



# Elder Planning Counselor Designation Program



## DESK REFERENCE

Module 4 - Communication and Other Timely Issues  
Twelfth Edition V2

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## ***Module 4 - Communication & Other Timely Issues***

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In this module, you will find the following chapters:

- Chapter 1: Communicating with Elders
- Chapter 2: Marketing to Elders
- Chapter 3: Elder Fraud and Financial Exploitation
- Chapter 4: Elders and Ethics
- Chapter 5: Putting It All Into Perspective

# DESK REFERENCE

Twelfth Edition V2

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Thank you all!

# Elder Planning Counselor Designation Program

## Desk Reference Module 4 Communication & Other Timely Issues

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# Chapter 1

## Communicating with Elders

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### 1 - 1 KEY OBJECTIVE FOR THIS CHAPTER

This chapter will assist you in developing communications that will resonate with the elder market. Elders are unique. They think differently than younger adults. They face a variety of emotional, social, and sensory challenges. And they are more difficult to communicate with - on a whole variety of fronts. The challenge is to make communications age friendly.

The following material will give you a lot of perspective on the many challenges associated with communicating with elders ... as well as some of the most effective strategies and approaches that can be employed to reach them.

Best of all, all the evidence seems to suggest that communications that are designed to effectively capture the attention of the elder market - will work well with anyone. Good elder communication strategies are simply ... good communication strategies. Once you have hit the mark in the elder market, there is no need to reinvent the wheel elsewhere.

Getting better at communicating with elders will make you a better all-around communicator.

### 1 - 1.1 How Will This Objective Be Achieved?

*In the following material we will look at:*

- ❖ How elders think
- ❖ Elder communication challenges
- ❖ Proven elder effective communication strategies and approaches.
- ❖ Elder communication "best practices"
- ❖ The issues with respect to specific types of media

At the end of this discussion, you will be well versed about elder communications. And you will have most of the information and guidelines you need to develop your own effective "elder-friendly" communications.

## 1 - 2 INTRODUCTION

Communication is important all through life, but it assumes even greater importance, as people become more dependent upon others in their later years. Aging well requires adjustments. Effective communication of relevant, actionable information can assist in the journey. Elders want to be dealt with holistically, receiving information about all aspects of their lives. Effective, holistic information thoughtfully and properly presented lays the groundwork for higher pick-up rates and successful calls to action and incorporation into elders' lives. It's more inclusive. This in turn, helps initiatives that support involvement and engagement of Canadians throughout their lifespan. That impacts not only the elders' quality of life and health and extends to all members of communities across Canada.

Older Canadians are a diverse group who want and value choice from a range of information sources about businesses, services and government programs that can help them live the lifestyle they want. That means service providers need to pay close attention to particular preferences which may be shaped by background, education, beliefs, values and opinions. It means learning about their spending patterns and activities so that you can serve them well from their perspective and that of their families.

The varying life experiences and personal characteristics of seniors means that they also hold a range of values, beliefs and opinions which should direct messaging that is tailored to these characteristics, recognizing that elders are not a homogenous group.

Communicating not only includes the talking and listening that people do but reading and writing as well. A great deal of communication also takes place through non-verbal cues (e.g., the raised brow, the sigh, the down turned lips, the smile, the nod, or the period of silence following an utterance).

Effective communication can help build satisfying relationships with elders you serve and whose wellbeing you help manage. It can strengthen relationships between provider and client and optimize interactions with them. It can help achieve better outcomes by reducing errors and omissions. Effective communication can mean the difference between providing someone with help or sending a message that doesn't resonate with or interest recipients at all. In fact, it may mean that the message literally falls on deaf ears.

The older we get, the harder it is for messages to reach us or stay with us. This drives the need for a different approach to the communication process. In fact, adopting and practicing an adaptable approach that works with elders in particular, where you exhibit clear and universally accessible communication, will actually work with most clients, regardless of age. Interpersonal communication skills are considered so important that they are a core competency in a number of professions. And a number of these skills can be used effectively for all age groups. The Canadian Initiative for Elder Planning Studies supports that.

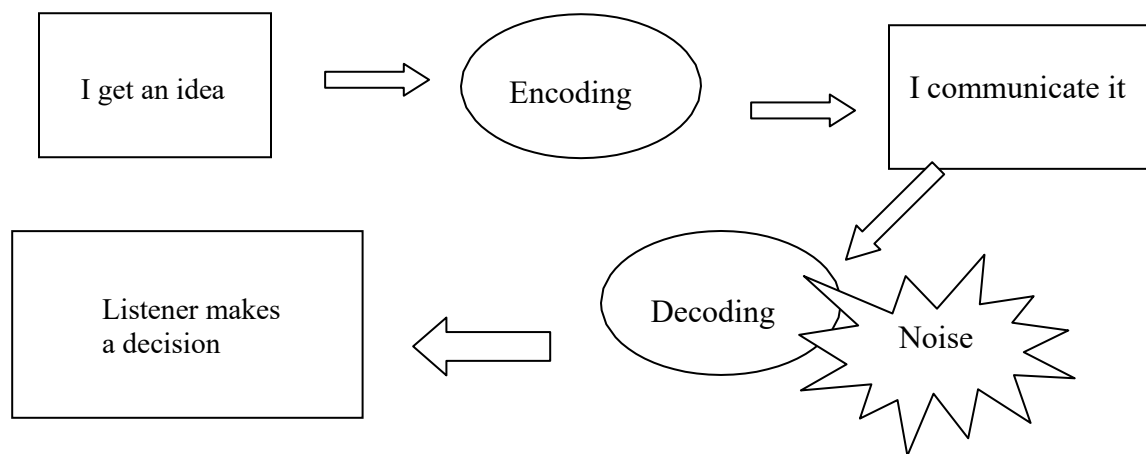


## 1 - 3 BRAIN SCIENCE

Before we focus specifically on communicating with elders, it is important to understand the key elements of the communication process. This background information is particularly important when it comes to elder Canadians - a group that faces several age- related communication challenges.

As we age, a variety of physiological, emotional, and psychological changes occur - and these changes need to be considered when crafting messages that are targeted at the 55-plus market segment.

### 1- 3.1 How We Communicate



When an idea is being conveyed, the originator thinks about the idea in their own terms. For example, a financial advisor might be enthusiastic about a new financial planning product. The advisor would think about the product in terms of the kind of client who would benefit, the tax implications, the estate planning considerations, etc. This is called encoding, and it is our way of understanding the concepts that we wish to share with others.

Once we have encoded the idea, we must communicate it to the listener in a way that enables them to see the value of what we say and to internalize it. The listener hears our words and then decodes what we say. This is the "what's in it for me?" part of the process. However, before the words can ever get to the decoding stage, they must pass

through the listener's *noise* field. Every listener's mind is crowded with numerous and disparate thoughts - all of which are competing for shelf space with the new message that is being delivered. A listener could have, for example, been thinking about the argument they had with his spouse earlier that morning: money matters, a messy house, or last night's football game.

When - and if - the communication is finally decoded, the listener will see it in his or her own way - thinking about it in terms of why it is important to them.

### **1 - 3.2        Three Levels of Communication**

It is important to understand that there are three different levels of communication. The first level merely conveys information. The second level attempts not just to convey information, but also to persuade the listener. The third level of communication - the most complex and the most difficult - conveys information, persuades, and results in a change in behaviour - the listener decides to take action based on the information supplied.

Managing communication at the first level is relatively easy. Very few people, however, are highly skilled at level three communication.

It is easy to simply tell a group that something is good for them - but the communication of this information becomes far more powerful if the listener internalizes the message, formulates the same conclusion, and then takes action based on it. It is only when the listener can understand how the message affects him that he can make a meaningful decision.

Having said this, it is also possible for a listener to make a decision without fully understanding what is being said. Decisions are often made based on emotion, gut feel and trust. Our tendency to make decisions based on an emotional, rather than rational, basis increases as we age.

### **1 - 3.3        Elder Issues**

Even at the best of times, communicating effectively is difficult - and trying to successfully reach the elder market adds a whole new level of complexity!

Often elders have trouble seeing and hearing. They face a variety of social, psychological, and emotional challenges. And worst of all, they just do not think the same way as the rest of us do.

### **1 - 4        PSYCHOLOGICAL CHANGES THAT OCCUR WITH AGING**

An elder does not process information in the same way that a 35-year-old might. The addition of life experience, awareness of one's own mortality, and a focus on life's "bigger issues" all conspired to change the way we listen, internalize information, and make decisions. The communicator who ignores this will find it difficult to create communications that will resonate with the elder listener. This applies across the broad spectrum of verbal communication (e.g., conversations, presentations, sales routines, etc.).

**Table 1-1      Key Difference Between a Younger Adult and an Elder**

	<b>Younger Person</b>	<b>Elder</b>
<b>Context</b>	Less likely to relate information to life experience, needs or goals	More likely to place all information in the context of their life
<b>Outlook</b>	More ‘extro-spective’—looking at the world as an observer	More introspective looking at the world in the context of oneself
<b>Perception of information</b>	Black and white	Shades of gray
<b>Learning pattern</b>	More left-brain	More right brain
<b>Thinking process</b>	Fluid thinking	Crystallized intelligence
<b>Price vs. Value</b>	More price sensitive	More value sensitive
<b>Posturing on issues</b>	More rigid	More flexible
<b>Objectivity</b>	More objective	More subjective
<b>Emotion</b>	Less emotional	More emotional

### **1 - 4.1      Right-Brain vs. Left-Brain Thinking**

The concept that there are right-brained dominant people and left-brained dominant people is actually a myth. There is no compelling, scientific evidence that supports differences in personalities and skill sets are due to the dominance of one half of the brain over the other half. Research on neuroimaging data has not unveiled clear evidence of the existence of phenotypic differences in the strength of either left-dominant or right-dominant networks. Each side of the brain does specialize in particular tasks and reasonings.

Most personality and assessment tests exploit a psychological phenomenon known as the Barnum Effect, sometimes referred to as the Forer Effect. Here’s what that means. When individuals are offered generic descriptive statements that are presented as individualized descriptions of their own personalities, they are predisposed to accept them as meaningful and true, especially if the statements are positive. Fake tests can produce similar results.

Studies have shown that we do become much more “right-brain” oriented as we get older. We tend, as a result, to become much less focused on facts and figures, details, and data -and a lot more focused on instinct and intuition, emotions, and experience. The way we process information becomes heavily influenced by the way - or manner - in which it is presented to us.

Older consumers respond to stories, pictures, images, anecdotes, and analogies much more than they do to facts, figures, and rational arguments that appeal to the left side of the brain. For most mature clients, the best way to present information is to tie it closely to the way that they view their world and how they see their lives. Then again, the saying; a picture is worth a thousand words certainly has substance and is something that can be remembered or recalled much easier.

## **1 - 4.2          Appealing to a Listener's Right-Brain**

As people mature, they start to make decisions - not just based on the information at hand,

but on a lifetime experience and stored memories. By drawing on past experiences and lessons, older adults shift from a left-brain orientation over to a more intuitive right-brain process. This shift produces decision-making that is far more subjective, conceptual, and creative. Elders have learned that relying on past experiences and following their instincts produces the best results.

No one, of course, is completely dependent on the "right-brain." All of us - including the elder segment of the population - evaluate new information using a combination of both our left and right brain. Information is constantly being shuttled between the two hemispheres across a "highway" called the *Corpus Callosum*. There are literally hundreds of millions of connectors between the left brain and the right brain (although it is interesting to note that women have on average, 15-20% more connectors than men do).

When someone communicates with facts, figures, data, logic, etc., your left brain will be drawn into action. This is your logic centre, the part of your brain that deals with reason. The right side of your brain is more likely to be involved in more abstract and complex thinking.

Of significance to the communication process is the fact that the right brain is also the "home" of emotion. It contains the Lymbic Centre, also referred to as the "emotional brain," which controls long-term memory, and which sends messages to the pituitary gland to bring your hormones into play. Surprisingly, the right brain is also where decision-making happens. Human beings do not make decisions based on facts, figures, and data. They make decisions based on how they *feel* about the information they have been given!

Therefore, when you are attempting to encourage someone to decide (which is often the case during a sales interview), you want to present your information in a way that appeals to their emotions - not their logic.

This does not mean that you ignore an analytical person's desire to have all the facts and data. If they believe that they need this information to make their decision, then let them have it - but understand they will likely use it simply to justify what will ultimately be a right-brain decision.

### 1- 4.3 Right-Brain Facts

The trigger for assessing and dealing with "risk" are in a person's right brain, not their left (and therefore countering emotion with logic frequently does not work)

People make their buying decisions on the right side of their brain and may validate them with the left.

All the facts and figures in the world are wasted if you cannot get a listener to use their right brain to process the information you have provided.

Connecting investments, money and percentage returns to life planning, lifestyle, dreams, and goals is an effective way to move from the left brain to right, and more accurately, to engage both sides to effect a more sustainable decision.

### 1 - 4.4 Engaging an Elder's Right-Brain

If you want to reach and then engage an elder's right-brain, a "top-down" (planning, managing, controlling) approach to your activities won't work. A more collaborative (teaching, counselling, sharing ideas) approach will produce better results. The elder needs to be a participant in the exercise - working with you to identify and address issues.

The following chart was developed by Scott West and Mitch Anthony in their book; "Story Selling" (Dearborn Financial Press 1999).

**Table 1-2 Activities That Engage the Brain**

Left Brain Activities	Right Brain Activities
Planning	Teaching
Organizing	Communicating
Managing	Counselling
Detailing	Expressing ideas
Timing	Sensing problems
Implementing	Understanding
Supervising	Supporting
Controlling	Service
Administering	Intuition
Fixing	Sensing people

Elder advisors need to see their role as that of an educator, motivator, and coach. For many, this will require a significant and/or concerted change in how they approach their business.

The financial services sector, for example, has tended to place a premium on the skill sets required to appeal to the left side of a client's brain. It is an approach that may be effective with younger adults - but it does not work well with elders.

Rather than pouring over complex illustrations and technical documents, most mature clients would rather answer questions, discuss lifestyle considerations, and share their wisdom and experiences. Advisors who can skillfully tap into these areas are the ones most likely to succeed.

Considering the above discussion, it should come as no surprise that women, who arguably do display more right-brain orientation and be comfortable with emotions, tend to excel when it comes to elder communication.

## **1 - 4.5      Crystallized Thinking vs. Fluid Thinking**

Whenever we process information, we use either "crystallized" or "fluid" intelligence in order to make sense of it. Unfortunately, elders are far more likely to employ crystallized intelligence.

***Crystallized thinking*** refers to our tendency to form judgments, on the information we receive, based on past experiences. Often, we will not even bother to think about the information and try to make sense of it - because we have already formed an opinion and have a set response - both of which are the product of prior events. An elder who grew up during the depression, for example, might react negatively if a financial planner suggests that he should consider more equities in his portfolio in order to boost returns. His experience tells him that equities are dangerous and that participating in the markets can produce financial hardship. The elder's reaction is largely emotional - as opposed to rational. No matter how much information the advisor provides (e.g., facts and figures, performance numbers, etc.) to try and comfort this elder, he will still use crystallized thinking to discount (or ignore) what is being said. It is impossible to counter fear with logic. The facts simply will not change his opinion, but a little empathy, understanding and discussion might do the trick.

***Fluid thinking*** refers to our ability to listen to information and to form opinions and make decisions based on a rational consideration of what we have heard. Preconceived notions of what is right or wrong do not bind us. By the age of 65, most of us have lost most of our capacity to employ fluid intelligence. We have been around the block a few too many times and our opinions tend to be relatively fixed. This poses some challenges for anyone who is dealing regularly with elders. The good news is that if you can engage the elder and encourage him to *think* about what you are saying, you will stand a far better chance of making some headway.

Remember, that just because elders rely a lot on crystallized intelligence, does not mean they are incapable of using fluid intelligence. They are not. It just demands that you make a little more of an effort and take a little more time.

## **1 - 5        ADDITIONAL CHALLENGES**

It is not just the way that elders think that can get in the way of effective communication. Aging Canadians also struggle with emotional and social issues - and a laundry list of physical and sensory limitations - all of which can severely inhibit their ability to receive and process information.

### **1 - 5.1        Emotional and Social Issues**

Many elders eventually struggle with loneliness, isolation, worry and a deep-set anxiety about becoming dependent on others. Elders also tend to be concerned about safety, security, and a loss of access to activities or services that they enjoyed when they were younger.

Retirement brings a change in social status - a loss of earning capacity and a change in income level. The death of a spouse and the death of close friends can reduce the depth of an elder's social network - at precisely the time when it is extremely difficult to attend new social and recreational activities and build new friendships.

These changes have a profound effect on the way in which elders want to receive information. They have a strong preference for personal contact and face-to-face, one-on-one interaction. Barring that, they like to receive information in a social setting (e.g., through clubs, their church, elders' centres, etc.).

In addition, as their social network narrows, elders come to rely heavily on the counsel provided by those that remain. Communicating with an elder can often involve gaining the blessing of this informal network.

### **1 – 5.2        Depression**

Depression may be associated with personal losses and a variety of age-related disorders including sensory loss, Alzheimer's Disease, and stroke. Depressed elders may avoid interaction, speak slowly, show memory difficulties, become easily agitated, or become argumentative.

It is important to have a supportive verbal and nonverbal attitude during conversations with older patients who have depression. Do not trivialize depression or suggest that the person is seeking attention or that everything "will be all right."

Conversations may take more time. Repeat and rephrase, encouraging the elder to feedback what they understand is being said. Use clear, well-constructed statements indicating what you are doing and why. Encourage the person to express opinions and respond to them meaningfully. Be prepared for periods of silence and sometimes opposition.

Remember not to take this personally, recognizing that this is easier said than done.

### **1 – 5.3 Cognitive Challenges**

Normal aging changes include reduced cognitive processing speed, difficulty remembering new information, and distractibility. For most older individuals, communication is facilitated by simple accommodations such as slightly slower, well-constructed, and repeated presentation of information in an active voice. The most important information should be presented first and repeated at the end. Avoid the use of "do not" and "it is not true" statements. Providing a written summary of key points is helpful.

Some elders will demonstrate the progressive cognitive decline associated with dementia, particularly Alzheimer's dementia (AD). According to 2023 data published by the Alzheimer's Association, about 5% of those ages 65-74, 13.1% of those ages 75-84 and 33% of those over the age of 85 have this condition. Communication will deteriorate over time for those with Alzheimer's dementia and conversations will become increasingly difficult.

Strategies to facilitate communication begin with gaining attention in a distraction-free setting, facing the individual, maintaining eye contact, and using supportive verbal and nonverbal communication. Present one idea at a time. Use concrete and familiar vocabulary in short sentences. Again, introduce topics clearly, avoid pronouns, and repeat key information without adding new ideas. Ask "yes/no" questions or provide two choices to facilitate participation. Listen for themes in responses and monitor the elder's emotional tone. Give the elder adequate time to respond and check for comprehension.

Do not expect the person with Alzheimer's disease, even early onset dementia, to remember information and avoid arguing or correcting faulty memories. Be patient when they frequently repeat stories in the same meeting. Listen attentively; do not interrupt or cut them off because you've heard it before.

### **1 - 5.4 Literacy and Language**

While it is estimated that around 48% of Canadians have some degree of difficulty with reading - surveys indicate that as many as 80% of Canadians over age 65 have reading difficulties. Difficulties that are significant enough to interfere with tasks such as filling out forms, reading instructions on medicine containers (document literacy) and understanding information provided by government and other institutions (prose literacy). This frequently has far less to do with comprehension than it does with font size and line spacing.

A growing number of older elders also struggle with basic quantitative literacy - doing such simple tasks as balancing a cheque book or calculating a tip. Then again, so do many of our youth.

A number of today's elders did not have the same access to formal education that most of us now take for granted. Others were new immigrants who never mastered the English language.



Both groups tend to lack the skills necessary to manage and understand printed material.

Some of these elders managed to cope by relying on oral communication, developing strong memory skills, and turning to a relative or friend to interpret written material. While this may have worked when they were younger - it might not work so well anymore. Now they might find it hard to follow oral discussions, their memories may not be what they used to be, and the friends and relatives that they have relied upon may no longer be available.

Many of today's elders are ill equipped to acquire vital information about health, safety, and financial security if it is only available in printed form and more and more of that information is in digital format, requiring some comfort with computers and devices. As noted elsewhere, 87% of elders go online to organize their finances; 73% to improve health and wellness, including over half (53%) to learn about health care and medical issues.

It is important, however, that we understand that lower literacy levels are not a reflection of overall intelligence - or of an elder's capacity to understand and learn. Simple, plain language materials, smart layout and presentation, and compelling messages can help to overcome these "literacy" hurdles. As well, the use of a variety of different communication approaches (many of which do not rely on document or prose literacy) is helpful when it comes to communicating with elder Canadians.

## **1 – 5.5      Conversational Challenges**

With normal aging, elders may have some difficulty understanding verbal or written material that is more complex in length and syntax. Comprehension is also complicated by cognitive, emotional, and sensory impairments. You may find that older individuals are less efficient in their communication, use more words and ambiguous words, and show less cohesion in their conversations. Some individuals tend to go off-topic, making efficient information exchange more difficult. To accommodate these changes, people working with elders should offer more clinical time to older adults. Reinforcing key words and summarizing topics helps to maintain topic cohesion. You also need to monitor your own nonverbal communication to avoid signaling impatience or annoyance.

Of critical importance with communicating with elders and those developing dementia is to avoid "elder speak," a style of condescending speech often used with older persons. Elder speak is characterized by slower rate, exaggerated intonation, elevated pitch and volume, greater repetition, use of diminutives and collective pronouns, and simpler vocabulary and grammar than is expected. It is frequently described as "singsong" or "child-like." Communication partners may think that such stylistic changes show warmth and facilitate communication with older people, but in fact, elders perceive them negatively and eventually withdraw and decline. The best way to avoid elder speak is to monitor one's own communication style with older individuals. Occasional audio/videotaping of interactions with older adults is an excellent monitoring strategy.

## **1 – 5.6      Sensory Changes**

Even healthy elders experience losses that can affect their capacity to receive and understand information. Any effective communication program that targets elders needs to take these changes into account.

Changes in both visual and auditory acuity can severely impact an elder's capacity to absorb information. These changes take place gradually and may be barely noticeable at first. A person may begin to have difficulty hearing clearly if a sound is above or below a certain pitch or if there is background noise. Initially an elder's sight might only be compromised in low light or when there is significant glare.

Physical changes include declines in flexibility, strength, speed of execution, fine motor control, hand-eye co-ordination, and sensitivity to touch. All of this can translate into difficulty manipulating controls and small objects (e.g., touch tone telephone buttons, keypads on automated banking machines, coin-operated devices, household electronics and appliances, etc.). Diseases such as arthritis, rheumatism and osteoporosis can also affect agility and mobility.

Given the above issues, effective communication can require patience and adapting tools and devices that accommodate physical challenges and dexterity. Using a variety of communication approaches, repeating key points, and checking for understanding are all useful when communicating with elders.

## **1 – 5.7      Visual Communication**

Elders may present with presbyopia, the age-related changes in near vision, or a variety of other age-related vision disorders, including macular degeneration, glaucoma, cataracts, or diabetic retinopathy. At age 60, about 1% of the population is visually impaired, but by age 80 this rate increases to 24% according to the Eye Digest. The degree of impairment ranges from mild (low vision) to blindness. In addition, some elders with neurological disorders (e.g., stroke or traumatic brain injury) may have vision difficulties. Reduced vision affects older adults' ability to see you, to identify nonverbal cues, and to see and respond to visual materials.

The first step in communicating with an elder with vision difficulties is to identify this issue at the outset. Approach the elder from the better vision side (if that is relevant) and introduce yourself. Ask where the best place is to stand or sit to promote visual access. Older people should be encouraged to wear corrective lenses that are clean and appropriately placed. Consider having some glass cleaner and wipes on hand in plain sight for them to use. Some elders may use "readers" for close reading. Older individuals with macular degeneration may take advantage of adequate peripheral vision and use "eccentric (side) viewing" to look at you.

Increased and consistent lighting is essential and should be from either natural sunlight or full-spectrum incandescent bulbs. Fluorescent lighting is less effective and prone to pulsing, irritating the senses. Task lighting on a table is helpful. Some individuals may have difficulty adjusting to lighting changes when transitioning from one area to another. They should be given time to adjust. Whenever possible, avoid shiny surfaces that reflect glare. Assistive vision devices should be available including handheld magnifiers (with or without attached lighting) or reading telescopes. Video magnifiers can project printed information onto a TV monitor or computer screen. Ensure the screen is large enough to optimize view. Also consider the use of wide-lined paper for writing and offer large felt tip pens.

Printed information presented or given to an elder should be clutter-free and have sharp color contrast between text and background. Print materials should use a large font size (at least 14 points) with adequate spacing between lines. Use 20-point font for main bullets in PowerPoint presentations and 18-point font for sub-points. Less is more in terms of content on the screen. Keep points well-spaced. Leverage imagery to make or emphasize a point.

The information should be written in jargon-free, common vocabulary with well-constructed sentences in an active voice. Information that is important to remember should be bolded, bulleted, or highlighted so that it stands out. Avoid all-cap text. More on this will be covered later in the chapter.

## **1 – 5.8      Hearing Issues**

**Presbycusis**, or hearing loss associated with aging generally beginning in one's 50s or 60s. It may affect up to 33% of those ages 65-74 and up to 50% of those over 75. This percentage increases for the very old (age 85 and older) and for those in long-term care. (National Council on Aging (NCOA; Mar. 11, 2024). It may be difficult to notice since the condition is frequently slow and gradual.

Hearing loss is the third most prevalent chronic condition in older adults and the most widespread disability. Aging is the number one cause of hearing loss in Canada. (McMaster Optimal Aging Port, 2020)

Unfortunately, two-thirds of older people with hearing loss do not wear a hearing aid. Unfortunately, incorrectly fitted hearing aids and using them improperly could potentially cause problems instead of solving them. There may be more damage to the auditory system if settings are too. If one hearing aid is used when two are recommended, the brain may be deprived of some of its ability to hear and interpret sounds.

There is reassuring news. 90% of older adults with hearing loss can improve communication with a properly fitted hearing aid, counselling, or environmental changes. (McMaster Optimal Aging Portal, accessed May 1, 2024)

People with this condition often feel that sounds are muffled and less clear and that people are mumbling. Think about getting plugged ears when you have been swimming or having too much wax buildup in your ears. Those conditions can usually be fixed quickly and easily.

Presbycusis results in the inability to understand comfortably loud speech, especially in a noisy background where a lot of people are talking at the same time and there is music., and in difficulty distinguishing high-pitched sounds or voices of children and women.

Conversations become hard to follow, let alone join in. This may cause you to avoid these situations because of the resulting frustration which in turn leads to less and more selective social interaction and a sense of being disconnected. Elders may begin worrying or wondering if their problem is one of hearing, attention span or memory. Even if hearing, attention span, concentration and recalling information do deteriorate or at least become progressively more challenging over time, elders have life advantages they can muster. They can use their knowledge, education and experience when they listen. They can compensate by relying on their improved ability to use context and knowledge of subjects and what's happening in the world around them when listening. This can help them stay more effectively engaged in social and business conversations, the news and activities.

**Tinnitus** also may be present, which is a persistent ringing or buzzing noise. Television volumes are turned up and it becomes harder to engage in phone conversations, precipitating feelings of isolation and loneliness.

### **1-5.9 Strategies for Communicating**

Strategies for communicating effectively with older persons with hearing loss begin with modifying the acoustical environment using soundproof materials and acoustic design and using vision-enhancing strategies. Ideally, personal hearing assistive technology will be available. Other strategies include coming into the visual field of the elder and announcing yourself to avoid startle. Ask to turn off a radio, television, or computer and avoid talking in the presence of competing noise. Encourage those who have a hearing aid to use it. Be sure the device battery is working, and the device is inserted properly and turned on.

In all cases, face the elder while talking and be sure that your face is well-lit and easy to see. Lighting strategies for those with vision impairment also assist those with hearing impairment. If the patient has accompanying low vision, ask where the best place for you is to position yourself so that your face is visible. Use natural volume, intonation, and gestures. Prime the elder with the topic to be discussed. Use well-constructed but not overly lengthy sentences that avoid the use of unclear pronouns. Build in pauses to facilitate comprehension and allow the patient to ask questions. Check occasionally for understanding and be prepared to repeat or rephrase. Remember that at least 21% of older adults present with both hearing and vision loss. Once again, more strategies to assist you in communicating with an elder with a hearing loss will be discussed later.

**Table 1-3      Sensory Changes That Affect Communication**

<b>Sensory Change</b>	<b>Types of Communication Affected</b>
<b>Visual Acuity</b>	Printed materialsProduct labels Signage (public buildings, street signs) Televised information
<b>Hearing Acuity</b>	Interpersonal communication Public address systems Telephone Television and radio
<b>Agility, Mobility, Touch</b>	Push-button telephoneBanking machines Kits (to be assembled)Product packaging Opportunities to see billboards, public transit ads, etc.

### **1 - 5.10      Outdated Assumptions**

Most of the discussion above focuses on the physical and cognitive changes that impact an elder's ability to receive and process information. While these changes can represent major barriers to communication, they are not the most significant barrier.

The biggest barrier to effective elder communication is the outdated assumptions that most of us tend to make about elders and the elder market. We live in a "youth" oriented culture. Marketers have historically focused almost all their attention on the age 15 to 45 demographic. As a result, as a society, we simply do not know that much about elders.

And much of what we do know is wrong!

The first rule, when it comes to effective communication, is... *know your audience*.

It is all about them. Without a clear understanding of who the audience for a message is, it is impossible to put together an effective communication.

**Table 1-4      Communication Barriers and Solutions**

<b>Potential Barriers to Communication</b>	<b>Possible Solutions</b>
Outdated assumptions about elders' lifestyles, interests, capacities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Stay in touch through research, focus groups, talking to your elder clients and customers.</li><li>❖ Establish partnerships with elders' groups</li></ul>
Physical, cognitive, and sensory changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Explore alternative formats and communication methods (large print, audio and video cassette, personal contact, assistive listening devices)</li></ul>
Communication materials not suited to the audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Use advisory committees to guide development of materials.</li><li>❖ Test materials before use.</li><li>❖ Work with agencies such as the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, and literacy organizations.</li></ul>

## **1 - 6      SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION KEYS**

As noted, the first "key" to successful communication is simply to know your audience extremely well. As part of this process, it makes sense to spend some time putting yourself in your audience's shoes:

- ❖ What does your audience already know, and what things does it want to know?
- ❖ What vital bits of information - things that they "need to know" - aren't even on your audience's radar screens yet?
- ❖ Should you try to meet all your audience's information needs at once - or should you be selective about the information and messages you choose to convey?

It makes a lot of sense to use a Socratic approach. Ask a lot of questions, just as

journalists do ... and then gather and organize the information that is provided. Far too many elder advisors spend too much time talking and not enough time listening. If you truly want to get to know your audience, they should be doing most of the talking in any face-to-face interactions.

If you listen well to what your audience is saying you will get a very good sense of what drives them (e.g., values, issues, concerns, fears, dreams, etc.).

Armed with this information it will be relatively easy to put together communications - specific to the audience - that are both interesting and compelling. Remember to keep the content of your initial messages short and simple - never try to force too much complex information into a single communication. Once you have got them hooked, more elaborate and detailed communications can follow.

Overly complex communications merely confuse the reader. In fact, too much information is sometimes worse than too little. In written communications, a "wall of words" will quickly intimidate elders with low literacy skills. You should keep these things in mind when preparing - not just printed material - but any communication (e.g., a web site, a radio spot, a seminar, etc.).

## **1 - 6.1 Additional Communication Tips**

- ❖ Speak to the elder as a fellow adult. Never talk down to elders, be or sound patronizing. Don't treat them like children or remind them of their age (most do not consider themselves to be "old"). Remember that physical, sensory, or cognitive impairments does not lessen their maturity or intelligence.
- ❖ As much as is possible avoid the use of terms like "senior citizen" - and certainly never apply terms of this nature to younger elders (e.g., younger boomers and older Gen Xers)
- ❖ Stick to the facts when you are profiling a product or service. Avoid overly busy brochures and web site formats.
- ❖ Use plain language. Avoid initialisms, acronyms and industry jargon.
- ❖ Ask open-ended questions. Regularly check with them that they understand by asking them what they understand versus if they understand. Genuinely listen
- ❖ Speak with them face to face at eye level, as noted earlier. Make sure they can hear you. Speak clearly, well-paced and in a normal tone versus a raised voice which some may interpret as anger or frustration. Adjust the speed and tone depending on the specific elder
- ❖ Be sensitive to cultural differences that can affect communication with your clients. Provide professional translation services and written materials in different languages for targeted clients and their families.
- ❖ Avoid "hype" at all costs. Most elders have "seen it all" and they possess a healthy skepticism.
- ❖ Focus on winning over elders gradually. You will have to gain their trust before they will do business with you.
- ❖ Make sure any product pitches have "elder appeal." Health tips, suggestions on how to manage retirement assets, information on low-cost travel, assistance with buying quality gifts for their grandchildren, are good examples. Other great topics: the low-down on the best places to retire, products that make it easier for elders to function in their own homes, and opportunities to save money and earn extra income.
- ❖ Always provide a phone number, an address, email or a web site so that the audience can gather more information when it is convenient for them - and in a manner that is convenient for them.

### **1-6.2 Additional Nonverbal Communication tips**

- ❖ Banish small type sizes, garish colours, and gratuitous design elements (e.g., flash, or slow-loading graphics on web sites)
- ❖ Make elder clients comfortable. Ensure easy access to your office, chairs that they can easily get into and rise from (higher, armchairs); incandescent, well-placed lighting, reduced background noise; well-lit surroundings, including parking.
- ❖ Use realistic - but positive images - of elders. Show people with grey hair and wrinkles but have them doing something active.
- ❖ Attitude: be friendly, kind, sincere and respectful; avoid being impatient, indifferent or contemptuous
- ❖ Eye contact: keep eye contact
- ❖ Facial expression: reflect different moods and can give different, perhaps unintended perceptions
- ❖ Posture and gesture: e.g., nodding, appropriate movements, appropriate positioning of chairs/seating
- ❖ Appropriate arrangement of time (daytime preferred, no evening driving on dark streets or highways)
- ❖ Reduce the noise and disturbance in the area where communicating and interacting
- ❖ Touch: e.g., holding hands, patting the hand, embracing (Caution: apply the skill of touch appropriately and reservedly, taking into consideration the elder's gender, state of mind, mental and physical health and your relationship with him/her, surroundings and presence of other people. Ask and re-ask permission.)
- ❖ Use of visual aids, diagrams, pictures and actual objects to help clarify and reinforce points being made
- ❖ Give them relevant content and be mindful of their interests and preferences. Older people are avid readers and will appreciate the information you provide. There is nothing wrong with lots of content, provided it is well written and interesting. Print out takeaway points and have pen and paper on hand for them to do the same during the meeting.

### **1-6.3 Additional Communication Tips With Elders Displaying Dementia**

- ❖ Maintain a positive communicative tone when speaking in terms of style, words and volume
- ❖ Avoid speaking too slowly.
- ❖ Pose different types of questions to elders, including open and closed questions, according to conversational goals.
- ❖ Simplify sentences when communicating, by describing the subject first, then the verb and then the object with additional information about the subject, a technique referred to as using right branching sentences. (e.g., The cat slept on the doorstep of the house in which it lived.)
- ❖ Use verbatim repetition or paraphrase sentences to facilitate comprehension.



#### **1-6.4 Building and Maintaining Trust**

As noted by Peter Wouters in a number of presentations and articles, For customers today, it's about building trust, from their perspective.

Consider these questions. What are your clients' expectations? What are their experiences? What is the gap between the two? Do you really know? How often do you measure it?

These points become more important as clients age.

For instance, 61% of the underinsured ranked trust tops in deciding from whom to buy and if they will be buying at all. ("Pre-Retirees: Advice on Their Own Terms," LIMRA 2015)

The payoff to you, the product and service provider is quite large and can be quite satisfying in building your brand and image. Satisfied customers are happy to help you get more clients, particularly when they are women. Generally, women will share their experiences more than men will ... and in more detail.

Prospective purchasers rely on friends and family for references, impetus to act (47%). What brand and experience are they recommending? (Michael Cafferky, Let Your Customers do the Talking.)

Word of mouth marketing is considered to be the most important and compelling form of marketing communications. It is perceived to be credible, trustworthy and without hidden motives – "What's more, recipients of word-of-mouth messages typically pass them on to other people they know." (Michael Cafferky, Let Your Customers do the Talking.)

The real key is to become referable – that's the next evolution of referrals. For example, more and more women taking over businesses or key functions – who really makes decisions in the couple or group? Do you actively engage them both? Do you recognize who the doorkeepers are even if not in the room? How do you get them engaged? Do they trust you? Why? And how much?

#### **1-7 PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS**

While the many communication challenges that elders, experience are a strong argument in favour of a multi-faceted, multi-media communications strategy - one simple approach does stand out: face-to-face, one-on-one, personal contact. No other approach even comes close to being as effective. Again, the definition and acceptance of what constitutes this has changed due to the experiences during the Pandemic. Face-to-face, one-on-one can be virtual facetime on a screen. It works for social and business interactions, making the world more accessible to more people.

A variety of research confirms that personal contact is not just the best approach - it is also the preferred source of information, even among elders who are skilled readers. This holds doubly true when it comes to information that has an impact on an elder's well-being and quality of life (e.g., information on health, pensions, social entitlements, investment options, and travel and recreational opportunities).

Consider the following tips when communicating with elders. Exercise patience, compassion and understanding. Ask what they want instead of telling them what they will get. Provide simple choices and offer them whenever possible. While on the subject of asking, don't assume that the elder will be fine with what is being done or not done. Ask permission and then explain why you may need to go ahead despite their objection. All of this gives the elder a sense of control, respect and independence.

### **1-7.1 A Two-Way Street**

Interpersonal communication should also be a two-way street. It is not just about distributing information - but also a way to check for comprehension, to let clients ask questions in order to clarify and enhance understanding. And, most importantly, it needs to represent their needs, feelings and well-being so that action will be taken by them and for them. Medical professionals, legal counsel, financial advisors, and other professionals all need to be skilled in promoting effective dialogue and discussion. Wherever possible, elder communication should involve an exchange of information. Clients and customers should be able to express thoughts and feelings and convey objective information about their personal situation. The listener must be skilled in interpreting gestures, words, and behaviour, and observing verbal and non-verbal messages. And they must then provide appropriate responses built on the client's needs, preferences and priorities.

### **1-7.2 Key Informants**

In some circumstances, meeting the people that elders trust and pay attention to (they are sometimes referred to as *key informants*) may be required. Research has found that when elders need advice, or help with a problem, they do not necessarily turn to "formal" information sources. Instead, they often turn to informal information networks such as family members and trusted friends and neighbours.

Researchers speculate that the fact that elders are reluctant to use formal information sources may relate to certain communication barriers. *Among them:*

- ❖ Frustration using automated telephone systems.
- ❖ Difficulty hearing over the telephone
- ❖ The impersonal nature of dealing with someone over the telephone, particularly if providing personal information.
- ❖ Difficulties interpreting materials that are supplied by formal sources.
- ❖ Approaches by you that don't seem to focus on them, their interests and their priorities consistently and holistically.

### **1-7.3 Group Meetings**

We have already noted the advantages of meeting with elders face-to-face, one-on-one. Unfortunately, this approach is extremely time intensive.

The good news is that group meetings, if properly structured, can offer most of the advantages of personal contact (e.g., opportunities for questions, dialogue, and an exchange of ideas). Meetings of this nature can, therefore, be an effective way to leverage your time. Group meetings, if planned carefully, can be a practical way to convey information to groups of elders (at an elders' centre, library, community centre, retirement home or in an apartment or condominium complex with a large elder population). They are also a great way to market your services and establish your first contact with individual elders.

The Covid-19 Pandemic opened our collective eyes to the power and comfort level with on-line interaction in business. Technology and legal progress leveraged the power of digital to permit the completion of documents and sharing of written information in real time. Surprisingly for many, elders adapted quickly and came to prefer this type of interaction to in-person meetings, particularly in wintertime, shorter daylight hours or inclement weather. Parties who are important to discussions and decisions can join together virtually, regardless of location. Demand for frequency of communication with service providers went up, while demand for in person meetings dropped, a benefit to elders and service providers alike.

Meetings of this nature work well because of their emphasis on exchanging information orally and doing it in a comfortable social setting. They also offer elders an opportunity to compare notes after the fact (with other attendees) and confirm or clarify the information that they received.

### **1-7.4 Telephone**

After face-to-face contact, and group meetings, the next most effective way to communicate with elders is on the telephone. The telephone does, of course, pose some challenges. It is not nearly as intense a medium as face-to-face contact and many elders have difficulty following telephone conversations.

Nonetheless it does offer many of the advantages of face-to-face personal contact: there is an opportunity for dialogue, the elder can ask questions and seek clarification, and the pace can be adjusted to suit the elder's needs.

Also keep in mind that many elders are quite adept at using the phone, regularly relying on it to stay in touch with family and friends and maintain social networks.

### **1-7.5 Television and Video**

Some elders watch a lot of television, but the television messages they receive may not always be effective. Television is a fast-paced medium that does not allow viewers to set the pace at which they acquire information. This will affect many elders' ability to absorb the information presented and retain it for future reference. Consequentially, some special care should be exerted in designing television messages that target elders.

If you wish to communicate using television, community-run cable stations or community access programs are a good place to start. The costs are minimal and many of the programs run by these stations (e.g., local news, health, and travel content) are of significant interest to elder audiences.

Also, wise use of community programming can be an effective way of overcoming some of the literacy barriers that exist among certain segments of the elder population.

Videotape can also be used as an alternative form of communication, but as with television, special care must be taken. Attention must be given to the types of voices used, the speed of message delivery, repetition of key points, avoidance of background noise, and use of graphics and action sequences to "show" rather than "tell" the viewer.

If you choose to use television or videotape to convey your message, it is a good idea to include captioning (open or closed) to ensure that elders with compromised hearing are not excluded.

## **1-7.6 Radio**

Surveys on elders' preferred methods of receiving information show that radio is not high on the list for most. Like television, radio is a fast-paced medium where listeners generally must acquire information at the pace set by the broadcast.

Nevertheless, certain segments of the elder population - particularly those with declining visual acuity - are avid radio listeners. Elders who struggle to read the newspaper often turn to the radio to stay abreast of current events and community affairs.

