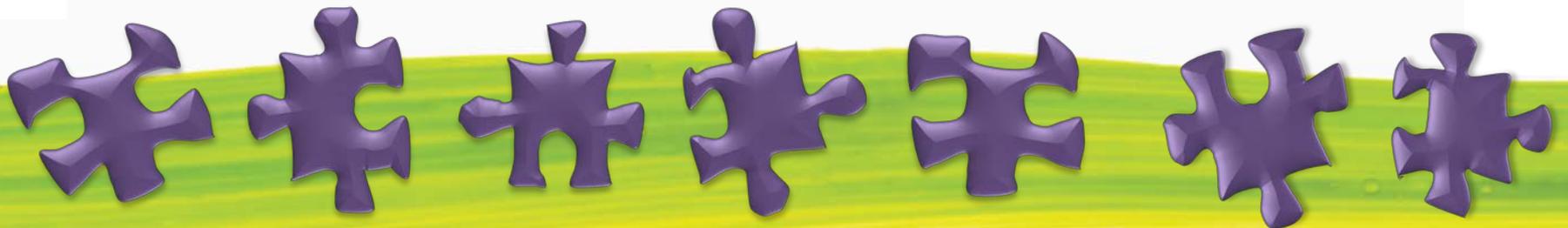
Ageism

Sexism

Culture



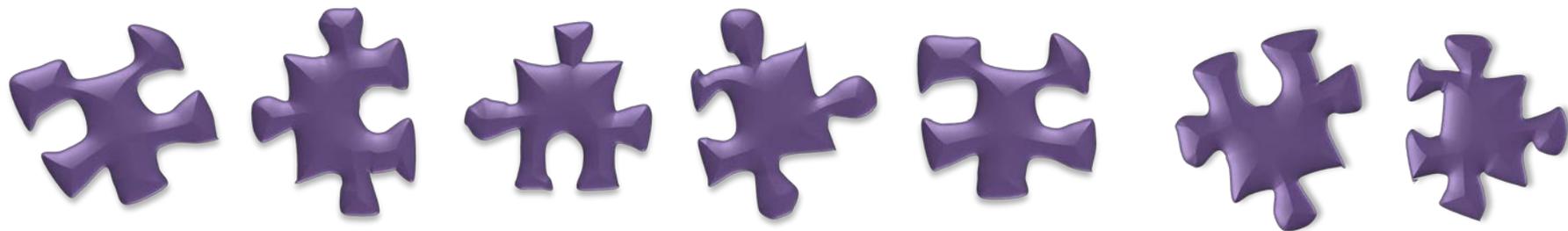
The Visit





Pat's Challenges

- Power and control normalized in her relationship
- Trapped by husband's deteriorating health and increasing dependency
- Children are distant and unavailable
- Does she know about supports available?
- Even if she did decide to leave, shelters are not usually prepared to deal with older women
- What will happen to her husband?



Social expectations
about her role

Economic

Shifting power
& privilege

History of
Domestic Violence



Ageism

Unregulated capitalism

Unregulated capitalism

Social expectations about her role

Economic

Shifting power & privilege

History of Domestic Violence



Ageism

Unregulated capitalism

Unregulated capitalism

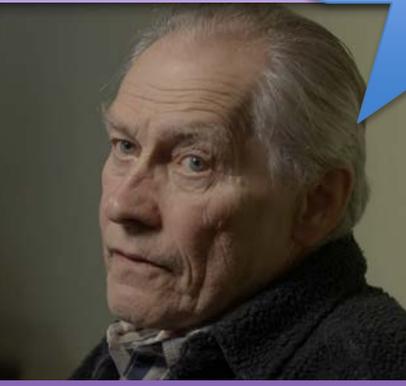
Social expectations about her role

Economic

Shifting power & privilege

History of Domestic Violence

I am accountable for my behaviour



Ageism





Getting the 'diagnosis'

- Ageism and the medical community
- Diagnosis as a 'final sentence' that negates Pat's rights and choices
- The assumption that the daughter will be the caregiver
- Incredible fear about what it means – ending up in long-term care





Health sector beginning to recognize violence as a health issue (Vega Project)