A radio message must be designed carefully, keeping in mind that an elder's ability to hear and understand the message is affected by the pitch of an announcer's voice, the speed at which the message is delivered, and the presence of any distracting background sound.

## **1-7.7 Public Address Systems**

Airports, bus and train stations, hospitals, and shopping malls all use public address (PA) systems to inform visitors. Some have audio/visual displays as well.

Unfortunately, many of these attempts at communication fail miserably - especially for elders. There is almost always a lot of background noise, messages are often garbled, and the announcers sometimes speak too fast.

The softer consonants (e.g., "s" and "f") can be particularly confusing for someone with reduced hearing, especially if words are not pronounced distinctly. Given the poor quality of many PA systems, often even a hearing aid is of little help. On a smaller scale, think of people's experiences with many drive-through fast food places.

Public audio/visual displays should also be designed carefully, to ensure that messages are clear, are repeated often, and that text does not scroll by too rapidly.

The Vancouver International Airport provides a good example of how to do things right. They have a specially designed "elder friendly" PA system and flight information displays are equipped with telephone access for those who have difficulty reading the displays.

PA speakers are installed at 15-foot intervals, so that announcements can be broadcast at lower volume. This makes the message more intelligible - especially for anyone using a hearing aid. Many announcements are delivered both verbally and visually on a board or video display. Check-in counters are also equipped with telephone handsets to amplify conversations between passengers and counter staff. Designing universally friendly PA systems also means supplementing them with clear signs and other visual cues to help visitors navigate through the facility. The issue is not only conveying information, but also assuring safety and security.

## **1-7.8 Non-verbal Communication**

Most of the discussion above focuses on verbal communication. It is important to remember that non-verbal cues also play a part in the communication process. When a communicator can be both heard and seen by the listener (e.g., face-to-face interaction, television) he or she must pay attention to non-verbal messages. If nonverbal messages are consistent with the verbal communication it can make the message delivered much more effective. If there is some conflict - nonverbal communication can undermine what is being said.

**Table 1-5 Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication Cues**

<b>Verbal Communication</b>	<b>Nonverbal Communication</b>
Ask the person to list questions or concerns before an office visit	Avoid establishing physical barriers between you and the client
Ask the person how they prefer you to address them (Mrs., first name...)	Remain seated during the conversation
Use open-ended questions to elicit information	Show courteous attention; demonstrate interest in what they are saying
Summarize information from the client to check your comprehension of the facts	Show (do not just tell) the client how to do something
Avoid formality and professional jargon; speak to the person's level of vocabulary and understanding	Maintain eye contact; communicate occasionally through touch if appropriate

Offer checklists or other plain-language material to back up oral instructions	Avoid doodling or fiddling.
Make sure your client has understood what you said by asking them for their understanding.	Stay alert to non-verbal clues that contradict or supplement verbal communication
Client does not understand - rephrase the sentence; do not repeat the words or say them louder.	Stay focused on the client; do not consult your schedule or your watch

## 1-8 EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

What would be the ideal split between you speaking and the client speaking? And what should be the focus of the conversation, especially in early sessions?

Target a 20:80 split. That means you spend 20% of the time talking and let the client spend the vast majority, upwards of 80% of the time talking. They leave the session feeling that they have been heard that they have had lots of airtime.

And what should the conversation be about in terms of the split between the problem or issue and the solution? Here again, target 80% of the time focusing on the issue and problem and 20% of the time to talking about the solution. The client again should feel that the focus was on them and their issues. The problem was the most important item and the more it was the focus of attention, the more likely emotion will be drawn into the thought process and a need to deal with the problem will grow. The client is far less likely to think that this meeting was all about the sales pitch and how to get out of it. It's more about this - Is there a way to deal with the issue and problem and do you have a solution or alternatives that can work based on a well discussed problem.

Your communication about your solutions: the services and products you offer, programs that fit the problem at hand will be much better received and effective since, in the mind of the client, they reflect their needs. The products and services should make sense, in fact common sense if positioned in language, terminology and methodology that is age friendly and customized for the customer.

Lack of communication and listening skills plus performance and cost, drive discontent and clients leaving an advisor ("Why people leave advisors, retrieved July 8, 2022). What's more, they are unlikely to come back.

## **1-9 PRINT COMMUNICATION**

Print communication has the advantage of allowing skilled readers to absorb information at their own pace and to retain the item for future reference. Print can also be tailored for an audience with more limited literacy skills through plain language, design, and message development. Elders still tend to receive information through traditional print and broadcast media, though the former is getting scarcer as community newspapers go out of business or move to on-line service offerings where elders can read from their computers or devices.

Keep in mind that any attempt at simplifying the material (large letters, simple words, etc.) will make your message available to a wider audience. Your print material must invite readers to begin reading, and your writing style must make it easy for them to get the message.

As you have seen, however, written material—even plain-language material designed for maximum readability—is not always an elder's preferred information source.

Moreover, written material may be of limited use to reach people with low literacy skills or limited vision, or to communicate with members of cultural communities who are literate in a mother tongue but not in English or French. Before printing leaflets, placing notices or advertising in newspapers and magazines, consider your audience and whether this method is likely to reach it.

Finally, if print documents are the chosen medium for your message, consider conveying the information in large print or in alternative formats, such as Braille, audio or video cassettes, computer diskette, etc. Providing information in print alone means you may miss large segments of your target audience.

Some additional guidelines with respect to the creation of printed materials follow.

### **1-9.1 Tone**

Depending on the nature of the communication piece, you will have to decide what tone is most appropriate - formal or informal; conversational or more reserved? The style you adopt should suit the message, the audience, the medium ... and it should reflect positively on your organization.

Whenever possible you should adopt an informal, conversational tone in developing materials for elders. It is easier to read and is more likely to endear you to your audience. Depending on the message, humour may even be appropriate. Humour can be a stress reducer, encourage your reader to relax, and it can help register important information in the reader's mind. However, make sure you are not flippant or patronizing and never assume familiarity.

## **1-9.2 Vocabulary**

Again, vocabulary should match the message and the audience. In almost all situations, short, simple, familiar words are best. Avoid professional, technical, academic, and other jargon, as well as unfamiliar acronyms, initialisms and abbreviations.

## **1-9.3 Language Level**

Nearly half of Canadians experience significant difficulties with reading, and this percentage is much higher among elders and Canadians whose mother tongue is neither English nor French. The same percentage “does not reach a level of literacy that can “disregard irrelevant or inappropriate content” to accurately answer questions about something they have read.” (Nearly half of adult Canadians struggle with literacy — and that's bad for the economy, CBC, Jan. 17, 2021)

Readability tests are available to determine the grade level of text but testing the message with your audience is always the best indicator of how reader friendly it is. You may wish to contact literacy groups in your area.

Keep in mind that even prestigious publications like the Wall Street Journal use language and sentence construction that is at a *grade eight level*. To be professional, you do not have to be complicated.

## **1-9.4 Presentation**

Effective, logical organization and presentation of your material tells your audience that you have given some thought to the way your message is presented.

Page after page of densely packed type—even if it is written plainly and clearly, may not be as effective as a pamphlet with big bold headings and checklists highlighting or recapping key information.

## **1-9.5 Structure**

A simple structure supports a cleanly delivered message - no matter what medium you are using. If you have ever tried to navigate a multi-layered web site or an automated answering system with multiple menu choices, you will appreciate the benefits of a simple structure.

## **1-9.6 Testing**

This is the best way to see whether you have hit the mark in terms of language, style, presentation, and overall effectiveness.

Real users—ideally members of your intended audience—are the best judges, and materials should be tested in real-life situations.



For the best results, try to replicate the conditions under which your message will be communicated or used (i.e., At home, a noisy and crowded bus station, a doctor's office, a commercial establishment filled with many other customers, etc.).

## **1-9.7 Effective Design**

Once you have decided on content, you will want to present the information in a way that helps promote the message and does not detract from readability and comprehension.

The "look" of your communication is a design issue that includes organizing the content effectively.

To some extent, content and design are interrelated and should proceed in parallel. There is no point writing 2,000 words, for instance, if you have decided that the best medium for your message is a 4-panel brochure or perhaps an infographic. Some preliminary design work will help you determine how many words you can fit on each panel, whether that is enough to convey everything you want to say, whether another vehicle might be better suited to your message, or whether your message is the right one for the situation.

Some of the rules and guidelines governing effective print design are covered in the bulleted list below. The product of research and experience these guidelines recommend the ideal size, font style, and spacing in printed materials. They also make recommendations with respect to colour contrast, length of line, and use of white space.

Many of these guidelines also apply to other media, including the design of web sites and online documentation. Fine print is no easier to read on a computer screen than it is in the telephone directory or at the bottom of an insurance claim form!

## **1-9.8 Print Design Checklist**

- ❖ Understand how type, headline placement, and use of certain colours can enhance or inhibit communication
- ❖ 12-point type is the minimum size for eyes that are middle-aged and older, and 14 point is better still.
- ❖ Choose a plain, clear typeface with a reputation for readability (Helvetica, Times New Roman, Arial, or Gothic are usually recommended)
- ❖ Dark print on a light background is the easiest to read; avoid "dropped out" or "reverse" lettering (where text is white on a light-colored background; Certain colours like combining yellow and red, read poorly as do the colours yellow and lime green on light or white backgrounds) Science News posted that the rate of people having significant problems with color increases rapidly past age 70. 50% or more of those elder ran into problems with blue-yellow colors. Ageing changes in the eyes make colour differentiation more challenging.
- ❖ Avoid using all italics, all capitals, and too much underlined type.
- ❖ Set text flush left and ragged right.

- ❖ Leave wide margins and space between paragraphs to avoid crowding text or cramming too much information on a page.
- ❖ Choose a comfortable line length based on the size of the document – on 8½" x 11" paper, two columns are preferable.
- ❖ Matte, non-glossy paper, and ink improve legibility by reducing glare.
- ❖ Use high-definition photographs or illustrations.
- ❖ Avoid using wavy lines or dots. These can be hard on the eyes because they swim on the page.

### **1-9.9 Plain Language Checklist**

The following checklist provides a summary of the material covered in the previous four pages. It should serve as a handy reference piece to be consulted whenever printed materials are to be produced.

- ❖ Attract the reader with a catchy title and pleasant concept.
- ❖ Highlight main ideas and important information with headings, point form and boldface type.
- ❖ Use familiar words and a conversational, personal tone.
- ❖ Use action verbs and active construction, not passive (For example, use "Ask your doctor for instructions" rather than "This medication is to be taken under the instruction of a physician")
- ❖ Favour short words and short sentences use short paragraphs.
- ❖ Banish small print. It is the number one complaint of elders and aging Gen Xers and boomers.
- ❖ Proceed logically, with the most important ideas first, and linked from one paragraph to the next
- ❖ Read it aloud – if you must pause for a breath in the middle of a sentence, it is too long. You are making your reader work too hard to understand your point.
- ❖ Write the way you speak. Put yourself in your reader's shoes. Watch out for bureaucratic or patronizing language.
- ❖ Check jargon at the door – show respect for your readers and your message by expressing it in words everyone can understand. Jargon, abbreviations, initialisms and acronyms have no place in universally friendly materials.
- ❖ Use concrete examples to illustrate ideas or concepts.
- ❖ Present ideas with illustrations or diagrams if this makes them easier to understand.
- ❖ Let readers know immediately who is doing what.

### **1-9.10 Forms**

Particular attention must be paid to the construction of forms. Most large organizations—governments, health care facilities, financial institutions, insurance companies—use forms to communicate and exchange information with clients and customers. Unfortunately, the results are not always satisfying. Forms are regularly filled out incorrectly or incompletely. Not only can this affect an individual's entitlement to health care, social benefits, and income - it is also a source of huge human resource costs for business and government.

Extra time must be spent answering phone calls from confused customers and in returning incomplete - or improperly completed - forms for more information. These errors also result in additional printing and postage expenses.

Most current forms are decidedly "elder unfriendly." The typical form uses small print, line spacing is very tight, it is jammed with information, leaves little room for responses, and has a complex - not necessarily intuitive - design. For elders with poor vision and compromised motor skills, forms of this nature are a disaster waiting to happen. They make an elder feel demeaned, inadequate, helpless and frustrated.

### **1-9.11 Signage**

A lot of current signage is also problematic. "Public" print—direction, street and warning signs, video displays giving schedules and other information, transit ads, and so forth—also require careful attention to design if they are to be effective for elders. Their size and location, the colour and size of type used, the colour of the background and the contrast between print and background, as well as the potential for glare from nearby light sources; can affect their ability to communicate clearly with elders and others with low or declining vision.

In addition, some colour combinations (for example, the commonly used red on black, red, or yellow) do not provide enough contrast to be legible by people with low vision.

### **1-9.12 Packaging and Labelling**

Special attention also needs to be paid to packaging and labelling to ensure that it meets the needs of the elder market.

*The following checklist covers many of the things that need to be taken into consideration:*

- ❖ Does your company have a clear policy of designing and using packaging that takes into account the needs of older consumers?
- ❖ Are there clear instructions explaining the product's use, including large print and illustrations?
- ❖ Do the instructions include safety and hazard warnings? Are labels, instructions, and warnings written in non-technical language?
- ❖ Have you focus-tested the labelling and instructions with elder consumers?
- ❖ Is packaging easy to open, not demanding extra strength or dexterity?
- ❖ Are packaging, labelling, and instructions printed in at least 12-point (14 point preferred) with sharp contrast between background and foreground (at least a 70% difference)?

### **1-9.13        Photos**

When portraying elders in photos, remember that the elders of today are different and diverse - and they will not likely respond well to the old stereotypes. Communication experts strongly believe that things like rocking chairs and golf courses should be banished from the photographs that you use. This sensitivity to the images that are used will likely become even more important - as the baby boomers enter their elder years *enmasse*.

*Some additional tips when it comes to the use of photographs follow.*

- ❖ Use photos that show elders being active.
- ❖ Show a mixed group of friends, and not just couples.
- ❖ Use intergenerational images such as grandparents and grandchildren.
- ❖ Show photos of people at a variety of ages.
- ❖ Most importantly, tailor photos to the audience (age, gender)
- ❖ Show cultural and ethnic diversity.

## **1-10        AUTOMATED COMMUNICATIONS**

The design of bank machines and other automated services (such as museum displays and government kiosks dispensing information and license renewals) should take into account the sensory, mobility, and agility challenges associated with aging. Design considerations include not only physical specifications (i.e., height, glare reduction on screens, size of buttons, and screen messages), but also the communication or interaction between the customer/client and the machine. Attention should be paid to the vocabulary used in visual or oral messages, the length of time required to grasp the message and to react by pushing the appropriate button.

Some banks, for example, have introduced audio banking at some locations. Their ATMs are equipped with headphones for use by clients with low vision. Plans are also in place to make bank machines more accessible to people with a variety of disabilities (lower height, adjustable screens, larger buttons, etc.).

### **1-10.1        Telephone Systems**

Elders are particularly challenged by automated telephone systems. These systems are often extremely difficult to navigate, they often demand very rapid responses, and in many cases they make it hard - sometimes impossible - to connect with a real person. Given the choice, elders would much rather speak to a real person than silicone Sally. Other problems also crop up. Some elders are still using rotary phones. Others have difficulty pushing the buttons on phone keypads. And still others have difficulty hearing. In short, for many elders, the telephone is not a particularly appropriate communication medium at the best of times. Forcing them to use a complex automated telephone system merely adds to the nightmare.

*In developing an automated telephone system all the following should be taken into consideration:*

- ❖ Does your phone system invite callers to talk to a real person without waiting for endless messages and menu choices?
- ❖ Does the system accommodate rotary phones?
- ❖ Are the instructions on your automated answering system, spoken clearly and slowly, with options to repeat a menu?
- ❖ Does your message start by advising callers to have a pen and paper handy?
- ❖ Does your system provide for teletypewriter users (to accommodate callers who are deaf or hard of hearing)?
- ❖ Does the system give callers the option of leaving a message and having someone return the call?
- ❖ Is there an enforced policy that someone picks up the phone after just a few rings?

## **1-10.2 Digital vs. Human**

Vast advances have been made in technology. Technology is leveraging all available data and providing analytics and answers at lightning speed and doing so consistently. It's increasingly hard for humans to compete with this. Recognize the very human element and the role that emotions play in decision making. It's not all about logic. A machine may answer the question; how is my portfolio doing. A human can reach out and ask; how are you doing?

Rather than look at going digital as taking you out of a job, think of it as helping you define who you are now and who you will be, using technology to do much of the lower paying work faster, cheaper and more consistently. Remember, what you think is value added may not be the same as what your clients view as value. And what they view is what counts. Leverage communication to your advantage.

## **1-11 COMMUNICATION APPROACHES**

When it comes to communication messages, format, medium and content - there are lots of choices to be made. Selecting the appropriate medium for your audience, fashioning a message that is well suited to it, and structuring the message to ensure that it can be communicated effectively are just a few of the things that need to be done.

*Communicating well generally involves asking yourself (and possibly your elder advisory panel) a variety of crucial questions:*

- ❖ Is this the most suitable way of communicating this message to this audience?
- ❖ How can we structure the message and use the medium in ways our audience will appreciate and be receptive to?
- ❖ What are the characteristics of this medium that we can take advantage of to make sure our message comes across effectively?

- ❖ Does the concept you have chosen accommodate large print? Will it also work well in alternative formats, such as audio or video cassette or Braille?

You should also remember that many successful approaches to communication are not necessarily complex. A variety of simple and inexpensive "elder friendly" approaches can work incredibly well. *Things like:*

- ❖ A bookmark with library hours printed in large type.
- ❖ A fridge magnet with emergency numbers
- ❖ A pre-printed grocery list that highlights nutritional guidelines
- ❖ Peel-off stickers to be placed on a calendar as "memory joggers."
- ❖ Simple clock and calendar outlines as reminders for appointments and medication schedule

Also bear in mind that if communicating in "plain language" is one of your goals and it should be, you also need to ensure that the approach and content chosen can accommodate this. Plain language is difficult to impose retroactively. If you start with a complex message, it may be difficult, if not impossible, to convert or translate it into plain language after the fact. One sign of an individual who really understands how a product or service can resonate with a client is to be able to explain it in a simple, relatable way that the client can remember and identify with in their life or particular circumstances.

## **1-12 PRACTICAL APPLICATION**

Much of the above material focuses on communication theory. In the material that follows we will look at how this theory can be applied in a practical way - in the financial services industry (one of the worst offenders when it comes to elder communication).

To effectively communicate with elders, you must: demonstrate that you are interested in them; maintain your visibility; target your materials; keep things simple; and address the client's "life goals."

### **1-12.1 Demonstrate That "It's Not About the Money"**

One of the things that you can do to demonstrate that "it's not about the money" is to regularly send out non-financial information to your clients. Suspending your Own Self-interest (the S.O.S. principle) reinforces your identity as someone who is interested in life planning, before financial planning, and who really cares about the client.

Even though your clients may not be interested in everything you send, by distributing materials that do not directly relate to selling financial products, you plant an important message in their brains. They start to think, "this person really is interested in me rather than my money" - and this helps take the relationship to the level of partner rather than a supplier / client.

This can include connecting people with people who provide services they need and know you don't provide. The service providers may be your clients. Think about plumbers, electricians, handymen and women, lawyers, realtors, decluttering specialists and the list goes on.

## 1-12.2 Maintain Visibility

People need you and your services the most when they are undergoing significant changes in their lives. Unfortunately, much of this change is entirely unpredictable - which is why you should always strive to be at "the top of their mind." You want them to make you the "first call" they make when life sends them a curve ball.

Not only do you want to be top of mind, but you will also want to position yourself as a holistic lifestyle planner or part of a team that provides this type of all-encompassing service. This helps to further ensure that you will be the one they turn to when they need someone or something. Keep in mind that being "top of mind" is not dependent solely on face-to-face contact. A variety of different media can be used to help keep you in the forefront.

Some of the tools that progressive advisors use to maintain contact and visibility are covered in the following table.

**Table 1-6 Tools of Communications Strategy**

<b>Communications Method</b>	<b>Importance in Your Practice</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Your Plan</b>
Pre-Meeting Package		As needed	
Focused client-educations workshops		Bi-weekly	
Public seminars		Quarterly	
Update letters (can be delivered electronically)		As needed, at least monthly	
Regular statements		Quarterly	
Client appreciation events		Semi-annually	
Regular phone calls		At least monthly for 'A's and 'B's	
Regular review meetings		Quarterly for 'A's and 'B's, semi-annually for the rest	
Brochures		Replace business cards	
Newsletters		Quarterly	
Web site		On-going	

### **1-12.3 Target Your Materials**

Not only do you need to "touch" your clients with regularity - but you also need to ensure that your materials are appropriately targeted. All the communication pieces that you create should have a common look and feel. As well, they should all be written to appeal to the reader's "right brain." The life-focused financial advisor understands the role that emotion plays in a client's decision-making - so everything that you write should elicit an emotional response from the reader. This can be accomplished by ensuring that all your advertising, client letters, newsletters, and your web site cover not just what you do, but also how it can make a difference in a client's life.

### **1-12.4 Keep It Simple**

All your information should be conveyed in client-friendly terms and phrases. The use of acronyms, industry buzzwords or other "left-brain" terms that do not immediately resonate with a client should be used minimally or eliminated. They only serve to make you look and sound just like everybody else and out of touch with them.

Most clients have become so inured to financial jargon that they have started to tune it out. Unfortunately, most advisors still believe that the more knowledgeable and puffier they sound the more the client will respect them. But clients just want somebody who can help make sense of things for them. Your role should always try to "connect the dots" in your communications. Even if you feel that the client can already "connect the dots," do it for them anyway. Despite our preconceptions, many clients, regardless of background or education do not "get it."

### **1-12.5 Focus on Life Goals**

The real objective of many of your services is to help clients to achieve their goals which may include life goals. Your products and services have a cost of investment incurred by the client. As Bill Bachrach says, "it's not what money is, but what money does." For those in the financial services business, in repositioning yourself as a life-focused planner, you will want to ensure that any of your discussions around money look radically different from those of your competitors. You can accomplish this by tying financial choices to lifestyle objectives.



## **1-12.6 Words and Phrases That Work**

Most of the terminology used in the financial services sector, for example, simply does not work anymore. *In reviewing your own material, pay close attention to your use of the following words and phrases:*

- ❖ Financial
- ❖ Financial planning & Wealth Management
- ❖ Money
- ❖ Insurance

All these words and phrases have been overused - and are no longer effective in describing what you do. Worse, most clients do not have a clue what you are talking about - and none of these words or phrases are likely to resonate with them.

Consider using some of the more "life-focused" examples.

### **"Financial Planning" Alternatives:**

- ❖ Clarifying your life goals
- ❖ Meeting your lifestyle and retirement needs
- ❖ Helping you create a legacy.
- ❖ Building a better future

### **"Investment Plan" Alternatives:**

- ❖ Growing assets without compromising security
- ❖ Establishing the financial foundation that you need
- ❖ Generating income from assets
- ❖ Keeping you plans current.
- ❖ Helping you keep as much of your money as possible.

### **"Retirement" Alternatives:**

- ❖ Making your retirement nest egg work more effectively
- ❖ Helping you create the life you want to lead.
- ❖ Simplifying the retirement product maze

### **"Family Planning" Alternatives:**

- ❖ Protecting your loved ones
- ❖ Assisting with your grandchildren's education

## "Business Planning" Alternatives:

- ❖ Protecting your assets
- ❖ Keeping more of what you make
- ❖ Helping to finance your dreams.

### 1-12.7 Common Strategies

Some of the common strategies that "life-focused" financial advisors use in order to distinguish themselves in the marketplace are covered in the following tables.

**Table 1-7 General Life Planning Information Strategies**

<b>Target Audience</b>	<b>Examples of Communications Opportunities and Subjects</b>	<b>Delivery Methods</b>	<b>What May Be Different than Most Advisors?</b>
<b>Clients, Prospects, Referral networks</b>	-Retirement lifestyle planning -"Fit after forty" and "healthy aging" -Critical illness -Long term health care -Children's education -Family budgeting -Understanding the internet -"Starting a second career." -Key non-financial factors of retirement success	-Newsletters -Web site -Seminars -Published articles -pre-meeting package for initial meeting	-Emphasis on non-financial -"Suspend self-interest." -Use of third-party proof sources. -Use of outside experts. -Advisor as an information conduit -Advisor as a "human web browser" on life issues -Life planning before financial planning

**Table 1-8 Targeted Life Planning Information Strategies**

<b>Target Audience</b>	<b>Examples of Communications Opportunities and Subjects</b>	<b>Delivery Methods</b>	<b>What May Be Different than Most Advisors?</b>
<b>Key Clients, Corporate prospects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Career transition</li> <li>-Employee life planning info</li> <li><b>Life transitions info:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bereavement</li> <li>- Retirement</li> <li>- Disability</li> <li>- Marriage</li> <li>- Family changes</li> <li>- Divorce</li> <li>- Critical illness</li> <li>- Elder care</li> <li>- Sudden wealth</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Forwarded articles.</li> <li>-Sending out books</li> <li>-Focused workshops</li> <li>-Referrals to other professionals</li> <li>-General information sessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Advisor as a coach</li> <li>-Advisor as a “human web browser” or source of non-financial information</li> </ul>

**Table 1-9 Information Specifically Tying Financial Planning to Life Planning Strategies**

<b>Target Audience</b>	<b>Examples of Communications Opportunities and Subjects</b>	<b>Delivery Methods</b>	<b>What May Be Different than Most Advisors?</b>
<b>Key Clients, Prospects, Referral networks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Sudden wealth</li> <li>-Suddenly single</li> <li>-Helping the community</li> <li>-Gifting loved ones.</li> <li>-Saving for education</li> <li>-Saving for retirement</li> <li>-Low stress investing</li> <li>-“How markets affect your life”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Newsletters</li> <li>-Web site</li> <li>-Workshops</li> <li>-Seminars</li> <li>-Writing articles</li> <li>-Regular client meetings</li> <li>-Initial meeting with new clients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-All information framed in terms of life plan.</li> <li>-Life planning as a branding method</li> </ul>

## **1-13 ELDERS & SOCIAL MEDIA**

### **1-13.1 More and More Canadian Elders are Online**

Older Canadians represent the fastest-growing segments of internet users nationwide according to Statistics Canada.

The proportion of older Canadians online jumped from 48% in 2012 to 82.6% in 2022, according to Statistics Canada 2023 report, the biggest jump among age cohorts. The increase was up 6.3% from 2020 to 2022. The report states that 60% of Canadians between 65-74 are now regular Internet users. The increase was even larger for elders aged 75 years and older, going up 10%. This oldest group boasted a 72% participation rate online.

A Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP) poll found that 53% of their online users have been using computers for over 20 years. 44% of elders surf online more than 5 hours a week.

Pew Research found wealthier seniors are more likely to be online, with a whopping 90% of higher-income seniors being regular Internet users. Educated seniors also use the Internet more, with 87% of university or college educated seniors being regular Internet users.

### **1-13.2 Making the Internet more Accessible for Elders and Their Fear of Internet Safety**

Current research being conducted into the use of internet technology by seniors does not cover safety perceptions and negative experiences. The quick evolution of technology and artificial intelligence (AI) has opened the door to scammers. Over \$9.2 million in losses were reported by seniors who fell victim to the crime — dubbed ‘Grandparent scams’ — in 2022, according to a Global News report, Feb. 28, 2024.

As more personal services are managed online, it becomes increasingly important to ensure that cyberspace is safe and accessible to seniors. The focus is being placed on medical information, personal information, and a variety of online transactions with researchers and developers looking at what authentication methods would be perceived as the most reliable in terms of accessing these services.

Options include traditional log-in screens, third-party providers, and biometric authentication.

As seniors are expected to live longer due to increased life expectancy, the need for accessible technology becomes increasingly important. By empowering the older members of the community to become internet savvy we not only enhance their quality of life but provide them with an increased sense of self-worth as well.

### **1-13.3          How to Create Strong Passwords to Secure the Senior's Information**

It seems like everything you do on the Internet today requires some kind of password, which makes sense considering the number of cyber-attacks that happen every day.

Reports show that there were over 4,000 ransomware attacks a day in 2016. With so many ransomware attacks occurring all the time, having strong passwords has never been more important.

The time for using your birthday, address, mother's maiden name, '123456', and anything easy to guess has long passed. Here are some of the best ways to create strong passwords and to secure your information.

#### **The Obvious**

Besides avoiding the passwords listed above, there are many other things that can help you keep your information safe; do not use a single case, but rather a good mix of upper and lower cases, which can drastically strengthen your passwords.

Make them long. If your passwords are six characters or less, it is time to extend your horizons. The longer and more complex you make your passwords, the more difficult it will be for hackers to ever crack them. Studies by mSecure (a cyber security firm) show that a brute force attack can crack a 6-character password in 11 hours, but it would take 10 years to crack one that is 9 characters.

Finally, use characters other than letters and numbers. These include \_, #, & \$, etc. The more complex and erratic you make a password, the harder you make a hacker's life.

#### **Learn from Gamers**

Names get taken fast in the online world, which forces people to get creative with their online identities. They will use random numbers, letters, and misspellings. This is done to get the name that people want when that identity has already been taken. You can apply this to your passwords as well.

In the online world, an 'E' can become a '3', an 'A' can become a '4', an 'O' can become a '0' and so on. Misspellings are also helpful when gamers want to create an identity for themselves. Change a 'Z' to an 'X,' add an extra 'R' or 'S,' or change an 'S' to a 'Z.'

For example, the name "The Agent Zero" can become something craftier like "Th3 4g3nt X3r0".

Use this premise when creating your passwords, think of a spelling that nobody else would ever consider. Many brute force attacks will go through the dictionary and try every single word until it finds one that works.

Swap out certain letters for numbers and spell things wrong on purpose in a way that you can remember. This way, brute force attacks will have to use other means to try and decipher your password.

### **Make A Sentence**

A one-word password can be easy to crack, which is why it is smart to come up with a sentence that only you can remember. No need to use the whole sentence, just parts to make it even more confusing.

Take a simple statement like, “In the year 2000 I turned 9 years old”. It is something simple, personal, and easy to remember. Now change that sentence into a complex code only you can remember, “iTy#2tH0us4nd-It\_nIn3Yo”. Now you have a complex password that is pretty much impossible to crack.

### **Multi-Factor Authentication**

Let us say someone gets your information and breaks your password. A scary thought to be sure, but there are certain precautions you can take to further your security. Multi-factor authentication is one of those precautions. Multi-factor authentication is used to verify your identity when your account is accessed from an unrecognized device.

If any suspicious logins occur, a message is sent to your email or device to alert you. Many businesses already use multi-factor authentication to protect their clients’ information – you too should enable it wherever you can. This way, if anyone ever breakthrough your password, you will be notified immediately so you can reset it and kick the hackers right out of your account.

### **Secure Your Devices**

The best passwords in the world are of no use if you do not secure the devices they are used on. If you have a PC, make sure that you have good antivirus software installed to prevent malware from stealing information. Some pieces of malware, known as “keyboard loggers,” can record all of your keystrokes and enable hackers to crack your passwords. Keep your information safe and secure by keeping your antivirus up to date all times.

You should always have the mentality that your information is never completely secure when using public Internet or devices. If you log in to an account on a public computer like at a library or a school, make sure to log out. It would be terrible if you went through a bunch of precautions to keep your information safe and then did something careless like leaving your online profile logged in, in a public place, for anyone to see and access.

Do not ever access important information like your bank account with an open Internet connection or public device. Also, be mindful of when you are logged into a device and when you need to log out, especially if that device does not belong to you.

As passwords keep all of your information safe, make an extra effort to make them strong. Take these tips, improve on them, and keep hackers away from your information. Also, remember to use different passwords for all of your many online accounts. Using only one password can make it easy for a hacker to access all of your different accounts.

### **1-13.4 Elders and the Positive Impact of Social Media**

Despite the myth that older people cannot manage technology because of cognitive deficits, seniors are flocking to social media at a rapid pace. In fact, Facebook, Twitter, Google+ (and Hangouts), Pinterest, and Instagram all note higher adoption rates among adults 65 and older — and see seniors as their fastest growing audience.

#### **Elders Benefit Socially, Mentally, and Physically**

Older adults who have had positive experiences on social media have reported elevated moods. An American Psychological Association (APA) study found that seniors who spend time on social media sites were more likely to participate in activities that can lead to greater health, such as cooking healthier recipes, and finding easier ways to clean and maintain their homes. The study also indicates that they have lower blood pressure and fewer instances of diabetes, and less negative health habits such as smoking, depression, or disease. This is attributed to the ability for self-education on any number of topics and remaining in-the-know about the latest technology trends.

#### **Social Media Keeps the Family Together**

Facebook is particularly useful for linking up with loved ones. It makes for more frequent conversations and helps close the generation gap.

Sharing current photos allows seniors to see their grandchildren change and grow and creates a closeness and involvement that may not have existed, especially if the family is not living close by. Video chats also are a great way to communicate in “real time.”

There is also the opportunity to relive fond memories or create new ones through postings of photos and home videos.

#### **Family Peace of Mind**

When a family lives apart, there can be stress and anxiety on both ends. Social media allows seniors and their families an easy way to check in as often as they wish. This is especially important if the senior is living alone and may experience ill health, a fall, or may not be eating or sleeping well, taking medications, or getting any form of exercise.

Family caregivers can use social media to ask critical questions that will let them know what is occurring in their loved one’s life.

## **Community Engagement and a Sense of Belonging**

Feeling connected is especially important to any senior's wellbeing. Social media allows the senior to make plans with others to meet up outside of the home. It also allows seniors who are unable to leave home to socialize online to combat loneliness and a feeling of being disconnected, forgotten or ignored.

## **Shopping Online offers Convenience and Savings**

Even if a senior cannot venture out of the home – due to physical limitations, inability to drive, or inclement weather, for example – they can always shop online and enjoy the ease of home delivery. In addition, there are lots of money-saving coupons and online sales, which can be especially convenient and sensible for those who are penny-pinchers or on a fixed income. Covid 19 projected many people of all ages, including elders into a new world they would have met eventually anyway, almost instantaneously. Yes, there was a learning curve, and elders demonstrated for the most part that they were not only up to the challenge, but they also found the resultant experiences easy for them.

Many elder clients today appreciate the convenience of digital communications for live, interactive video meetings that can involve family members and other advisors from wherever they are located, regardless of the weather. They can be more effective and efficient. What's surprising is that in a number of cases, elders bought into the digital online world faster than advisors and remain committed to it.

## **Some Precautions Should Be Taken**

As a caregiver, you may want to monitor the senior's activities. You may want to make sure that the loved one is not falling for phishing scams and the like. You may also want to make sure they are connecting with trustworthy people – especially if they are conversing in chat rooms and through blogs. Also watch their monetary spending – you do not want your senior overspending on items they do not need.

## **1-13.5 Social Media Use by Elders**

### **What Social Media Platforms Do Elders Use?**

The simple answer is Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and Snapchat. The rankings are not equal. According to the Pew Institute and American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) shared in a study published by Creative Design (2022), Facebook and YouTube are the top platforms used by older adults by a wide margin.



**Table 1-10      The Platforms Are Not Equal in Popularity**

Social Media Use						
Age Group	Facebook	YouTube	Instagram	Twitter	LinkedIn	Snapchat
50+	92%	88%	58%	47%	24%	24%

Why is this data important? When you choose a social media platform, you want to select a platform that is used by family, friends and clients and that is popular in your age group.

### **1-13.6      A Little More Information About 4 Types of Social Media Elders Should Embrace**

Many of the popular social media feature millions of users from all around the globe, meaning that they are rich with different ideas from cultures across a myriad of countries. Seniors who sign up for these networking sites have the opportunity to connect with and learn from these individuals, sharing ideas and interesting facts with a group of like- minded people.

#### **1. Facebook Reaps Social and Mental Benefits for Elders**

The most commonly used social media site is Facebook, which boasts more than 1 billion active monthly users, according to Statistic Brain. Not only is this platform one of the most frequently visited sites on the Internet, but the Canadian Press reported that more Canadians use Facebook than any other country in the world. According to the statistics, 74 per cent of the population checks their profiles at least once per month, with 14 million people logging in once per day.

With this high volume of people joining the social networking sites, seniors have the ability to connect with their friends and family members who may not live near them. Bystaying active and posting updates, pictures and thoughts, older adults can stay current on the lives of their loved ones.

Additionally, the University of Arizona recently published a study where researchers examined how Facebook affected the minds of older adults. They found that adults over the age of 65 who logged onto the site tended to have higher memory functioning.

Researchers reported that seniors who were active on Facebook performed 25 per cent better in memory tests.

According to Environics Research, 80% of Canadians aged 50-64 and 74% of those aged 65+ felt confident using current technology online, and that was just before the pandemic. The majority of Canadians (60%) believe that the impact of technology on society is positive and that feeling became firmer during the pandemic.

## **2. Creativity Can Be Fostered Through Pinterest**

Pinterest may not be the most popular social media site, but it provides a wealth of opportunities for seniors, especially those who enjoy creative projects. This site allows users to share links and pictures by “pinning” them to boards, or personal pages. By collecting these “pins,” users can have a collection of different artistic ideas pertaining to their favorite projects. For example, people who enjoy knitting can find thousands of patterns and ideas for their latest artistic creation. The site also features various decorating ideas, scrapbooking suggestions, and do-it-yourself projects.

## **3. Elders Can Stay Up to Date with Twitter**

Unlike other social platforms, Twitter allows companies, celebrities, and individuals to communicate quickly and efficiently. For seniors who prefer sending or receiving information in short bursts, this site is ideal. Since thoughts are limited to 140 characters, users are limited to posting one or two sentences at one time.

This provides ample opportunity for those who are seeking platforms to receive news updates and interesting links, such as individuals who like to follow specific industries.

The Huffington Post added that Twitter, unlike Facebook or Instagram, can be customized for the user, meaning that seniors only have to read updates that pertain to them. Additionally, the article adds that Twitter is one of the safest sites for users, as privacy settings prevent any unwanted persons from interacting with a profile.

## **4. Instagram Provides an Easy Platform for Picture Storage**

Although Instagram is only available for mobile devices, it has seen immense popularity among younger adults. This site allows users to share photographs with their followers, meaning that seniors who join can not only create their own photo albums, but they can follow children and grandchildren to see picture updates of their lives.

An 85-year-old man created a digital history using the platform. Calling himself “Instagram-pa,” the user posts pictures – old and new – that represent his life and personality dating back to 1920. He has effectively created a snapshot of his entire life through photographs, a digital footprint that will live forever.

## **1-13.7 COVID-19 Has Significantly Increased the Use of Many Technologies Among Older Canadians**

This information comes from a press release in September 2020.

From Facebook to food delivery apps and fitness trackers, older Canadians have upped their use of many technologies and online services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A new AGE-WELL poll conducted by Environics Research in July 2020 shows that two-thirds (65%) of Canadians aged 65 and older now own a smartphone, compared to 58% in 2019, and most who own one (83%) use it daily.

During the pandemic, elders have increased their use of video calls as a way to communicate with family and friends. About a quarter (23%) of Canadians 65+ now use video-calling on their smartphones, twice as many as in 2019; 6 in 10 of whom report increased use due to COVID-19.

When it comes to social media, so popular with a younger demographic, older adults are populating the platforms too. Over one-third (37%) say they use social media to communicate with family and friends (of whom 4 out of 10 report utilizing it more as a mode of communication due to COVID-19).

And with many elders staying at home more during COVID-19, two in 10 (19%) of Canadians 65+ are using online shopping for essential items, like groceries, for "health, wellness and/or independence" (of whom 6 in 10 report utilizing it more due to COVID-19).

The survey results show that 72% of Canadians aged 65 and over feel confident using current technology.

"With these findings, we can set aside any notion that older adults are technophobic. Most are unfazed by technology, and they are using a lot of it during these challenging times," says Dr. Andrew Sixsmith, Scientific Co-Director of AGE-WELL, Canada's Technology and Aging Network. "We were already seeing older adults using more technology, but COVID-19 is clearly a catalyst that is taking tech use to a new level."

The new poll was carried out July 16 to 27 with over 2,000 Canadians 50 years of age and older. AGE-WELL commissioned a similar survey in July 2019 of Canadians aged 50-64 and 65+.

Olive Bryanton, 83, of Hampshire, Prince Edward Island, cannot imagine life in the time of COVID without technology. "It has kept me sane, especially in the early part when we couldn't go out and family couldn't come to visit." She has been on Zoom "almost constantly" since COVID-19 began, participating in and presenting at virtual meetings and webinars, and connecting with family. She takes to Twitter and Facebook more often and attended a wedding via livestream. "I'm just so glad I'm able to use technology," says Dr. Bryanton, a member of AGE-WELL's Older Adult and Caregiver Advisory Committee.

The new survey also looks at the impact of COVID-19 on age-related concerns among older Canadians, who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. About half of respondents aged 50+ are now more concerned about health and about losing loved ones. Forty-six per cent are significantly or somewhat more concerned about moving to a nursing home, and 43% feel that way about moving to a retirement home.

On the positive side, over two-thirds (66%) of Canadians over 50 agree that technological advancements can help to lessen the impact of COVID-19 on daily life. The majority agree that technological advances can help them maintain relationships with family and friends, reduce social isolation, pursue hobbies, manage health, maintain mental health, and stay safe, independent, and active as they age.

The poll also found that half of Canadians aged 50+ are willing to pay out-of-pocket for technology that helps manage health and wellness. Almost 7 in 10 are willing to pay out-of-pocket for technology that allows them to stay at home as they age.

### **Among Other Key Findings And By The Numbers**

#### Technology Use

- ❖ 88% of Canadians aged 65+ use the Internet daily.
- ❖ 30% of those 65+ are streaming; over 4 in 10 (45%) of them report increased online streaming due to COVID-19.
- ❖ 52% of Canadians aged 50+ had a telehealth appointment in the past 3 months, and 79% of those who had one were satisfied with it. Experience with video appointments is still limited (7%).
- ❖ Over a quarter (29%) of Canadians 65+ use social media for "health, wellness and/or independence" (of whom 42% report utilizing it more due to COVID-19).
- ❖ Among those 65+, 68% use Facebook (up from 63% in 2019), 40% use YouTube (up from 37%), 19% are on Instagram (up from 15%), 18% use Twitter (up from 16%), and 16% use WhatsApp (up from 11%).
- ❖ 17% of Canadians 65+ use video calls on a desktop or laptop; 56% of whom report increased use due to COVID-19.
- ❖ 13% of Canadians 65+ now use exercise or activity apps or trackers; one in five (19%) of those have increased their use due to COVID-19.
- ❖ 13% of those 65+ engage in online activities such as book clubs and games; 50% of whom have ramped up these activities due to COVID-19.
- ❖ 11% of Canadians aged 65+ use voice-assisted tech, e.g., Google Home; 18% of whom are using this tech more due to COVID-19.
- ❖ 7% of those 65+ use food delivery apps; 45% of whom have increased their use of these apps due to COVID-19.

#### Current Attitudes

- ❖ 48% of Canadians over the age of 50 are optimistic about aging (compared to 56% in 2019).
- ❖ 66% of Canadians aged 50+ have felt isolated at least some of the time during COVID-19.
- ❖ Half of respondents feel that technology has had a positive impact on their lives during COVID-19 (45% say neither positive nor negative).

Technology that "manages independence" is most popular, with over half of users of techs/services such as wearable digital devices, online shopping for essential items, exercise/activity trackers and webinars/online classes and meetings reporting a positive impact on their health and wellness.

"At a time when older adults face enormous challenges, it is encouraging to see that many are reaching for technologies, online services and apps to help," says Dr. Alex Mihailidis, AGE-WELL Scientific Co-Director and CEO. "They are receptive to technology that allows them to stay in their own homes, and open to virtual health and virtual community with family and friends. "AGE-WELL teams are developing a widerange of technologies, services, and policies/practices to help older Canadians maintaintheir independence, health, and quality of life. These include health apps, wearable therapies, smart-home systems, and socially assistive robots.

Central to all of this is ensuring that new technologies are user-friendly and practical, including for people with disabilities. Connectivity is another challenge. "Despite the increasing use of technology by seniors, we need to remember that some people are still losing out and there is a digital divide between the technology haves and have-nots. We need to make sure that technologies are accessible, affordable and available to all. "

### **1-13.8 Privacy Tips for Social Media**

#### **Here Are Seven General Tips That Will Help You Manage The Data And Privacy Concerns With Social Media**

1. ***Choose your Level of Engagement*** - When you sign up for a social media platform, you can choose your level of engagement. Please know that you do not have to share anything on the platform, and you can simply consume the posts and updates made by your friends and family. This is up to you.
2. ***Guard your Personal Information*** - Never share information like your address, full birth date, phone number, driver's license number or social security number.
3. ***Keep your Circle of Friends Close*** - Do not accept friend requests from people that you do not know. Know when you share or post if you are sharing with friends or with the public.
4. ***Do not Overshare*** - That post about your vacation plans may be an invitation for a burglar to visit your house. Comment carefully.
5. ***Do not Share your Location*** - For example, Twitter can automatically attach location information to public tweets. Turn off any location information.
6. ***Be aware of Scams and Frauds*** - Be aware that scams and frauds exist and remember that if something sounds too good to be true, it is.

7. *Talk to your children if you intend to post pictures* of your grandchildren to ensure that their privacy concerns are understood.

## 1-14 CONCLUSION

*You have **two choices** when it comes to communicating with the members of the elder audience you want to reach:*

1. You could single out these clients or customers and give them information designed specifically to meet their needs and expectations.
2. You could adopt a new approach in dealing with all customers and clients, making sure that your communication is always clear and universally accessible and checking regularly to make sure your messages have been received and understood.

The second approach may well be more effective, because adapting a message or medium for an elder audience helps everyone get more from it! What is more, in thinking about whether to single out older people with "special" information products and communication approaches, consider the risks of alienating clients or customers by creating stigma, embarrassment, or shame.

Once you have done your research to understand your audience and their preferred information sources, you can start thinking about the potential of the various media to reach your audience. Then you can package up a message to suit both the audience and the communication medium. Formulating this message means making decisions about concept, content, and design.

Businesses, services, and other organizations that want to be known as elder friendly should take a comprehensive look at - not just communications - but at everything they do from the perspective of their older clients and customers. Are administrative style, staffing policies, and programming goals compatible with elder-friendly service? Do training plans and incentive systems demonstrate the value attached to communicating effectively and serving an elder clientele well?

Are facilities conveniently located (close to public transportation) and designed for the safety and comfort of older users? Do entrances, floors, lighting, surfaces, acoustics, seating, signage, and restroom location take into account the sensory and physical changes of aging and the needs of elders? Readily available documentation on barrier-free design provides useful tips on building or retrofitting spaces and amenities.

Think broadly when you think about communicating. Almost everything you do as a service provider or business owner communicates your attitude toward your older customers and clients. Unintentional messages can be just as powerful as a deliberately planned communication. As the Alberta Council on Aging says, elder friendliness is an attitude based on considering the elders' needs and respecting elders' contributions. It is a matter of common sense and good manners.

Do not try to persuade elders you are doing them a favour. Embrace elder friendly communication because it is logical and makes sense for your program objectives or your bottom line: elders bring their business to elder friendly stores and businesses, and they are loyal customers when they are well served.

Know your audience, keep your knowledge up-to-date, and look to the members of your audience to tell you about their information needs and preferences. Design communication with your clients and customers—not for them. Think about the advantages and drawbacks of each communication medium as a means of reaching an elder audience, and design communications that seize the advantages while avoiding the pitfalls. How well you communicate with your elder clients and potential clients plays a significant factor in how well you meet their needs. As noted in “Welcome to Age-Friendly Communication,” published by the Federal Government, “Whether you provide services related to health, financial planning, travel and leisure, housing, or other services, keeping communication approaches and messages current is vital—especially in this era of rapidly changing technology and information overload.”

Find out about the communication concepts and design approaches that work best with elder audiences. Ensure a good match between your audience, your message, and the medium you use to convey it. Explore alternative formats (e.g., large print, audio and video cassettes, Braille, available on demand, etc.), and innovative strategies for reaching elder audiences (e.g., social networks, community contacts, trusted advisers, and key informants).

In summary, turn all of this into a well-researched, organized, documented plan that can be used as a roadmap, measuring stick and comparison between what is being done versus what should be done. Dare to test your plans and solicit feedback on how well your plans are doing in terms of consistent execution. Remember what you unintentionally do or not do will impact the effectiveness of your communication and your efforts.

Demand action from governments and other administrations and social institutions. Communicating effectively with elders makes sense from society's perspective: well-informed elders are healthier, more active, and involved. Moreover, they can live in their own homes longer—so their quality of life is better. Elders have time, energy and insight borne of life experience. They are valuable assets to a society that respects them and takes the time to think about effective ways of reaching out to them.

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# Chapter 2

## Marketing to Elders

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### **2 - 1      KEY OBJECTIVE OF THIS CHAPTER**

This chapter will be of significant interest to anyone who wants to "connect" with elders in a meaningful way - whether it be for commercial purposes or otherwise.

While the elder population is clearly diverse, elders do share some common interests, outlooks, and values. This chapter focuses on these similarities and how they impact and colour the way in which elders react to information.

Understanding how elders react to, and process information is helpful to anyone who wants to deliver effective and compelling messages to this market segment.

#### **2 - 1.1      How Will This Objective Be Achieved?**

We will take a close look at the things that are important to elders, and at the unique way in which elders tend to assimilate information. In this process, we will also look at the types of messages that are likely to motivate this market segment and some marketing strategies and tips that have proven effective.

A lot of the material that follows will focus on the types of media that are best suited to delivering messages to Canadian elders - among them: direct mail, newsletters, radio and seminars.

This chapter will close with some suggestions on how to build a Marketing Development Plan - and generate quality referrals.

### **2 - 2      INTRODUCTION**

Somewhere, someone decided that unless you were selling creams, ointments, laxatives, mobility and hearing aids, or prescription eyewear, there was no point in "wasting time" in the elder market.

After all, or so the theory goes, most elders live a meagre existence; they are largely dependent on government handouts; have extremely limited "purchasing power;" are hard to reach; and have virtually no interest in most popular consumer products.

If all this were true, it would be reasonable to conclude that the elder market was simply a "write off."

There is just one small problem with the picture painted above: it is dead wrong ... on all counts! Companies that ignore the elder market are missing an enormous marketing opportunity.

Today's elders defy the stereotypes. They are, for the most part, comfortable financially, quite a few are affluent, highly mobile, and very adventurous.

## **2-2.1 The Elder Market: by the Numbers**

*The most recent Statistics Canada figures report the following by household type: (July 2023, reporting on 2019 figures)*

- ❖ Average savings of economic families, comprised of a group of two or more people who live in the same home and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law partnership, adoption, or foster relationship
- ❖ Average savings of single individuals not in an economic family

**Table 2-1 Average Savings By Household Type**

Age band	Household type	Retirement savings	Financial assets	Total savings
55-64	single	\$377,500	\$ 69,200	\$446,500
	family	\$645,000	\$163,600	\$809,100
65+	single	\$384,000	\$112,000	\$384,000
	family	\$514,800	\$224,400	\$739,000

**Table 2-2 Average Savings Of Single Individuals Not In An Economic Family**

Age band	Household type	Average Net Worth
55-64	single	\$ 544,800
	family	\$1,401,900
65+	single	\$ 589,700
	family	\$1,298,800

**The Household Balance Sheet, published by Investor Economics in 2021 made the following forecasts about household financial wealth, referred to as investable assets.**

- ❖ A ten-year compound annual growth rate of 5.6% yielding year-end figures growing from \$5.556 trillion in 2020 to \$9.590 trillion by 2030. And that is actually a slowdown growth rate from the 7.1% trend in the previous decade.
- ❖ By that time, the boomer cohort will control almost half of that wealth, and the elder segment will experience continued moderate growth.
- ❖ Elders age 55+ will control 67% of the total Canadian wealth, representing \$6.4 trillion.

A great deal of wealth from these people will be passed down to succeeding generations over this decade. Generation X is currently in the middle of its accumulation phase and beset with the challenges facing a rapidly appreciating housing market. They are poised to accumulate over half of the net inheritance flows forecasted to occur over the next decade. That is estimated to be more than C\$450 billion in total. The report predicts that nearly half a million households will join the ranks of the financially affluent. That translates into that category holding up to 76.4% of total Canadian household wealth.

The spending patterns of elders covers the gamut: from essentials to non-essentials like travel, luxury cars, gourmet foods, interior decorating, appliances, and home entertainment. They also represent a huge, largely untapped, market for a wide variety of insurance and investment products.

Consider the following startling statistics. ***Elders:***

- ❖ Age 50+ account for 52% of consumer spending (Age of Majority, 2032)
- ❖ Boomers represent 30.4% of actual consumer spending (CE Surveys, 2023)
- ❖ Spend more on travel and recreation than any other age group.
- ❖ Spend more per capita in the grocery store than any other age group.
- ❖ Spend more money on gifts and charity than any other group.
- ❖ Watch more television and read more newspapers than any other age group.
- ❖ Spend more money on quality clothing for their grandchildren than the children's parents do.
- ❖ Make up the fastest growing group of Internet and email users, doing everything from sending pictures of their grandkids to shopping online.
- ❖ Boomers account for 15 times the level of consumer spending vs. Gen Z
- ❖ Elders are much more brand loyal than the Gen Z and Gen Y cohorts who are the target of most marketing efforts
- ❖ Less than 20% of marketing resources are directed at older adults

The potential of the elder market is huge, and it is poised to grow dramatically in the immediate future. The number of Canadians ages 65 and older reached 7.6 million in 2023. They represent just under 20% of the population in 2024 and are expected to represent between 21-29% of the population or about 1 in 4 Canadians by 2068. Most of these new elders will be baby boomers - a wealthy, educated group that has a taste for the finer things in life. A group that will gladly spend money to maintain a lifestyle. A group that has transformed, in dramatic fashion, every stage of life it has encountered.

The opportunities are near limitless for those individuals who are savvy enough to take the time to understand the needs, dreams, and concerns of the existing and emerging elder population.

Despite all of this, they are largely ignored or pigeonholed or stereotyped in marketing in Canada and the US. While the focus is on Canadian elders, they are inundated by US marketing initiatives regularly in the media they watch, listen and read which focus on youth and younger consumers. As noted in a 2022 research paper; "Research on the effects of representation and stereotyping of older people in media suggests several mostly negative social effects, such as promoting negative images of aging or reduced self-concepts of older people, which can even affect their mental health." (Older People in Advertising, Martin Eisend, Pages 308-322 | Received 21 Jul 2021, Published online: 18 Feb 2022). The challenge of people and organizations focusing on the elder market is twofold. One is to look at ways to optimize the effects of marketing and minimize negative social effects. The second is that there is insufficient research and empirical evidence. Progress can be made in any event by studying and applying learnings focusing on the elder market.

In assessing the potential of the elder market, it is also important to remember that elders exercise an influence that extends well beyond their own significant purchasing power. Many younger adults rely on the advice and counsel of their elder friends and relatives when making major purchases and life decisions.

## **2 - 3            SEGMENTATION WITHIN THE ELDER MARKET**

While much of this chapter will focus on the similarities between various groups of elders, anyone who wants to succeed in the elder market needs to be keenly aware of some of the significant differences that exist.

In an earlier chapter we discussed the differences that existed - in terms of life experiences, values and outlook - between different elder cohorts. Baby boomers, not surprisingly, are quite different from the earlier World War and Depression cohort - and these differences necessitate different tactics, approaches and even product solutions.

Unfortunately, the differences that exist between groups of elders go well beyond the simple boundaries of birth cohort. Culture, education, geography (e.g., urban, or rural residence) and socioeconomic factors also play an important role in determining an elders' outlook and attitudes.

Age itself also plays an important role. Our elder years now span many decades, and it is unreasonable to assume that a 65-year-old has a great deal in common with a 95-year-old.

In fact, the oldest boomers have boomer children and both groups will claim they are nothing like each other. Most marketing professionals find it useful, as a result, to divide the elder market into five age-related groups: the youngest boomers (ages 57–62); the new retirees (ages 63–67); the established retirees (68 – mid 70s); the later-stage retirees (mid-to-late 70s); and older adults (80+). Of these segments, new retirees (ages 63–67) are a rapidly growing market segment that is rarely given its due.

Early retirees are particularly attractive for marketing. This group is still healthy, active, happy, and interested in doing things. They have also been recently freed from the obligations of work and child rearing - and the full impact of having to live on a fixed income has not yet hit home. They are focusing on their bucket list and completing it as soon as possible. A number of those items can cost significant amounts of money, either as lump sums or high cash flows during the first phase of what we collectively still call retirement. They are ready to pursue many of the things they have dreamt of doing for years.

## **2 - 3.1 Marketing to Diversity**

As noted, level of education, age, living arrangements, cultural background, as well as individual interests, all strongly influence the choices people make concerning where, how, and when they choose to purchase products and services.

*Market segmentation can be made using the following key demographic groups by:*

- ❖ Generational cohort (The Silent Generation, WWII, Post War, Boomers 1 and 2, Gen X, Gen Y (Millennials), Gen Z, Generation Alpha)
- ❖ Age (children, young adults, middle aged, elders (seniors))
- ❖ Gender
- ❖ Marital status
- ❖ Income
- ❖ Homeownership/renters
- ❖ Educational level (and type)
- ❖ Religion
- ❖ Country of origin/ancestry
- ❖ Visible minority status
- ❖ Mother tongue/ languages spoken
- ❖ Employment status
- ❖ Self-employed/business owner
- ❖ Occupation/profession

People may be identified by a number of these demographic groups. There are four pillars of market segmentation.

- ❖ Demographics are one of the most common and basic and has just been described.
- ❖ Geographic segments markets based on their location.

Normally, some demographic groups are located within a specific area, tying in demographic and geographic segmentation.

- ❖ Psychographic segmentation focuses on characteristics that are more mental and emotional like beliefs, lifestyles, attitudes and values.
- ❖ Behavioral segments markets based on consumers' behaviors, especially regarding particular products.

Lifestyle segmentation is another noteworthy approach that can be particularly insightful when engaging in retirement income planning. This form of segmentation looks at categorizing elders, particularly retirees, according to their interests, opinions and how they prefer to spend their time and what they spend their money on and how much to support their lifestyle type.

This diversity also impacts how elders wish to access information - "one size" clearly "doesn't fit all." Groups of elders will want to choose from a range of information sources about businesses, services, and government programs.

The fact that different groups of elders have different values, beliefs, and opinions also necessitates tailoring messages to suit the needs of specific groups. It is important for anyone who wants to be successful in the elder market to understand that elders may hold a diverse range of opinions on a wide variety of subjects. *There may be little unanimity on such subjects as:*

- ❖ What constitutes "the good life," "quality," and "service."
- ❖ Attitudes toward authority or bureaucracy
- ❖ Degree of comfort in asking someone else for help.
- ❖ Perceptions of health and illness
- ❖ Attitudes toward disability
- ❖ Ideas about food and nutrition
- ❖ Concepts of age and aging
- ❖ Gender roles
- ❖ Family and intergenerational relationships
- ❖ What government is and what it does or should do and not do?
- ❖ What health and social services are, how they work and entitlements

## 2 - 3.2 "Value and Values Based" Market Segmentation

Given the enormous diversity among elders, marketers have looked for a simple and manageable way of segmenting the elder population. Some will interchange two almost identical looking marketing types which includes the word value or values. There is a difference that comes up when segmenting clients and pursuing them.

“Value-based” marketing focuses on proving your brand can deliver to customers what it says it can.

On the other hand, “values-based” marketing focuses on ethics and morals the brand possesses for the common good.

For some organizations, the two types overlap. Whichever one is chosen, remember to use value or values to deliver more meaningful content in your marketing approaches and support. Either type aims to deliver value to existing and potential clients in your marketing itself, rather than just promising value. Put another way, marketing should be something the audience finds useful vs. being purely promotional.

It is a promising approach, given that an elder's value system is undoubtedly the product of the complex interaction between such factors as ethnicity, education, geography, socioeconomic status, cohort and age. This approach, as a result, manages to take into account the entire spectrum of generational, cultural and life experience variables that help shape elder thinking and behaviour.

### Model 1

*Segmenting people by value system is very helpful from a marketing perspective since people who share the same values tend to:*

- ❖ Access the same media which can be further segmented into types of media and entertainment.
- ❖ Be interested in the same products and services.
- ❖ Respond to similar marketing approaches.
- ❖ Have similar "hot buttons."

Values-based marketing is a strategy that appeals to the customer or group of customers' values and ethics. It focuses on how your product or services bring value to the customer and very importantly, from their perspective. It hones in on making a genuine connection with people as customers that goes beyond an interest in a product or service. It builds a strong bond between brand and customer. What happens is that when brands and customers share values, including ethics and act on them, they believe they make the world a better place. Think about ESG investing (environment, social and governance) or product purchases tied to where the products came from, working conditions, environmental impact. A values-based marketing strategy can help what you do and the products you offer establish greater trust with the people with whom you want to connect and do business, in this case, elders.

When you consistently deliver on the promises you make through your marketing and exceed them, you are demonstrating that what you say about your product, service and you is what you will do, is what will happen and is what they will experience. People are passionate about the causes they support and the values they hold dear. If what you offer, described by the brand you are building, connects with elders and resonates with them in a powerful way, they will want to engage with you; and some, particularly women, will share their experiences with others and refer others to you.

**Table 2-3 Different Types of Marketing Values**

<b>Types of Marketing Value</b>	<b>What it is</b>
Functional	the product and its use, such as the benefits to clients and customers who use it
Economic	the value is the cost of the product or service versus the cost savings of using it
Social	whether the product or service helps individuals interact with others
Emotional	anything that makes the client/customer feel good when they use a product or service

Different products and services lend themselves to particular types of value-based marketing and some offer a combination of types.

A body of extensive research on individuals age 62 years of age and older has identified a total of eight different "value-based" market segments. Descriptions of all eight along with the percentage of elders who fall into each category - follow.

### **2 - 3.3 True Blue Believers**

Twenty percent of all elders are True Blue Believers. They are religious, but not zealous; happy, but not giddy; smart, but not brilliant; and conservative, but not inflexible. Elders in this category have found their "place" in life - they are fulfilled and happy within their circle of family and friends. True Blue Believers do not feel as if they have anything to prove and as a result, they can afford to have a modest and unassuming lifestyle.

### **2 - 3.4 Hearth & Homemakers**

For the 20% of the elder population who are Hearth and Homemakers, family and friends are the centre of their life - and their church is the centre of their community.

The hospital receptionist likely knows them personally since they tend to be frequent visitors and are often volunteers. Their memories are rich and full, and their lives have been happy and rewarding.



Combined, Hearth and Homemakers and True-Blue Believers represent 40% of the entire elder population. That is the good news.

The bad news is these two groups possess values that marketers tend to stereotypically attribute to all elders. Marketing pitches designed to be effective with these two groups will not play well in the other 60% of the elder market.

## **2 - 3.5      Fiscal Conservatives**

The next largest group of elders are Fiscal Conservatives (15% of all elders). Elders in this category have achieved a good life and are admired for their possessions and accomplishments. They are careful shoppers who focus on quality and value. They are keen on tradition and family pride and highly suspicious of any change that involves their family, community, or themselves.

## **2 - 3.6      Intense Individualists**

Fourteen percent of all elders are Intense Individualists. This group sees the world as a tough and unforgiving place. Considering this, they tend to be both resourceful and self-reliant. They are also unsentimental and uncompromising and often assume a leadership role in their family and community.

## **2 - 3.7      Active Achievers**

Roughly 10% of the elder population are Active Achievers. This group has decided not to be "old" and to focus on lifelong achievement. Elders in this category are well educated, socially involved, and prosperous. They are non-conformists who thrive on excitement.

Active achievers are often divorced, and they tend to have very limited family ties.

## **2 - 3.8      Liberal Loners**

Liberal Loners (9% of all elders) have a strong sense of purpose and a desire for independence from government, health care institutions, friends, family, and financial restraints. They value honesty and social equality. And while they do have a social conscience, they do not always have the energy to translate empathy into action.

## **2 - 3.9      In-Charge Intellectuals**

In-Charge Intellectuals (7% of all elders) are society's elite. They have probably been lifelong readers and thinkers, and they keep up with social developments. They have enormous confidence in themselves and their perception of the world.

## **2 - 3.10      Woeful Worriers**

Woeful Worriers make up a mere 5% of the elder population. This group has survived the ravages of the Depression era, and this has made them aware of the importance of financial security. They are concerned about their health, home, companionship, and social activities. They turn to religion for support, and they believe that the meaning of faith is following the rules and honouring the beliefs that they were brought up with.

## **2– 3.11      Key Take aways**

The challenge is to design and implement coordinated and reinforcing value propositions that incorporate three layers of value. Ensure that marketing initiatives are supported by evidence across the board and are stress tested to ensure effectiveness from the customer's perspective. Continue that positive customer experience throughout the relationship with them.

## **2-3.12      The Three Layers of Value**



1. Qualitative: how the products and services address elder issues
2. Quantitative: the measurable effect of those products and services against key performance indicators.
3. Financial: the financial effect of the products and services on elders

Collectively, they should address any relief and emotional impact on elders and their families.

## 2 - 4 COMMON THEMES

While the elder market is clearly diverse, there are, nonetheless, some common themes. As a group, elders tend to share some common interests, values and motivations. The following material focuses on some of these similarities. To appreciate that, understand that a personal values system is made up of all of one's personal values learned and shaped through life, which combined, influence and formulate how one feels and interacts with people, things and events around them.

### 2-4.1 Core Values

The core values of the elder population are substantially different from the values of younger adults. In a recent survey, it was found that elders - as a group - valued social power and materialism a lot less than things like self-respect, family ties, and religion. The portrait that emerges is of a group of people who are comfortable in their own skins -and who do not feel at all compelled to seek the validation of others (through garish purchases, exercises of power, etc.). They are largely "self-actualized" to borrow Maslow's terminology. Given the core values that drive most elders, it is easy to determine what types of sales approaches, pitches and triggers will - and will not - be effective.

The fast-talking, pushy, stereotypical salesman who attempts to appeal to their vanity and ego, will find himself as good as "dead in the water." Glamour, glitz, and hype do not play well. A slower, more relationship-based approach that focuses on family, friends, church, and community is far more likely to succeed. Two essential ingredients come into play: market knowledge and genuine interest. It may sound cliché, but "elders don't care how much a salesperson knows, until they know how much he cares." Unfortunately, this obvious reality often escapes the attention of many younger, self-absorbed salespeople.

**Table 2-4 Elder Values**

Value	Importance
1. Self-respect 2. Religion 3. Family Ties 4. Warm Relationships	Most Important
5. Intellectual Curiosity 6. Compassion 7. Happiness 8. Wellness 9. Conservatism 10. Financial Security	Somewhat Important
11. Social Power 12. Excitement 13. Materialism	Least Important

## **2 - 4.2 Elder Motivation**

Studies suggest that elders - as a group - are motivated by five key values: autonomy, self-sufficiency, spiritual or social connectivity, altruism, and personal growth and revitalization. All five are discussed in detail below.

## **2 - 4.3 Autonomy**

Like most of us, the elder population prefers to make its' own decisions. Ads that suggest, either visually or verbally, that an elder must relinquish his or her power of choice - with phrases like, "ask your family," "your doctor knows best," or "we'll take care of everything," - are unlikely to gain much traction. Phrases like, "The choice is yours," "You decide," and "Trust your own judgment" are far more likely to elicit a positive response in the elder market.

## **2 - 4.4 Self-Sufficiency**

Self-sufficiency is closely linked to autonomy. It, however, is more concerned with an elder's physical capacity to perform life's daily functions. Even elders who are experiencing a significant reduction in their ability to manage their own affairs - due to illness, injury, or age-related issues - will still look to maintain some level of self-sufficiency (their ability to simply remain in their own home).

Advertising copy that recognizes this need - with words and phrases such as, "maintain your lifestyle," "keep your independence," "you can do it yourself," - will be received favourably. Visual images that reinforce this message (e.g., physically challenged elders gardening from a wheelchair, reading the newspaper with the help of a magnifying device, or cruising around town with the help of a power scooter) are also helpful.

Kimberly-Clark's promotion of Depends undergarments is a classic example of good "elder" advertising. In their television commercials spokesperson June Allyson golfs, attends parties, plays with her grandchildren, and leads an active life unhindered by bladder incontinence - a physical problem that is quite common among elders (especially women). Depends promotes autonomy, self-sufficiency and an enhanced lifestyle. It also enjoys an astounding 50% market share.

## **2 - 4.5 Spiritual or Social Connectivity**

"You've got to have friends," or so the song goes. Nowhere is this truer than in the elder market. At a time in life when old friends, family members, and acquaintances have begun to die, maintaining a close and loving tie with others becomes crucial for elders. They value the chance to talk among friends and to help with social or community events.

Elders are more than willing to take the time to get to know you - and they expect you to respond in kind. Experience tells them that few things require an instant decision - and as a result, they will not respond well to pressure tactics.

## **2 - 4.6          Altruism**

Most elders have an unselfish regard for others. Their focus tends to be - not on themselves - but on their community, their family, and the broader society around them.

They have come to a point in their lives when they are asking the big questions: "did I make a difference," "is the world a better place than when I arrived," "will I be remembered."

It is not about what they own, or their social status ... it is all about the ways in which they have managed to touch others in a positive fashion.

These attitudes help explain why their church, charitable organizations and their grandchildren play such an important role in their lives.

## **2 - 4.7          Personal Growth and Revitalization**

The old saying, "you can't teach an old dog new tricks" does not really apply when it comes to today's elders. Seven in ten people over 50 say they love to try new things. 10% of new college students are over 50. Among individuals 50 and over, health club memberships are up nearly 150% since 1988.

Elders have entered a period of life when they finally have the time and freedom to pursue a wide variety of interests, and they are not holding back.

## **2 - 4.8          Key Creative Words and Phrases**

Marketers should go to great lengths to wrap their messages around the five key values (described above) which tend to motivate today's elders.

**Some of the words and phrases that are most effective in the elder market:**

- ❖ "You can do it," "The choice is yours," "You decide," "You're in control."
- ❖ "They rely on you for advice."
- ❖ "Let us help you" (not "we can do it for you"), "Discover how easy it is," "In your own home."
- ❖ "Be a part of the action," "Your friends and neighbours agree," "A part of the family."
- ❖ "See for yourself," "Send for more information."
- ❖ "Make new friends," "Meet others who share your interests."
- ❖ "Learn," "Think," "Enjoy"

## 2 - 5 ELDER INTERESTS

A variety of the key interests of the elder market are detailed in the table below. Marketing messages that tap into these interests are the ones most likely to have significant impact.

**Table 2-5 Elder Interests**

Health and wellness Connecting with others Personal Finance Intimacy and romance Beauty Sports Spirituality Philanthropy Advocacy	Genealogy Movies and shows. Nostalgia Online access, email Second careers Seminars Spending time with grandchildren Lotteries and casinos Travel Family Eating out
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Of all these varied interests, three are of significance: health and wellness, personal finance, and spending time with grandchildren.

### 2-5.1 Health and Wellness

It may be hard for younger adults to understand, but for elders their health is a lot more important to them than their financial circumstances.

This is hardly a revelation - if you take the time to think about it. As outlined in an earlier chapter, aging involves a series of physical changes that can seriously limit an individual's ability to function - and function independently. With age comes an increased risk of disability, sensory loss, and chronic disease - all of which can lead to dependence, social isolation and eventually - financial difficulties. The surest way to help make your elder years satisfying, fulfilling and productive, is simply to maintain their health.

Elders, as a result, are keenly interested in anything and everything that will either improve their health or help them to maintain independence and lifestyle quality in the face of disability and disease.

Medical advances, new drug therapies, mobility and sensory aids are all of tremendous interest to a broad cross section of the elder market.

Maintaining "wellness" is also top of mind. Elders are very interested in information on diet, food choice and preparation, fitness and exercise, and social events. Marketers who can link their product or service with any of these concerns will have a leg up on others who overlook this opportunity.

## 2 - 5.2 Personal Finance

Elders also differ from younger adults when it comes to attitudes about money and investing. Most are a lot more concerned with capital preservation than with capital growth. Well into his own elder years, Mark Twain once commented "I'm a lot less concerned with the return *on* my investment, than I am with the return *of* my investment."

This, of course, makes perfect sense. Younger adults - with few assets - are often preoccupied with "get rich quick opportunities." When it comes to investments, they are prepared to take big risks that might produce big returns.

Elders - with substantial assets - have far less incentive to engage in risky investment practices. Not only are the potential losses far greater in absolute terms, but they may seriously impact an elder's lifestyle - an impact that may be difficult or even impossible to recover from. To most elders, when it comes to finances - "steady as she goes" sounds a lot more attractive than "let us shoot the lights out."

To attract the interest of the elder market, the financial industry should focus on things like:

- ❖ Less volatile mutual funds that invest in blue chip, dividend paying enterprises
- ❖ Investments that produce an income stream while preserving assets
- ❖ Annuity products with guarantees
- ❖ Strategies to both: reduce income taxes and preserve capital.
- ❖ Insurance programs (e.g., long-term care insurance, health insurance, etc.) that can help elders retain independence and protect assets.
- ❖ Legacy planning programs that ensure that the bulk of an elder's assets are passed on - efficiently - to the people and causes they hold dear.

## 2 - 5.3 Spending Time with Grandchildren

In an old joke, several grandparents are talking about their grandkids when one of them pipes up and says, "you know, if I had known how much fun the grandkids were going to be, I would have had them first."

Many grandparents are relatively indifferent when it comes to their own children but as for the grandkids, that is another story altogether!

Findings from a "50 Plus" study indicate that in an average four-week period, nearly 75% of grandparents over age 50 had purchased gifts for their grandchildren. On an annual basis, they spent a median of \$650.54 on presents for the grandkids.

These same grandparents also purchased a variety of gifts - for their own children - that were specifically intended for use in the parenting process (e.g., rocking chairs and infant carriers, etc.).

Although boomer grandparents are not expected to spend any more on their grandchildren than other grandparents do, the sheer number of boomers approaching grandparenthood suggests that it is wise for retailers and other businesses to pay attention to what they are buying and how they view their grand parenting role.

There is a mountain of evidence to suggest that baby boomers will want to assume a bigger role in their lives as grandparents than earlier generations. For many, their parenting role is fresh in their minds. Some, in fact, have children from second or third marriages who are almost the same age as their grandchildren.

Also, given the "generation gap" that existed between them and their parents, boomers are likely to see helping with the grandchildren as a way of maintaining a connection with their own children.

Considering this, there is every reason to expect that as the ranks of boomer grandparents grow, more and more grandparents will be taking responsibility for childcare. In the process, grandparents will become more involved in day-to-day purchases—what cereals to serve for breakfast or what to pack for lunch. In addition, since baby boomers tend to be more health conscious than previous generations, they are likely to seek out health foods and vitamins for kids. Boomer grandparents will also spend more on transportation, shuttling grand kids to soccer practice and other activities.

As more and more boomers assume the role of grandparent, the travel industry will likely be one of the biggest beneficiaries. Boomer grandparents will likely shell out big bucks to vacation with their grandkids - particularly on trips that are designed to broaden their grandchildren's minds. Adventure travel, eco-friendly cruise packages; river-rafting and other educational-adventure tours will be major attractions.

Grandparents who do not live near their grandchildren will spend freely on airplane and train tickets, or on road trips to visit them more frequently. They will also be inclined to sign up for Internet accounts in order to stay connected by email and instant messaging.

Then there is the entertainment market. Having grown up on rock and roll, boomers will be far more likely than their elder parents to share their grandchildren's musical interests. That means not only that they will spend more on compact discs for their grandkids, but also that they will be joining them in the stands at rock concerts. Similarly, they will be more likely to take them out to restaurants, movies, and sporting events.

Educational concerns will also shape entertainment purchases. Interactive computer games that teach core skills will be at a premium - and if an educational game is something that grandparents can play with their grandkids, so much the better. Boomer grandparents will also be receptive to funding programs like space camp, computer camp, private lessons in painting, music, or other artistic endeavours. Boomers are also likely to focus on non-traditional gifts such as museum memberships, or even wild animal adoptions through the World Wildlife Fund.



And while boomers will continue to spend money on the usual fare, such as toys and clothing, they will likely go about it with an eye toward keeping themselves informed. Kathy Whitehouse, an elder consultant with SRI Consulting Business Intelligence, says that boomer grandparents will be more likely than their own parents to pay attention to sources such as Consumer Reports, not only to assess a gift's educational value but also to gauge its usefulness, safety, and durability. Much of the focus of boomers as grandparents will be on giving their grandkids a wider range of experiences than what their own parents could afford.

In the end, the best way for marketers to appeal to boomer grandparents will likely be to emphasize two things: education and shared experience.

## **2 - 6 ELDER MARKETING TIPS**

### **2 - 6.1 Know the Market**

In the same way that every automobile is not a Ford, every member of the mature market is not a stereotypical "elder." As discussed earlier, people over 55 are part of a multi-segmented group - and each segment has its own outlook, approaches, and wants and needs.

Is the group you are working with in their mid-fifties, still in the workforce and still supporting dependent children? Are you talking to people in their early 60s who are likely facing retirement and some troubling health concerns? The point is this: when it comes to the mature market, *one size does not fit all*. It is important that you identify these segments, or segments, that you are working with and tailor your approaches and messages to meet their specific concerns and needs.

### **2 - 6.2 Stick to the Facts**

"Been there, done that," is often the battle cry of the over 50 set. They have been around the block a few times and they will tire of hackneyed and lumbering sales pitches. They prefer sound bites to diatribes.

In the elder market, the most effective sales messages explain exactly what the product or service does and why they should be interested in it in a clear, concise and straightforward way. As in any sales approach, the focus should be on "benefits" and "advantages," not "features."

Reader's Digest, of course, figured this out many years ago - which is why this publisher offered abridged stories for over 75 years. Sadly, the company ceased operations on March 31, 2024.

### **2 - 6.3 Use Life Stage Marketing**

Life-changing events (marriage - of their kids or grandkids, retirement, moving, health problems, etc.) are defining moments for this market.

Use these events to create connections. For example, market fitness products by focusing on the parents' free time now that the kids are gone—or financial services products that provide enough post-retirement security for a dream vacation.

## **2 - 6.4 Educate the Market**

Some of the most successful marketing campaigns to elders are focused primarily on pure education. The product or service message is in the background - subtly slipped in between the lines. American Express, for example, built its pre-retirement base by sponsoring seminars on fraudulent telemarketing practices. The seminars were low-key, with no overt product promotion, but those attending knew the sponsor cared enough to help them protect their money.

Many banks conduct small group sessions - often run by an elder - that are designed to help familiarize elders with their services and introduce them to their automated service options (e.g., telephone banking, instant tellers, etc.). These meetings are casual and non-threatening - coffee and snacks are usually served, the seating is comfortable, and elders are made to feel "right at home." Often one-on-one follow-up meetings, with a peer trainer, are also available.

## **2 - 6.5 Design with the Eyes in Mind**

No matter how young they may feel and act, diminished vision is a fact of life for most people over the age of 50. In preparing written materials, the type should be in a readable font style, at least 12 points in size (14 preferred), and surrounded by plenty of white space.

Bold headlines and subheads - as well as narrow columns (that do not span the entire page) - are also recommended. Unnecessary clutter should also be eliminated. The object is to make the copy a pleasure, rather than a chore, to read.

Four colour printing is preferable to black and white - and when it comes to photography and graphics, use pictures and art that reflect the lifestyle of the group to whom you are speaking.

## **2 - 6.6 Avoid Scare Tactics**

Scare tactics and discouraging news about aging will not motivate this group to act or buy. Marketers who focus on the positive - who celebrate the joys of aging, stand a much better chance of connecting with elders.

## **2 - 6.7 Watch Your Terminology**

Elders dislike being singled out by such euphemisms as "the golden years," and "senior citizen." Terminology of this nature should be avoided.

Not surprisingly, CARP is aware of this and now simply describes itself as the association for Canadians who are "50 plus." This sticks to the facts and avoids all the baggage associated with other monikers.

The Government of Canada is systematically replacing the term “senior” with “older adult” in their publications.

The only label that the generation that “*tells it like it is*” likes - according to one senior ad executive - is “grandparent.”

## **2 - 6.8 Demonstrate Your Credibility**

Elders appreciate experience and expertise. If your company has been in business for 20 or more years, make this fact a prominent feature in all your promotional material.

If, on the other hand, you are the new kid on the block - go out of your way to focus on the knowledge, background, and educational credentials that you bring to the table.

Testimonials from satisfied clients, professional endorsements, designations, and degrees are all useful in building your credibility.

## **2 - 6.9 Remove the Risk**

Elders tend to be risk adverse as they age. Of course there is no shortage of exceptions. That said, anything that you can do to mitigate risk will be received favourably. Consider things like offering a money-back guarantee, a free trial period, or a lifetime warranty.

Also, focus on the human aspect of your business and on the integrity of your personnel. Elders like to know that there is a human at the end of the line and behind pieces of correspondence.

Use names frequently when talking (or writing) about the people who will be making the product, handling the account, or providing the service you offer.

## **2 - 6.10 Sell Up from the Heart**

As noted earlier, elders do not care how much you know, until they know how much you care. Go out of your way to make them aware that you are genuinely concerned with their well-being and apply “a personal touch” whenever possible.

## **2 - 6.11 Provide Personalized Attention**

Elders thrive on face-to-face personalized attention. They dislike automated phone systems, voice mail and automated banking machines. They want to speak with a person.

Their distaste for quick, impersonal, automated transactions should come as no surprise. Many elders are retired - they have time on their hands - and they feel no need to rush. Many of the appointments they make are the major events of their day ... and their focus is on the “quality” of the interaction (not its’ speed).

## **2 - 6.12 Tap into Their Feelings and Emotions**

Where possible, reminisce with them and attempt to trigger memories from another time. Encourage their stories, listen to them with interest and bond with them. When discussing your products and services emphasize safety, independence, and security.

## **2 - 6.13 Make Them Comfortable**

Make sure your office is a pleasant place to be. Ensure that your chairs are comfortable, that the lighting is good and focus on indulging their sense of taste and smell by offering refreshments (e.g., coffee, cookies, etc.) in China instead of paper cups or mugs.

Avoid cold calling them and try and make calls in the morning or early evening - but never at mealtime. As well, never forget that elders can tire easily ... so keep things short and to the point.

More contact is better than less. Most elders will expect to hear from you with regularity - up to 12-15 contacts (e.g., calls, correspondence, meetings) annually are recommended. This expectation increased during the pandemic and has not gone away.

## **2- 6.14 Find a Message That Works**

Once you determine how you want to reach your market, you must send the most appropriate, yet powerful message. Your marketing should focus on explaining things in non-technical language. Testimonials are particularly effective.

## **2 - 6.15 Accommodate Their Physical Limitations**

Elders do not just expect you to accommodate their physical and sensory challenges - they will demand it.

Restaurants that cater to the elderly, for example, will put them in the most comfortable and accessible tables - close to the entrance or on an obstacle-free route from the door, away from drafts and traffic paths, and close to a good light source. Menus will have large readable print and offer a "smaller portion" option.

The same kind of thinking should go into any enterprise that has a significant number of elder clients.

## **2 - 6.16 Be Sincere**

Simply proclaiming your *elder friendliness* will not gain you much ground; elders will soon detect whether or not your intentions are genuine. Elders tend to be a skeptical bunch. They are suspicious of flattery and insincere deference, and most can smell a huckster a mile away. Becoming elder friendly is a matter of conscious decisions and choices about when, how, and where to communicate.

## **2 - 6.17      Focus on Value**

Elders also tend to be quite thrifty. They are always looking for a good deal - are no more brand loyal than other consumers - and they will move their business from one institution to another if it is in their financial interest, to better align with their expectations of accessibility and service.

One bank manager tells the story of an elderly couple who took a few of the bank's pens and a stack of deposit envelopes home (to store their leftover flower seeds). This was not problematic from the bank's perspective, however, since in the course of the visit they also purchased a \$50,000 Certificate of Deposit and put another \$100,000 into a bank run Mutual Fund.

The experts agree: elders are turned on by value and turned off by conspicuous consumption.

## **2 - 6.18      Build Relationships**

Experience tells elders that few things require an instant decision. Considering this they tend to respond poorly to pressure tactics. Anyone who is interested in the elder market can forget about "one interview sales," "power phrases," and "tricky, manipulative closes." Slow and steady wins the race.

Elders value personal ties, and they expect a relationship.

## **2 - 6.19      Marketing Checklist**

*The following questions may prove help in evaluating your marketing and promotion campaign - is what you are doing up to snuff?*

- ❖ Have you researched and produced guidelines concerning how your messages must be tailored to meet the needs of older consumers?
- ❖ Do you focus-test your materials with elder customers or clients?
- ❖ Does your marketing plan recognize that you are not trying to communicate with a single homogeneous group of clients or customers?
- ❖ Have you tested a marketing plan and materials with several groups of older consumers that include a range of ages and literacy levels?
- ❖ Do you use older people or models in your promotional materials?
- ❖ Do you present positive images of people who are healthy, happy, and representative of elders' diversity of culture, language, health status, geographic location, income level, and so forth?