- negative health impacts of long term abuse
- not trained to recognize warning signs and escalating risk
- Limited familiarity with referral pathways



VAW sector is not prepared to deal with older adults

- Crisis shelters are designed for younger women and children
- Few options for men
- Outreach services not designed for older adults
- Housing – accessibility issues / need care

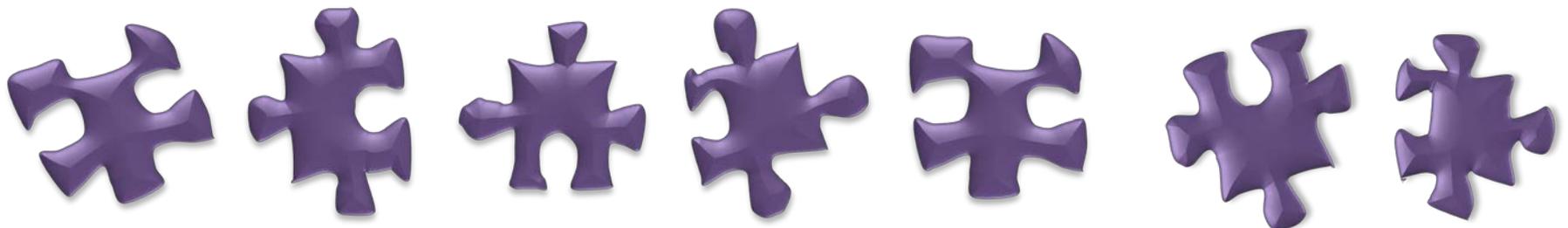




Questions

Elder Abuse and VAW

- How does risk change when health issues force one partner to be 'caregiver' to the other?
 - When the historical abuser is the caregiver
 - When the victim is the caregiver
- How prepared are health care workers to recognize and respond to domestic violence?
- How do we recognize high risk for older adults?
- How well are community services communicating with one another on high risk cases – across sectors?

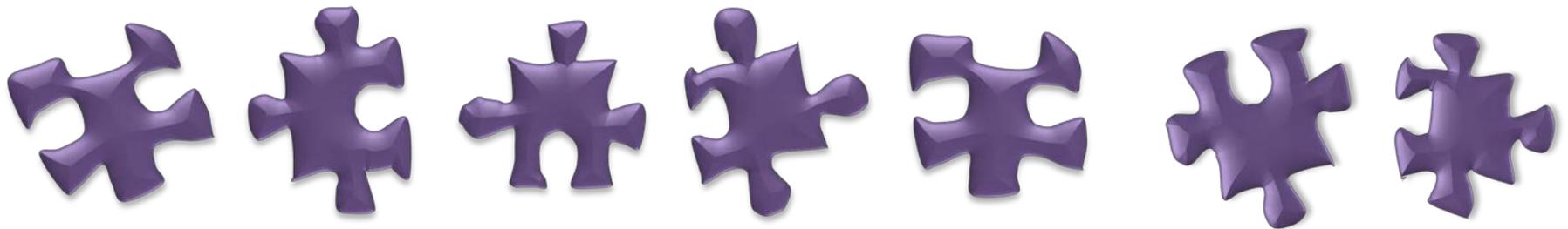




Questions

Elder Abuse and VAW

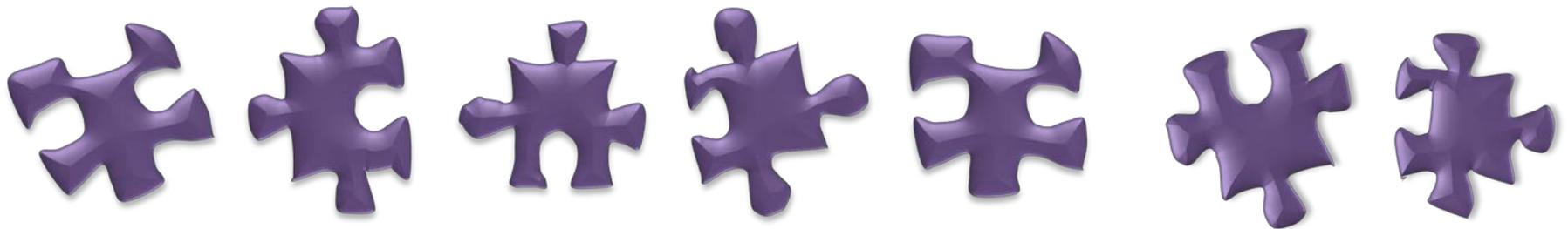
- What are the risk factors for homicide/suicide when no history of domestic violence?
 - Deteriorating health and loss of mobility, social isolation
 - Fear of being a burden, being separated, been sent to a ‘home’
 - Mental health issues – depression
 - Lack of coordinated approach and services to support families
 - Lack of respite in situations of intensive care
 - Available beds vs chronic aging problems – low priority (ageism)
 - Long term health care needs and poverty
- How do risk factors for suicide intersect in older couples?





Potential for Collaboration Elder Abuse and VAW

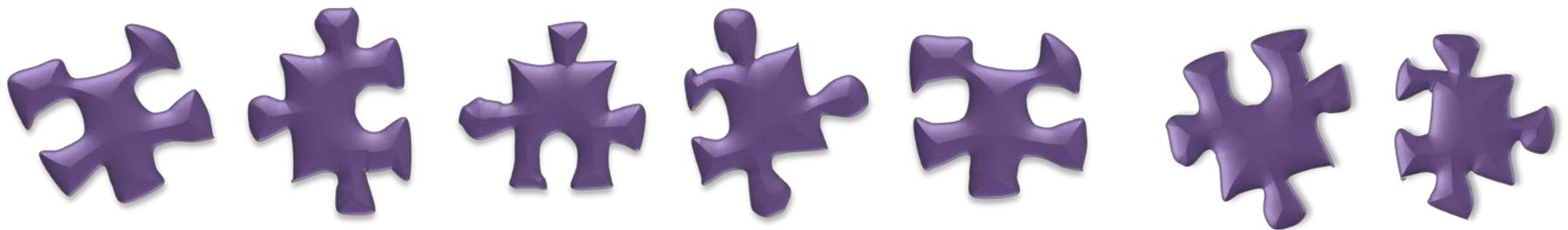
- Many communities have both VAW and EA committees
 - Community case reviews
 - Cross-training / learning
- Extensive analysis of woman abuse – needs to expand and include experiences of older women





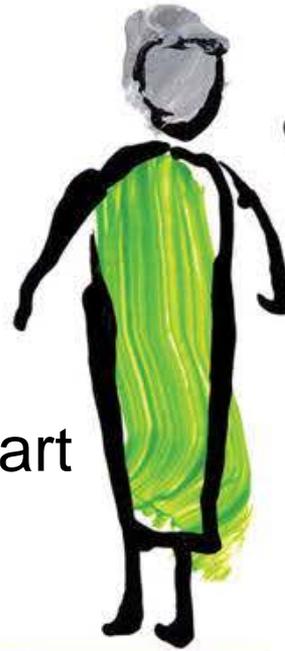
Potential for Collaboration Elder Abuse and VAW

- VAW language of criminal justice to describe victims /perpetrators – EA focus on family/friend relationships
 - Power imbalances are at the root of abuse. As men age, they are treated more like women – age is the great equalizer
 - Shifting perspectives need to focus on earlier intervention
 - Bystanders are our first line of response
 - Cannot continue to put those who are abusive outside the circle as the default – are we ready to see people who are behaving abusively as human beings part of a system and in trouble?



TVI - A Human Being Approach

- Every situation is different (our starting point)
- Requires individual engagement in addition to standard practices, approaches and protocols
- Capacity and willingness:
 - to reflect on and learn from each situation as individuals / communities / organizations
 - to move from simple to complex understanding, from good-bad dualities
 - to question the basis for our attitudes as being part of a whole social system