## 2 - 7 RELATIONSHIPS IN THE ELDER MARKET

There is a way to sell to the elder market that is more rewarding than many traditional approaches and which can help overcome the fear of rejection that many salespeople experience. It is called *relationship selling*, and it is the most effective way to connect with the elder market.

Relationship selling is not a new concept, and although it is commonly associated with commercial transactions, it can be effectively employed in personal sales as well.

Anywhere a long-term association can be beneficial to both buyer and seller, an ideal opportunity for relationship selling exists. The steps in the sales process may vary somewhat by business type, but the practice of building relationships is consistent from industry to industry.

Relationship marketing treats marketing contacts and initiatives as a process over time, rather than a single encounter. Developing more meaningful, personal connections with customers results in better client retention, repeat purchases, referrals, and a variety of other benefits. One of the keys to effective relationship-based marketing is dialogue - two-way communication between the client and the salesperson.

### 2 - 7.1 The Benefits of Relationship Marketing

*Relationship marketing helps organizations to:*

- ❖ Managing expectations - ongoing contact, dialogue, and communication are the keys to effectively managing expectations and ensuring that no one is ever "blindsided."
- ❖ Gather vital market intelligence - there is no better market intelligence that what comes straight from the mouths of key customers. Regular contact with customers helps you keep your thumb on the pulse of the marketplace - providing you with crucial information that can be used to enhance products and services. The president of Domino's Pizza (a huge North American fast-food franchise), for example, spends 1/2 a day every week working behind the counter of one of his outlets simply to stay connected with what is happening at street level.
- ❖ Build loyalty - well-served clients who feel they have a relationship with an organization rarely stray.
- ❖ Grow their business - both through repeat sales and referral business. Satisfied customers return for more and often recommend their favourite organizations to friends, family, and associates.
- ❖ Add value - for all parties involved in the relationship.

## 2 - 7.2 Relationship Marketing Tips

Relationship marketing is elaborate, multi-faceted and labour-intensive. It involves slowly building a relationship and getting to know the elder in a deep and meaningful way. Short cuts are not allowed.

*Some of the most successful "relationship" marketers who operate in the elder market adhere to the following guidelines:*

- ❖ They focus almost exclusively on the elder niche - it automatically makes them a specialist and this, in turn, provides a certain authority.
- ❖ They become known as the "go to" people in their field by speaking at events and conferences populated by elder audiences.
- ❖ They write articles and get them published in trade publications read by the elder audience.
- ❖ They are relentless - sending a sequence of messages (automated if possible) to prospects that slowly feeds further valuable content to them - and subtly demonstrates their expertise and authority (often covering "success stories" with other clients)
- ❖ They go out of their way to resist the temptation to ask for a meeting immediately (the people who are keen on meeting them will call and ask anyway, while others may need more time to get comfortable). They never risk scaring off a prospect by "pouncing" too quickly. Appearing "needy" is a credibility killer. In the world of marketing and sales, there is an unspoken assumption that if you are any good at what you are doing, then your diary should automatically be full (we know that is not how it works in practice, but that is the bias we are all up against!)
- ❖ In at least one of their messages, they offer a meeting, but it is not just a "free consultation." They think long and hard about what benefits they can offer the prospect and then position the meeting accordingly.
- ❖ Since not everyone will respond immediately, they do regular follow-ups (e.g., telephone calls, newsletters, etc.) focused on staying connected, and continuing to build the relationship.
- ❖ They constantly tweak their marketing process. They review results regularly and focus on areas for improvement.
- ❖ They let the process do the work - momentum builds, a "snowball" effect kicks in and eventually they can select from an array of potential prospects.
- ❖ They tend to provide "a hook" at the end of each talk or published article. The hook is an offer, a "giveaway" (e.g., a free report that provides valuable and useful content) that is provided in exchange for the reader's contact details and permission to stay in touch over time.

Given the amount of initial effort and planning involved, many marketers shy away from the "relationship marketing" process altogether. It is their loss.

In the words of the great inventor Thomas Edison, "most people miss opportunity, because it's dressed in overalls, and it looks like work."

## **2 - 7.3      Dealing with Other Advisors**

Elders - particularly elders with significant assets - tend to have a variety of different advisors that they trust implicitly. Included in this group: children, grandchildren, and several professionals (e.g., an accountant, a lawyer, a doctor, etc.). These advisors oftentimes take on the role of "gatekeeper" - which means that building a relationship with the elders often involves seeking the blessing of this group first.

Consider the following "tips" whenever it becomes necessary to attain the approval of the gatekeepers.

- ❖ Introduce yourself and tell them what organization you are affiliated with.
- ❖ Start with a compliment. If possible, thank the advisor for taking the time to join the meeting.
- ❖ State the issues concisely, your recommendations and any action you want the elder and the advisor to take.
- ❖ Stress how the solution will help the elder solve a problem and make his or her life easier.
- ❖ Briefly talk about your expertise, highlighting any experience and education that you have with the issues being covered.
- ❖ Do not dominate the conversation or act like a know-it-all.
- ❖ Politely steer the conversation back to the issue when others take it off-track.
- ❖ Answer questions to the best of your ability, but if you do not know the answer do not make it up or fake it. Instead, offer to follow up with the information.
- ❖ Offer to serve as a resource on the issue and leave a brief fact sheet that outlines your proposal.
- ❖ Do not be intimidated. You know the issue well and have a responsibility to present information.
- ❖ Be courteous always.
- ❖ At the end of the meeting, restate any commitments made or follow-up required. Thank the advisor for their time, even if she or he did not agree with your solution and proposals.

Remember being asked to speak in front of the elder's other advisors is an honour - when it comes to potentially fruitful meetings - this is the "holy grail."

## **2 - 8      ELDER FRIENDLY MARKETING METHODS**

Certain types of media and marketing approaches are particularly well suited to the elder market. Elders tend to absorb information differently than the rest of the population.

Messages that appeal to the right brain are more effective, for example, the messages targeting the left brain.



Elders also like messages that are short and sweet and to the point - but if the story is compelling enough they will also take the time to read more elaborate materials. There are, in fact, no marketing materials that are too long - only marketing materials that are too boring! In selecting a medium, it is also very important to remember the physical and sensory limitations that many elders live with. The following material focuses on the types of media that have proven particularly effective in reaching the elder market.

### **2-8.1 Omnichannel Approach To Marketing To Elders**

An omnichannel approach can be particularly useful when marketing to older adults. It allows elders to receive, open and engage with your services using a variety of marketing channels and approaches. What's more, an omnichannel approach helps to bridge gaps between digital marketing and traditional marketing, or put another way, between offline and online interactions and experiences. The key here is that the customer is at the centre, with the various marketing approaches feeding them and they in turn access different approaches to interact with you.

For example, some elders may research products and services on-line, through specialized magazines or trade fairs. They prefer to make purchases in a physical store. The opposite may occur, where the research is done in a more traditional way and the purchase is made on-line, something that exploded during the pandemic. No pickups, transportation or logistics. The product arrived at the door.

### **2-8.2 Digital Marketing**

Digital marketing is one of the fastest-growing areas of marketing. And it exploded during the COVID-19 pandemic as businesses, service providers, their clients and customers found themselves in an accelerated future of digital and virtual communication and contact. Businesses and governments needed to respond to new technologies and to increased demands from the various publics whose expectations went up as they experienced the power and potential of digital. Digital marketing used to be just one approach of marketing. It has grown into its own industry with all kinds of terms and areas of expertise within it. Some claim that digital marketing is more important than traditional marketing strategies and is quite scalable at comparatively much smaller costs. It is very accessible and is certainly the fastest and easiest way to communicate. As a subset of that, social media has become very powerful, casting a broad net, arguably too influential and certainly very fast.

Specialists in this area cite 8 types of digital marketing, some of which will be covered in the following material. They are email, mobile, social media, influencer/affiliate, content, paid advertising, search engine optimization (SEO), and marketing analytics

## **2 - 9         DIRECT MAIL**

A direct mail initiative can involve sending letters, flyers, or other types of information to a target audience. This form of marketing offers many advantages. It can be specifically targeted at a market segment, it can be information intensive, and it is extremely cost effective. It also ensures that the audience is in possession of a physical reminder of the product or service, as well as vital contact information. It also works well with elders since it allows them the time to digest the information provided at their leisure.

*To ensure success with direct mail, marketers are advised to:*

- ❖ Use a qualified mailing list that is unique to the target market they have in mind.
- ❖ Conduct "wave" marketing - an approach that focuses on successive - ongoing - mailings.
- ❖ Ensure that their materials are properly (even professionally) designed.
- ❖ Test multiple formats and messages in order to determine which one works best.
- ❖ Go to great lengths to make it easy for the recipients to respond (e.g., self-addressed postage paid envelopes, 1-800 numbers, etc.)

### **2 - 9.1         The Qualified Mailing List**

Having a mailing list that will generate results is the key to direct marketing success. Many companies rent or sell lists that can be used for this purpose. Purchasing a list is like buying a car or home - shopping around. Find out how long the organization supplying the list has been in business and request information on the results achieved by their previous customers.

When you find an individual or company that can provide the list for you, there is a good chance that they will have a list of conditions that you must follow in order to access the list. Also remember that the more segmented the demographic information requested - the higher the cost.

### **2 - 9.2         Successive Mailings or "Wave Marketing"**

It is quite unlikely that a single mailing will ever produce much in the way of results. One of the keys to direct mail is repetition. Wave marketing involves sending successive mailings out to the same target audience - often on a predetermined schedule.

It usually takes a series of "hits" (often eight or more) before an audience is motivated to act. In the meantime, wave marketing helps to keep you and your product or service "top of mind." It also contributes to building your presence, profile, and credibility. Your audience comes to know your name, believe that you are more than just a flash in the pan, and they may even make some assumptions about your success (e.g., he must be successful if he can afford to keep sending me all this information).

Elders - it should also be noted - are far more likely to believe "the printed word" than verbal messages.

## **2 - 9.3      The Value of "Repetition"**

It has often been said that people do not believe anything until they have heard it at least eight times. Remarkably your message becomes more credible and powerful the more it is told.

*Repetition overload works because:*

- ❖ Familiarity builds trust.
- ❖ Information that comes in various formats and at various times is more trusted than information from a single source.
- ❖ People are more likely to open and read the information that they receive from companies and organizations that they are familiar with.

As it turns out, familiarity is the key to success when it comes to all forms of marketing. And there is perhaps no easier and cost-effective way to breed familiarity than direct mail sent repeatedly. Each wave mailing need not be identical. Mix it up by sending out slightly different messages and repeat the sequence a few times a year.

## **2 - 9.4      Direct Mailer Design**

With a mailer, you only have a few seconds to catch the attention of your audience. It is vital, as a result, that it includes a compelling headline that will capture the interest of the reader. The body of the piece should concentrate on the benefits available to the consumer - remember that they all listen to the same radio station (WII-FM ... What is in it- for me). In addition, information on you, your credentials and your company should also be included.

The physical design of the mailer (paper, typeface, font, contrast, alignment, colour, language, style, etc.) is also of great importance and it will be discussed in more detail in the chapter on communicating with elders.

## **2 - 10      NEWSLETTERS**

Newsletters offer distinct advantages over other direct mail pieces. They can be used with both prospective and existing clients; they can be very effective in building your credibility; they can be designed to cover a wide variety of topics; and they are extremely low key in nature (which plays very well in the elder arena).

Newsletters are also a great way of simply staying connected - in a meaningful way. Research shows that the #1 reason clients change financial advisors, for example, is due to lack of contact. Frequency is not enough; make it meaningful to them. With your own personalized newsletter, you have a cost-effective way to stay in touch with your clients, protect your relationships, attract new business, and generate valuable referrals.

In short, there are many advantages associated with sending out a well-designed and carefully targeted newsletter. *If distributed on a regular basis it can:*

- ❖ Give you the recognition you deserve (particularly if the look, feel and content of the newsletter are all top notch)
- ❖ Keep your name in front of your customers and prospects.
- ❖ Distinguish your company from others.
- ❖ Serve as a regular means of staying in touch.
- ❖ Help to create a positive image.
- ❖ Motivate your readers to take action.
- ❖ Be passed on to the family, friends, and associates of the people you have targeted (thus multiplying its' effectiveness)

It is important to personalize your newsletter with your name, photo, contact information, as well as any personal messages you might deem appropriate. Having said this, it is also important to remember that you do not have to recreate the wheel when it comes to newsletter production. A variety of excellent "stock" newsletters can be purchased, modified, and employed to good effect.

## **2 - 10.1      Newsletter Customization**

Thanks to database technology and state-of-the-art digital printing, it is now not only possible - but easy - to publish customized newsletters that send a different message to different groups of customers.

Not only can you include a friendly welcome using their name - but the content can also be massaged to address their specific interests. *You can:*

- ❖ Create different special offers for each customer.
- ❖ Remind customers of their individual scheduled appointments and other key dates.
- ❖ Create unique messages and stories of interest.
- ❖ Test different prospecting approaches and messages and track their results.

## **2 - 10.2      E-Newsletters**

Many organizations - perhaps most - are not making effective use of digital when it comes to marketing and relationship building. An E-newsletter is a remarkably inexpensive way to stay connected with existing clients.

E-Newsletters are an effective tool for brand building and increasing awareness of company products, services, promotions, news, and events. They can be even more effective if links to other services are included that point to your website or related sites offering benefits and ideas to readers.

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By using an HTML format, it is possible to have an E-newsletter to match the look and feel of the company's promotional materials and web site. It is even possible to provide a direct link from the newsletter to a web site and incorporate QR codes.

QR codes quick-response code is a type of two-dimensional matrix barcode, invented in 1994. Their use has exploded over recent years.

*They look like this:*



They serve as a link to a website or application. Just take a picture and click to get to the particular site.

### **Click through rates**

Click through rates measures the percentage of email recipients who clicked on one or more links in a given email.

Studies have indicated that 10% of email recipients will click-through to the sender's website and 2.5% will make a purchase. One third of marketers rank click-through rate as one of the top two metrics they track when sending and reporting on email marketing. What other medium boasts such impressive results at such a low cost - while offering the added benefits of easy tracking, interactivity, and the opportunity to build an ongoing customer relationship?

## **2 - 10.3 How to Create Excellent E-Newsletters**

Given all the advantages of E-Newsletters it stands to reason that they should become wildly popular with anyone who has a message to deliver.

There are, however, a few "tricks of the trade" that should be kept in mind.

*A successful E-Newsletter requires:*

- ❖ A clear objective
- ❖ A commitment - on your part - to stick to it.
- ❖ A precise combination of marketing elements
- ❖ A good database

A good database is one of the pillars of Internet marketing - you should gather names, contact information - and permission to send your E-newsletter from a wide variety of the people your organization meets.

*Gather names:*

- ❖ At the point of sale (in-store and online)
- ❖ From customer registrations
- ❖ On the web site
- ❖ From direct mail
- ❖ Through your telemarketing efforts
- ❖ From your tech support/customer service departments

*There are also several guidelines that need to be followed when it comes to the content of an E-newsletter:*

- ❖ **Table of contents** - Include abstracts to pique interest.
- ❖ **Personalization** - Wherever possible, customize copy to targeted segments and individual recipients.
- ❖ **Relevance** - Always ask, "Who cares?" when evaluating content. Steers clear of internal happenings and corporate propaganda.
- ❖ **Tone of voice** - Keep it conversational and newsy. Do not be afraid to develop a tone all your own. Your voice will attract consumers to your newsletter.
- ❖ **Length** - Keep articles short and to the point; use bullet points and random bolding.
- ❖ **Reader benefits** - State them early and often
- ❖ **Style** - Develop a consistent look that reinforces your company and/or brand image.

While relevant content is king in the E-newsletter marketing world, how it is presented can dramatically affect its impact. *Some of the tools and techniques that can be used to capture attention include:*

- ❖ **HTML** - Use lots of graphics, product photos and logos; include click-through URLs to encourage interactivity.
- ❖ **Web Inserts** - "Push" web site content to recipients without lingering download times by using your email marketing software content tool.
- ❖ **Streaming video** - Add interest with videos of events, product demonstrations or executive greetings.
- ❖ **PDF attachments** - Include documents like annual reports, product brochures and press coverage.

And remember to include:

- ❖ **Logo links and QR codes** - Put your web site one click away.
- ❖ **Access to back issues of E-newsletters** - Create an archive on your website for easy reference and link relevant articles and marketing pieces to each other.
- ❖ **Opt-in/opt-out instructions** - Always!
- ❖ **Forwarding capability** - Give the reader an easy way to spread your message to friends, family, and associates.
- ❖ **Customer service link** - Use it as an opportunity to stress service and reassure new prospects.

- ❖ **Permission statement** - Remind recipients that the E-newsletter they are reading was requested.

Nothing can turn prospects on or off faster than poorly crafted headers and headlines.

*Keep these dos and don'ts handy when crafting this all-important message:*

- ❖ DO keep it short and direct - 35 characters or less.
- ❖ DO explain what the message is about.
- ❖ DO make the first word important and informative.
- ❖ DO personalize it and DO keep it fresh and creative.
- ❖ DON'T use puns or "cute" words or phrases.
- ❖ DON'T use all caps, dollar signs or exclamation points.
- ❖ DON'T use the word "free" or "opportunity."
- ❖ DON'T bait and switch.

## **2 - 10.4 E-Newsletter Frequency**

It is quality, not quantity that makes your E-newsletter a welcome arrival. But the plethora of messages out there also demands that you develop a consistent pattern and high enough frequency that readers recognize and remember your newsletter.

*Consider these tips when planning your strategy:*

- ❖ Be consistent. Pick a schedule and stick to it.
- ❖ Make it monthly, or even more frequent. Once a month is standard for company news, but research shows that 31% of consumers consider weekly permission E-newsletters acceptable.
- ❖ Do not overdo it. Too many mailings can backfire. If your opt-out rate seems high, pull back on frequency to find the right balance.
- ❖ Do not underdo it. If you are too infrequent, your audience will forget you and the fact that they requested to receive your E-newsletter.

## **2 - 10.5 Prepare for the Future**

All indications suggest that E-newsletters will only continue to grow in importance as email usage expands and best practices emerge. Companies report that 23% of media buyers already rate E-newsletters the most responsive marketing method available... quite an accomplishment for a medium still in its infancy.

## **2 - 11 PRESS RELEASES**

A well-written press release sent to the right people can result in more media coverage than any amount of advertising could ever bring. And thanks to the Internet, it is that much easier to get important press release messages out to market in a timely and cost-effective way.

## **2 - 11.1 Press Release Topics**

A wide variety of "elder issues" make for suitable - and highly interesting - content in a press release. *Among them:*

- ❖ Recent Provincial or Federal Budget changes and their impact on elders
- ❖ Problems with healthcare and healthcare facilities
- ❖ Investment returns and investing issues.
- ❖ Changes to Old Age Security and the Canada Pension Plan
- ❖ Medical advances
- ❖ Demographic information and population projections

## **2 - 11.2 How to Write a Press Release**

Writing a successful press release is not rocket science. By following the simple rules outlined below virtually anyone can write a quality press release.

- ❖ Ensure that it is "well written" - spelling mistakes and grammatical errors will not be received favourably. They make your company look bad (not good) and this "sloppiness" is likely the thing that will stick in the recipient's mind.
- ❖ Focus on information and facts - self-promotion ("we provide the best service") is strictly off limits.
- ❖ Avoid overstating your case - overselling a product or service you provide will simply annoy the reader and guarantee that your release will never see the light of day.
- ❖ Be respectful - the person reading your press release is the person who can open the door to the publicity you want - do not get on their bad side.
- ❖ Stick to the point - the people reading your release do not have the time to read a lot of rambling and pointless copy. And they certainly do not have time to rework it. Keep things brief and concise - never go on longer than a single page.

## **3 - 12 BIOGRAPHIES**

Marketing professionals benefit from having a well thought out biography. A biography (or Bio) is simply a portal into your life's experience. It is a condensed version of your career history and provides your readers with insight into who you are. It is the short story of your professional life. Its primary purpose is to enhance your standing and credibility - to convince the people reading it that they should be interested in you. Unlike a résumé, which is generally used for seeking employment, a biography is simply a method of introduction - a more elaborate version of a business, or calling, card. Biographies are used with regularity by entrepreneurs, artists, writers, business owners, and professional consultants.

### **2 - 12.1 Biography Content**

As you prepare your biography, remember that you are trying to establish more credibility for yourself in the eyes of the public. So, begin by making a list of things that are relevant.



Think about what might appeal to your readers or what might be of interest to someone considering doing business with you.

People have choices, so your biography should provide good reasons why someone should do business with you and not a competitor.

*A biography should include:*

- ❖ Educational background
- ❖ Any pertinent specialized training
- ❖ Association memberships that are relevant
- ❖ Special licensing (if it is a business requirement)
- ❖ Years of experience
- ❖ Any notable business success that you have achieved.
- ❖ Any awards that you have won, or other recognition received.
- ❖ Material that you have written and had published.
- ❖ Anything that sets you apart from the crowd.

Many people are perfectly comfortable writing about themselves. Many others, however, struggle when attempting to write about themselves. It makes them feel like they are bragging. To overcome these feelings, the best policy is simply to be honest. When something is conveyed honestly, it never comes off as being smug. If you do feel uncomfortable writing about yourself, you might consider having a professional writer prepare your biography. Not only can a professional tell your story with objectivity - but they can also frame it in such a manner as to make it both interesting and compelling.

## **2 - 12.2      Summary**

A biography does not just help your clients get to know you - it can also provide a great deal of focus to your activities. It reminds you of what is important and affirms your suitability to the job at hand. Your biography should be included - with regularity - in virtually all your promotional materials. Biographies are also appropriate for inclusion in newsletters and press releases - and as a way of introducing you at seminars and other events.

## **2 - 13      TELEVISION AND RADIO**

All the statistics available indicate that elders tend to watch more television than other adults. In Canada, men, and women over the age of 55 watch approximately 34.4 hours of television every week (almost 5 hours per day) (Statista, Nov. 27, 2023). This compares with the national average of 20.6 hours per week for viewers age 18+. Television viewing, in fact, accounts for one of the largest shares of free time of older Canadians.

Unfortunately, these statistics have led many observers to conclude that elders are glued to the tube with a near deadly passivity - that they have ceded their lives over to the “idiot box.” Nothing, in fact, could be further from the truth.

Recent research on the subject has found that elders watch television deliberately and thoughtfully. They carefully pick the shows that they will and will not watch.

News and public affairs programming account for the largest share of the television viewing of older Canadians, followed by dramas, and variety and game shows. There is also the customer option of going commercial free so take that into account when using this medium.

Practically speaking, most people will piggyback and leverage regional and national advertising and promotion by the companies they work for or whose products and services they represent. Opportunities do exist on community television, including the promotion of events you sponsor.

Similar local programming is also offered by local “AM” radio stations - and this can further reduce the cost of advertising.

Note that many of the current affairs programs (on both radio and television) cover topics of interest to elders that may also have a direct tie in with the product or service you are offering (e.g., health care, household maintenance, fitness, food, investing, etc.). You may consider sponsoring/advertising here with short spots. (10-15 seconds at most)

## **2 - 14      SEMINAR AND WORKSHOP MARKETING**

**Seminars** offer a potentially large number of targeted consumers some information on programs, products, and services. Seminar marketing is a particularly effective tool in the elder market. It is presentation driven, often delivered by an expert or specialist, using various tools to effectively get information across. Good presenters engage the audience and treat members as if the presenter was talking to them during the session and through a Q&A, time permitting. Participant learning is more passive, with members taking notes.

**Workshops** are different in that they very much emphasize active learning, participation and interaction. They require materials that encourage participation and hands-on learning and a well-trained moderator to keep things moving in an organized manner, ensuring engagement from participants and that their voices will be heard. Workshops are structured to teach or develop a particular skill or get something started or done, something that can be taken away for follow-up by the organizer and as a preparatory step to an individual follow up meeting. The moderator or facilitator usually has a plan that can adjust and adapt according to the group’s progress. As such, workshops focus on discussion, completing exercises, providing feedback and applying knowledge. They more frequently include Q&A sessions. Participant learning is more active.

## **2-14.1 Differences In Purpose And Use Of Tools**

The person responsible for conducting the seminar can use nothing more than a flipchart

or opt for a variety of multimedia devices. PowerPoint, properly used, can present an organized and professional image to the audience and can feature imagery that is positive and tailored to the audience. The objectives should always be to keep the audience informed, entertained and engaged. Effective seminars also encourage some audience participation - something that is particularly important when elders are in attendance (they thrive on opportunities to get involved).

The moderator for a workshop may also use a variety of multimedia devices including flip charts at the front of the room, or a number of them around the room for breakout sessions, where group members, capture thoughts which they share and report on later to the entire audience. A workshop is designed to develop skills or complete tasks. Participants are exposed to a practical or actionable understanding of a task or skill which can help them implement what they've learned in their personal or professional lives.

## **2-14.2 Advantages Of Seminars And Workshops**

Seminars and workshops offer other advantages when it comes to the elder market. Elders enjoy learning new things - especially when the information comes to them free of charge. They also enjoy the social setting that an event provides - typically there are dozens of people present, the atmosphere is entirely non-intimidating and there is often ample time for interaction. Better still, most of these events also provide refreshments (e.g., nonalcoholic refreshments and snacks). All in all, it is a very pleasant way to spend an hour or two during the morning, afternoon or evening. Seminars are a first step in building an ongoing, relationship-based marketing approach. There is no pressure to act immediately. Everyone has time to digest the information provided, ask questions, and opt to receive more information later. Workshops on the other hand, are more actionable, task oriented and results oriented for the participants. Purchases of products and services are generally not the objective. Uncovering needs, data gathering, exploring alternatives and working through issues may all be part of workshops.

Seminars that attempt to "sell" a product - on the spot - are doomed to fail. The seminar should be designed to build the vendor's credibility, interest the attendees in a topical idea or common area of concern, providing actionable information and a call to action, followed by gaining permission to follow-up. The "first" sale that takes place is not a product sale, but the sale of this follow-up meeting.

Any attempt to go beyond this will violate the whole spirit of seminar marketing and the offender will usually end up with a luke-warm reception, poor reviews and few if any interested parties. Often, they won't get a second chance to make that first all-important first impression.

## 2 - 14.3 Reducing Prospect Fears

*Almost everyone detests that first meeting with a salesperson. Prospects worry about a whole variety of things:*

- ❖ What if I do not like the salesperson?
- ❖ Will they try and pressure me into buying?
- ❖ What kind of sneaky sales pitch will they employ?
- ❖ Are they going to ask for money?
- ❖ Are they going to ask me to give them the names of my friends and family?
- ❖ Will it be difficult to get rid of them?
- ❖ Is the salesperson knowledgeable and credible - or is he just another huckster?
- ❖ Will I be led astray, and will I be aware of it?
- ❖ Will I be taken advantage of, preying on my age, physical or mental condition.
- ❖ Is the salesperson trustworthy or just another con artist?

The beauty of a marketing seminar is that it quickly eliminates all these concerns. There is no pressure, the attendees can remain largely anonymous (thanks to the comfort provided by numbers), and they have lots of time to make their own judgments about the program and the presenter. They get a chance to assess the presenter's knowledge, they can draw some conclusions concerning his moral character, and they can decide if they would be comfortable opening up to him on a one-on-one basis. They get a chance to do some "tire-kicking" in an incredibly non-threatening environment.

The seminar setting also gives attendees a chance to monitor the reactions of others in the crowd. If they like what they have heard, and the rest of the audience seems to agree, they will be that much more inclined to agree to a follow-up meeting.

From the presenter's perspective, seminars also offer crucial advantages. They allow him to leverage his time to the maximum (speaking not to one individual, but to dozens ... even hundreds). They also - if well attended - help position him as an expert in his field (why else would so many people show up?).

Done correctly, a marketing seminar of this nature is one giant first appointment - which offers you tremendous economies of scale. You will also find that many prospects that would never have granted you a "cold" first appointment will now actively pursue you for additional information. Selling these - now warm - prospects a product will be substantially easier than it would have been. Already sold on you - they will be ready to begin talking about themselves and their own personal situations. Seminar selling offers a win-win proposition for both you and the prospects in attendance.

## **2 - 14.4 Costs**

A properly run seminar need not be but can be expensive, but this expense must be put into context. How much does it cost you to deliver your message to a single client - when you factor in travel time and expenses, missed and cancelled appointments, meals and entertainment, your actual client closing ratios and a whole slew of other factors, *including*:

- ❖ The cost to buy a "list" of names.
- ❖ The cost to prepare promotional mailers.
- ❖ Printing and postage expenses
- ❖ The cost associated with processing responses received (toll-free calls, business reply postage, etc.)
- ❖ The cost associated with "fulfilment" (i.e., supplying promised info, materials, etc.)
- ❖ The cost (largely time) associated with your appointments.
- ❖ The costs associated with the large number of prospects who will not grant you an appointment.
- ❖ Your travel costs (auto, gas, tires, insurance, wear and tear, maintenance etc.)
- ❖ The cost of cancelled appointments
- ❖ The cost of no-shows

In comparison, running an effective 90-minute seminar for roughly 100 prospects will cost somewhere around \$4,000 (to cover room rental, refreshments, advertising, invitations, speaker fees/honorariums, etc.). As steep as that may sound, it works out to about \$40 per person - not bad at all when compared to the cost of individually trying to see 100 people. Costs may be significantly less if using a community centre, church hall or library that can accommodate larger crowds. In some cases, business partners and sponsors may contribute to costs as an investment in the host, and as an expectation that some resulting business will flow their way. Seminars can help establish your brand, expertise and services, particularly if done with some regularity.

## **2 - 14.5 Format and Subject Matter**

One of your main up-front goals of a seminar is to be informative, interesting and entertaining! Too often seminars are long and boring affairs. The presenter comes off as more of a nerdy, robotic professor, rather than a dynamic and engaging leader. Find someone who can engage the audience and bring energy into the room and topic.

For a workshop, There is a seemingly more flexible format where active participation is not only encouraged, but also necessary for success. The facilitator introduces concepts and then directs participants to practice these through exercises, group tasks, or discussions.

When it comes to content, elders are looking for solutions - not a degree in finance or some other discipline. Remember the goal is to get the attendees interested and engaged -you want to motivate them to act. Tell stories that the attendees can relate to and use lots of examples and focused activities. Make your audience feel comfortable, involved and productive.

Allowing questions is always a good idea in a seminar, but the presenter must be skilled at managing them (amplifying only those questions that reinforce his arguments and quietly and carefully redirecting those that do not). A moderator of a workshop thrives on questions to and from the audience and needs to be reading the audience, adapting to their level of interest and engagement while staying true to the original purpose and staying on time. Moderators, more than seminar speakers, need to be very time conscious and keep things moving along regularly. Sticking to the time schedule is a key deliverable for the speaker and organizer to be respectful to everyone.

Never talk about specific products or companies during the seminar - as soon as attendees get the sense that a sales pitch is in the making, they will turn it off and shut down. They did not invest an hour or two of their time in order to hear some long, drawn-out, cookie-cutter infomercial.

Pushing product is the number one mistake made in the arena of seminar selling - it will almost instantly kill the program.

**Consider the following two seminar topics - which seminar would you rather attend?**

1. Seminar One - "Seven Little Known Money Traps Which Routinely Cost Retirees Thousands!"
2. Seminar Two - "Financial Planning and Mutual Funds."

Seminar one has the requisite retiree appeal - seminar two is dry and un motivating.

Finally in preparing the content for a seminar or workshop always "keep the end in mind." The golden rule is simple: the only thing for sale is "an appointment with you afterwards."

## **2 - 14.6      Size Matters**

### **Seminars**

When it comes to seminar selling, size really does matter! Small seminars may be ineffective and unproductive for both the speaker and attendees - for a whole variety of reasons.

You lose the "comfort-in-numbers" that comes with a large group. People who find themselves at poorly attended seminars no longer feel anonymous - and worse, they find themselves wondering, "why aren't more people here?" This is particularly true if the venue is much larger than the audience. What's more, you lose that sense of intimacy.

Your credibility plummets like a stone. Skepticism about you and what you are offering abounds. People feel as though they got sucked into nothing more than a sales pitch.

You will end up with dramatically fewer appointments from a smaller pool of attendees and it will be harder to close the people who do agree to meet with you.

You also lose the benefit of the "economies of scale" associated with a large seminar -your cost per attendee skyrockets and you cannot leverage your time nearly as effectively. A small seminar can be a PR disaster - worse, in fact, than no seminar at all.

People are much more comfortable in a large crowd. They tend to become immediately pre-sold on your abilities and they assume that you must know what you are doing. The sheer size of the crowd makes them think of you as an *expert*.

On the other hand, smaller groups can be positioned as “by invitation only” or for select invitees or special events. Positioning then is key to matching attendee experiences to expectations.

A well-run and well-attended seminar takes on the status of an "event" and attendees are much more comfortable referring their friends to your future meetings. You and your services are perceived as being in high demand. People become much more relaxed when signing up for appointments because "everyone else is doing it."

The word spreads fast when clients are "wowed" by a seminar. All of this results in an increase in your closing ratios, a reduction in your per attendee costs, and the effective leveraging of your time.

## **Workshops**

Workshops on the other hand can be much more intimate and allow for greater control and interaction between audience members and the moderator. Sizes range from a dozen or so to 40-50 maximum. These are then broken down into workgroups of 6-8.

In many ways, the downsides of seminars’ “go big or go home” are benefits of workshops. In workshops, things actually get done, then and there. There is a greater sense of purposeful, and tangible accomplishment. The cost benefit analysis focuses on doers vs. listeners, taking on the experience of individual client meetings taken to a larger scale. That improves efficiency. Clients demonstrate their buy-in and engagement and leave with a sense of satisfaction that they were in a partnership, sharing responsibility for issues, options and effort. It builds trust, a sense of control and sense of independence in an organized environment.

## **2 - 14.7 Taking Charge**

Don’t think that you the organizer must always be the seminar speaker or workshop moderator. Aim to make this a great experience for attendees, giving them the best that you can bring. Attendees will see value in you by bringing in polished speakers and moderators. Those people can enhance your image and the good ones direct follow ups, product and service specifics and feedback to you.

Don't be overly concerned if you are not front and centre; it may even work to your advantage. You can make notes about which attendees are really engaged and in what parts of the sessions, and which ones are not. Use those notes as follow-ups with your invitees. Yes, insert some plugs about your services and even testimonials to round out the session and connect with the topic before and after the main presenter. Play the host and master of ceremonies. Be there to handle missteps or logistical challenges Attendees will remember that it was you who invited them, orchestrated the organization and ensured that invitees would get value for their investment of time.

Many people are ill at ease in front of a group. Others are overly confident about themselves to a fault. Try to see what speaking role you can play in a seminar or workshop. Often, this is quite possible and puts you upfront, along with the invited professional or specialist, allowing you to engage in some self-promotion. With some advance coordination, the speaker may promote you or refer guests to you throughout their presentation.

## **2 - 14.8 Checklists**

The following "checklist" covers some of the essential matters that must be addressed in order to ensure that your event meets the needs of the elder market.

- ❖ The invitation should give a contact name (so prospective attendees know who to notify concerning specific needs or aids)
- ❖ The meeting location should be accessible – close to public transportation, offering a place where elders can be dropped off safely by car. Plenty of freeparking should also be available.
- ❖ The meeting room should be accessible to people with varying degrees of mobility; the meeting room chairs should be comfortable.
- ❖ Always start the meeting at the appointed time
- ❖ Provide an agenda (so attendees know what to expect)
- ❖ Never run a session that exceeds 90 minutes in length. If more time is needed, get buy in and commitment upfront and put in breaks for people to stretch, refresh and mingle.
- ❖ Use guest speakers to enhance your seminar and add credibility.
- ❖ The room should be arranged to ensure that everyone can see and/or hear and understand your message. The requirements will vary depending on the audience and could include public address systems that accommodate listening devices and hearing aids, sign language interpretation, large posters, or projected images to convey key points. With respect to projection systems, beware of projection methods that require a darkened room, since this is problematic for elders with low vision. Use half round tables with seating facing the front.
- ❖ Make sure the MC announces who is at the head table if one is set up and asks speakers or persons asking questions to identify themselves. This is particularly useful to people who are blind or who have difficulty reading signage and nametags.



- ❖ It is also helpful to announce the location of washrooms and other amenities such as coffee shops. If there are refreshments available, announce the location and the choices. Messages should be simple and concise: narrow them down to three or four points – no one can easily retain more than that. Handouts can reinforce and supplement the information provided verbally.
- ❖ Allow time for questions and clarification. Schedule a few minutes to wrap-up at the end of the gathering to repeat and reinforce key messages. Ensure questions are heard by all. Repeat the question to make sure. Offer plain-language handouts and a telephone number (answered by a real person) for questions that remain unanswered. Make sure there are enough printed materials for everyone in attendance.
- ❖ Where possible collaborate with a larger - higher profile - company (it boosts your image and adds to your credibility - it may even defer some costs)
- ❖ Finally, plan to end the gathering on time, so that people using public transit or arranged rides can get home safely and conveniently.
- ❖ Conduct regular events - not "one off" affairs - so long as they provide results that exceed the amount of money spent to run them. Success in brand building and learning comes from multiple offerings.

## 2 - 14.9      **Summary**

Seminars and workshops can be two of the most lucrative and streamlined ways to help catapult your practice - whatever discipline you are in - to the next level. They make effective use of your time; they can be cost and time effective and they position you in a positive fashion. Best of all, they are extremely popular with audiences - particularly elder audiences!

## 2 - 15      **THE INTERNET**

A lot of people have made a big deal about the fact that "elder" Internet usage is growing faster than that for any other segment of the population. It is a nice "sound bite," but it is also entirely misleading - for two reasons. First, Internet usage for younger adults is

already at close to 100% ... so there is not exactly a lot of room for growth.

In a report entitled; What do the elderly do online, posted by Wire19, back in the fall of 2018, over 70% of elders age 65 and over use the internet on a typical day. Another 11% go online 3-5 times per week. Boomers spend 27 hours per week online.

With elders, they tend to stick with what they know and where they feel comfortable and confident. *Recent data suggest that their top "Internet interests" continue to be:*

- ❖ Email (91% of those age 60+)
- ❖ Hobby information (genealogy, nostalgia, etc.)
- ❖ News (political and financial information), Health information (medicines, remedies, etc. by 53% of seniors) and the weather
- ❖ Search engines to gather information on topics of interest. 82% of elders use these.
- ❖ Social media (49%)

- ❖ Shopping (by almost 6 in ten elder users and 45% for coupons, discounts and daily deals)
- ❖ Games (43% of elders use the internet for this. 76% of elders say that mental sharpness is a very important or extremely important reason for playing online games.)
- ❖ Banking and finances (55%)

It should also be noted that elders - like many others - tend to be somewhat suspicious of the information they receive over the Internet. They trust it a lot less than regular advertising, corporate brochures, and traditional news sources.

The most trusted "online" information is that provided by traditional media (i.e., the websites of newspapers, magazines, and broadcasters).

## **2 - 15.1      The Good News**

Not all the news is bad. It turns out that "wired" elders are more likely than their "offline" peers to be married, highly educated, and enjoying relatively high retirement incomes.

It should also be noted that the Internet will clearly be a very important tool when it comes to delivering messages to aging boomers. This group will also be far more likely to make fuller use of the Internet's capabilities (downloads, consumer purchases, financial transactions, etc.). Some evidence of this is already surfacing. Over half of internet users who are 55 years of age and older report online purchasing as their third most common activity. This was really fed during the pandemic and has become an enduring practice following it.

Snowbirds also deserve special mention - since their Internet habits closely resemble the habits of individuals between the ages of 18 and 34. Snowbirds spend more time online (than other elders) and they are more likely to use interactive features like chat programs. They also tend to be more Internet savvy - they stay online longer and drill down deeper into web sites than even their children or grandchildren do.

The Internet can be a very effective way to reach a small - highly educated and wealthy - segment of the elder population.

## **2 - 15.2      Internet Benefits**

Despite a relatively slow uptake, there are a wide variety of very compelling reasons why every elder should be embracing the Internet with a passion. The Internet can help reduce elder isolation, promote lifelong learning, and compensate for functional decline.

Books, medical aids, medications - even groceries can be ordered from the convenience of home and then delivered to an elder's door. Basic day-to-day transactions (banking, bill paying, managing investments) can also be done from the convenience of home.

These are truly revolutionary breakthroughs - particularly for elders who are struggling with mobility issues.

The Internet also makes possible a rich array of new communication possibilities (email, chat rooms, picture, and video sharing) that can help elders stay in close contact with their children and grandchildren - even in situations where they are all thousands of miles apart.

And, of course, the Internet can entertain and inform, as well. It offers up-to-date news and weather, games, photo journals, etc. - which can offer an elder, hours of entertainment.

## **2 - 15.3 Website "Look and Feel"**

Website design and online documentation present many of the same challenges as print and other media (e.g., telephone answering systems).

The design guidelines that apply to print (i.e., Type sizes, contrast between type and background, avoidance of dots and wavy lines) also apply to web sites and online materials.

Avoiding unnecessarily complex routines and structures makes just as much sense in cyberspace as it does for publications and automated telephone answering systems.

In fact, elder-friendly design makes surfing the web more enjoyable and informative for all users, not just elders.

Make the structure and navigation of web pages clear and understandable, not convoluted. Images and copy should resonate. The colour of the type should heighten the contrast with the background. Use plenty of white space with a minimum 12-point type font with bold heads and subheads. Legibility is a key factor with elders. Putting disclaimers in smaller type for this group deters readability and, in some cases, may be unethical. Screened images behind type can make the type illegible to elders.

*Consider the following "pointers" when putting together a web site designed to appeal to the elders:*

- ❖ Try to make reading a pleasure and not a chore.
- ❖ Opt for four colours (not two-color or three-colour) - surveys have indicated that readership increases in proportion to the increase in colour.
- ❖ Remember that older eyes have trouble distinguishing between blues and greens, and that when lavender and purple are put together they may leave a yellow afterglow.
- ❖ Strong colours should be avoided (they are too intense for older eyes) - select softer colours instead.
- ❖ Use complementary colours instead of contrasting colours to create a soothing and balanced effect.

- ❖ Take into account established "colour cues" - red is an action colour; while light blues, pinks, yellows, and soft greens signify cheerfulness, good health, nature, and harmony. Dark blue conveys respect and responsibility. Blue green is classy, and it denotes financial success.
- ❖ Use readable type (e.g., a sans serif typeface, such as Helvetica, that is not condensed). Avoid the use of serif, novelty, and display typefaces.
- ❖ Use a minimum of 12 or 14-point type size for body text, and medium or boldface type.
- ❖ Present body text in upper and lower case letters. Use all capital letters and italics in headlines only if at all. Reserve underlining for links
- ❖ Double-space all body text – Use left justified text - it is best for elders
- ❖ Avoid patterned backgrounds.

## **2 - 15.4      Navigation Tips**

- ❖ Use text relevant images only – make use of short segments to reduce download time on older computers.
- ❖ Provide text alternatives such as open captioning or access to a static version of the text for all animation, video, and audio.
- ❖ Increase the ease of navigation – the organization of the web site should be simple and straightforward.
- ❖ Use explicit systematic navigation procedures whenever possible to ensure that viewers understand what follows next.
- ❖ Carefully label links.
- ❖ Use single mouse clicks to access information.
- ❖ Use icons with text as hyperlinks and provide a site map to show how the site is organized.
- ❖ Use a standard page design and the same symbols and icons throughout. Also use the same set of navigation buttons in the same place on each page. Label each page in the same location with the name of the web site.
- ❖ Incorporate text with each icon and use large buttons that do not require precise mouse movements for activation.
- ❖ Use pull down menus sparingly – avoid automatically scrolling text. If manual scrolling is required, incorporate specific scrolling icons on each page.
- ❖ Use pull down menus sparingly.
- ❖ Avoid automatically scrolling text. If manual scrolling is employed, incorporate specific scrolling icons on each page.
- ❖ Incorporate buttons such as 'Previous Page' and 'Next Page' to allow the reader
- ❖ to review or move forward.
- ❖ Include a tutorial on the web site to teach visitors how to use the site. Offer a telephone number for those who would prefer to talk to a real live person.

When it comes to designing a web site, you might also consider getting some input directly from elders. Experts believe that when you are setting up a web site for older people, you should solicit unbiased comments from them through focus groups, usability testing, or other means. This will help you to test the accessibility and friendliness of what you have created.

## **2 - 15.5 "Elder Friendly" Email Campaigns**

In designing an email marketing campaign, the first thing you need to do - before you write a single word - is to find a compelling message to deliver. Some research may be required - do not just go with your instinct. Talk to 20 elders and ask them to evaluate the program you have in mind. This will quickly tell you what benefits and features to emphasize.

Once you have written up and designed the program, show it to 20 more elders. Get their opinions on your copy and presentation in order to ensure that you have hit the mark. It is difficult for young copywriters to speak to an older age group, so ensuring the message is clear and the presentation readable is of the utmost importance.

Finally, make it easy for elders to respond to your email offer.

*Some additional recommendations - with respect to an email marketing campaign targeting elders - follow:*

- ❖ Keep it simple and clearly state the benefits.
- ❖ Keep your copy brief and concise (leave no room for inference)
- ❖ Make sure images and graphics are representative of the target audience.
- ❖ Clearly address security and privacy rights
- ❖ Provide links to additional content.
- ❖ Include third-party testimonials.
- ❖ Stay clear of misleading and misdirected statements and claims.
- ❖ Use positive statements.
- ❖ Use the "active voice."
- ❖ Provide a handy glossary of technical terms.
- ❖ Organize the content in a workable format - break lengthy copy into shorter sections.

## **2 - 16 OTHER MEDIA**

A wide variety of other marketing and promotional options are available to you. Brochures and print advertising (in newspapers or magazines) are popular and relatively inexpensive.

How to best use vehicles of this nature will be discussed in more detail in the chapter on communicating with elders.

You might also consider such tried-and-true promotional offerings as fridge magnets, writing pads, letter openers, paperweights, coffee mugs, golf shirts etc. Elders have a keen sense of "value," and they love these types of "freebies."

*A word of warning though* - make sure that the products you distribute are of good quality. "Free" cuts it ... but "cheap" does not.

## **2-17 WORD OF MOUTH MARKETING**

Word of mouth continues to be the most powerful form of marketing as noted in the 2021 Neilson Trust in Advertising study. It found that 88% of respondents placed the highest trust in recommendations that came from people they know, ranking higher than any other marketing messaging. Why is word of mouth marketing considered to be the most important and compelling form of marketing communications? It is perceived to be credible, trustworthy and without hidden motives – "What's more, recipients of word-of-mouth messages typically pass them on to other people they know." (Michael Cafferky, Let Your Customers do the Talking.)

Key to becoming referable – next evolution of referrals

*Consider these additional, supporting facts and figures:*

- ❖ 64% of marketing executives believe word of mouth is the most effective form of marketing.
- ❖ McKinsey & Co reported that word of mouth is the primary factor behind 20-50% of all purchasing decisions.
- ❖ Boston Consulting Company reported that word-of-mouth was 2-10 times more effective than paid ads.
- ❖ Nielsen found that consumers were 77% more likely to buy a product if their friends recommended it.
- ❖ 23% of consumers talk about their favorite products with friends and family every day.
- ❖ Word-of-mouth marketing results in 5x more sales than paid media impressions

## **2 - 18 DEVELOPING YOUR BUSINESS**

Marketing is all about uncovering what you do best and then telling lots of people. It sounds easy, but the devil is in the details. Properly marketing your organization and its products and services requires hard work and discipline.

The following material provides some tips on how to effectively "market" and build your business.

### **2 - 18.1 A Business Plan**

Every business needs a business plan - it creates focus, direction and it helps you to make decisions. It should include a clear mission statement; describe the services you provide, the market you serve and the benefits you offer. It should also include financial goals and projections.

## **2 - 18.2      A Marketing Plan**

A properly developed marketing plan should help add focus to your day-to-day activities. Far too many companies are trying to do everything for everyone. They are students of everything and experts in nothing. They muddle along, on a hit and miss basis, struggling to find the next customer.

A company with a clearly defined target market and marketing plan is far more efficient at finding new customers and delivering exceptional service and support. This expertise allows it to become known as the "go to" organization in the segments it serves.

Focused companies with an effective marketing plan rarely must beat the bushes looking for new customers.

## **2 - 18.3      Marketing Materials**

Word of mouth is the best advertising - but it cannot hurt to have materials that will assist you, and your best customers, in getting your message out to others. Your marketing materials (brochures, newsletters, flyers, etc.) help to define who you are what you do.

They can help build your reputation, elevate your credibility, and sell the marketplace on the benefits of your products and services.

Your best clients love what you do for them - make it easy for them to get your story out.

## **2 - 18.4      A Plan for Networking**

A huge part of success involves simply "showing up!" Whether it is civic activity, volunteering at your child's school, attending religious services, or supporting a local charitable organization ... show up!

The more you put into your community, the more you will get back in return.

## **2 - 18.5      The Perfect Office**

If you are going to cater to the elder market, office design is crucial. Are your waiting room chairs comfortable? Is your office easy to access for individuals with mobility issues? Are your magazines up-to-date and appropriate for the elder market? Does the décor send the right message? Is the background music "market appropriate?"

Your office cannot just be pleasant and functional. It should also subtly send this message to every client - *you understand them and are focused on their needs and well-being.*

## **2 - 18.6 Over-Respond to Every Situation**

Give far more than expected. Answer every question, and then send a relevant article a few days later. Return phone calls immediately! Promise less, and then deliver more. Always exceed expectations.

## **2 - 18.7 Don't Delay**

Never wait "until you can afford" new equipment, a better office, or more training. Delaying on these fronts will result in far too many missed opportunities. If you need to do it - and you know that you will do it eventually - then do it now! Get on the Internet; install a computer billing system, upgrade your phones. Delay costs you money, time, and energy, and limits your creativity.

## **2 - 18.8 Take Superb Care of Yourself**

Exercise and eat well, get plenty of rest, and hang around the most delightful, challenging, and exciting people you can find. See one less new client per day and spend that time adding value to your existing clientele.

## **2 - 18.9 Market Yourself Shamelessly**

Market your practice with style, with passion, with good taste, and with a low-key honesty. The community needs your skills far more than you need a job—clearly communicate what you do and how well you do it. Your community needs you ... so make sure that they know how to find you!

## **2 - 18.10 Tolerate No Distractions**

A clear vision and passionate commitment to your priorities is the secret to success. It makes life simpler and helps you to stand out in a crowded marketplace. Declare yourself and they will come.

Clean up any distractions and focus on what you want for your business in the months ahead. People do not generally get everything they wish for in life, but being clear, focusing on what is important (rather than convenient or the familiar) and working hard can take you further than you imagine. The clearer you are about what you want, the more likely you are to get it.

## **2 - 18.11 Focus on Customer Service**

It is not about you. It is all about them ... your customers!

Customers complain about retail giants saying they are "salespeople [and] can't do much more than read the features off the package." You may not be bigger, but you can be better.



Every time a customer meets your business is a promotional opportunity. Create a good ten-second introduction to describe your organization that everyone can use. Consider the following example: "Hello, I'm John Agent with ABC Financial Ltd. We specialize in providing financial freedom."

Do not put a customer on hold and allow them to hear the advertising of a competitor. If a customer must be put on hold, plug in messages that promote your organization.

Remember that customers do not always buy at the lowest price. They always buy what they believe is the best value. Your mission is to increase customer perception of your value. Customers will pay a premium of up to 10% or more for good service, and all service comes from people.

Satisfying customers is not a distraction from selling products or services; it is how you sell more. Fix problems, satisfy customers, and they will buy from you and refer you to others with regularity.

Let the customer know that you are interested and that you care. The statistics on why customers decide to take their business elsewhere is quite revealing.

*Customers move on for the following reasons:*

- ❖ 1% die
- ❖ 3% move away.
- ❖ 5% find other suppliers.
- ❖ 9% switch for competitive reasons
- ❖ 14% are dissatisfied with your products.
- ❖ 68% feel that you are indifferent toward them.
- ❖ 75% of the adult children of your elder clients will move investable assets left to them or put into their control elsewhere.
- ❖ 70-80% of widows switch advisors within 18 months of their spouse's death

More than two-thirds of the customers who leave you are likely leaving because you have not shown them how important they are to you! If you want to keep your customer base intact, there is no such thing as showing them too much attention.

The bottom line is to stay in touch with your customers and treat each one with the respect that they deserve. Without them, you are out of business.

## **2 - 19      VOLUNTEERING**

Volunteering is one of the best ways for you to create some profile, position yourself favourably within the community and - as it turns out - get face-to-face, shoulder-to-shoulder with a wide range of elders. Many elder related organizations and charities are in desperate need of assistance. And offering your time and energy should be the prime motivator for getting involved.

## **2 - 19.1 Clubs, Charities and Community Organizations**

Numerous elder clubs and community organizations are in need of people with some background in a variety of disciplines including finance, technology, marketing/sales, and budgeting/billing. Often even non-skilled help is appreciated - book club moderators, for example, are needed to lead the discussion at regular meetings.

These organizations also need people with driving, knitting, and sewing skills - and to help with bulk mailings and participate in community outreach programs.

Local charities require people to check on elders and arrange food delivery.

## **2- 19.2 Retirement and Nursing Homes**

A range of volunteers is also needed at many retirement and nursing homes. They are needed to act as tutors, mentors, readers, storytellers, adult nurturers, and craft project helpers. Some are even called upon to help write letters.

Volunteers are also needed for entertainment (e.g., bingo callers) and to play games (e.g., jacks, chess, checkers, etc.).

## **2 - 19.3 Health Care**

Volunteers are needed to serve as receptionists, couriers, gift and coffee shop helpers, patient greeters, patient visitors, and clinical assistants. And there is a need for people to help facilitate programs on bereavement and loss.

## **2 - 19.4 The Benefits of Volunteering**

People are always willing to recommend people that they believe are leaders. Public service projects are a great way to become that leader and give something back to your community at the same time.

Make sure you have not done this just for publicity, though. Find a cause you personally believe in and get involved. It will be much more satisfying for you and most productive for the group you help - and you will not come across as being phony, shallow or financially opportunistic and self-serving. If you are helping with a cause you believe in, people will see that you care, and they will assume that you probably bring the same dedication to your work.

## **2 – 20 OBTAINING ELDER REFERRALS**

If you are in the sales and marketing business, and you started your career in the late 70s or early 80s, you learned how to sell during challenging economic times. One of the keys to survival was asking for referrals.

In the past two decades, asking for referrals (from customers, friends, family, and business associates) has fallen by the wayside. This is a terribly disturbing development, since referral business is about the best business you can get.

*Among the benefits associated with referral business:*

- ❖ Quicker access to new sales leads
- ❖ Less time spent prospecting unqualified leads.
- ❖ Less stress
- ❖ The improved likelihood that your calls will be returned, and an appointment made.
- ❖ Instant rapport (even trust)
- ❖ Increased sales and earnings

## **2- 20.1        The Hierarchy of Leads**

*There are three basic types of leads:*

- 1. Cold Lead (Cold Prospect)** - You are on your own for this call. There is no referral – or if there was you do not have permission to use their name. There is no apparent common ground – no connection between you and the person you are meeting.
- 2. Warm Referral (Warm Prospect)** - You have the referring person's permission to use their name in introducing yourself to the prospect. However, you only have minimal information to work with (concerning the prospect's current situation, concerns, goals, etc.).
- 3. Hot Referral (Hot Prospect)** - You have the referring person's permission to use their name in introducing yourself to the prospect - and you have a lot of the facts you need to establish a connection and a relationship.

Some referrals are inherently better than others. At one end of the spectrum is the cold call (which involves no referral whatsoever). There is nothing worse than a cold call and it is a lousy place to make a sale.

Which raises some interesting questions such as "Which sales calls produce the best results, the most sales, and the greatest return on time and money?" "Which sales calls are best for building great relationships and creating loyal customers?" "Which sales calls are most profitable?"

*Ranked, in reverse order, here they are:*

- ❖ A cold call - the worst
- ❖ An appointment made from a cold call - almost as bad.
- ❖ A response from an ad or direct mail - fair
- ❖ An appointment made from a trade show or networking event - not bad.
- ❖ A referral from a customer or a friend (though you had to ask for the referral) - good.

- ❖ An unsolicited referral from a customer or friend - very good
- ❖ An unsolicited call from a prospect who wants to buy - great.
- ❖ A call from an existing customer wanting to buy more - the best!

In a perfect world, every lead would be a call from an existing customer wanting to buy more. Life would be very easy. Unfortunately, most salespeople will not do the hard work necessary to make an easy sale.

## **2 - 20.2      The Four Cornerstones**

There are four fundamentals or cornerstones when it comes to building referral business: build a referral alliance; target niche markets; use a simple process; and ask for the referral.

### **1. Build a Referral Alliance**

Not all your referrals should come from satisfied customers. You should make a concerted effort to look for referrals from people within all the groups and associations that you have some involvement.

Referrals from other salespeople - within and outside of your comfort zone - are another great way to build your referral alliance.

### **2. Target Niche Markets**

If you do a great job of servicing the needs of a target market niche (e.g., elders) you will build a reputation in the marketplace and become the "go-to-guy" or girl in that market segment. As soon as a situation involving your expertise presents itself people will immediately think of you. In some instances, even your competitors will be forced to cede the business to you.

### **3. Use a Simple Process**

In order to produce referrals, talk to existing clients about the typical client that your organization services. Then ask the person to imagine the faces of people they know (e.g., vendors, friends, members of associations to which they belong) who fit the profile. Next, ask directly for the referral and wait for their answer.

### **4. Ask for the Referral**

Many salespeople just forget to ask for the referral. In many cases, the satisfied client is waiting for you to ask for their help ... so ask them!

A properly managed referral system will help you develop more qualified appointments than you need. You will be in the enviable position of deciding which clients you choose and choose not - to work with. It does not get any better than this!

## 2 - 20.3      **Enabling Referrals**

The best referrals happen spontaneously—a customer is so pleased with your work that they are eager to tell others about their experiences with you.

If your clients are going to become your advocates, they need to be well versed in the three "Cs" - comprehension, conviction, and communication.

- ❖ **Comprehension** - your advocates must be able to: be aware of the situations that trigger a need for your services; identify the type of client you work with; and ask the right questions to help "qualify" the prospect.
- ❖ **Conviction** - your advocates must have a strong conviction that you are "the solution."
- ❖ **Communication** - Sources need to know how to tell your story effectively and be assured they will look good every time they refer someone to you.

Most professionals leave it to chance. They believe that referral sources have all the information they need and that they can easily supply an endorsement. They do not, and they cannot.

## 2 - 20.4      **When to Ask for a Referral**

When is the best time to ask for a referral from a customer? This could depend on the nature and size of the "sales relationship" that you have built with your customer.

Usually, the best time to ask for a referral is right after the sale is closed and your product and service is being delivered or installed. At this time, you should also consider getting a written testimonial to use as a sales aid. When asking for a testimonial, consider getting some ideas from the customer first, then writing them up yourself. The customer can then review and sign what you have written.

## 2 - 20.5      **Key Questions to Ask**

- ❖ How do I ask for referrals without sounding pushy?
- ❖ How do I motivate someone to endorse me?
- ❖ Will they remember me when the time comes?

It is difficult to be effective when questions like these keep going through your mind. The best way to get comfortable in asking for referrals is to put yourself in the shoes of the person you want the referral from. This will help you gain a great deal of perspective on what will and will not work.

## **2 - 20.6 Why Do Some People Refuse to Provide Referrals?**

- ❖ They see no benefit for themselves.
- ❖ They do not have confidence in your abilities.
- ❖ They do not want to offend their family, relatives, and friends.
- ❖ They do not have a clear understanding of who you are looking for.
- ❖ They do not really have a relationship with you - they do not necessarily trust you

## **2 - 20.7 After the Referral**

After meeting with a referred lead, it makes sense to follow-up with the person who supplied the lead. A thank you card, or a phone call are both good ideas. Some sort of gift - even better.

This is smart business practice - especially in the elder market (they like to know if they have helped).

## **2-20.8 Become Referrable**

The real goal for service and product providers should be to become referable. When people need or want something, your name comes up, regularly and positively.

Make the experiences your clients and networks have with you impactful and shareable. Offer bite sized talking points that clients who can become advocates can repeat and share.

Solicit feedback on your value proposition and offerings. Use testimonials to promote the benefits and advantages of dealing with you.

Be that “go to” person that people can use when various issues come up with their connections, for services you don’t even offer (realtor, plumber, handyman, gardening, painter, decorator, lawyer, dentist...and the list goes on). This will pay dividends down the road. Those references may even use your name when one of their contacts is looking for some help in your area of specialty.

Networking can be a great tool when it’s used to develop meaningful relationships with others. There are many ways to benefit from those relationships once you have established a basic level of trust and agreement of support. Be sure to communicate regularly, but not aggressively about opportunities to support one another including actionable steps to take for each one of you. One of things you need to cultivate is a specialty you offer that instills trust and confidence in you and your services and product solutions with the comfort of potential referrers that you will act in the clients’ best interest in a positive way.

## 2 - 21 CONCLUSION

As consumers, elders possess financial resources, make educated decisions and are loyal to their chosen service providers. These qualities, coupled with their increasing longevity, make them model customers.

Unfortunately, most mainstream marketing programs miss the mark. Elders dislike being labelled and patronized. "We need to have more sensitivity to aging issues and market themes that are important to all generations," suggests one demographic expert.

Collectively, elders represent a powerful purchasing force - and they can provide the businesses that service them with a significant and stable consumer base.

Elders now live longer; healthier lives compared to their parents and are more active consumers. From power mowers to salad dressing, pillowcases to thermostats, freezer to baby clothes, elders are spending money. If you are in business, it makes a lot of sense, given that Canada's elder population is one of the fastest growing in the world, to ensure that your products and services are elder friendly.

Marketers will not reach future elders by selling products that are geared at "old people."

*The focus should instead be on themes, such as:*

- ❖ **"You've earned it"** - which appeals to elders who value hard work and sacrifice, but who, because they have not absorbed the baby boomer philosophy of self-entitlement, need to be told that it is OK to spend money.
- ❖ **"Wisdom"** - give them the respect that they deserve. They have weathered wars, cultural revolutions, and political and economic turmoil successfully and have a right to be proud of their own experience and the wisdom it has produced.
- ❖ **"Nostalgia"** - as with any age group, using images and music that elders identify with can be an effective marketing strategy. For inspiration, explore the history and popular culture of the late 1940s and the 1950s—the period when the future crop of elders came of age.
- ❖ **"All generation appeal"** - marketing a product based on its multigenerational benefits ensures that elders do not feel stigmatized. When it comes to special interest or affinity-based travel experiences, for example, future elders may welcome the opportunity to interact with different generations.

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# Chapter 3

## Elder Fraud and Financial Exploitation

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### 3-1 KEY OBJECTIVE OF THIS CHAPTER

Financial exploitation is the most common type of elder abuse in Canada. When it comes to financial exploitation, an elder's greatest enemy can be a family member, close friend, or trusted professional – the very people he or she should be able to count on. This chapter will give you a primer on how elders are exploited, who the perpetrators are, and how you can help to protect our elder population.

Of course, elders can also fall prey to outsiders. Con artists like to focus their attention on the most vulnerable members of a society. Elders who are isolated socially, who have financial challenges, or whose health is failing make excellent targets. This chapter will also provide you with a lot of information on elder fraud and some suggestions on how to defend against it. Often, the best defense an elder can have against fraud is to simply live by the following motto: *“If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!”*

#### 3 - 1.1 How Will These Objectives Be Achieved?

We will provide a detailed, fact-based review of financial exploitation: the types of exploitation, a profile of the targets, and the measures that can be taken to prevent it. We will then turn our attention to elder fraud, covering such targets as: the media used for fraud, the reasons elders are targeted, common frauds, and prevention techniques. Having a very basic understanding of the nature and dynamics of elder fraud is the first step in helping to prevent it. Or, put another way, when it comes to fraud - a little awareness can go a long way.

### 3 – 2 FINANCIAL ABUSE

Elder financial abuse is the illegal taking, misuse, or concealment of funds, property, or assets of a vulnerable elder at risk for harm by another due to changes in physical functioning, mental functioning, or both. Elder financial abuse has also been described as “...the fraudulent or otherwise illegal, unauthorized, or improper act or process of an individual, including a caregiver or fiduciary, that uses the resources of an older individual for monetary or personal benefit, profit, or gain, or that results in depriving an older individual of rightful access to, or use of, benefits, resources, belongings, or assets.”

For every known case of elder financial abuse, it is estimated that four to five cases may go unreported. Elder financial abuse is also called financial exploitation, misappropriation of funds, and fiduciary, economic, or material abuse. It encompasses a broad range of misconduct, including, but not limited to, fraud, scams, undue influence by family members and trusted others, and illegal viatical settlements; abuse of powers of attorney and guardianship; identity theft; Internet “phishing;” and failure to fulfill contracted health care services.

According to Seniors First BC, the top 10 forms of financial abuse (between 2013 and 2017) were: 1. exploiting affected adult (for shelter or money); 2. pressuring (to lend, give gift or change will); 3. misuse of power of attorney; 4. real estate; 5. questionable business transaction; 6. misuse of bank or credit card; 7. misuse of joint bank account; 8. Theft; 9. cashing pension or other cheques without authorization; 10. Skimming.

Elder financial abuse is regarded as one of the most commonly substantiated types of elder abuse, along with neglect and emotional/psychological abuse. It occurs in community or institutional settings, accounting for 30%–50% of all forms of elder abuse, and the problem appears to be growing. Experts and advocates have decried that inadequacies in its definition frustrate attempts to discover, remedy, or prevent the problem as well as to define its causes and its scope.

In addition, the justice and social services systems are often inadequately staffed and funded to address elder financial abuse. Even seasoned professionals have difficulty determining whether elder financial abuse occurred or if an elder willingly and knowingly made a poor financial decision.

### **3 – 2.1 Elders at Risk**

The “typical” victim of elder financial abuse is between the ages of 70 and 89, female, frail, and cognitively impaired. She is trusting of others and may be lonely or isolated. However, professional and trade journals, as well as newspaper articles describing financial abuse often yield descriptions of victims with very diverse profiles.

Women experience elder financial abuse more than men. Since women tend to live longer than men, there are a greater number of older women than older men in the population. In 2023, there were 4,302,417 women age 65 and over in Canada, versus 3,610,164 men.

That is almost 700,000 more elderly women. The numbers become even more compelling at age 85 and over. According to the latest census, there are almost twice as many women age 85 and over (542,111) than men (318,888). Compounding the problem, far more elderly women than men are living alone.

Though certainly not for all, as age advances, some older women experience cognitive decline and increases in instances of chronic disease. Decreased cognitive functioning, in turn, affects their decision-making capacity, leaving them potentially susceptible to people looking to defraud or deceive them. For example, women in need of some caregiving may

experience theft of their valuables or cash by their paid caregiver. The caregiver may intercept the woman's mail, obtain credit card numbers, and bank information, and use this information to commit identity theft. Some women who experience financial abuse may be lonely due to the death of a spouse or partner. When the partner dies, an older woman may become responsible for household finances for the first time in years or the first time ever. Women unaccustomed to home maintenance may trust a "professional" for home repairs that were never intended to be done or were intended to be done shoddily. They also may have predictable patterns in their finances and daily routine, such as when and where they go shopping and when monthly cheques arrive. Thus, observant perpetrators of financial abuse can predict when an older woman will have money on hand or be going to the bank and become the target for a variety of con games and scams.

Women who have not been able to make financial decisions may be more trusting in the advice of others, particularly if they are new at seeking financial advice. Women with cognitive problems may be easily influenced by others, especially if that influence increases in intensity and becomes a "hard sell." Vulnerability to undue influence could lead to a woman changing the beneficiary of a trust or will. It could also induce an agent into changing the power of attorney document. In these situations, she would forfeit her legal rights to another person. Even if this were discovered and reversed, it may prove difficult to impossible to ever recover any assets transferred to the unscrupulous individual.

Embedded in roles as mother and caregiver, women may unwittingly contribute to the dependency of a troubled child who may be posturing to care for them. They may give funds to an errant child who is dependent on the woman for funds for general living, for drugs, or for alcohol. They may enable an adult child who believes that he or she is entitled to the woman's funds. "She would want me to have it" is a common excuse. Women often do not report the financial abuse to protect their children from prosecution.

### **3 – 2.2      Aging Men Are Victims Too**

Like older women, older men also experience losses of spouses and friends as they age. Such losses may leave them alone and lonely to the point that they may become unwitting victims of people who seek to befriend them—with the intention of creating a coercive relationship through which he or she gains financially at the expense and lasting emotional anguish of the elderly man.

One type of elder financial abuse that older men seem to be more susceptible to than women is a "Sweetheart Scam" (although women can fall prey to this form of abuse as well). In these cases, an older man experiences the loneliness accompanying the loss of a spouse or partner and may also be depressed and experiencing some cognitive and physical decline.

The deceased partner may have fulfilled a caregiving role for the man, and so he feels this loss intensely. His adult children want to help him, but they may have other family responsibilities, living some distance away, or also coping with the loss.

A woman, often younger, “befriends” the older man. Filling the void of loneliness, she may insert herself more and more into the man’s life and decision-making. In such a scam, the esteem of the man becomes measured in the ways he lavishes attention on her, the attention manifesting itself in multiple and escalating expenditures for expensive gifts, automobiles, clothes, paying off debt, and signing over wills, trusts, or other legal authority to this new “friend.”

Men may tend to be more risk-taking in making financial investments than women, and so they may be prone to being vulnerable to “professionals” or family members who seek to invest their money by promising unrealistically high returns.

Such financial fraud may take the form of faulty insurance policies, refinancing a homeloan, investments in stocks and bonds, and unrealistically rapid investment returns.

Telemarketers may involve a man in paying for goods and services never rendered or rendered inadequately. Men are often enticed to provide personal information, thus making it possible for thieves to commit identity theft via the telephone, the front door, or the Internet.

### **3 – 2.3      An Equal Opportunity Crime**

Financial abuse is viewed quite differently by different ethnic groups. White Canadians, for example, might regard that taking money from an elder “because she would want me to” or “because I am going to get it all anyway” as unacceptable, while in other cultures, such as that of Korean Canadians, it may be regarded as culturally acceptable.

More research is needed to establish definitive trends regarding the extent of elder financial abuse among different cultures.

Almost everyone agrees that estimates of elder financial abuse represent only the most overt cases, thus significantly underestimating the incidence of financial abuse of elders living in the community. Even less definitive information is available about the prevalence of financial abuse in residential long-term care settings.

Estimates of the occurrence of elder financial abuse vary considerably. The source of information about this abuse is one reason for the variation, as some estimates are predicated on anecdotal information of what people are seeing and reporting at best, while others are founded on a “sentinel approach” (i.e., purposefully selected reports) to estimating the size of the problem.

### **3 – 2.4      The Perpetrators**

A study of newsfeeds in the United States, from April 2008 through June 2008, indicated that the largest percentage of cases of elder financial abuse involved close associates of the victim—families, friends, caregivers, and neighbours. Almost 40% of reported cases involved these close associates.

Family members, even more so than strangers, financially exploit their elderly relatives. Although there is no definitive estimate of the number of older adults who experience financial abuse by family members, community service providers and other professionals agree that cases reported to authorities represent only the very “tip of the iceberg.” Like King Lear, when people in their later years encounter health problems that diminish their physical or cognitive capacities, they usually first turn to family members for assistance and support. In most situations, family members nobly assume their caregiving role; but in others, family members—sons, daughters, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews—take advantage of the elders’ dependencies and become perpetrators of financial abuse. Approximately 60% of substantiated cases of financial abuse involve an adult child.

The elder’s grandchildren and other relatives are also likely to be perpetrators of financial abuse (9.2% and 9.7%, respectively). In the primary literature, male and female relatives are equally likely to be financial abusers of older adults.

However, the media-reported instances revealed that elder financial abuse was 2.5 times more likely to be committed by sons than daughters. Overall, 45 incidents (16.9%) of elder financial abuse described in the media involved immediate relatives. Family perpetrators often misuse their powers of attorney to steal money from bank accounts, obtain credit cards to make unauthorized purchases, and embezzle large sums of money by refinancing the elder’s home, among other examples of financial abuse.

It is unknown what factors contribute to the likelihood of family members financially exploiting their elderly relatives, as no rigorous research has been done. Scholars and practitioners speculate that, like perpetrators of other types of elder abuse, family members who exploit their elders are dependent upon them for their own survival (e.g., shelter and finances) and their actions may be influenced by problems with alcohol, drug abuse, and gambling, and many may suffer from antisocial behaviour disorders. Tensions and inequalities between the elder and family member, perhaps stemming from the relative’s dependency and mental health issues, enhance the likelihood of financial abuse. For example, an unemployed adult child living in the home of a parent might be more likely to exploit the elder than an adult child with a steady income and their own place of residence, or one generation abused another and then the “abuser role” is reversed.

Some family members also feel a sense of entitlement and believe that they have a right to the money and material goods their parents or older relatives have accumulated. They often start with small crimes, such as stealing jewelry and blank cheques, before moving on to larger items or coercing elders to sign over the deeds to their homes, change their wills, or liquidate their assets. They feel justified in taking “advance” control over assets that they perceive to be “almost” or “rightfully” theirs. Relatives may believe they are entitled to “reimbursement” for providing care for the elder, or/and may even take pre-emptive steps to secure assets to prevent their presumed inheritance from being exhausted to pay for the elder’s care and medical bills.

It should also be noted that professionals in several key areas have also been known to financially abuse elderly clients. The most likely abusers in order are financial professionals, lawyers, and clergymen.

### **3 - 3            PROFESSIONAL SCAM ARTISTS**

In addition to being financially exploited by relatives, friends and financial professionals, elders are also exposed to any number of professional con men.

There was a time, not that long ago, when fraud was the domain of snake-oil salesmen and travelling sideshows. Most consumers were exposed to con artists on an infrequent and sporadic basis. The odd con artist that they did encounter, tended to disappear - for good - under the cover of night ... if he had not already been "tarred and feathered" and driven out of town on the rails.

The good old days are long gone. Today fraud is an international, multi-billion-dollar business. The con artists themselves are highly sophisticated, compelling, and equipped with the latest in technology.

While it is still possible to meet up with them face to face, it is far more likely that they will contact you via the mail, newspaper, telephone or over the internet. From the con artist's perspective these forms of contact offer significant advantages - they are quicker, cheaper, easier ... and, of course, safer!

It is common for today's consumers to be contacted a dozen or more times each week by a slew of different con artists. The ploys themselves also run the full gamut. Some focus on robbing a lot of people of a little money ... while other - far more labor-intensive programs - focus on taking a lot of money from a few people. The latter tend to target large swaths of the elder population. As we shall soon see, elders are particularly susceptible to the entreaties of these modern-day confidence men.

As noted, elders are prime targets for fraud. Aware of this exposure, many elders are keenly interested in finding people, and companies, who operate according to a Code of Business Practices and who are committed to behaving in an ethical manner.

### **3 - 4            WHY ELDERS ARE TARGETED**

#### **3 – 4.1            Homeowners**

Most older adults, from the fittest to the frailest, are homeowners. They are often "home alone" within the fast-paced, multi-generational communities in which they live, exposing them to unscrupulous vendors, scam artists, and telemarketers who prey upon innocent individuals who are eager to live out their lives in familiar and comfortable surroundings.

For example, the tendency of fraudulent telephone salespersons to prey on older adults is high, with more than 50% of victims of telemarketing scams being age 50 or older. Elders, who often end up on the “mooch list” of crooked telemarketers, frequently are victimized repeatedly.

### **3 – 4.2      Accumulated Wealth**

Their accumulated wealth also makes elders good targets. As a group, elders are relatively affluent. They are the wealthiest households in Canada. They have the most discretionary income. And they are more likely than other households to have a substantial investment "nest egg;" and to have good access to credit. Con artists tend to focus their attention on segments of the population most likely to be in a financial position to buy, and elders - as a group - tend to fit the bill.

Despite their wealth, some elders worry that they will outlive their money and be forced to rely on their children for financial support. As a result, they are often targeted for phony investment schemes. Scam artists are aware of the fears elders have and often troll for elders with financial means by visiting churches, country clubs, or senior centers.

They develop a relationship with them to win their confidence by performing legitimate services, such as tax preparation or financial planning, before pitching a fraudulent investment.

Common sense dictates that individuals with great financial resources are highly attractive to family members and others seeking to take large sums of money.

Nevertheless, people with limited means are also at risk of elder financial abuse. These elders are particularly at risk of being sold a “get rich quick” scheme.

Anyone can be a victim of elder financial abuse, but older adults who are socially isolated are also especially vulnerable because they are less likely and able to seek advice before making an important financial decision. In addition, because the sales solicitation itself addresses a need for social interaction on the part of the elderly victim, they may feel obligated to be friendly or compliant in return.

If the older adult appears hesitant to engage in the transaction, the perpetrators have an endless supply of rebuttals for any excuse the victim offers and can have an aggressive style that intimidates them into complying. These tactics are effective primarily because of their appeal to natural human desires to feel special, to find a bargain, and to please someone else.

### **3 – 4.3      Personality Traits**

Individuals who grew up in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s were generally raised to be polite and trusting. Both are positive personality traits ... except when it comes to dealing with a con artist. People who are trusting tend to be less cynical and critical - and this makes them more susceptible to being tricked, pressured, and coerced.

The con artist will exploit these personality traits, knowing that it is difficult and sometimes near impossible for trusting elders to say "no" and just hang up the phone or close the door.

### **3 – 4.4      Level of Risk**

Elders present less "risk" from the con artist's perspective. *They are a lot less likely to report fraud for several reasons:*

- ❖ They sometimes do not even realize that they have been "scammed" - often referring to the crime as, simply "a hard sell" (a 1996 study conducted by the American Association for Retired Persons indicated that 68% of older fraud victims admitted that they had difficulty "spotting" a fraud)
- ❖ They do not know who the fraud needs to be reported to (a highly legitimate complaint since there is often jurisdictional confusion as to whether these are civil or criminal matters)
- ❖ They are so ashamed and embarrassed that they are reluctant to let others know that they have "been taken."

In other cases, an elderly victim may not report the crime out of fear that a relative may come to the conclusion that the elder no longer has the mental capacity to take care of his or her own financial affairs.

### **3 – 4.5      Compromised Recall and Memory**

Elderly victims of fraud often make incredibly poor witnesses. In many cases they are unable to supply enough detailed information to secure an arrest, let alone a conviction.

Weeks - even months - can go by before the elder becomes aware of the fraud. Almost anyone could be expected to struggle remembering details after this long a passage of time. Not surprisingly, elders are often quite hard pressed to answer the most basic of questions. How many times did the fraudster call? What time of day did he or she call?



Did he provide a call back number or address? Was it always the same person? Did you meet in person? What did the fraudster look like? Did he or she have any easily recognizable features or traits? Where did you send the money? What did you receive in return if anything - and how was it delivered? What promises were made and when? Did you keep any notes of your conversations?

The fact that elders may be hard pressed to answer the above questions is something that the typical con artist relies upon.

Time, as it turns out, is also on the side of the con artist. Prolonged legal proceedings take a heavy toll on the elderly. Many give up, become seriously ill, or simply expire long before justice is done.

### **3 – 4.6 Vulnerability**

When it comes to products that promise increased cognitive function, virility, improved physical conditioning, anti-aging, and cures for chronic conditions - elders are a receptive audience. Their deteriorating physical condition helps to make them a relatively "easy mark."

In a country where medical advances, improved drug treatments and new cures for old diseases are commonplace - it is easy to believe that almost anything is possible.

Elder's very optimism - their hope for better days ahead - makes them receptive to whatever wild promises that a con artist wishes to make.

### **3 – 4.7 Accessibility**

Compared to almost any other group of Canadians, elders are the most likely to be easily accessible. Since most are retired and many have mobility issues, chances are they are going to be home when a telemarketer calls, or when a door-to-door sales representative comes knocking.

### **3 – 4.8 Isolation**

Isolation and loneliness can sometimes cause elders to welcome the approaches made by telemarketers and this helps facilitate the con. The fact that many elders do not have regular contact with relatives and friends (with whom they could discuss prospective investment schemes, product offers, etc.) merely compounds the problem. There is often no one to double-check the program and offer some "sober second thought."

Con artists prey on both vulnerability and loneliness. They are often willing to spend hours talking to prospective victims - in the process building rapport and trust. The best of them may even become a trusted substitute for the guidance that would normally be provided by a family member or friend.

### **3 – 4.9      Health Issues**

The declining health that comes with age makes it easy for con artists to literally wear their victims down. Elders are targeted relentlessly - often receiving as many as 20 different telephone solicitations a day - and dozens of pieces of "questionable" mail each week.

Health concerns (e.g., loss of hearing, sight, and mobility) also make it difficult for some elders to easily access many products and services. Unfortunately, this leaves many elders easy prey for the entreaties of door-to-door salesmen and telemarketers. It also makes them inordinately receptive to scams that promise to deliver a product or service right to their door.

Declining mental health can further compromise matters, by making it difficult for elders to remember the specifics of what was agreed to.

### **3 - 5            TELEMARKETING FRAUD**

If you are 50 years old, or older, you are a prime target for con artists who sell bogus products and services by phone. This is especially true in the case of older women who live alone.

Telemarketing fraud is a 40-50 billion dollar a year business in North America - and 56% of victims (according to a Princeton University Study) are 50 years of age or older.

Telemarketing scams run the gamut - from bogus jackpot winnings to low-cost vitamins and health care products, to get rich quick schemes, to low cost - often "free" - travel deals.

*Some of the telltale signs that should warn consumers that a telemarketer is not on "the up and up" include:*

- ❖ Lots of pressure to act immediately (e.g., unless you act *now*, the offer will be withdrawn)
- ❖ "Postage and handling," taxes, or other charges must be paid up front, before a *gift*, vacation, or prize can be claimed.
- ❖ Popular payment arrangements include a credit card or bank account number, wire transfers and cheques (which will be picked up by courier). The emphasis will always be on quick payments that cannot - after the fact - be easily connected to the recipient organization.
- ❖ Great pains will be taken to build the profile of the company involved. The mark will be assured that the company is above board and that there is no need to check it out with anyone else (e.g., family members, lawyers, accountants, a local Better Business Bureau, or consumer protection agency)

- ❖ The telemarketer will not be amenable to delay tactics - particularly requests for references and written information about the company involved - until payment has been secured.
- ❖ A variety of "high-pressure" sales - and scare - tactics will be employed - the telemarketer will not take "no" for an answer.

The best defense - against any of the tactics described above - is to just say "no thank you," and hang up the phone. If an individual is a victim of telemarketing fraud, it is very difficult to get the lost money back. Telemarketing con artists find it difficult to track many operate "offshore" and their boiler rooms tend to be extremely mobile. *Before buying anything by telephone, remember:*

- ❖ Do not buy from an unfamiliar company. Legitimate businesses understand that consumers want more information about their company, and they are happy to comply. Always ask for and wait until written material about the offer is received. Once received, ask someone whose advice can be trusted to review the offering. Keep in mind —not everything written down is true.
- ❖ Always check out unfamiliar companies with provincial or territorial consumer affairs offices, the Better Business Bureau, the Competition Bureau, or the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (formerly Phone Busters) at 1-888-495-8501.
- ❖ Obtain a salesperson's name, business identity, telephone number, street address, mailing address, and business license number before completing any transaction. Some con artists give out false names, telephone numbers, addresses, and business license numbers - so be sure to verify the accuracy of the information received.
- ❖ Before giving money to a charity or an investment program, find out what percentage of the money is paid in commissions and what percentage goes to the charity or into the investment.
- ❖ Before sending money, ask the following simple question: "What guarantee do I really have that this solicitor will use my money in the manner agreed upon?"
- ❖ Never pay in advance for services. Pay for services only after they have been delivered. Some con artists will send a messenger to pick up payment claiming that this is a consumer-friendly service. It is a great way for them to pocket the money without leaving a trace.
- ❖ Always take lots of time before agreeing to anything. Legitimate companies do not pressure anyone to make a "snap" decision. Remember that it is never rude to wait and think about an offer. Always consult with a trusted friend, family member, or financial advisor. Never respond to an offer that is not understood thoroughly.

- ❖ Have a set policy with respect to the kind of information that will and will not be supplied over the telephone.
- ❖ Never send money or give out personal information such as credit card numbers and expiration dates, bank account numbers, dates of birth, or social security numbers to any unfamiliar companies or unknown persons.
- ❖ If an individual has already been victimized, be especially wary of people who call offering to help recover the losses - for a fee - that must be paid in advance.