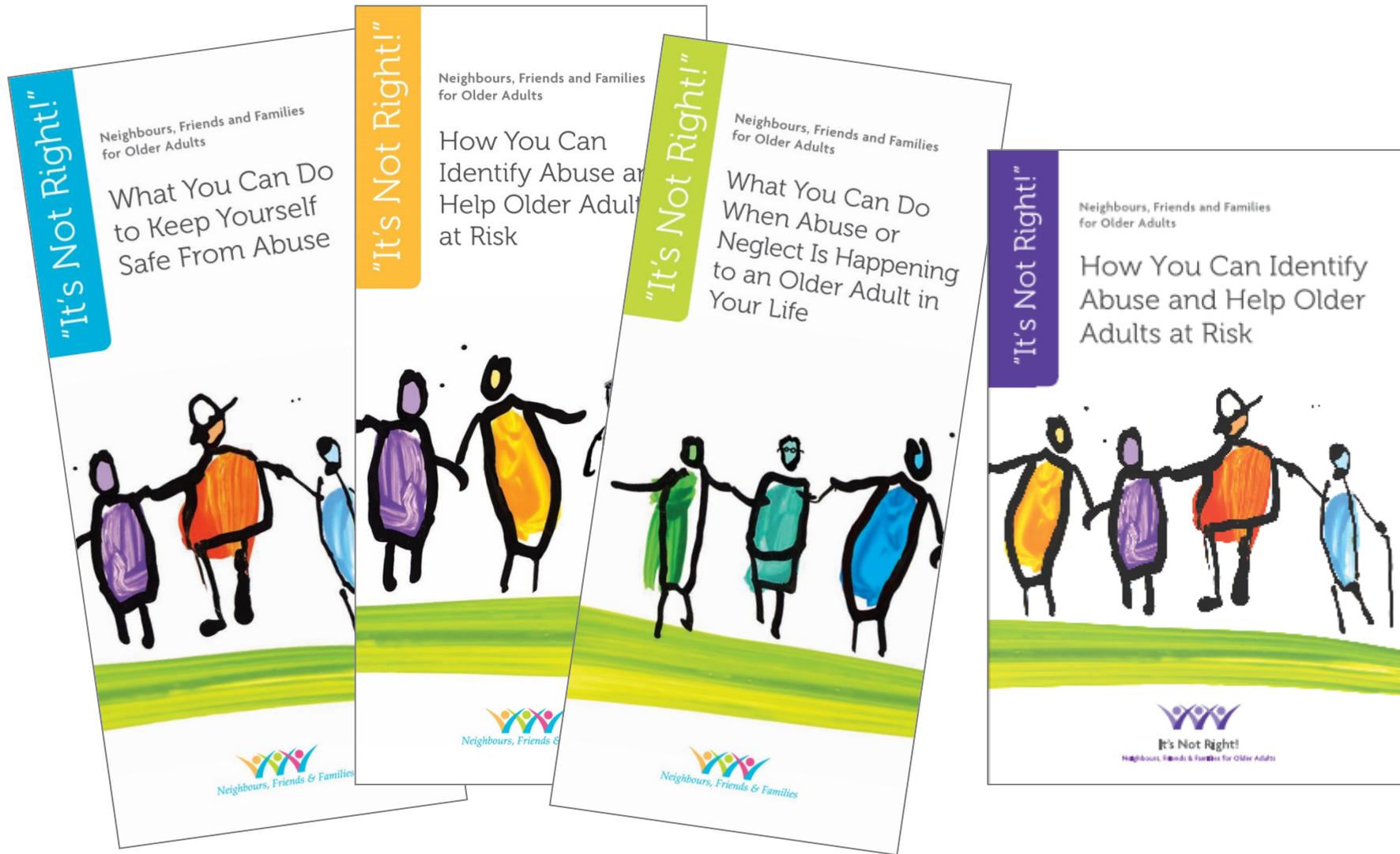


Readiness for Change

Majority of participants in INR-NFF workshops consistently indicate:

- people behaving abusively need help and have to be part of the solution
- we are all capable of behaving abusively under the 'right' conditions
- we are all ageist – and our attitudes put older adults at greater risk
- everyone has a role to play... neighbours, friends and family members will step up – if they know what to do





Centre for Research & Education on Violence against Women and Children



It's Not Right!

Neighbours, Friends & Families for Older Adults



Western
Education

**Centre for Research & Education
on Violence Against Women & Children**