Finally, it is worth noting that, if a person absolutely cannot resist the urge to purchase - whether from a telemarketer, a door-to-door salesman, or over the internet - he or she should always pay the safest way! In most cases the safest method of payment will invariably be a credit card. With credit card purchases it is possible to dispute the charges if the goods and services promised are not delivered, or if they were misrepresented. In most cases consumer liability is limited to \$50 ... and often, even this amount, will be waived by the credit card provider.

### **3 - 6 INTERNET FRAUD**

Many of the schemes to defraud consumers that have traditionally been conducted by telemarketers have now found their way onto "the net." Internet users can expect to receive a wide variety of unsolicited emails that purport to offer business opportunities, investment opportunities and great deals on goods and services. Often this "spamming" will direct consumers to a 1-800 number or to a web page.

The frauds conducted over the internet include many of the most popular cons (i.e., Nigerian 419 letter scams and charitable giving schemes) as well as a variety of newer cons. Among the newer cons: degrees from fictitious educational institutions, illegal raffles, dubious auctions, as well as business opportunities (e.g., clipping coupons or selling coupon certificate booklets). Internet fraud is a rapidly growing business both in terms of the number of frauds and the average loss. The most popular scams are currently auction related, while the most expensive - by a significant margin - involve Nigerian 419 letters.

Elders are less susceptible to some forms of internet fraud (i.e., auction and general merchandise) and more susceptible to others.

*The rules to follow - when it comes to preventing internet fraud - are like those used to prevent telemarketing fraud - with the following additions:*

- ❖ Never respond to unsolicited email
- ❖ Never provide personal information in a "pop-up" screen
- ❖ Be wary of downloading information from an unknown source.
- ❖ Beware of bogus web sites (designed to mimic legitimate sites)

### **3 - 7        MAIL FRAUD**

Mail fraud refers to any scheme that attempts to unlawfully obtain money, or items of value, in which the postal service is involved (at any point in the process).

Most consumers receive what can only be described as an abundance of junk mail that involves either misleading or downright fraudulent claims. These promotions come in a variety of different forms.

*Among the most common mail frauds are:*

- ❖ Misleading and deceptive advertisements
- ❖ Identity misrepresentation (e.g., a letter that appears to be from a government agency or financial institution requesting, or even demanding, personal information)
- ❖ Promotional cheques (which, if cashed, impose - via some slippery fine print - several obligations on the consumer)
- ❖ Solicitations disguised as invoices (usually the headline reads, "please pay this amount" - even if a very small number of recipients comply, the scam is profitable)
- ❖ Chain letters (often promoting pyramid schemes)
- ❖ Fraudulent charitable solicitations
- ❖ Sweepstakes that require a payment, purchase or entry fee in order to claim the prize - or which direct the mark to a 900 number. All the prizes awarded in scams of this nature are - despite appearances to the contrary - worthless, or near worthless.
- ❖ Work-at-home scams that supposedly require little effort, but which purport to deliver big money.

### **3 - 8        DOOR-TO-DOOR FRAUD**

Since elders are more likely to be home during the day, they are far more likely to meet face to face with door-to-door salesmen and women. While some of these salespeople may be honest, the chances are very good that they are anything but.

Door-to-door salespeople sell a variety of different goods and services including home improvement products (e.g., siding, windows, roofing, etc.), magazines, vacuums and filtration systems and other household equipment. The con artists - whether male or female - are likely to be charming, friendly, and incredibly polite. They will look and feel "honest." In short, they are very good at what they do.

*Some of the tricks employed by these engaging cons include:*

- ❖ Greeting their victims by name (they have done their research well)
- ❖ Claiming to be from the "neighbourhood"
- ❖ Indicating that they are already doing work for others in the neighbourhood.
- ❖ Approaching victims when they are outside (so it is impossible to shut the door on them)
- ❖ Using a variety of misleading ruses in order to get inside a victim's home.

- ❖ Making a play for sympathy (e.g., their family will go hungry if they cannot make a sale)

If a consumer deals with a door-to-door con artist, he will likely end up with either: an overpriced product, shoddy workmanship, or nothing at all.

Consumers should never let people they do not know inside their homes. Even if the sales pitch is intriguing, they should: demand to see the salesperson's credentials, and allow themselves time to investigate the company, compare prices, and read the fine print in any documents provided.

*If the consumer does decide to proceed, he or she should:*

- ❖ Be certain that they understand the contract (e.g., what is included and what is not, refund policies, guarantees, etc.)
- ❖ Never accept verbal promises - all the pertinent details (total price, warranties, financing, and other conditions) must be in writing.
- ❖ Never sign a contract with blank spaces
- ❖ Make any cheques payable to the company - not the salesperson.
- ❖ Never pay in advance
- ❖ Be sure they have both a legitimate street address and phone number for the company involved.

### **3-9 POPULAR SCAMS**

A scam is used to describe situations where a person is tricked into giving money property or personal information to another person. The consumer is being cheated somehow – through misrepresentation, overpricing, paying for a service or product that is not actually delivered, or other means.

We've all gotten that suspicious type of call: It may have been an air duct cleaning salesperson, an automated voice telling you your Amazon package was stuck, or a call from Canada Revenue Agency warning that you owe the government money. You may or may not have known it at the time, but they were all scams.

An Ipsos poll published in February 2023 found that 43 per cent of Canadians have been the victim of a fraud or scam in their lifetime, and the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre reported 92,078 fraud incidents in 2022.

With more of our interactions taking place online and artificial intelligence tools upping the stakes, it's getting increasingly difficult to discern when a message claiming to be an organization is real and when it isn't. According to the Better Business Bureau, more than 68 per cent of all scams reported in the U.S. last year were attempted online.

In an attempt to stay up to date on the latest schemes, the following is a list of the most common scams currently taking place in Canada. The following also provides information on what to keep an eye on and how to protect yourself.

### **Emergency Scam / Grandparent Scam**

The emergency scam, also known as the grandparent scam, often happens by phone and most likely to more senior Canadians. A caller will pretend to be a loved one or a family member and claim they've been in an accident or charged with a serious offence, such as a DUI. Oftentimes, the phone will then be passed to a second fraudster, claiming to be a lawyer or police officer, who will then demand money to bail the loved one out of jail.

According to the Anti-Fraud Centre one of the most prominent tactics fraudsters use during phone scams is caller ID spoofing, where they alter the caller ID on a phone call, to make it seem like they're calling from an official number.

If you receive a call claiming to be someone you know, hang up and give them a call back on a number you know. If they claim to be law enforcement or a lawyer, call them back through an official number. Be wary if the caller is trying to push you into an urgent decision or is asking for cash.

### **Tech Support**

This scam involves getting a call or an urgent e-mail from a fraudster, who claims that the target's computer has been infected with a serious virus or malware. They then charge sums of money for repairs, or occasionally convince the victim to give them full access to their computer.

It's extremely unlikely that a reputable company would call you out of the blue about computer issues. If you believe you have an issue with your devices, do a scan through your installed security programs, or call a trusted expert, such as a technician from a computer electronics store.

### **Air Duct Cleaning Fraud**

The target will receive a call advertising a service (such as air duct cleaning or roofing) for an extremely low price and that tries to get credit card information or payment through the phone. Occasionally, the scammers do actually come to a victim's home to do the work, but this could result in a shoddy job and invalid warranties.

These scammers are preying on vulnerabilities because they know people are trying to save money and are offering the service at a substantially lower price than a reputable company would.

It's important to do your research. Look up the company offering you a deal and check for a proven track record of good service.

## **CRA-Related Scams**

These fraud attempts typically either try to deceive you into thinking you're speaking to someone from the government or other institution or trick you into sharing compromising personal or financial information. The CRA flagged that Canadians were receiving texts and e-mails from scammers pretending to be government officials, with fake links to claim deposits such as the Climate Action Incentive Payment.

According to the CRA, if a caller claims to work for the government and demands your banking information or an immediate payment, you can ask for their name, work section and office location, and verify their identity by calling the CRA directly before moving forward.

## **Phishing Scams**

The most common and popular form of e-mail or text scam is phishing, where a user receives a message impersonating a person or organization they're familiar with – an urgent message from FedEx, Amazon or Canada Post claiming there's an issue with your package, for example.

The goal of a phishing message is to get the user to either click on a malicious link or share their personal or financial information. It's important to take your time when receiving such messages, as scammers are hoping you'll make a rash decision because the message seems urgent.

In most cases with phishing, victimization happens quickly. Most victims realize immediately after providing the personal information or clicking on the link that something was a little off.

If you receive a message claiming to be from a person or organization you know, reach out to them through a different communication platform to confirm or deny the message. Avoid clicking on any links in the messages and check for spelling mistakes.

## **Fake Websites For New Immigrants**

The federal government flagged fake websites as a vulnerable type of fraud for new and aspiring immigrants to Canada. These fake websites claim to be official government sites and may offer special travel deals and guaranteed jobs.

If a website looks fake, look it up on a search engine to see if it has been flagged anywhere for fraud, and double check the URL to verify it's legitimate.

## **Contests And Sweepstakes**

Sweepstakes and contest scams are still running rampant, where Canadians receive a call announcing they've won some glamorous contest with a huge prize or free trip. But the (almost always fake) prize comes with some extra tax or fee to claim.



“Don’t be fooled by claims that the offer is legal or has government approval – many scammers will tell you this,” Competition Bureau Canada says on its website. “Instead of receiving a prize, you will lose every cent you send to the scammer. And if you have provided other personal details, your identity could be stolen, too.”

Don’t fall for the urgency of the offer, especially if you never signed up for any contests in the first place. If you do follow through with the contest, don’t pay any extra fees or costs to claim a prize.

### **Extortion**

Extortion typically involves an e-mail where a fraudster claims they’ve hacked into the victim’s personal computer and accessed compromising photos or videos. They threaten to release them online unless a payment is made.

If this happens to you, report it to your local police and the Anti-Fraud Centre.

### **Fake Airline Website Scam**

Travel agency Flight Centre said hundreds of imposter sites have been popping up online. The fake websites — which can feature prominently on search engines — impersonate Flight Centre to trick customers into spending thousands on fake flights.

Though Flight Centre is working to get the sites taken down, check for spelling mistakes and any irregularities in the website design before buying your tickets.

### **Romance Scam**

Canadians on dating sites, apps, or other social media are contacted by a fake profile, and slowly builds an online relationship with them. The fraudster then begins asking the victim for money — a flight ticket for a visit or a medical emergency, for example — and then cuts contact after payment is sent. According to the Better Business Bureau, the percentage of people who reported losing money to romance scams has increased more than 300 per cent since 2020.

Be wary of profiles that seem too good to be true — or if you suspect the photos might be of someone else — and if they try to move your relationship too quickly. Any request for money should be considered a red flag.

### **Emergence Of AI Scams**

A growing number of existing scams have been taking advantage of developments in AI technology. Deepfakes – a type of AI-generated video where a person’s likeness can be mimicked and manipulated – are being made to create fake advertisements featuring celebrities, in an effort to make a fraudulent product look legitimate.

And AI chatbots are being used to fake conversations with potential victims – in romance scams, for example.

The Anti-Fraud Centre is monitoring the use of AI in scams, but prevention is the same: Double-check the URLs, check if a company is reputable and do your research.

Despite the huge range of different scams and frauds out there, just staying vigilant and keeping yourself informed can make a huge difference. Fraudsters often try and get a potential victim to act fast and without thinking, so it's important to take your time and make sure everything is legitimate before making any moves.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (“RCMP”) have identified several scams that seem to target older adults. The first two described below are of particular concern.

### **3 – 9.1      The New Best Friend Scam**

In this scam, someone befriends an older adult and then isolates her from her network of friends and family in order to gain control over her finances.

An actual scam of this nature followed the following script: an elder woman was befriended by a man who said he was her nephew. He needed a temporary place to stay

and convinced his “aunt” to invite him into her home. The elderly woman lived alone and was pleased with the potential short-term companionship. The “nephew” started systematically isolating her. He screened her calls and censored her mail. He discouraged visitors by claiming that his “aunt” could not come to the phone: she was taking a nap, not feeling well, or out with friends. It got to the point that neighbours did not see the woman leave the house for months.

By the time the elderly woman's daughter came to town to visit, her assets and health had suffered significantly. She had been persuaded to stop taking certain medications and to skip regular medical appointments. The “nephew” had sold her car and was selling items out of her house. The house could easily have been next if Agnes' daughter had not intervened. Claiming that he wanted to help Agnes pay bills and pick up groceries, the “nephew” convinced Agnes to add him to her bank account. Sadly, once the nephew became a joint bank account owner, Agnes' funds were depleted and many bills unpaid.

### **3 – 9.2      Some Renovation Scams**

Under the Home renovation scam someone offers to do repair work for a special price, paid in advance. The scammer appears to do some work but does not complete the job.

A typical scam of this nature plays out as follows: an elder retired and living alone in her own home is approached by a man from a renovating company. The man indicates that he had noticed that the house's roof, or driveway, or windows, etc. are in need of significant repairs. He offers to do the work for a special low price.

The man seems to be a legitimate contractor: he is wearing work clothes, including a tool belt, and his truck, loaded with impressive-looking equipment and labeled with a business logo and telephone number, is parked out front. He leaves behind a legitimate-looking business card and offers to drop by the next day to save her the trouble of contacting him.

The man then works on the roof (or driveway, or windows, etc.) for several weeks. Many times, he asks her to pay up front to cover the cost of supplies. He eventually persuades the elder to allow him to fix some other problems with the house (a deck, a foundation, etc.).

One day he simply stops coming back, leaving a pile of garbage in the back yard and a pile of unfinished work. The elder then must hire another contractor just to fix the problems that have been created. In the end, on top of giving hundreds of dollars to the first "contractor," she is forced to pay a second contractor to repair the damage.

### **3 - 9.3 Charitable Giving Schemes**

Many elders have the laudable desire to help the less fortunate - and telemarketing and door-to-door scam artists are quite willing to exploit this by devising schemes that purport to raise money for worthy causes. The cause involved in scams of this nature is often both well-known and topical (e.g., victims of the South Asian tsunami, the 911 terrorist attacks, the Sandy Hook School massacre etc.). Sometimes the name of the charity will simply mimic the name of a legitimate charity in order to dupe the donor.

While in other cases, the cause identified is engineered to tug at the heartstrings (e.g., disadvantaged children).

With some of these scams, none of the proceeds are ever passed on to the charity identified. In others, a modest donation will be made (typically no more than 10% of the take) in order to maintain "the aura of legitimacy" and to help protect the scam artists from prosecution. In Canada, there are literally dozens of charitable organizations that contribute very little to the causes they purport to support. Often anywhere from 80 - 100% of the proceeds goes to "administration and marketing costs" (i.e., into the pockets of the principals). The fact that many of these outfits are "registered" (i.e., authorized by Canadian Revenue Agency to issue tax receipts for the donations made) tends to give donors a false sense of security.

A final variation, on the many charitable giving schemes, is called "badge fraud." Here the scam artists claim to be collecting funds to support police or fire department related causes. A popular Canadian version of this fraud involved a supposed police initiative to send disadvantaged children to a Circus performance. By aligning themselves with the police or the fire department, con artists accomplish two things: they create some apparent legitimacy, and they encourage you to donate. When it comes to charitable giving three rules should always be followed: Never give to a charity you are not familiar with; never get pressured into contributing; and never pay in cash.

### **3 - 9.4 Fake Cheque Schemes**

Fake cheques - or "middleman" schemes - offer unsuspecting consumers an opportunity to earn large sums of money quickly by acting as the middleman in a financial transaction. The victim is asked to simply deposit a cheque (often issued by a European company or offshore cartel) into his bank account.

For this service, the victim can keep a portion of the deposit - and is instructed to forward the balance back to the company's representatives.

The original cheque is, of course, forged, and worthless. By the time the mark is notified of this, his or her cheque has likely already been cleared. A variation on this scam, called "overpayment cheque fraud" targets people who have placed classified advertisements.

They are contacted by an interested party who agrees to buy the item for the full asking price. Shortly thereafter a cheque arrives for an amount substantially in excess of the agreed upon price. The victim is instructed to cash the cheque "as is" and prepare a cheque in an amount equal to the overpayment (which will be picked up by a courier). Sometimes the seller is even told to keep a little extra to compensate for their trouble. The cheque sent by the buyer ends up being worthless and the seller has now lost both the item that was advertised and a significant amount of cash.

### **3 - 9.5 Credit Card, Credit Repair, and Loan Schemes**

Schemes of this nature are devised to victimize individuals who have bad credit, or whose income is too low to allow them to access credit. In the credit card scam, the con artist tells these individuals that he can obtain credit cards on their behalf.

The victims pay a fee for this service and end up receiving - not a credit card - but some application forms, cheap brochures, and other materials. In a variation on this scheme, a credit card is provided, but it must be pre-funded by the consumer and his spending is limited to the amount of the pre-funding.

The credit repair scam promises to - for a fee - remove bankruptcies, judgments, liens, foreclosures, and other matters from the victim's credit report. No company can remove legitimate items from a credit report. The mark pays a fee and receives nothing of value in return.

In the advance fee loan scam victims are promised a loan in return for an upfront fee. Once the fee is paid, the victim is notified that he has been turned down.

### **3 - 9.6 Investment Schemes**

These scams offer consumers an opportunity to invest in things like precious metals, gemstones, oil, and gas wells, etc. The items offered tend to be topical and difficult to accurately value.

Items that can be sent to the victim are often enclosed in containers that dissuade the consumer from seeking an independent appraisal - while items that cannot be sent to the consumer (e.g., an interest in an oil or gas well) are thoroughly misrepresented by the con artist. The basic nature of these scams is straightforward enough - they are designed to sell largely worthless items at high prices.

The con artists often "reload" their victims - suggesting that there are buyers interested in paying a premium for their goods - but only if they can purchase larger lots or quantities. The victims are encouraged to buy more of an item in order to "round out" their portfolio.

Two new investment schemes that have become extremely popular in recent years are RRIF/LLIF unlocking schemes and exempt securities scams.

RRIF/LIFF unlocking schemes promise to unlock money from RRIFs and LLIFs without the need to pay tax.

Here is how it works. The promoter makes a pitch through an ad in a community newspaper or spam e-mail and offers those who reply a special RRIF loan to tap the locked-in funds. To get the loan, the victims must sell the investments in their RRIFs and use the money to buy shares of a start-up company the promoter is selling. In return, the promoter promises to loan them back 60% of the money they've "invested," and says he will keep the rest as a fee. But the investment is worthless, and the "investors" never see the loan. In the process, they lose all their retirement savings.

And when the Canada Revenue Agency finds out, as it will, the victim will be taxed for the entire amount and billed for any back taxes that are applicable.

Exempt securities in themselves are not scams. They are sold by companies that are permitted to sell securities without filing a prospectus and are usually bought by wealthy investors. These investments are usually high-risk, the kind of investments seniors should not be in. Even if the investment is a legitimate one, the senior is probably taking on more risk than he can afford.

Pitches for bogus investments usually claim that this is a limited offer, and the "investor" needs to act upon it immediately. This is to prevent the victim from researching the investment or getting another opinion.

### 3 - 9.7 Lottery Schemes

With lottery schemes, consumers are encouraged to invest in foreign lotteries (e.g., the Australian Lottery, "El Gordo," etc.). A small portion of the money they send is used to buy actual lottery tickets, while the balance - along with any lottery winnings - is pocketed by the fraudsters. If victims notice that some of the numbers have won - they are told that these winnings have been "re-invested."

Victims of lottery schemes are initially asked to make small contributions (e.g., \$5-10). They are then encouraged to make bigger and bigger contributions. Some victims have been known to invest tens - even hundreds - of thousands of dollars into these schemes.

*A few of the questions that consumers should ask themselves - before participating in schemes of this nature - include:*

- ❖ Does the lottery - in any way - involve a foreign country? Lotteries involving foreign countries - conducted through the mail - are illegal ... plain and simple.
- ❖ Does the promotion involve both a charity and a sweepstakes? Be wary of lotteries that require a donation in order to qualify - and be careful to ensure that the charity involved is legitimate.
- ❖ Do I have to supply any personal or financial information? When it comes to reputable lottery organizations, there should be no need whatsoever for this type of information. If an organization of this nature requires things like credit card and banking account numbers, social insurance numbers, etc., then something is terribly amiss.

### 3 - 9.8 Prize Promotion Schemes

There are at least three different varieties of prize promotion scheme. In all three the consumer is offered what appears to be a high value prize in return for a product purchase. The products offered for sale (e.g., coin collections, personalized pen sets, etc.) will sound valuable over the phone, but are uniformly cheap and highly overpriced.

The oldest of these schemes - still carried out in some areas of Canada - tells consumers that they have won a high value item (e.g., a new car). Unfortunately, this high value item never actually materializes - which, of course, is clear evidence of fraud. Promoters of frauds of this nature have - as a result - been successfully prosecuted.

More recent prize promotions (beginning in the late 1980s and early 1990s) are called "one-in-five" schemes. The victim is told that he has won one of five high value prizes. The prizes listed will typically include four clearly high value items (e.g., A new car,

\$5,000 in cash, etc.) and one "gimme gift" that sounds expensive (e.g., a diamond ring, designer watch, a vacation package) but which is of little real value. The gimme gift is often positioned in between two items of much higher value to mislead the consumer into thinking that it has a value that is in between these prizes.

At the end of the day, the victim parts with a substantial amount of cash and receives a product and a prize that is near worthless.

A final prize promotion is a variation on the "one-in-five" scheme. With the "mystery pitch" scam, the consumer is told that he has won a valuable gift - but one that cannot be revealed until he makes a purchase.

In every prize promotion scheme, the victims are often "reloaded" - offered an even more attractive array of prizes for additional purchases.

*Before agreeing to participate in a prize promotion consumers should ask themselves the following questions:*

- ❖ Do I have to pay something (a fee, taxes, shipping, and handling) or buy something in order to receive "the prize?" You should never have to pay to receive a prize or qualify for a sweepstakes. In fact, it is illegal for companies to request that you do so.
- ❖ Have I been told that I am a "guaranteed" winner - and that "no risk" is involved in the promotion? Consumers should be highly skeptical of "no risk," "guaranteed" promotions.
- ❖ Am I pressured to respond in any way? Never be pressured into making an immediate decision. Legitimate organizations are more than willing to give consumers ample time to make an informed decision.

### **3 - 9.9 Magazine Promotion Schemes**

Playing off the popularity of some high-profile magazine sweepstakes, con artists have turned to offering magazine promotions. In a typical scam of this nature, the con artist will contact a consumer and tell him that he has won a highly valuable prize. They are then told that to claim the prize they must purchase multiple magazine subscriptions - the cost of which will total anywhere from several hundred to several thousand dollars.

The actual magazines supplied are far less expensive than what the con artist charges (some, in fact, may even be free publications). Unfortunately, the consumer does not find out which magazines are available until after payment.

The length of the subscriptions is often misrepresented, and clients are encouraged to donate some of these subscriptions to a local hospital or hospice - both measures designed to further line the pockets of the con artists involved.

### **3 - 9.10 "900" Number Schemes**

Under these schemes the consumer is notified that he has won a significant prize (e.g., cash, cars, boats) and is instructed to call a 1-900 number in order to find out what the prize is and collect it. The call charges a toll (typically around \$4.99 per minute), and it takes - on average - 7 or 8 minutes to complete. In return (after spending roughly \$35), the victim is offered a prize that has a value between 1 and 2 dollars.

### **3 - 9.11 Advance Fee Schemes**

An advance fee scheme occurs when the victim pays money to someone in anticipation of receiving something of greater value and then receives little or nothing in return. The variety of advance fee schemes is limited only by the imagination of the con artists who offer them.

Advanced fee schemes may involve the sale of products or services, investments, lottery winnings, "found money," or any number of other "opportunities." A popular Canadian version, called "the puppy" scheme, offers to send consumers a cute puppy in return for a fee (to cover shipping or customs charges).

In another typical advance fee scam, a clever con artist will offer to provide a substantial "loan" (often to an individual with bad credit) in return for a "finder's fee" that must be paid in advance. The client is asked to sign a contract agreeing to pay the fee once they have been introduced to the financing source.

Victims usually learn that they are ineligible for a loan only after they have paid the "finder's fee." Frighteningly, the contract signed, and the fees paid are perfectly legal - unless it can be proven that the con artist never had any intention or ability to provide financing.

*In order to avoid falling victim of an advance fee scheme consumers should:*

- ❖ Use common sense: legitimate business is rarely conducted, in cash, on a street corner.
- ❖ Know who they are dealing with - visit their business offices and check them out with the Better Business Bureau. Avoid businesses that operate out of post office boxes or mail drops - and which do not have a regular street address. Also watch out for people who do not have a direct telephone line or who are never "in" when you call (and always return your call later).
- ❖ Talk to trusted advisors (e.g., bank personnel, a lawyer, an accountant) about the program and the company.
- ❖ Make sure they fully understand the business agreement they are entering into. If the terms are complex the document should be reviewed by a lawyer. Consumers should be particularly wary of business deals that require them to sign nondisclosure agreements (that prevent independent review of the contract and its terms).

### **3 - 9.12 Pyramid Schemes**

Pyramid schemes, also referred to as franchise fraud, or chain referral schemes, are marketing and investment frauds in which an individual is offered a distributorship or franchise to market a product.

The real profit is earned, not by the sale of the product, but by the sale of new distributorships. This emphasis on selling franchises rather than the actual product eventually leads to the point where the supply of potential investors is exhausted - and the pyramid collapses.



At the heart of each pyramid scheme, there is typically a representation that new participants can recoup their original investments by inducing two or more prospects to make the same investment.

*In order to avoid falling victim to a pyramid scheme, consumers should:*

- ❖ Stay clear of "opportunities" to invest money in franchises or investments that require the recruitment of subsequent investors (to recoup the initial investment made)
- ❖ Independently verify the legitimacy of any franchise or investment before investing

### **3 - 9.13 Nigerian Letter or "419" Fraud**

Nigerian 419 letter frauds are a popular variation of the advance fee schemes. In this version the mark receives a letter (or email) sent from Nigeria (or in some cases another African country) offering the recipient an "opportunity" to share millions of dollars that the author, a self-proclaimed government official, is trying to transfer illegally out of the country. In order to participate, the recipient must forward cash that will be used variously to pay taxes, bribe government officials, and cover other fees - that is often described in detail.

In return for this help, a portion of the millions will be forwarded to the participant as soon as the funds are spirited out of Nigeria.

In order to help facilitate moving the money out of the country, the recipient is encouraged to supply his bank name, account numbers, cheques, bank letterhead, stationery and other identifying information using a facsimile number provided in the letter.

In actuality, the millions of dollars do not exist, and the victim eventually ends up with nothing. Worse, once the victim stops sending money (which is often paid in a series of instalments), the perpetrators have been known to use the personal information and cheques received to impersonate the victim and drain his bank accounts.

While such an invitation impresses most law-abiding citizens as a laughable hoax, tens of millions of dollars in losses are caused by these schemes on an annual basis. All that is needed in order to be successful is a willing victim, who has demonstrated a "propensity for larceny."

Given the shady nature of the deal and their willing participation, victims of this fraud are somewhat compromised. In fact, some have been lured to Nigeria, where they have been imprisoned. The Nigerian government is not sympathetic to victims of these schemes, since they were willing participants in a conspiracy to illegally remove funds from Nigeria. Scams of this nature violate section 419 of the Nigerian criminal code - hence the label "419 frauds."

"Inheritance Schemes," a variation on the Nigerian 419 scam, are also quite popular in Canada. Under this scheme, a wealthy stranger has died, and the mark has either been identified as an heir, or a potential trustee. In order to repatriate the inheritance, the mark's banking information is required along with an upfront fee.

The scam is often quite elaborate - involving among other things: overseas phone numbers, safety deposit boxes, even memorial web sites (which describe the deceased and his fortune in detail). Anyone who is targeted by a Nigerian 419 or inheritance fraud should contact the RCMP or a local law enforcement office.

### **3 - 9.14      "Ponzi" Schemes**

A Ponzi scheme is an investment fraud where an "operator" promises financial returns (or dividends) that are significantly higher than what is available from traditional investments programs. Instead of investing the victim's funds, the operator pockets a portion and uses the balance to help pay "dividends" to earlier investors (mollifying them in the process). Paying off some of these early investors lends credibility to the program and encourages new deposits.

The scheme generally falls apart when the operator runs out of new investors - at which point, he will generally skip town with a substantial amount of money.

Ponzi schemes are named after Charles Ponzi - a Boston, Massachusetts con man who operated an extremely attractive investment scheme that guaranteed investors a 50% investment return. Although he was able to pay his initial investors, the scheme dissolved when he was unable to pay investors who entered the scheme later.

### **3 - 9.15      Identity Theft**

Identity theft refers to all types of crime in which someone wrongfully obtains and uses another person's personal data in a way that involves fraud or deception. Criminals can get the information they need to assume someone's identity from a variety of sources (e.g., the theft of a wallet, rummaging through trash, from credit or bank information). They may approach you in person, by telephone, or on the internet and ask you for the information.

Elders are often victims of internet "phishing" or "brand spoofing." The con artist creates emails or web sites that replicate existing legitimate messages and sites - and in the process manages to con the victim into supplying personal information (e.g., credit card numbers, bank accounts, passwords, social insurance numbers, etc.). The information gathered is then used to commit fraud.

*The following tips can be employed to help minimize the risk of identity theft:*

- ❖ Never throw away ATM receipts, credit statements, credit cards, or bank statements in a usable form
- ❖ Never respond to email requests for personal information
- ❖ Never supply a credit card number over the telephone unless you initiated the call.
- ❖ Reconcile bank accounts monthly and notify the bank of any discrepancies immediately.
- ❖ Keep a list of telephone numbers to call to report the loss or theft of a wallet, credit cards, etc.

- ❖ Report unauthorized financial transactions to the bank, credit card company, and the police as soon as they are detected.
- ❖ Review a copy of credit reports at least once each year. Notify the credit bureau in writing of any questionable entries and follow through until they are explained or removed.
- ❖ If your identity has been assumed, ask the credit bureau to print a statement to that effect in your credit report.

### **3 - 9.16      Recovery Room Schemes**

Recovery room schemes are specifically targeted at victims of fraud. The con artist contacts a victim, posing as a customs officer, lawyer, government, or law enforcement agent, and offers to help recover the losses. In most cases, the con artist involved is connected to the organization that committed the original fraud (or frauds) - and this gives him inside information on the nature of the losses and the scam employed. It also helps build his credibility.

The victim is then asked to pay a fee either to release money that has been recovered by the agency involved, or to help nab the criminals responsible.

### **3 – 9.17      Public Utility Scams**

Under this fraud, **two** people knock on the door claiming to be utility inspectors. While one inspects the utility services, the other asks to use the washroom. Theft of money or valuables often occurs.

### **3 - 9.18      Anti-Aging Schemes**

Modern day "snake oil" salesmen do exist - and they target consumers using a wide variety of media. Most of the pitches cover all the old territory: miracle cures, new vitality, and freedom from pain. A new pitch, aimed at our incredibly narcissistic society, has also been added to the mix: newfound youth ... or - at least - the appearance of it!

Frighteningly many of the pitches made appear in "mainstream" media - which offer them a lot of unwarranted credibility.

*To protect themselves, consumers - particularly elderly ones - need to adhere to the following advice:*

- ❖ Beware of "Secret Formulas" and "Breakthroughs"
- ❖ Do not be afraid to ask questions about a product. Find out exactly what it should do for you and what it should not. Write down the name of the product and research it thoroughly before buying it. Call the Better Business Bureau to find out if other people have complained about the product or the "seller."

- ❖ Be wary of products that purport to cure a wide variety of illnesses (particularly serious ones) that do not appear to be related. Testimonials and/or celebrity endorsements are often misleading.
- ❖ Be very careful of products that are marketed as having no side effects.
- ❖ Products that are advertised as making visits to a physician unnecessary should be questioned. Always consult your doctor before taking any dietary or nutritional supplement

### **3 – 10      WARNING SIGNS**

Certain warning signs indicate if older adults are experiencing financial abuse – particularly abuse at the hands of a caregiver or close relative or associate.

*Among the signs to look for:*

- ❖ Unusual degree of fear or submissiveness to caregiver. The elder, for example, cowers in front of a caregiver or begins trembling or crying when the caregiver discusses finances.
- ❖ Isolation from family, friends, community, and other stable relationships. The older person is never alone or permitted to discuss finances without the caregiver also present.
- ❖ Signs of intimidation and threat by another. The older person never looks at people directly or averts their gaze.
- ❖ Withdrawn behaviour or disheveled appearance. The older person tries to avoid talking with others, especially when asked to respond to something specific.
- ❖ Missed appointments, uncharacteristic nonpayment for services. The older person, previously prompt and reliable, does not show up for medical appointments or “forgets” to pay bills.
- ❖ Anxiety about personal finances. The older person worries a lot about how she will ever pay a bill or have enough to eat.
- ❖ Lack of knowledge about financial status. The older person seems unaware of his money.
- ❖ New “best friends.” The older person seems surprisingly or unseemly close and attentive to someone he has just met.
- ❖ Missing belongings or property. Glasses, clothes, dentures, money, or all of these are gone. The elder is dismissed as “forgetful.”
- ❖ Significant changes in spending patterns. The older adult purchases an expensive car even though she has not driven in the past year.
- ❖ Makes sudden changes regarding financial management. Power of attorney for financial matters is suddenly changed from a long-time friend to a new person—family member or stranger.

In addition to the behaviours of the elders, there are also notable signs exhibited by family members or others who befriend older adults and engage in elder financial abuse.

*For example, they are frequently:*

- ❖ Develop a close bond and exert influence over the older person's decisions.
- ❖ Make false promises or withhold information from the older person.
- ❖ Show excessive interest in the older person's assets.
- ❖ Demonstrate excessive control of the older person.
- ❖ Suddenly acquire expensive possessions
- ❖ Control phone use and prevent others from accessing the older person.
- ❖ Exhibit defensiveness or hostility during appointments or on the phone
- ❖ Are reluctant to leave the side of the older person during appointments.

Recognizing these warning signs can be a very effective tool in early intervention and prevention of further financial abuse.

### **3 – 11 WHY ELDERS DON'T REPORT ABUSE**

A significant reason for the underestimation of the occurrence of elder financial abuse is the victims themselves do not report elder financial abuse for a variety of reasons.

*Among the multitude of reasons uncovered, the victims:*

- ❖ Do not want government interference in their personal lives.
- ❖ Do not want their adult child or other family member going to jail or facing public embarrassment.
- ❖ Feel responsible for what has happened.
- ❖ Do not realize that they have been financially abused.
- ❖ Believe financial abuse is a consequence of “doing business” or taking risks.
- ❖ Fear that they will be placed in a nursing home or other facility.
- ❖ Do not think anyone will really help them, even if they expose the abuse.
- ❖ Worry that the perpetrator might harm them even more.
- ❖ Think resolution will come too late to be of any good
- ❖ Believe they will lose even more money to the costs of pursuing the financial abuse.

Financial and other professionals who deal with elders generally feel a responsibility to help protect their elderly clients from harm or abuse of any kind.

*However, they often fail to get involved when they suspect elder financial abuse because they:*

- ❖ Do not want to compromise professional relationships.
- ❖ Are not clear who their client is (older adult or their family members)
- ❖ Are not able to determine the actual mental capacity of their older clients, a determination that affects decisions made by them and on their behalf.

- ❖ Want to avoid adverse publicity to themselves and their organizations.
- ❖ Do not understand business ethics and practices in relation to elder financial abuse.
- ❖ Do not want to incriminate a fellow professional.
- ❖ Want to avoid involvement in a criminal investigation and potential lawsuit.

### **3 - 12 PREVENTING FINANCIAL ABUSE**

Any person—elders, family members, or professionals—who suspects that financial abuse of an elder has occurred should report it. One of the challenges in describing and documenting financial abuse stems from the variability in terminology between disciplines and the laws in different jurisdictions. But, when in doubt, it is always better to err on the side of caution and report suspected financial abuse to the appropriate agencies, law enforcement agency, or compliance department of the financial institution.

Reports can be made confidentially, and the reporting person is protected from civil and criminal liability. Successful prevention of elder financial abuse involves multiple strategies. There are a variety of actions individuals, family members, financial service professionals, businesses, and organizations can do to help protect elders from getting tangled in the web of elder financial abuse.

Older adults themselves can take several precautions to avoid falling prey to financial abuse. Such actions include:

#### **Stay Organized**

Keep belongings neat; keep track of possessions; open and send your own mail; direct deposit Canada Pension, Old Age Security, and other cheques; complete and sign your own cheques whenever possible; use an answering machine to screen calls and do not provide personal information over the telephone.

#### **Stay Informed**

Consult with an attorney about future, including a power of attorney; consult with an attorney about caregiving arrangements; review your will; know where to go if you suspect abuse; ask for help from police, from employees at a bank, or government agency, if needed.

#### **Stay Alert**

Do not leave items of value out in the open; do not sign any document unless someone you trust reviews it; do not be left out of decisions about your finances.

### **3 – 12.1 Advice for Family Members**

Families, particularly those who find themselves in a caregiving role, also need to be aware of situations that place their older loved ones at risk for financial abuse. Family members should periodically inquire about their older family members' financial resources and perceived limitations that may stem from their financial situation.

*They also need to keep an eye out for such things as:*

- ❖ Unusual worry about finances or fear of an individual
- ❖ Unexplained trembling or crying
- ❖ Changes in communication patterns
- ❖ Any abrupt change in behaviour
- ❖ Overpayment for goods and services
- ❖ Unnecessary services or household repairs
- ❖ A set of “out-of-sync” cheque numbers
- ❖ Increased ATM activity
- ❖ Unusual cash withdrawals from a financial account in a short period of time
- ❖ Missing belongings from the home or room in a facility
- ❖ Excessive time spent on the Internet.
- ❖ A signature that seems forged, unusual, or suspicious
- ❖ An unexplained reduction in bank accounts
- ❖ An increase in the number and amount of credit card accounts
- ❖ An abrupt or unexplained change in the power of attorney, will, or other legal or financial documents
- ❖ Sudden transfer of assets to a family member or someone outside the family

### **3 – 12.2 Advice for Professionals**

*Financial service and other professionals, such as bankers and lawyers, are well positioned to contribute to the prevention of elder financial abuse by:*

- ❖ Educating clients about their rights and about types of consumer fraud and scams
- ❖ Describing how family members, with the help of legal counsel, can explore options such as financial conservatorship for clients who are frail, mentally ill, or cognitively impaired.
- ❖ Encouraging clients or family members to discuss with legal counsel the option to assign financial guardian or power of attorney, as needed.
- ❖ If children are of concern, educating clients about the option to assign responsibility to an outside person.
- ❖ Generating media attention on the issue of elder financial abuse and its prevention
- ❖ Staying apprised of current trends in elder financial abuse and techniques for stopping it
- ❖ Training appropriate personnel in techniques for interviewing older customers
- ❖ Seeking assistance from other disciplines (social services, medical/nursing personnel, government agencies)

- ❖ Reporting suspected cases of elder financial abuse to local authorities or to their institution's compliance department

Note that some of these steps may not be appropriate for all professionals and that elder financial abuse situations vary and must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

### **3 – 12.3 Telltale Signs**

*When loved ones and friends visit the elderly, they should keep an eye out for the following telltale signs that the elder has become a victim of fraud:*

- ❖ Look for stacks of unsolicited mail proclaiming the recipient to be "a guaranteed winner" or offering lottery tickets for sale.
- ❖ Be wary of an excessive number of magazine subscriptions.
- ❖ Watch for an unusual number of packages that contain inexpensive costume jewelry, plastic cameras, or wristwatches (which were likely either bought or received as prizes)
- ❖ Note if they are receiving unsolicited telephone calls from fast-talking operators offering "fantastic" opportunities to claim prizes or make sure-fire investments. Be particularly concerned if they are receiving calls from organizations that are offering to recover - for a fee - money that has been lost to fraudulent telemarketers.
- ❖ Volunteer to help balance the elder's cheque book - ask about any questionable cheques or sudden, large withdrawals. Offer to go over credit card statements to ensure that only authorized purchases are listed.
- ❖ Offer to pick up their mail to see if they are receiving unsolicited sweepstakes or lottery offers. If so, they may be on a variety of "sucker lists" being circulated by con artists. If there appears to be a problem, find someone who can check the elder's mail daily.
- ❖ Take note if they are having difficulty buying groceries and paying basic bills (e.g., rent, utilities, etc.)

If any problems are identified, talk to the elder about how to evaluate the offers they receive in the mail or on the phone. Encourage them to talk over any offers with someone they trust before accepting them.

### **3 – 12.4 Where to Get Help**

If you suspect that an elder has fallen victim to a scam or that he or she is being financially exploited, your first course of action should be to contact the experts available on various elder abuse hotlines across the country. The contact information for these services is provided below:

- ❖ **B.C.** - Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support: **1-866-437-1940**
- ❖ **Alberta** - Family Violence Info Line: **310-1818**
- ❖ **Saskatchewan** - Seniors Mechanism Info Line: **1-888-823-2211**
- ❖ **Manitoba** - Senior Abuse Line: **1-888-896-7183**



- ❖ **Ontario** - Senior Safety Line: *1-866-299-1011*
- ❖ **Quebec** - Info-Abuse Line: *1-888-489-2287*
- ❖ **N.B.** - Social Development (Abuse Line): *1-888-992-2873*
- ❖ **Nova Scotia** - Senior Abuse Line: *1-877-833-3377*
- ❖ **P.E.I.** - Adult Protection Line: *902-368-6717*
- ❖ **Newfoundland & Labrador** - Senior Resource Centre: *1-800-563-5599*
- ❖ **N.W.T.** - Senior Information Line: *1-800-661-0878*
- ❖ **Nunavut** - Community Social Services or the RCMP: *1-867-979-0123*
- ❖ **Yukon** - Seniors Services (Adult Protection): *1-800-661-0408 (ext. 3946)*

### **3 - 13 FRAUD AND FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION CONCLUSIONS**

The scope of the problem is larger than we realize. Some form of elder financial abuse is involved in at least 20%–30% of all reported cases of elder abuse. Based on research and the experience of experts, advocates and law enforcement agencies, this number is significantly underestimated, since cases involving only financial abuse are likely to go unreported.

Elder financial abuse has both short- and long-term impacts. Anecdotal information suggests that the impact of elder financial abuse is hugely demoralizing.

It not only affects the elder who is financially abused, but it reaches far beyond its immediate victim, affecting health care and health care costs, living situations, filings for bankruptcy, and costs for its recuperation passed along in service industries. Elder financial abuse is a companion to other forms of abuse. It is often tied to other forms of abuse and may be the precursor to them. If that is so, stopping elder financial abuse would prevent or reduce other and equally insidious forms from occurring. As well, generational differences in elder financial abuse patterns are evolving. The Greatest Generation elder cohort is quickly dying and giving rise to new generations of elders, especially the Baby Boomer generation. With this demographic surge of “new elders” comes new ways of approaching elder finances—widespread use of credit cards, investments, travel, and, above all, information available at unprecedented speeds through the Internet. New methods of dissemination also provide a fertile ground for increasing opportunities for individuals and industries to defraud.

Organizations and families have their own views about their entitlement to the money of past generations. For example, when adult children live in a parent’s home, they may think they are due money from a parent, just because they help them in some way, not because the older adult has given them permission to have money. Often, children make the “assumption” that Mom or Dad would “want me to enjoy it now.”

The number of potential older adult victims is growing rapidly. Advances in health care have allowed populations with particularly vulnerable adults to live longer, a circumstance often accompanied by those who seek to capitalize upon their vulnerability.

If someone is having trouble making decisions, he or she could easily become confused when information is presented by a con artist very quickly and with pressure to make a quick decision. An older person, often trusting, might then agree to participate in a sales arrangement that later turns out to be bogus. No one wants to be the victim of a scam. However, many of us will fall prey to the numerous scam artists that lurk at every corner - in the mail, on the television, in the newspapers, on the phone and over the internet. Sadly, a disproportionately large number of elders are victimized. Knowing what we are up against is our best defense against fraud. Fraud is arguably the most prevalent scourge affecting seniors today - more damaging in many ways than the various diseases and medical conditions that plague this segment of our population. Thousands of elders fall prey to con artists every week and many are left destitute in the process.

Whether elders realize it or not, whenever a person is induced to enter into an agreement under false pretenses, it is fraud. And when the promoter of a scheme intentionally uses unclear terminology - in order to confuse - that too is fraud. And what, we might ask, would cause people to act in a fraudulent way? Obviously, the biggest motivator is simple greed; the desire to acquire more than one is entitled to - and to do so at someone else's expense. Mind you, the greed involved often cuts both ways: many perpetrators rely on the willingness of the victim to be driven by greed and compromise their own principles in the exchange.

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# Chapter 4

## Elders and Ethics

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### 4-1 KEY OBJECTIVE OF THIS CHAPTER

This chapter will provide you with a broad overview on the origins of ethics – as well as some detailed discussions on such topics as ethical decision making, elder ethical issues and business ethics.

Ethics and codes of ethics are largely concerned with protecting the weakest members of society. Without ethics and codes of ethics, it would be relatively easy for the strong and the able to take advantage of the poor, people with disabilities, the cognitively challenged - and the elderly! For the elderly, a discussion of ethics is not merely an academic exercise - it is vital to their well-being. They need to know that the people they encounter with regularity (e.g., medical professionals, accountants, lawyers, salesmen, financial planners, etc.) are going to act with their best interests in mind.

#### 4 - 1.1 How Will These Objectives Be Achieved?

Under the broad subject of ethics, we will look at such things as: the definition of ethics; the importance of ethics; and a variety of ethical fundamentals. *We will also examine several more complex topics, including:*

- ❖ Ethical dilemmas
- ❖ Ethical decision making.
- ❖ Ethical problem solving.
- ❖ The links between ethics and morality and values

We will close with a discussion of business ethics and samples of the codes of ethics used in a variety of different organizations.

### 4 – 2 ETHICS & ELDERS

It is important to recognize, understand and responsibly address the ethical issues that could arise when working as specialists with the older or aging population. It is no accident that this program is called the Elder Planning Counselor Program, a sign of respect and a nod to what they have contributed to the fabric of society.

According to the Webster Dictionary, ethics are: "(1) the principles of honour and morality. (2) Accepted rules of conduct. (3) The moral principles of an individual."

Women experience elder financial abuse more than men. Since women tend to live longer than men, there are a greater number of older women than older men in the population. In July 2023, there were 7,568,308 people age 65+ in Canada of which 11,703 were centenarians. This represents 18.9% of the population.

4.07 million women age 65 and over in Canada, versus 3.5 million men.

That is more than half a million more elderly women. The numbers become even more compelling at age 85 and over. Compounding the problem, far more elderly women than men are living alone. (StatsCan modified Mar. 7, 2024)

Though certainly not for all, as age advances, some older women experience cognitive decline and increases in instances of chronic disease. Decreased cognitive functioning, in turn, affects their decision-making capacity, leaving them potentially susceptible to people looking to defraud or deceive them.

It is no surprise then that society, ombudsmen and the courts tend to be particularly sensitive to ethical and moral behaviour when it involves the elderly, people's mothers and grandmothers, who may be seen as marks by the unethical, immoral and amoral. In business, perception is reality. Providers of products and services to elders are advised as a best practice to be diligent and mindful of this fact of life and opinion driven reaction. That is why demonstrated, codified, disciplined ethical marketing and behaviour is so important and valuable.

From an academic perspective, ethics are a branch of philosophy that is concerned with the evaluation of human conduct ... the "science of conduct" as it were ... the fundamental ground rules by which people live their lives. We have well developed disciplines in intergenerational ethics and yet grey definitions and boundaries that describe ethics of ageing. This is somewhat surprising given ageing is so fundamental to life. And yet, ageing is associated with the elderly, as if it only happens to them, like death, and that it generally has negative connotations; physical, psychological, social, political, economic, emotional and intellectual or mental wellbeing. Perhaps this influences the heightened sensitivity around morals and ethics when dealing with elders.

As noted by the American Society on Aging, "There are a variety of areas in which ethical issues can emerge, including complex family dynamics, end-of-life wishes, preserving dignity and respect, promoting independence and keeping the individual safe. There are various factors that can make older adults vulnerable to abuse, neglect and ill intent."

Ethics deals with moral conduct, duty, and judgment. In the end, for some it all comes down quite simply to "what is right ... and what is wrong." For others, it is about what is appropriate and suitable for certain people, not whether it is right or wrong from a legal perspective. But what about a focus and support of ageing well and maintaining, developing and protecting aging with meaning?

Yes, and cultivating that so aging people have a sense of purpose, a sense of ongoing value, and dealing with their fears of being forgotten, not having mattered and not being important relative to younger people.

The ethics of ageing should position the elder in the centre and recognize that the elder person today arrives at every juncture, every milestone, every stage with the experiences they encountered and whether they overcame them. Most importantly, it involves an understanding and appreciation of how their experiences have shaped them in all aspects of their person.

### **Grey Areas And Evolving Views**

Unfortunately, what is considered right and wrong is not the same for every individual. Tolerance varies by whom is being slighted or (potentially) taken advantage of, and the definition of what is ethical also changes from culture to culture and generation to generation. Doing the right thing is not nearly as straightforward as it may seem. Ethics is a moving target that is dependent on where you live, your religious beliefs, and your personal long-range goals. There are few absolutes and many shades of grey. Because of this the study of ethics tends to be an incredibly complex matter. Even those who make ethics their life work often fail to come to the same conclusions.

*From an intergenerational perspective, consider the relevancy of ethics of the following:*

- i) Younger people who are bothered by the fact that their quality of life is reduced by taxation to accommodate elderly people who may not have adequately contributed to a social support system or who can't find housing because older people own them and don't want to move, preferring to age in place in accommodations that they don't fully use.
- ii) People trying to justify discrimination against the elderly, ranging from mandatory retirement, real or imagined, accessibility due to physical challenges, job opportunities, access to health care and perceived or actual higher use of health care services and who should receive priority for serious or critical conditions. allocation decisions. Would such discrimination be acceptable when compared to discrimination based on racial, cultural or gender groups, of which elders may be members of some or all minorities?
- iii) What about technology, regulations and learnings that can increase lifespan but not health span or do both and either way, can improve quality of life?
- iv) What about anti-aging medications, cosmetics, operations and fads promoted by people to mask or purportedly fight the effects of aging? ...as if it was bad to age gracefully, naturally and without masking it.

At its simplest, ethics is a system of moral principles. They affect how people make decisions and lead their lives. Ethics is concerned with what is good for individuals and society and is also described as moral philosophy. One measure is that, in actions, do no harm.

The term “ethics” is derived from the Greek word *ethos* which can mean custom, habit, character, or disposition. *Ethics covers the following matters:*

- ❖ how to live a good life and one that builds wellbeing
- ❖ our rights and responsibilities and those of the people around us
- ❖ the language of right and wrong in terms of what people ought to do vis a vis benefits to society, fairness or virtues
- ❖ moral decisions - what is good and bad? Again, do no harm

Our concepts of ethics have been derived from religions, philosophies, and cultures. They infuse debates on topics like abortion, human rights, and professional conduct.

#### **4 – 2.1 Approaches to Ethics (two sets of four)**

**Let’s consider two sets of approaches to ethics and ethical decisions**

1. The first is comprised of four broad branches of ethical study: meta-ethics; descriptive ethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics.
2. The second set of four approaches can be summarized as: the principle approach, the consequence approach, the virtue/character approach, and the moral sentiment approach.

#### **4-2.2 First set - Meta-Ethics**

Meta-ethics deals with the nature of moral judgment. It looks at the origins and meaning of ethical principles. Meta-ethics addresses questions such as "What is goodness?" and "How can we tell what is good from what is bad?" It seeks to understand the nature of ethical properties and evaluations.

#### **Descriptive Ethics**

Descriptive ethics involves the factual study of the ethical standards or principles of a group. The category of descriptive ethics is the easiest to understand—it simply involves describing how people behave, and/or what sorts of moral standards they claim to follow.

Descriptive ethics incorporates research from the fields of anthropology; psychology, sociology, and history as part of the process of understanding what people do and what they believe when it comes to moral norms. Descriptive ethics are sometimes referred to as comparative ethics because it often involves comparing ethical systems: comparing the ethics of the past to the present, comparing the ethics of one society to another, and comparing the ethics which people claim to follow with their actual conduct.

Strictly speaking, then, descriptive ethics is not entirely a field within philosophy— rather, it is more of a specialty, which involves many different fields from within the social sciences.

It is not designed to provide guidance to people in making moral decisions, nor is it designed to evaluate the reasonableness of moral norms. Nevertheless, actual work in moral philosophy cannot proceed very far without the knowledge gained from descriptive ethics.

### **Normative Ethics**

Normative ethics involves the development of theories concerning right and wrong actions. Normative ethics attempts to answer specific moral questions concerning what people should do and how they should believe. The word normative refers to guidelines or norms and is often used interchangeably with the word prescriptive.

### **Applied Ethics**

Applied ethics is the branch of ethics, which consists of the analysis of specific, controversial moral issues such as abortion, animal rights, and euthanasia.

In recent years applied ethical issues have been subdivided into convenient groups such as medical ethics, business ethics, environmental ethics, sexual ethics, and social ethics.

Two features are necessary for an issue to be considered an "applied ethical issue." First, the issue needs to be controversial in the sense that there are significant groups of people both for and against the issue at hand. The issue of drive-by shootings, for example, is not an applied ethical issue, since virtually everyone agrees that this practice is grossly immoral. By contrast, the issue of gun control would be an applied ethical issue since there are significant groups of people both for and against gun control.

*The following are some examples of topics that are examined under the banner of "applied ethics:"*

- ❖ Personal benefit: acknowledge the extent to which an action produces beneficial consequences for the individual in question.
- ❖ Social benefit: acknowledge the extent to which an action produces beneficial consequences for society.
- ❖ Principle of benevolence: help those in need.
- ❖ Principle of paternalism: assist others in pursuing their best interests when they cannot do so themselves.
- ❖ Principle of harm: do not harm others
- ❖ Principle of honesty: do not deceive others.
- ❖ Principle of lawfulness: do not violate the law.
- ❖ Principle of autonomy: acknowledge a person's freedom over his/her actions or physical body.
- ❖ Principle of justice: acknowledge a person's right to due process, fair compensation for harm done, and fair distribution of benefits.

- ❖ Rights: acknowledge a person's right to life, information, privacy, freeexpression, and safety

#### **4-2.3 Second set - The Principle Approach**

Here, decisions are made according to principles such as the Ten Commandments or the Golden Rule.

##### **The consequence approach**

In this approach, decisions are made according to their likely outcomes.

##### **The virtue/character approach**

The third approach describes decisions that are made according to the decision maker's view of his or her responsibilities.

##### **The moral sentiment approach**

The final approach in this set describes decisions made according to the decision maker's feelings.

#### **Does Ethics need to provide direction and answers?**

If ethical theories are to be useful in practice, they need to affect the way human beings behave. Some philosophers think that ethics does do this. They argue that if a person realizes that it would be morally good to do something then it would be irrational for that person not to do it. But human beings often behave irrationally - they follow their 'gut instinct' even when their head suggests a different course of action. However, ethics does provide good tools for thinking about moral issues.

#### **4 – 2.4 Ethics Can Provide a Moral Map**

Most moral issues get us pretty worked up - think of abortion, euthanasia and capital punishment for starters. Because these are such emotional issues, we often let our hearts do the arguing while our brains just go with the flow. But there is another way of tackling these issues, and that's where philosophers can come in - they offer us ethical rules and principles that enable us to take a cooler view of moral problems. So, ethics provides us with a moral map, a framework that we can use to find our way through difficult issues.

#### **4 – 2.5 Ethics Can Pinpoint a Disagreement**

Using the framework of ethics, two people who are arguing a moral issue can often find that what they disagree about is just one part of the issue, and that they broadly agree on everything else. That can take a lot of heat out of the argument, and sometimes even hint at a way for them to resolve their problem.



But sometimes ethics does not provide people with the sort of help that they really want or need.

#### **4 – 2.6 Ethics Doesn't Give Right Answers**

Ethics does not always show the right answer to moral problems. Indeed, more people now think that for many ethical issues there is not a single right answer - just a set of principles that can be applied to cases to give those involved some clear choices. Some philosophers go further and say that all ethics can do is eliminate confusion and clarify the issues. After that it is up to everyone to come to their own conclusions.

#### **4 – 2.7 Ethics Can Give Several Answers**

Many people want there to be a single right answer to ethical questions. They find moral ambiguity hard to live with because they genuinely want to do the 'right' thing, and even if they cannot work out what that right thing is, they like the idea that 'somewhere' there is one right answer. But often there is not one right answer - there may be several right answers, or just some least worst answers - and the individual must choose between them. For others moral ambiguity is difficult because it forces them to take responsibility for their own choices and actions, rather than falling back on convenient rules and customs.

#### **4 – 2.8 Ethics and People**

Ethics is about the 'other.' Ethics is concerned with other people. At the heart of ethics is a concern about something or someone other than us and our own desires and self-interest. Ethics is concerned with other people's interests, with the interests of society, with God's interests, with "ultimate goods", and so on. So, when a person 'thinks ethically' they are giving at least some thought to something beyond themselves.

#### **4 – 2.9 Ethics as a Source of Group Strength**

One problem with ethics is the way it is often used as a weapon. If a group believes that a activity is "wrong" it can then use morality as the justification for attacking those who practice that activity. When people do this, they often see those who they regard as immoral as in some way less human or deserving of respect than themselves, sometimes with tragic consequences.

#### **4 – 2.10 Good People as Well as Good Actions**

Ethics is not only about the morality of courses of action, but it is also about the goodness of individuals and what it means to live a good life. Virtue Ethics is particularly concerned with the moral character of human beings.

#### **4 – 2.11      Searching for the Source of Right and Wrong**

*At times in the past, some people thought that ethical problems could be solved in one of two ways:*

- ❖ By discovering what God wanted people to do
- ❖ By thinking rigorously about moral principles and problems

If a person did this properly, they would be led to the right conclusion. But now even philosophers are less sure that it is possible to devise a satisfactory and complete theory of ethics - at least not one that leads to conclusions. Modern thinkers often teach that ethics leads people not to conclusions but to 'decisions'. In this view, the role of ethics is limited to clarifying 'what's at stake' ethical problems.

Philosophy can help identify the range of ethical methods, conversations and value systems that can be applied to a problem. But after these things have been made clear, each person must make their own individual decision as to what to do, and then react appropriately to the consequences.

#### **4 – 2.12      Are Ethical Statements Objectively True?**

Do ethical statements provide information about anything other than human opinions and attitudes?

- ❖ Ethical realists think that human beings discover ethical truths that already have an independent existence.
- ❖ Ethical non-realists think that human beings invent ethical truths.

The problem for ethical realists is that people follow many different ethical codes and moral beliefs. So, if there are real ethical truths out there, then human beings do not seem to be very good at discovering them. One form of ethical realism teaches that ethical properties exist independently of human beings, and that ethical statements give knowledge about the objective world. To put it another way, the ethical properties of the world and the things in it exist and remain the same, regardless of what people think or feel - or whether people think or feel about them at all. Cultural norms can conflict when people from different cultures live together because of immigration, working together on projects or setting up rules and guidelines.

## 4 – 3 THE FOUR ETHICAL “ISMS”

When a person says "murder is bad" what are they doing? That is the sort of question that only a philosopher would ask, but it is actually a very useful way of getting a clear idea of what is going on when people talk about moral issues. The different 'isms' regard the person uttering the statement as doing different things.

*We can show some of the different things I might be doing when I say 'murder is bad' by rewriting that statement to show what I really mean:*

1. I might be making a statement about an ethical fact.

- ❖ "It is wrong to murder."
- ❖ This is moral realism.

2. I might be making a statement about my own feelings.

- ❖ "I disapprove of murder."
- ❖ This is subjectivism.

3. I might be expressing my feelings.

- ❖ "Down with murder"
- ❖ This is emotivism.

4. I might be giving an instruction or a prohibition.

- ❖ "Don't murder people."
- ❖ This is prescriptivism.

### 4 – 3.1 Moral Realism

Moral realism is based on the idea that there are real objective moral facts or truths in the universe. Moral statements provide information about those truths.

### 4 – 3.2 Subjectivism

Subjectivism teaches that moral judgments are nothing more than statements of a person's feelings or attitudes, and that ethical statements do not contain factual truths about goodness or badness.

In more detail: subjectivists say that moral statements are *statements about the feelings, attitudes, and emotions* that that person or group has about an issue. If a person says something is good or bad they are telling us about the positive or negative feelings that they have about that something.

So, if someone says 'murder is wrong' they are telling us that they disapprove of murder. These statements are true if the person does hold the appropriate attitude or have the appropriate feelings. They are false if the person does not.

### **4 – 3.3      Emotivism**

Emotivism is the view that moral claims are no more than expressions of approval or disapproval.

This sounds like subjectivism, but in emotivism a moral statement does not *provide information about the speaker's feelings* about the topic but *expresses those feelings*. When an emotivist says "murder is wrong" it is like saying "down with murder" or "murder, yecch!" or just saying "murder" while pulling a horrified face or making a thumbs-down gesture at the same time as saying, "murder is wrong."

So, when someone makes a moral judgment, they *show* their feelings about something. Some theorists also suggest that in expressing a feeling the person *gives an instruction* to others about how to act towards the subject matter.

### **4 – 3.4      Prescriptivism**

Prescriptivists think that ethical statements are instructions or recommendations. So, if I say something is good, I am recommending you do it, and if I say something is bad, I am telling you not to do it.

There is almost always a prescriptive element in any real-world ethical statement: any ethical statement can be reworked (with a bit of effort) into a statement with an "ought" in it. For example: "lying is wrong" can be rewritten as "people ought not to tell lies."

## **4 – 4      ORIGINS OF ETHICS**

As soon as humans began living together, there was a need for an unwritten code of conduct. Survival would not be possible if the strong members of society (typically adult males) took everything, including food and shelter, from those who were weaker. If the weaker individuals (typically women and children) did not survive, then the species itself would also perish. Unwritten rules were thus established to ensure everyone is treated in a fashion that was in the best interests of the group. Ethics began as society's code of unwritten rules.

From the earliest times, societies began to debate and argue over what was and is ethical and moral, and what is not. Philosophers have been discussing ethics for at least 2,500 years since the time of Socrates and Plato. The word ethics, in fact, comes from the Greek word *ethos*, which means "character."

It was during the fifth century B.C. in Greece that the philosopher Socrates gave ethics its formal beginning. Unlike other figures of comparable importance, Socrates did not tell his pupils how to live - instead, he taught them a method of inquiry. The conventional wisdom of the time suggested that strict adherence to a fixed moral code was more important than the cultivation of an inquiring mind. Socrates disagreed and famously announced that “the unexamined life is not worth living.” For this he was accused of corrupting the youth of Athens and sentenced to death.

Socrates believed that true virtue could be known - and that anyone who knew true virtue would of necessity act virtuously. He also felt that anyone who acted badly only did so out of ignorance. This belief may seem peculiar today, in large part because it is now common to distinguish between what a person ought to do and what is in their own interest. Often a person knows what they ought to do but proceeds to do something else - what is in their own interest instead. This is, in fact, the central problem of ethics in modern Western society: how do you motivate self-interested people to do what is right?

Each country and culture have their own unique brand of ethics - and Canada is a special case. Its diverse and multi-cultural population produces a wide variety of opinions with respect to what is ethical, and what is not.

Many ethicists view emerging ethical beliefs as the drivers of public policy. What becomes an ethical guideline today is often translated to a law, regulation, or rule tomorrow.

It is important to note that philosophers have several answers to the question “where do ethics come from?” *Among the answers:*

- ❖ God and religion
- ❖ Human conscience and intuition
- ❖ A rational moral cost-benefit analysis of actions and their effects
- ❖ The example of good human beings
- ❖ A desire for the best for people in each unique situation
- ❖ Political power

### **God-Based Ethics – Supernaturalism**

Supernaturalism makes ethics inseparable from religion. It teaches that the only source of moral rules is God. So, something is good because God says it is, and the way to lead a good life is to do what God wants. Unfortunately, humans being humans, are not infallible and some may exhibit manipulative and self-serving behaviour, twisting, contorting and cherry-picking teachings of religion and in the process do physical and emotional harm to others.

### **Intuitionism**

Intuitionists think that good and bad are real objective properties that cannot be broken down into component parts. Something is good because it is good; its goodness does not need justifying or proof.

Intuitionists think that goodness or badness can be detected by adults; they say that human beings have an intuitive moral sense that enables them to detect real moral truths. They think that basic moral truths of what is good and bad are self-evident to a person who directs their mind towards moral issues.

So good things are the things that a sensible person realizes are good if they spend sometime pondering the subject.

*For the intuitionist:*

- ❖ Moral truths are not discovered by rational argument.
- ❖ Moral truths are not discovered by having a hunch.
- ❖ Moral truths are not discovered by having a feeling.

It is more a sort of moral 'aha' moment - a realization of the truth.

### **Consequentialism**

This is the ethical theory that most non-religious people think they use every day. It bases morality on the consequences of human actions and not on the actions themselves.

Consequentialism teaches that people should do whatever produces the greatest amount of good consequences.

One famous way of putting this is “the greatest good for the greatest number of people.” The most common forms of consequentialism are the various versions of utilitarianism, which favour actions that produce the greatest amount of happiness.

Despite its obvious common-sense appeal, consequentialism turns out to be a complicated theory and does not provide a complete solution to all ethical problems.

*Two problems with consequentialism are:*

1. It can lead to the conclusion that some quite dreadful acts are good.
2. Predicting and evaluating the consequences of actions is often very difficult.

### **Non-Consequentialism or Deontological Ethics**

Non-consequentialism is concerned with the actions themselves and not with the consequences. It is the theory that people are using when they refer to "the principle of the thing."

It teaches that some acts are right or wrong in themselves, whatever the consequences, and people should act accordingly.

## **Virtue Ethics**

Virtue ethics looks at virtue or moral character, rather than at ethical duties and rules, or the consequences of actions - indeed some philosophers of this school deny that there can be such things as universal ethical rules.

Virtue ethics is particularly concerned with the way individuals live their lives, and less concerned in assessing actions. It develops the idea of good actions by looking at the way virtuous people express their inner goodness in the things that they do. To put it very simply, virtue ethics teaches that an action is right if and only if it were an action that a virtuous person would do in the same circumstances, and that a virtuous person is someone who has a particularly good character.

## **Situation Ethics**

Situation ethics rejects prescriptive rules and argues that individual ethical decisions should be made according to the unique situation.

Rather than following rules the decision maker should follow a desire to seek the best for the people involved. There are no moral rules or rights - each case is unique and deserves a unique solution.

### **4 – 4.1 Ethics and Ideology**

Some philosophers teach that ethics is the codification of political ideology, and that the function of ethics is to state, enforce and preserve political beliefs. They usually go on to say that ethics is used by the dominant political elite as a tool to control everyone else.

More cynical writers suggest that power elites enforce an ethical code on other people that helps them control those people, but do not apply this code to their own behaviour.

### **4 – 4.2 Moral Absolutism**

One of the big questions in moral philosophy is whether there are unchanging moral rules that always apply in all cultures and societies.

Some people think there are such universal rules that apply to everyone. This sort of thinking is called moral absolutism. Moral absolutism argues that there are some moral rules that are always true, that these rules can be discovered and that these rules apply to everyone.

Immoral acts - acts that break these moral rules - are wrong in themselves, regardless of the circumstances or the consequences of those acts.

Absolutism takes a universal view of humanity - there is one set of rules for everyone - which enables the drafting of universal rules - such as the Declaration of Human Rights. Religious views of ethics tend to be absolutist. *Why people disagree with moral absolutism:*

- ❖ Many of us feel that the consequences of an act or the circumstances surrounding it are relevant to whether that act is good or bad.
- ❖ Absolutism does not fit with respect for diversity and tradition - different cultures have had different attitudes to issues like war.

#### **4 – 4.3 Moral Relativism**

Moral relativists say that if you look at different cultures or different periods in history you will find that they have different moral rules. Therefore, it makes sense to say that "good" refers to the things that a group of people approve of.

Moral relativists think that that is just fine and dispute the idea that there are some objective and discoverable "super-rules" that all cultures ought to obey. They believe that relativism respects the diversity of human societies and responds to the different circumstances surrounding human acts.

Why people disagree with moral relativism:

- ❖ Many of us feel that moral rules have more to them than the general agreement of a group of people - that morality is more than a super-charged form of etiquette.
- ❖ Many of us think we can be good without conforming to all the rules of society.
- ❖ Moral relativism has a problem with arguing against the majority view: if most people in a society agree with rules, that is the end of the matter. Many of the improvements in the world have come about because people opposed the prevailing ethical view - moral relativists are forced to regard such people as behaving "badly."
- ❖ Any choice of social grouping as the foundation of ethics is bound to be arbitrary.
- ❖ Moral relativism does not provide any way to deal with moral differences between societies.

#### **4 – 4.4 Moral Somewhere-in-Between-ism**

*Most non-philosophers think that both above theories have some good points and think that there are a few absolute ethical rules.*

- ❖ But a lot of ethical rules depend on the culture.

#### **4 – 4.5 Ethical Fundamentals**

Regardless of a person's position in society, he or she will face numerous ethical decisions every day.

It would be nice to assume that most of us will act in an ethical fashion - since it is hard to imagine that anyone would purposely act unethically.

Unfortunately, many people who do act unethically find a way to rationalize their actions. "I lied because it was necessary." "I took that from my employer because I was entitled to it."



"I was merely doing what everyone else does." People use justifications of this nature to deny the breach.

#### **4-4.6 Information Sharing And Ethics**

The explosion of information on the internet and social media has brought with it, the good, the bad and the very ugly of fake news, bad, wrong and/or manipulative information and actions by people who read them. What's more, real fear about false or biased information relies on assumptions of being able to suggest things to people that grab on to their thoughts and course of thinking and working their way deep into their feelings and memories (however false).

The success of misinformation and disinformation hinges on people's gullibility and suggestibility, particularly when they feel oppressed, ignored, and disenchanted and then motivating them to rally around some ideas or creeds. Tell a lie, make it big enough and retell it often enough, and people will believe it, particularly if they don't have to objectively prove it or admit that they really aren't sure.

Social media is also being misused to manipulate or mislead conversations. Here are four ways that this is being done.

1. **Sockpuppet:** an online identity used to deceive and mislead through uses of online identities to support, defend or praise a person or organization, manipulate public opinion or get around bans or restrictions on a website. This person poses as an independent third party so is not like a pseudonym which is affiliated with an account holder.
2. **Catfishing:** a form of fraud where someone creates a sockpuppet or fake identity to target someone on social media. Think romance schemes on dating sites.
3. **Sealioning:** trolling or harassing people with persistent questions or requests for evidence. While dressed in civil language, they are considered bad faith invitations to debate.
4. **Astroturfing:** hides/masks sponsors of a message to make it appear as if it comes from grassroots participants. Information about motives or financial connections are withheld to lend credibility to organizations.

More recently, we are seeing the advent of publicly accessible artificial intelligence which produces material, sometimes factual, sometimes made up, sometimes outrightly wrong. It can and is used to modify and manipulate data and information, mislead or change original meaning and material.

Observations today show that we are facing a crisis of trust and legitimacy which forms part of the base for the spreading of inaccuracies, biases and falsehoods, a number of them paranoid.

#### 4-4.7 Misinformation and Disinformation

The fact that different groups of elders have different values, beliefs, and opinions also necessitates tailoring messages to suit the needs of specific groups. It is important for anyone who wants to be successful in the elder market to understand that elders may hold a diverse range of opinions on a wide variety of subjects. What role do we or should we play when sharing information and what is the impact, perceived or real on moral and ethical behaviour?

Think of the difference between sharing or using inaccurate, false or biased information. It could be the use of misinformation (unintentional) or disinformation (intentional) to sway opinion, serve as propaganda, support or reject the sale of a product or service, boost our image, question or damage someone else's, differentiate ourselves from competitors. Either way, the information is inaccurate, false or biased and presented as objective fact.

#### 4-4.8 Mis & Dis Information Types

Here is a reference list of different types of mis- and dis- information. One letter does not change the impact on others.

1. False connections: headlines, visuals, captions don't support the content (think of news headlines or soundbites to tantalize curiosity and engagement)
2. False context: factually accurate content mixed with false contextual material (headline doesn't match article content)
3. Manipulated content: factually correct material distorted to garner attention (click bait)  
Sponsored content: advertising or public relations disguised as editorial content
4. Misleading content: misleading information, opinion expressed as fact
5. Fabricated content: false material
6. Imposter content: impersonating genuine sources and branding
7. Error: mistakes made by established news agencies in reporting
8. Propaganda: content used to direct, influence attitudes, values and knowledge
9. Satire and Parody: humorous and false material shared as true with perhaps no intent to do harm, but may fool recipients/readers

The issue of whether it's a big deal or not is addressed elsewhere in this chapter. And that leads to the morality and ethics of sharing false or biased information. The World Economic Forum published a report in January 2024, showing that almost 1500 (1490) international experts rated misinformation and disinformation as the leading global risk of the next two years. This is more than war, climate catastrophes and migration.

Paul Thagard, a philosopher at the University of Waterloo states that "misinformation is threatening medicine, science, politics, social justice, and international relations, affecting problems such as vaccine hesitancy, climate change denial, conspiracy theories, claims of racial inferiority, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine." We might add the recent Israel Gaza conflict and devastation.

While social media and a number of now mainstream news sources are blamed for manipulating our seemingly easily influenced thoughts and minds, what about our collective failures as a society? What issues are causing people to feel uncertain, helpless, alienated, powerless and untrusting, and how is that proving to be fertilizer for the belief in false, misleading and inaccurate information? (noted in an article published by the New Yorker, “Don’t believe what they’re trying to tell you about misinformation (Apr. 15, 2024).

People have strong symbolic beliefs which they treat differently than factual beliefs. Factual beliefs guide behaviour. They don’t tolerate much inconsistency. Symbolic beliefs feel genuine and generally do not lead to action and expectation. Toleration of inconsistencies is much higher. The latter is exemplified in areas like religion.

As a best practice, ensure that information you read, use and share has been properly vetted by objective sources, as many as possible if needed. Self-critique why you are using and sharing this information. The exclamation that “I didn’t know,” “I didn’t check,” “I didn’t mean to hurt anyone,” will not protect your reputation or guard against errors and omissions. The damage is the same to the elder and their family.

Although we routinely hear individuals say they did not realize they were making a wrong (unethical) choice, the fact is, most of us do know right from wrong. We know it is wrong to accept something that is not ours; we know it is wrong to lie; we know when we should feel guilty about our actions.

#### **4-4.9 Best Practice Tips When Sharing And Acting On Information**

While disinformation is clearly unethical and arguably immoral, what about misinformation?

*Consider the following:*

- ❖ “I googled it, so it must be true.”
- ❖ “I used ChatBT or some other artificial intelligence tool to create the document or research the topic. The response must have been objective and true, using all available resources.”
- ❖ “I heard or read a credible person or organization say this. It must be true.”
- ❖ “I thought it was true, so I shared it or used it in marketing, making my point, recommending a product or service or recommending against them.”

To guard against these common mistakes of using and sharing misinformation, a best practice approach is to include the following steps.

Fact check the material before using it or sharing it. A fact is a statement that can be verified. A statement of opinion is not a fact. Understand the difference and be very clear in your communications with Elders and others about what it is you are sharing. This is generally covered in a Code of Conduct. Here are some resources that you can use, and some organizations do use to verify information and “facts.” They can be used by you to ascertain

the truth of claims made in social media posts, news coverage and political statements. This is not an exhaustive list.

FactCheck.org: Monitors the factual accuracy of what is said by major U.S. political players in the form of TV ads, debates, speeches, interviews and news releases.

Google's Fact Check Explorer: designed to facilitate the work of fact checkers, journalists, and researchers in discovering what has and hasn't been debunked all over the globe.

Décrypteurs: focuses on the spread of false information on social media.

COPE: (Committee on Publication Ethics); committed to educating and supporting editors, publishers, and those involved in publication ethics with the aim of moving the culture of publishing towards one where ethical practice become a normal part of the publishing culture.

SciCheck: focuses exclusively on false and misleading scientific claims that are made by partisans to influence public policy.

AFP FactCheck: Canadian arm of this global digital verification service.

Politifact: Rates the accuracy of claims by elected officials and others who speak up in American politics.

Snopes.com: Conducts extensive fact-checking research on popular topics.

Logically.ai: Uses artificial intelligence to combat misinformation.

Washington Post Fact Checker: The purpose of The Washington Post's Fact Checker column is "to 'truth squad' the statements of political figures regarding issues of great importance, be they national, international or local."

Duke Reporters' Lab: Maintains a database of global fact-checking sites. Use the map to explore fact-checking sites around the world.

## **Lead Stories**

Lead Stories is a fact checking website that is always looking for the latest false, deceptive or inaccurate stories (or media) making the rounds on the internet.

About this result: lets you get context about a website before you click through. Just click the three dots next to a website in search results and tap on the "more about this page" tab. That will bring up information about the website, such as how Wikipedia describes it (when available) and what others on the web have said about the site. With more information about the website, you can make a more informed decision about visiting it.

A number of articles will have verification stamps on them to help with separating fact from fiction.

Sadly, many people simply "go with the flow" - they let peer pressure, current trends and the whims of the masses determine their actions. They do not make any conscious decisions to either be, or not be, ethical. It is extremely unfortunate that so many of us live this way. As the old song goes, "You've got to stand for something, or you'll fall for anything." Truer words have rarely been spoken. Being ethical requires a lot of thinking. A person who considers the issues in a meaningful way will be prepared to make the right decision when the need arises. Someone who has not will be lost. It is hard to act ethically when every situation you face takes you by surprise.

The purpose of the material that follows is not to provide you with the answers to every possible ethical question. The purpose of the material that follows is to promote thinking, specifically, ethical thinking. A thinking individual is an individual who oversees their own life and actions.

The most basic ethical question is quite simple: "what is the right thing to do?" Unfortunately, this simple question does not always have one simple answer. What is right under one set of circumstances may be quite wrong under another. And yet, even in the most horrific of environments, it is still possible to do the right thing - to act ethically. In "Man's Search for Meaning," author Viktor Frankl discovered that even in the brutal confines of the Auschwitz concentration camp, many people still demonstrated ethical behaviour. Despite their circumstances, they were able to do the right thing.

Society, through a variety of mechanisms (e.g., the legal system) can attempt to mandate behaviour, but it cannot mandate ethics. Ethics come from within. A person may decide not to steal because of the consequences associated with this behaviour (e.g., fines, incarceration, public humiliation) - but this does not constitute ethical behaviour. The individual in question might still wish to steal - and in the absence of consequences they likely would.

## **4 - 5            ETHICAL DECISION- MAKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING**

Ethics or morality poses questions about how people ought to act and how they should live. It asks, "according to what standards are these actions right or wrong?" It asks, "what character traits (i.e. honesty, compassion, fairness) are necessary to live a truly human life?" It also asks, "what concerns or groups do we usually minimize or ignore? And why might that be?" Admitting blindness is the beginning of vision.

In the process of making ethical decisions, it is important to identify, or recognize, moral issues; get all the facts; and then evaluate the options and alternative actions, from various moral perspectives. Some of the questions that need to be asked along the way are covered below.

#### **4 - 5.1 Recognizing a Moral or Ethical Issue**

Is there something wrong personally, interpersonally, or socially? Is there conflict that could be damaging to people, to institutions, to society - to animals or the environment? Does the issue go deeper than legal or institutional concerns? What does it do to people and their dignity, rights, and hopes for a better life together?

#### **4 - 5.2 Getting the Facts**

What are the relevant facts of the case? What individuals and groups have an important stake in the outcome? What is at stake for each? Do some have a greater stake because they have a special need (e.g., those who are poor or excluded) or because they have special obligations? Are there other important stakeholders in addition to those directly involved? What are the options for acting? Have all the relevant persons and groups been consulted? If you showed your list of options to someone you respect, what would that person say?

#### **4 - 5.3 Evaluating the Alternative Actions from Various Moral Perspectives**

Which option will produce the best and do the least harm? Which option respects the rights and dignity of all stakeholders? Even if not, everyone gets all they want, will everyone still be treated fairly? Which option would promote the common good and help all participate more fully in the goods they share as a society, as a community, as a company, and as a family?

Which option would enable the deepening or development of those virtues or character traits that people value as individuals, as professionals, and as a society?

#### **4 - 5.4 Making a Decision**

Once a person has completed the process above, he or she should be ready to make an informed and ethical decision. As a final check, the following two questions can also be asked.

- ❖ Considering all the information collected, which of the options are the right thing to do?
- ❖ If you told someone you respect why you chose this option, what would that person say?

#### **4 - 5.5 Act, and Then Reflect on the Decision Later**

As noted above, being ethical requires a great deal of thinking. After making a decision - as part of an ongoing learning process - it makes sense to reflect on what transpired.

How did it turn out for all concerned? If you had to do it over again, what, if anything, would you do differently?

## **4 – 5.6 Ethical Problem Solving**

*In addressing ethical problems, the five key questions to ask are:*

- ❖ What benefits and what harms will each course of action produce, and which alternative will lead to the best overall consequences?
- ❖ What moral rights do the affected parties have, and which course of action best respects those rights?
- ❖ Which course of action treats everyone the same, except where there is an ammorally justifiable reason not to, and does not show favoritism or discrimination?
- ❖ Which course of action advances the common good?
- ❖ Which course of action develops moral virtues?

This approach, of course, does not provide an automatic solution to moral problems. It is not meant to. It is merely meant to help identify most of the important ethical considerations. In the end, people must deliberate on moral issues for themselves, keeping a careful eye on both the facts and on the ethical considerations involved.

## **4 - 6 ETHICS AND MORALITY**

Ethics is the formal study of moral standards and conduct. What is good? What is evil? How should I behave—and why? How should I balance my needs against the needs of others?

The terms ethics and morality are often used interchangeably—indeed, they usually can mean the same thing, and in casual conversation, there is not a problem with switching between one and the other. However, there is a distinction between them in philosophy. Strictly speaking, morality is used to refer to what you would call moral standards and moral conduct, while ethics is used to refer to the formal study of those standards and conduct. For this reason, the study of ethics is also often called “moral philosophy.”

### **4 – 6.1 Moral Judgments**

*The following are just a few examples of what can be classified as moral judgments:*

- ❖ Companies who are dumping chemicals in the river are wrong and ought to be punished.
- ❖ It is wrong that a company is trying to avoid the regulations, and it should stop.
- ❖ He is a bad person—he never treats people well and does not seem to respect anyone.

As seen in the above examples, moral judgments tend to be characterized by words like ought to, should, good and bad. However, the mere appearance of such words does not mean that people are automatically making a statement about morals.

*Consider the following examples:*

- ❖ Most Canadians believe that racism is wrong.
- ❖ Tricia Romance is a bad painter.
- ❖ If you want to get home quickly, you should take the bus.

None of the previous should be considered moral judgments.

Another important feature of morality is that it serves as a guide for people's actions. Because of this, it is necessary to point out that moral judgments are made about those actions which involve choice. It is only when people have possible alternatives to their actions that you conclude those actions are either morally good or morally bad.

When discussing morality, it is important to distinguish between morals and mores. Both are aspects of human conduct and human interaction, but they are very different from each other.

Mores are usually treated as "harmless customs," where "harmless" means that failure to follow the customs may result in a negative reaction, but not a very serious one. Such mores would include the time of day when meals are eaten and the proper form of greeting individuals.

Morals, on the other hand, involve much more serious aspects of how people behave and how they treat others. What this means is that failure to follow the dominant morals will result in a much harsher reaction from others. Examples of this would include discrimination, physical abuse, and theft.

Another important distinction in morality is that between standards, conduct, and character. When you form a moral judgment, you are employing moral standards—principles against which you compare what you see in order to form a conclusion.

Such judgments might be about particular conduct, which includes a person's actions, or it might be about a person's character, which includes their attitudes and beliefs.

Ethics, on the other hand, involves the study of those standards and judgments which people create. Ethics assumes that the standards exist and seeks to describe them, evaluate them, or evaluate the premises upon which those standards exist.

#### **4 - 6.2      Why Should We Care about Ethics and Morality?**

Why be concerned with moral theories and distinctions between different types of moral theories? Why bother with some of the difficult questions, which are raised in meta-ethics? Everyone is brought up with some sort of moral system, and it usually works out well— isn't that enough? What is the point of bothering further?

The point is that the "conventional" or "customary" morality which people are brought up with is something those people too rarely think about very carefully.



Following a moral system blindly and without reflection is not a method likely to result in thoughtful, contemporary and appropriate action. Moreover, if this person is suddenly faced with people from a different culture who have a very different moral system, it will not be possible to handle it very well. The most likely results will be extreme dogmatism, deep disillusionment, or even the abandonment of morality entirely.

However, once a person does begin to reflect upon a moral system and look more closely at its premises and inferences, then they are now in the realm of ethics.

Indeed, the very process of moral growth requires such reflection and the attempt to find a path between extreme dogmatism and extreme skepticism. Both moral maturity and moral autonomy require that a person can reach moral conclusions on their own—and just as importantly, explain and justify those moral decisions in a reasonable manner.

That is why it is important for people to be able to reason about their moral beliefs and moral positions. Such reasoning requires, first, an understanding about how to reason and use logic, and second, an understanding about how morality and moral systems work. These are the sorts of skills and information which a person needs in order to reach a level of moral autonomy.

## **4 - 7            ETHICS, MORALITY AND VALUES**

Values that guide how people ought to behave are considered moral values (e.g., values such as respect, honesty, fairness, responsibility, etc.). Statements around how these values are applied are sometimes called moral or ethical principles.

Values and ethics are the convictions that shape people's attitudes, guide their actions, and inform the choices they make. And they are very important to professionals in business. Over half of the 5000 respondents to the 2019 Glassdoor's Mission & Culture Survey, said that company culture is more important than salary when it comes to job satisfaction. The survey also found that 73% of professionals say they take an organization's values into account and would not apply to a company unless its values aligned with their own.

One of the most important characteristics of moral judgments is that they express your values.

Not all expressions of values are also moral judgments, but all moral judgments do express something about what you value. Thus, understanding morality requires investigating what people value and why.

There are three principal types of values, which humans can have: preferential values, instrumental values, and intrinsic values. Each plays an important role in every person's life, but they do not all play equal roles in the formation of moral standards and moral norms.

#### **4 - 7.1          Preferential Values**

The expression of preference is an expression of value. When a person says that he prefers to play sports, he is saying that he values that activity. When another person says that he prefers relaxing at home to being at work, he is saying that he values leisure time higher than work time.

Most ethical theories are not terribly concerned with - nor do they place much emphasis on - preferential values. The one exception would be hedonistic ethical theories, which explicitly place such preferences at the centre of moral consideration. Such systems argue that those situations or activities which make people the happiest, are, in fact, the ones they should morally choose.

#### **4 - 7.2          Instrumental Values**

When something is valued instrumentally, that means that it only has value insofar as it is a means to achieve some other end that is, in turn, more important. Thus, if your car is of instrumental value that means that you only value it insofar as it allows you to accomplish other tasks, such as getting to work or the store.

Instrumental values play an important role in teleological moral systems—theories of morality that argue that the moral choices are those which lead to the best possible consequences. Thus, the choice to feed a homeless person is considered a moral choice and is valued not simply for its own sake but, rather, because it leads to some other good—the well-being of another person.

#### **4 - 7.3          Intrinsic Values**

Something with intrinsic value is valued purely for itself—it is not used simply to some other end, and it is not simply "preferred" over other possible options. This sort of value is the source of a great deal of debate in moral philosophy. In fact, some people even question whether intrinsic values exist.

If intrinsic values do exist, how is it that they occur? Are they like colour or mass, a characteristic that you can detect so long as you use the right tools?

You can explain what produces the characteristics like mass and colour, but what would produce the characteristic of value?

If people are unable to reach any sort of agreement about the value of some object or event, does that mean that its value, whatever it is, cannot be intrinsic?

#### **4 - 7.4 Instrumental Versus Intrinsic Values**

One problem in ethics is if intrinsic values really do exist, how do you differentiate them from instrumental values? That may seem simple at first, but it is not. Take, for example, the question of good health—it is something that just about everyone values.

But is it an intrinsic value?

Some might be inclined to answer "yes," but in fact, people tend to value good health because it allows them to engage in activities that they like. From this perspective, good health is an instrumental value. But this raises the question, are those pleasurable activities, then, intrinsically valuable? People often perform them for a variety of reasons—social bonding, learning, to test their abilities, etc.

So, even these activities - it could be argued - are also instrumental rather than intrinsic values.

It seems that everything you value is something which leads to some other value, suggesting that all your values are, at least in part, instrumental values. Perhaps there is no "final" value or set of values - we are all caught in a constant feedback loop where things that we value continually lead to other things that we value.

#### **4 - 7.5 Values – Subjective or Objective?**

Another debate in the field of ethics is the role human's play when it comes to creating or assessing value. Some argue that value is a purely human construction—or at least, the product of advanced cognitive functions - whether human or not.

If all cognitively advanced creatures disappeared, things like mass would not change, but other things - like value - would disappear.

Others argue, however, that at least some forms of value (intrinsic values) exist objectively and independently of any observer.

You might deny that they have value, but in such a situation, you are either deceiving yourself or you are simply mistaken. Indeed, some ethical theorists have argued that many moral problems could be resolved if we could simply learn to better recognize those things which have true value and dispense with the things that have artificially created value (things that are merely a "distraction").

## **4 – 8            ETHICS AND THE ELDERLY**

Ethical issues pervade our modern society. Daily - often many times a day - people who have a moral compass are confronted with an ethical choice. Sometimes these choices are so difficult that they are called ethical dilemmas. In the world of the elderly, ethical issues have an even greater significance because they usually involve an elder who is likely to be more vulnerable than the average adult. For that reason, in many ways the elderly are taken advantage of by people in whom they have misplaced their trust.

To provide the highest level of care to an elder, the entire caregiving team (including any number of different professionals) needs to form a partnership having the best interest of the elder as their focal point while providing loving, appropriate care to enhance their quality of care, their quality of life and their happiness in the latter days of their lives.

For the elderly, ethics is about how they want to be treated and allowed to make their own decisions. For family members as caregivers, ethics is about doing what is right even when no one is looking. For professionals providing elder care, ethics is about adherence to established canons of ethics promulgated by various professional organizations.

### **4 – 8.1            Codes of Ethics**

As noted, elders are prime targets for fraud. Aware of this exposure, many elders are keenly interested in finding people, and companies, who operate according to a Code of Business Practices and who are committed to behaving in an ethical manner.

A code of ethics states a profession's goals, values, and level of commitment to the public and the community which it serves. The development and promulgation of a code of ethics sets a minimum standard of practice to which members are held accountable.

The code not only directs practice, but also offers a means of self-regulation by fellow professionals and the development of trust within the community they serve. Due to the importance of a code of ethics within a profession, many organizations have developed their own code (some of which are covered at the end of this chapter).

### **4 – 8.2            Common Ethical Issues**

#### **Actual Conflicts of Interest**

There are several scenarios under which conflicts of interest may arise when family members and professional caregivers assist or represent the elderly. *They include:*

- ❖ Conflicts involving spouses and their wishes versus the elder's wishes and interests.
- ❖ Conflicts involving family members from different generations and their wishes versus the elder's interest.
- ❖ Conflicts involving a fiduciary (such as a guardian, conservator, or agent under a power of attorney) who may have interests different than the elder

- ❖ Conflicts involving the care provider's business interests versus the elder's interests, well-being, and quality of life.

Consider the following scenario. Some family members feel a sense of entitlement and believe that they have a right to the money and material goods their parents or older relatives have accumulated. They feel justified in taking "advance" control over assets that they perceive to be "almost" or "rightfully" theirs. Relatives may believe they are entitled to "reimbursement" for providing care for the elder, or/and may even take pre-emptive steps to secure assets to prevent their presumed inheritance from being exhausted to pay for the elder's care and medical bills, such as taking advantage of their parent's trust or loss of memory or using their perceived latitude when acting under a Power of Attorney for Property. Self-serving rationalization may enable an adult child who believes that they are entitled to the elder parent's funds or assets. "They would want me to have it" and I'm going to get it anyway, so why not now" are common statements.

### **Potential, Future or Perceived Conflicts of Interest**

Potential conflicts are those which are not actual conflicts when the caregiving or assistance to the elder begins. These potential conflicts may later become actual conflicts when the elder's interests diverge from the caregiver's interests.

For example, consider this situation. A power of attorney is prepared by the elder's attorney and signed by the elder to give the elder's son the power to manage all their business affairs when the elder could not. The son is already involved in the business and is the potential heir. At this point there is a potential conflict of interest. Later, after the elder is incapacitated, the son as agent seeks legal counsel concerning a gifting strategy that could (or would) impoverish the elder by transferring the assets to the son and his siblings. The potential conflict has now become at least a perceived conflict of interest. And if the son acts within his power to impoverish his parents, there is an actual conflict of interest.

### **Confidentiality**

In the course of eldercare, family members and caregivers frequently gather a substantial amount of confidential information about the client. They owe a duty of confidentiality to the elder. Not only must they not breach the confidence placed in them by releasing that private information to others, but they must also not use that information for their own benefit in such a way as to be adverse to the elder.

### **Decision-Making Capacity**

The elderly may have capacity (be competent) or may not be competent to properly participate in the process of making decisions, both business and medical. Such decisions will likely have lasting effects on the elder's future, even to their end of life. Eldercare providers have a duty to focus on the elder's needs, both present and future, as well as their assets.

At all times, their interests must be considered and prioritized. After all, if the eldercare involves the choice of using the elder's assets or protecting those assets using a strategy, whose assets are being expended or protected? So, the best interest of the elder must be weighed heavily in all decision-making, especially when the elder is unable to think clearly about the decisions and the consequences thereof or to express herself clearly about them.

This should also be the case with all partners in the eldercare provider team. Where appropriate, all professional eldercare providers and family caregivers should maintain an "elder-centered" approach to those they assist each day.

## **4 – 8.3      Five Critical Principles**

### **1.    Autonomy: Respect for the Elder's Choices**

Respect for individuality is a core value in our society and is no less so when dealing with the elderly. In fact, it may be even more needed because the elderly are usually not as able as the younger population to stand up for their rights and their decisions.

Implicit within any discussion of autonomy is the concept of equality, at least as it relates to human dignity.

Eldercare providers owe the elder the duty to respect his autonomy. *Two conditions are essential for autonomy:*

1. Liberty - independence from controlling influences.
2. Capacity for independent decision-making and intentional action.

Autonomy encompasses the "capacity" of the elder to form a contract such as with an eldercare provider for healthcare services or an attorney for legal services. Autonomy is also involved in the elder being able to give his "informed consent" to medical treatments as well as to agree to courses of action proposed by social workers.

Personal autonomy is, at a minimum, self-rule that is free from both controlling interference by others and from limitations, such as inadequate understanding, that prevent meaningful choice. For example, a 70-year-old female diagnosed with cancer (but who has all her mental faculties and has been fully informed of the benefits and consequences of various treatments) may refuse invasive treatment and elect to have alternative therapies of acupuncture and natural remedies. In this, she is utilizing her rights of autonomy. Likewise, an octogenarian with capacity to decide and with necessary information about his options may choose the location for his skilled nursing care despite the recommendation of a case worker or discharge planner.

It is not the place of the elder's caregivers, or family members to make decisions for the elder when the elder has capacity (is competent) to do so. Rather, they all must respect the elder's right to make their own choices. They must allow the elder to direct the course of their life, their treatment and legal representation.

However, the elder's autonomy reigns only after their caregivers have discharged their duty to fully communicate the information needed, including the risks and benefits, in a manner that allows the elder to both form and render their informed consent or decision. Obtaining such informed consent or decisions is essential to all who are involved in eldercare, professionals and family members alike.

Eldercare providers frequently encounter situations where the elder's mental capacity to understand their options and make well-reasoned decisions is in question. In such cases true autonomy cannot exist. Then autonomy may be exercised through a surrogate, the moral or legal agent.

If the elder lacks capacity, if the surrogate has interests that conflict with the elder's interests, and if there is no clear guidance from the elder to resolve the issue with reasonable certainty, there is a major ethical dilemma for all concerned. In these circumstances, the principle of autonomy should be weighed against the principles of nonmaleficence, beneficence, justice and sanctity of life. Careful application of the conflict rules in the professional caregiver's code of ethics with guidance provided by these principles can unravel the Gordian knot and achieve the right result that is in the best interest of the elder. It is, after all, the elder's health, life, well-being and finances that most often hang in the balance in such situations and yet should be held over that of others.

As noted in other chapters, autonomy can be expressed, and to some extent be exercised, by the elder through the use of Advance Directives created and signed by the elder.

## **2. Beneficence: Do Good**

Beneficence is defined as the doing of good; active goodness or kindness; charity. Eldercare providers of all kinds can do well by doing good. Those who embrace and incorporate the principle of beneficence in their ethical decision-making can make a great difference in the quality of life that elders enjoy. Quality of care of all types is the key to the future quality of life and the rate of decline in their functionality and happiness.

Quite often eldercare begins with a healthcare crisis. When the elder needs assistance, the family members are usually the first to step in – unless the emergency medical technicians are the first on the scene and the first eldercare providers. In a life-threatening emergency, in which the patient may be unconscious, surgery may be performed before the patient's consent can be obtained. Thus, the principle of beneficence is put into practice by saving the elder's life. This occurs after a determination has been made that without intervention and consent the patient would expire. Here beneficence trumps autonomy because it cannot be expressed by the elder.

If the situation is not an emergency requiring immediate hospitalization or similar intervention, the elder's family member, acting as a surrogate, will quite likely seek the assistance of the appropriate healthcare team, be it the hospital, physician, nursing staff or other eldercare providers such as a home healthcare or a skilled nursing facility.

The family may also seek the advice after the elder has been moved to a skilled nursing facility. At this point it is quite likely the elder cannot return home without substantial assistance. The family does not know what to do. They need the counsel of a lawyer or a Geriatric Care Manager. These professionals can help them sort out all their options and assist them in making appropriate decisions. They will be guided by the elder's wishes, those they currently express to their care planning team or their prior statements of how they wished to be cared for if such a situation ever arose.

The problem inherent with beneficence – no matter what member of the eldercare team is trying hard to do good - is that beneficence may easily change into paternalism.

Paternalism is “the intentional overriding of one person's known preferences or actions by another person, where the person who overrides justifies the action by the goals of benefiting or avoiding harm to the person whose preferences or actions are overridden.”

By their superior training, knowledge, and experience, professional caregivers such as physicians, nurses and social workers may cross the line from beneficence to paternalism. They are better positioned to determine and advocate for the elder's best interest than is the elder herself. However, those superior qualifications are neither a mandate nor permission to overrule the elder's wishes without respecting the elder's autonomy. By trying too hard to do good, a care provider may do emotional or psychological, if not physical, harm.

Consider this example of paternalism. A 75-year-old male patient is told by his physician that he must have surgery immediately without giving the patient full information about the reason for this surgery, the risks and benefits, and any complications that might result. Also, the patient has not been given any options or an opportunity for a second opinion or discussion with others. While the physician may be correct, his beneficence that overrides the autonomy of the competent patient results in paternalism and a lack of informed consent.

### **3. Nonmaleficence: Do No Harm**

The principles of nonmaleficence and beneficence are particularly significant for the elderly and their future quality of life.

For example, when it comes to the elderly, surgical cost-benefit considerations tend to be subtler and more complex, as harm is more likely, and benefit is less certain. As a result, before elective surgery is undertaken the elder must be made aware of the goals of surgery and the literature on the likelihood of success. Medical practitioners have an ethical responsibility to help the patient to make an informed decision.

Such considerations also enter into deliberations about whether or not to hospitalize an elderly patient. They get confused in the hospital, there's disruption of their daily routine, [and] they may fall. So, while on paper it looks like it's the right thing to do to put them in hospital, you don't approach this decision the same way you would with a younger patient. These considerations make decisions about outpatient treatment for the elderly more complicated.



Respect for client autonomy does not abrogate or excuse any eldercare provider's duty to prevent harm to the elder. Caregivers are ethically justified in advising the elder, or directing the elders surrogate or agent, to focus planning on bettering the quality of care and thus the quality of the elders life. Asset protection concerns thus become secondary. Caregivers, especially family members and lawyers, are not only advisors but should be advocates for the elder.

#### **4. Justice**

The fourth principle is justice - a broader societal issue concerning the allocation of limited health care resources. It's not something physicians deal within day-to-day interactions with patients, but nevertheless it is very important. How do you approach giving health care with limited budgets? There are two opposing sides, the strictly utilitarian ethical viewpoint and then there's the idealistic.

The supporters of the utilitarian viewpoint say that limited health care resources should be allocated to do the best for the largest number of people. Supporters of an offshoot of this utilitarian viewpoint would allocate resources where they are most likely to be successful, where the good results will be the most prolonged and where they will help the most people. Such is the approach of Canada's various provincial health care programs. This approach can really impact negatively on older people in terms of health care delivery. This is because the success of interventions is less in the elderly, the length of time the intervention will last is going to be less and, in most areas, the elderly don't constitute the bulk of the population. Rationing can be detrimental to the aged.

The idealistic approach to the allocation of resources takes a different route. It refuses to allocate our resources solely based on where there's the most bang for the buck. It states that resources should be allocated to help people who need them the most.

So, there are various viewpoints to the concept of justice as it relates to the providing of eldercare services such as medical care and it's financing. Moreover, the principle of justice invokes yet another, related duty - to respect the elders human dignity. Respect for human dignity is the source of the essential autonomy principle. Furthermore, the duty of respect of the elder's human dignity leads to the next principle, the sanctity of life.

#### **5. Sanctity of Life**

As important as the above principles are, surely the ultimate foundation and underpinning of all ethical frameworks or models must be respected for the sanctity of life. If every

elder's life was not precious, and the quality of life and the dignity of that human life were not relevant to all the issues of eldercare, caregivers would not have much reason for following the previous essential principles or act ethically in the process of providing care.

Everyone involved with elders needs to respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person. They must each elder in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity.

Conflicts certainly may arise between the essential principles and this foundational declaration that every human life, especially the children and the elderly who are most vulnerable, is precious.

For example, the issue of physician-assisted suicide is a collision between the principle of autonomy – the right of the elder to make their own decisions - and the principle of respect for the sanctity of human life - even for the life of one approaching the end by natural means.

#### **4 – 8.4      Derivative Rules**

Derived from the above five principles there are several additional rules of ethical care - Veracity, Confidentiality and Fidelity.

##### **Veracity**

The rule of truth telling, can sometimes be overridden by other important factors, such as a responsibility to avoid “unnecessary distress.” It is also true that some elders do not always wish to be told the full truth. There is no universal agreement as to what extent it is permissible to either lie or to withhold full information from a patient.

##### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is a right central to the concept of an individual’s autonomy. Each person, perhaps even more so each elder, has the absolute right to expect that medical or any other private information will not be shared with others without their express permission or that of their surrogate or agent if they cannot grant permission. This right to confidentiality is protected in many countries.

Frequently the law recognizes special circumstances under which confidential medical information can be released such as when not sharing the information would or could be detrimental to the patient’s well-being. For example, the patient tells the nurse, “Don’t tell the doctor that I don’t take my Coumadin (blood thinner) at home.” What is the nurse to do, especially if this information could jeopardize the life of the patient?

Although confidentiality is almost always considered to be good, there are situations in which the greatest number who would benefit may outweigh the value of keeping a confidence, known as the utilitarian approach.

For example, in the AIDS epidemic, confidentiality has been broken to warn others of the danger of infection. Some health care professionals argue that if this had been done in the early stage of the public health problem, instead of waiting for legislation freeing physicians from liability, AIDS may not have reached its present epidemic proportions.

## **Fidelity**

Fidelity or accountability is the willingness of the eldercare provider or family member to be loyal to the elder and assume responsibility for the nature and quality of the care the elder needs and receives within limits of the law. Social workers' primary responsibility is to promote the well-being of clients. In general, clients' interests are primary. However, social workers' responsibility to the larger society or specific legal obligations may on limited occasions supersede the loyalty owed clients, and clients should be so advised. Such would be the case if a social worker had reason to believe a client had abused, neglected or exploited a child or an elder because the law requires reporting this to the appropriate authorities.

## **4 - 9 ETHICS IN BUSINESS**

Business ethics is a form of applied ethics that examines the ethical principles and moral or ethical problems that can arise in a business environment. In the increasingly conscience-focused marketplaces of the 21st century, the demand for more ethical business processes and actions (known as ethicism) is increasing.

73% of professionals say they take an organization's values into account and would not apply to a company unless its values aligned with their own. (Glassdoor's Mission & Culture Survey 2019)

Furthermore, 82% of workers say they would prefer to be paid less and work for a company with ethical business practices rather than receive higher pay at a company with questionable ethics.

Business ethics can be both a normative and a descriptive discipline. From a corporate perspective it is primarily normative; while from an academic perspective it is also descriptive.

Interest in business ethics increased dramatically in the 1980s and 1990s, at both the corporate and academic level. Today most major corporations place a heavy emphasis on their commitment to promoting non-economic social values under a wide variety of headings (e.g., codes of ethics, core values, social responsibility, etc.). Part of this is due to consumer values, demand and expectations.

Sales of ethically certified food and drink were projected to rise by 17% to reach £9.6bn between 2019-23. This marks a change in consumer buying habits, not likely to go away.

Up to 43% have stopped buying products from companies that have acted unethically, especially around abuse and exploitation of people. The summary statement is that doing good is good for business. (All figures from; If ethics sells more, why are so many brands behind the curve? Dr Chris Arnold, Thought Architect. Specialist in Creativity, Innovation, Ethical Marketing, Branding, Social Impact Strategy, Jan 1, 2021)

Now think of the rise and proliferation of responsible investing, known as ESG investments, standing for environmental, social and (corporate) governance. EY 2020 DNA of the CFO survey found that 74% of finance leaders say that investors increasingly use nonfinancial information in their decision-making, with a focus on ESG and expecting companies to report what they are doing to address these issues which many investors view as ethical issues as part of ethical investing. Investors are demanding transparency and responsibility from the companies in which they invest, not just profits.

Just as every person needs to have a sound moral base from which to operate - so does businesses. Most of us want to deal with enterprises that are ethical, but sadly we have come - often with good reason - to view some industries as perpetually unethical.

Business ethics can be referred to as the professional rules of right and wrong in a particular industry. It involves the processes through which individuals apply their personal values, beliefs, and attitudes to new, dynamic situations in the workplace in order to make, implement, and evaluate ethical policies and decisions.

Business ethics involves knowing what is right or wrong in the workplace and doing what's right—when it comes to products, services and relationships with all the stakeholders (management, employees and customers). There are two broad areas of study when it comes to business ethics: managerial mischief and moral mazes.

### **Managerial Mischief**

Experts explain that “managerial mischief” includes “illegal, unethical, or questionable practices of individual managers or organizations, as well as the causes of such behaviours and remedies to eradicate them.”

There has been a great deal written about managerial mischief, leading many to believe that business ethics is merely a matter of preaching the basics of what is right and wrong. More often, though, business ethics is a matter of dealing with dilemmas that have no clear indication of what is right or wrong.

## **4 - 9.1 Typical Ethical Scenarios in Business**

Business ethics are not terribly different from personal ethics. Or as Ken Iverson puts it in his book Plain Talk, "If something is wrong outside the realm of business, then it's wrong in the realm of business."

**Table 5 - 1 Typical Business Ethical Scenario**

Moral Standards Factual Information Concerning the Policy or Behaviour That is in Question
Ethical decision on the rightness or wrongness of the particular behaviour under question

Such things as embezzlement, fraud and backbiting are usually attributed to greed, a desire for power or prestige. These are traits carried by individuals, and if these people are in power, they may incorporate them into a business. The business itself is an entity and not a human being. As such, it can be neither moral nor immoral. Rather, the people involved in the business bring these traits.

Studies have shown that unethical behaviour is likely to arise in industries that operate in a competitive environment - and drop in those that don't. However, in competitive businesses, management can lessen the likelihood of unethical behaviour by stressing the importance of ethics and the need to service the interests of customers. Since every business also wants to make money, a difficult balancing act is often part of the equation.

The amount of personal contact a business has with its customers also impact the level of ethical behaviour. As society becomes more technical and complex, social interaction is lessening. People are more likely to fax or email communications than they are to verbally express themselves. As personal interaction decreases, the need to stress ethical behaviour increases. When a person is not face-to-face with another, their level of tolerance seems to go down.

Consider two different interactions: one on a congested sidewalk and the other on a congested freeway.

If an elderly woman were standing on a sidewalk looking in a store window, making movement difficult, a person trying to get by would probably simply say "excuse me" and edge around her. Place those same two people in cars on the freeway, however, and the one trying to get by is likely to become hostile in words and actions. The lack of face-to-face contact fundamentally changes the interaction.

#### **4 - 9.2 The Ten Principles of Business Ethics**

**The ten principles of business ethics are as follows.**

1. Business Ethics are based on Personal Ethics - There is no real separation between doing what is right in business and playing fair, telling the truth, and being ethical in your personal life.

2. Business Ethics are based on Fairness - Would a disinterested observer agree that both sides are being treated fairly? Are both sides negotiating in good faith? Does each transaction take place on a level playing field ... and if so, are the basic principles of ethics being met?
3. Business Ethics require Integrity - Integrity refers to wholeness, reliability and consistency. Ethical businesses treat people with respect, honesty, and integrity. They back up their promises, and they keep their commitments.
4. Business Ethics require Truth-telling - The days when a business could sell a defective product and hide behind the "buyer beware" defence are long gone. You can sell products or services that have limitations, defects, or are outdated, but not as first-class, new merchandise. Truth in advertising is not only the law, but business ethics also require it.
5. Business Ethics require Dependability - If your company is new, unstable, about to be sold, or going out of business, ethics requires that you let clients and customers know this. Ethical businesses can be relied upon to be available to solve problems, answer questions and provide support.
6. Business Ethics require a Business Plan - A company's ethics are built on its image of itself and its vision of the future, as well as its role in the community. Business ethics do not happen in a vacuum. The clearer the company's plan for growth, stability, profits, and service, the stronger its commitment to ethical business practices.
7. Business Ethics apply Internally and Externally - Ethical businesses treat both customers and employees with respect and fairness. Ethics is about respect in the conference room, negotiating in good faith, keeping promises and meeting obligations to staff, employers, vendors and customers. The scope is universal.
8. Business Ethics require a Profit - Ethical businesses are well-run, well-managed, have effective internal controls, and clear expectations of growth. Ethics is about how people live in the present to prepare for the future, and a business without profits (or a plan to create them) is not meeting its ethical obligations to prepare for the future well-being of the company, its employees, and customers.
9. Business Ethics are Value-based - The law, and professional organizations, must produce written standards that are inflexible and universal - while they may talk about "ethics," these documents are usually prescriptive and refer to minimal standards. Ethics are about values, ideals, and aspirations. Ethical businesses may not always live up to their ideals, but they are clear about their intent.

10. Business Ethics come from the Boss - Leadership sets the tone, in every area of a business. Ethics are either central to the way a company functions, or they are not. The executives and managers either lead the way, or they communicate that cutting corners, deception and disrespect are acceptable. Line staff will always rise, or sink, to the level of performance they see modelled above them. Business ethics start at the top.

#### **4 - 9.3 Ethics in Leadership**

"Ethics comes from the top" is a motto of each professional ethics-oriented manager. One should also realize that managers' ethical behaviour influences their employees to perform in the same ethical way.

*Three questions should be asked when leadership is faced with an ethical dilemma:*

1. ***Is it legal?*** - In other words, will you be violating any criminal laws, civil laws, or company policies by engaging in a activity?
2. ***Is it balanced?*** - Is it fair to all parties concerned both in the short-term as well as the long term? Is this a win-win situation for those directly - and indirectly - involved?
3. ***Is it right?*** - Most of us know the difference between *right* and *wrong*, but when push comes to shove, how does this decision make you feel about yourself? Are you proud of yourself for making this decision? Would you like others to know you made the decision you did?

#### **4 - 9.4 Ten Myths About Business Ethics**

Business ethics in the work environment is all about prioritizing moral values and ensuring behaviours are aligned with those values. Yet, myths abound about business ethics. Some of these myths arise from general confusion about the notion of ethics. Other myths arise from narrow or simplistic views of ethical dilemmas.

- ❖ Myth # 1 - Business ethics is more a matter of religion than management
- ❖ Myth # 2 - Our employees are ethical, so we do not need to give attention to business ethics
- ❖ Myth # 3 - Business ethics is a discipline best led by philosophers, academics and theologians
- ❖ Myth # 4 - Business ethics is superfluous—it only asserts the obvious: "do good!"
- ❖ Myth # 5 - Business ethics is a matter of the good people preaching to the bad people
- ❖ Myth # 6 - Business ethics is the new police person on the block
- ❖ Myth # 7 - Ethics cannot be managed
- ❖ Myth # 8 - Business ethics and social responsibility are the same thing
- ❖ Myth # 9 - Our organization is not in trouble with the law, so we are ethical
- ❖ Myth # 10 - Managing ethics in the workplace has little practical relevance

## **4 - 10      COMPANY ETHICS POLICY OR CODE OF CONDUCT**

A Company's Ethics Policy or Code of Conduct is an invaluable source of ethical solutions. It provides employees with a framework that they can use to solve ethical dilemmas guided by the established written standards of conduct. A few fundamental principles apply when it comes to the creation of a corporate ethics policy.

### **4 - 10.1      Purpose**

An Ethics Policy should have a clear purpose - that combines both your vision as well as the values you would like to see upheld in your business. It comes from the top and outlines specifically what is considered acceptable as well as unacceptable in terms of conduct.

### **4 - 10.2      Pride**

The Corporate Ethics Policy should be a source of pride. It should help foster dignity and self-respect. If employees are proud of where they work and what they are doing, they are much more apt to act in an ethical manner.

### **4 - 10.3      Patience**

Since you must focus on long-term versus short-term results, you must develop a certain degree of patience. Bringing a corporate ethics policy to life takes time. If you rush things, you may become frustrated, and this can lead to the temptation to let things slide and opt for less than ethical alternatives.

### **4 - 10.4      Persistence**

Persistence means standing by your word. It means being committed. If you are not committed to the ethics you have outlined, then they become worthless. Stand by your word.

### **4 - 10.5      Professional Standards and Codes of Conduct**

A Corporate Ethics Policy that sets specific standards of conduct can help you avoid many of the problems connected with resolving ethical dilemmas. It draws a line in the sand and establishes policies that must be followed.

*Company policy may regulate such matters as:*

- ❖ Conflict of interest – e.g., each employee may be obliged to disclose any interests that may impede the company's economy or efficiency or the employee's objectivity and sense of best interest
- ❖ Confidential information
- ❖ Restrictions on Trade Practices
- ❖ Copyrights; Bribes, Payoffs, Gratuities, etc.
- ❖ Use of company resources for business and personal purposes



## **4 - 11      MANAGING ETHICS IN THE WORKPLACE**

The following guidelines ensure a corporate ethics program is operated in a meaningful and effective fashion.

### **4 - 11.1      Process**

Recognize that managing ethics is a process.

Ethics is a matter of values and associated behaviours. Values are discerned through the process of ongoing reflection. Therefore, ethics programs may seem more process- oriented than most management practices. Managers tend to be skeptical of process- oriented activities, and instead prefer processes focused on deliverables with measurements.

However, experienced managers realize that the deliverables of standard management practices (i.e., Planning, organizing, motivating, controlling) are only tangible representations of very process-oriented practices.

For example, the process of strategic planning is much more important than the plan produced by the process. The same is true for ethics management.

Ethics programs do produce deliverables, e.g., codes, policies and procedures, budget items, meeting minutes, authorization forms, newsletters, etc. The most important aspect from an ethics management program is the process of reflection and dialogue that produces these deliverables.

### **4 - 11.2      Preferred Behaviours**

As with any management practice, the most important outcome of an ethics policy is the production of behaviours preferred by the organization. The best of ethical values and intentions are relatively meaningless unless they generate fair and just behaviours in the workplace.

That's why practices that generate lists of ethical values, or codes of ethics, must also generate policies, procedures, and training that translate those values into appropriate behaviours.

### **4 - 11.3      Handling Ethical Dilemmas**

Ethical issues and decisions are part of daily work. There is no one strategy to use or answer to provide or seek that covers all situations. They can be sensitive because the very term can trigger emotions, defensive behaviour, fooling oneself or virtually instant judgements, rationalization, or over/under reacting.

Rationalization permits us to let things slide or do things that may be questionable. They can be identified by statements such as:

“It’s not a big deal. It’s not my problem. This is someone else’s responsibility. I don’t have all the information so maybe it’s okay (and why should I check up on this). This is or must be the way these things are done here (in our department, at our company, in this organization, in this country, in our industry or profession, etc). You’re not seeing the big picture.”

Some say that the best way to handle ethical dilemmas is to avoid their occurrence in the first place. That may be hard to do for a variety of reasons. You may be a witness, a victim or (potential) perpetrator/enabler.

That is why practices such as developing codes of ethics and codes of conduct are so important. Their development sensitizes employees to ethical considerations and minimizes the chances of unethical behaviour occurring in the first place.

There are guidelines you can follow to help with this.

### **Understand perspective and context.**

What could be behind the actions or inactions? What is the motivation? Is it an ethics driven action or something to get through a tough situation or conversation, perhaps to contain emotions, minimize harm or reframe a matter? Does the party understand that what is happening may be wrong on some level; that this could be perceived as being an ethics question and perceived negatively by the company, the client, colleagues, other professionals?

### **Benefits and consequences**

What are the benefits and downsides of doing something about the matter at hand? To you and others impacted. It’s normal to think of self (and family) preservation (your job, future, paycheck. Compromise does occur. In any event, protect yourself as best as possible. Document as much as possible and solicit support from others should matters take an uncomfortable or bad turn. This can help you stand your ground.

### **Speak with the perpetrator first.**

Sometimes it helps to give someone the benefit of the doubt. You may not be seeing the whole picture; your emotions and bias may cloud your judgement. The person may stop and adjust their behaviour, either because they have been challenged or because they did not appreciate the ethics of the situation. Share your observation and repeat any directives given by a superior or co-worker to gain clarification. You may have misconstrued or misunderstood. On the other hand, this may cause the individual to give pause and reflect, then take a different, more palatable and ethical approach.

*Approach them with questions like:*

- ❖ “Can you help me understand what is happening, why this is being done or not done?”
- ❖ “I am confused or concerned about (blank). Can you explain the rationale behind this?”
- ❖ “I need some help from you to help me understand why you’re not worried about this.”

You are or should be looking out for everyone’s best interests. That can be hard. With a co-worker, colleague or manager, you may position the dilemma in terms of the potential or real downsides and consequences to them or the company. Suggesting ethical alternatives provides a graceful and helpful way out.

Sometimes dealing with it at the grassroots level doesn’t go anywhere. There may also be things that you see or experience that are serious enough to escalate up the reporting ladder, to Human Resources, Compliance or an available anonymous hotline.

Remember, your firm’s reputation is on the line, the perpetrator’s reputation is on the line, and so is yours if you don’t address it. Many organizations have published guidelines on procedures to follow to help you out.

#### **4 - 11.4      Public Decision-Making**

Ethical decisions should be made in groups, and these decisions should be made public, as appropriate.

This usually produces better quality decisions by including diverse interests and perspectives and increases the credibility of the decision process and outcome by reducing suspicion of unfair bias.

#### **4 - 11.5      Integrated Management Practice**

Integrate ethics management with other management practices. When developing the values statement during strategic planning, include ethical values preferred in the workplace. When developing personnel policies, reflect on what ethical values you would like to be most prominent in the organization's culture and then design policies to produce these behaviours.

#### **4 - 11.6      Cross-Functional Teams**

Use cross-functional teams when developing and implementing the ethics management program.

It is vital that the organization’s employees feel a sense of participation and ownership in the program if they are to adhere to its ethical values. Therefore, include employees in developing and operating the program.

#### **4 - 11.7 Value Forgiveness**

This may sound rather religious or preachy to some, but it is probably the most important component of any management practice. An ethics management program may at first actually increase the number of ethical issues to be dealt with because people are more sensitive to their occurrence.

Consequently, there may be more occasions to address people's unethical behaviour. The most important ingredient for remaining ethical is trying to be ethical. Therefore, help people recognize and address their mistakes and then support them to continue to try operating ethically.

#### **4 - 11.8 Expectation is Not Perfection**

Note that trying to operate ethically and making a few mistakes is better than not trying at all.

Some organizations have become widely known as operating in a highly ethical manner (e.g., Ben and Jerry's, Johnson and Johnson, WestJet, AIC, Hewlett-Packard, etc.).

Unfortunately, it seems that when an organization achieves this strong a public image, some business ethics writers place it on a pedestal.

All organizations are comprised of people and people are not perfect. However, when a mistake is made by any of these organizations, the organization has a long way to go. In an increasingly critical society, these organizations are accused of being hypocritical, and social critics soon pillory them.

Consider some of the ethical scandals in business since the Millennium. (Enron's accounting scandal; United Airlines handling of the forceful removal of a doctor from an overbooked flight; Google's antitrust issues and abuse of size to restrict advertising for AdSense customers on rival search engines, and Equifax's use of old, outdated security systems that could have been fixed and handled a hack affecting 148 million consumers and not reported; not to mention numerous government scandals in Canada and abroad).

Share values drop, customers boycott and leave, businesses may even close. Consequently, some leaders may fear sticking their necks out publicly to announce an ethics management program. This is extremely unfortunate. It is the transparency of owning up and trying to correct or do better that counts towards maintaining or restoring trust.

#### **4 - 12 ETHICS AND THE FINANCIAL SERVICES INDUSTRY**

Perhaps as much or more than other industries, the financial services industry has a public responsibility. A financial product that is sold or serviced incorrectly or for the wrong reasons can be devastating to the consumer - and sometimes that devastation is not realized until twenty or thirty years later.

All too often, people in sales lose sight of ethics. Unfortunately, bad news gathers big headlines and tarnishes an industry even if the percentage of transgressors is very small. It reflects a breaking of trust, which is considered so sacrosanct in many professions. Rather than consider the needs of the client or consumer at the forefront, they are considering the needs of their pocketbooks, image and/or reputation. What's more, perceptions, values and standards of the consumer or client are very much the reality to be addressed regardless of any substance to criticism or judgement. This is a common problem in any profession where commissions and bonuses for (short term) performance are the basis of income. This is quite unfortunate, because selling ethically does not have to result in reduced earnings or a change in compensation. In fact, it might actually increase earnings and support this method of compensation for service focused sectors.

The ethics in selling is all about doing the right thing and going the extra mile not because one has to, but because one wants to.

What follows are some tips that financial services people in sales can employ to ensure that they are conducting business in an ethical manner.

#### **4 - 12.1      Learn the Products Completely**

Any salesperson who wants to hold themselves out as a professional - and an "expert" - needs to thoroughly know their stuff. This includes reading and understanding every policy contract in its entirety that they have a contract to sell and/or service as well as the strategies and concepts they use, including their appropriateness for each client and prospect.

#### **4 - 12.2      Learn to Communicate Effectively**

This is good advice for any line of work, but it is especially necessary in sales. People who communicate better than their competitors have an immediate edge. Successful communication is not manipulation. Communication is the ability to relay information in a concise, easily understood manner, and including pertinent details so that clients can make informed decisions. Few people will buy a product or implement a strategy that appears confusing to them.

#### **4 - 12.3      Respect the People You Are Selling To**

Respect means dressing professionally; talking appropriately (without slang or profanity); keeping privileged information private; showing up on time for all appointments or calling if that is not possible; returning telephone calls in a timely fashion and addressing the consumer in an appropriate manner. An ethical agent does nothing to offend their client base.

#### **4 - 12.4      Plan a Marketing Strategy That is Honest and Professional**

Certainly, every agent likes to consider themselves honest and professional. Honesty is all about telling the truth, not half-truths or partial truths, but the entire truth without omissions that are important to making an informed decision.

When it comes to selling financial products, this honesty is actually mandated by the individual provinces, regulators, associations and companies. But honesty and professionalism are more than simply following provincial and federal mandates. Both should be intrinsic.

In developing a marketing strategy, the first step should be recognition of the value of the item that is being promoted. Marketing should always centre on the consumer's benefit and advantage in purchasing the product. If the salesperson does not know what that value is from the customer's perspective, then the product should be re-evaluated. Either the product is not valuable to the consumer (in which case the agent / broker should abandon it) or the agent / broker has not been properly trained.

#### **4 - 12.5      Avoid Product Misrepresentation**

Every salesperson has a responsibility - not just to know the product - but to know where it fits and when it fits; to understand the market for which a given product was designed.

Historically many financial service organizations were distribution, rather than market driven. It was assumed that every product was suitable for every market. The organization knew what was best. Not only did this lead to many inappropriate sales, but it also led to a high degree of product misrepresentation. Everyone has heard of sales representatives who tell consumers that a product fits, where it clearly doesn't - or that the product has a feature or features that it does not possess. Misrepresentations of this nature are both unethical and illegal. They can also bring about lawsuits as soon as the consumer discovers the truth. Today, organizations respond to customer needs, expectations and demands, customer driven vs. product or company driven.

### **4 – 13      CODES OF ETHICS FINANCIAL SERVICES**

It is useful to take a look at a couple of representatives "codes of ethics" used in the financial services industry in Canada. The following codes provide us with a snapshot of what is currently considered important - from an ethical perspective - in this industry.

#### **4 – 13.1      CLHIA Consumer Code of Ethics**

*As a condition of membership, all Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association (CLHIA) members are committed to conducting their business in accordance with the following principles:*

- ❖ To engage in keen fair competition so that the public can obtain the products and services it needs at reasonable prices
- ❖ To advertise products and services clearly and straightforwardly, and to avoid practices that might mislead or deceive
- ❖ To ensure that illustrations of prices, values and benefits are clear and fair, and contain appropriate disclosure of amounts that are not guaranteed
- ❖ To write all contracts in clear, direct language without unreasonable restrictions

- ❖ To use underwriting techniques that are sound and fair
- ❖ To pay all valid claims fairly and promptly and without unreasonable requirements
- ❖ To ensure competent and courteous sales and service
- ❖ To respect the privacy of individuals by using personal information only for the purposes authorized and not revealing it to any unauthorized person

#### **4 – 13.2 Financial Planners Standards Council Code of Ethics - Synopsis of Principles**

The following are the principles to which all Certified Financial Planning (CFP) professionals must adhere. The principles are statements expressing in general terms the ethical and professional ideals of CFP professionals.

##### **Principle 1: Integrity**

CFP professionals may be placed by clients in positions of trust and confidence. The source of this trust is integrity. In deciding what is right and just, a CFP professional should rely on his or her integrity as the appropriate touchstone. Integrity demands honesty and candor that must not be subordinated to personal gain or advantage. Integrity requires the CFP professional to observe not only the letter but also the spirit of this code.

##### **Principle 2: Objectivity**

Objectivity requires intellectual honesty and impartiality. It is an essential quality for any professional.

Regardless of the particular service rendered or the capacity in which a CFP professional functions, a CFP professional should protect the integrity of his or her work, maintain objectivity, and avoid the subordination of his or her judgment, which would be in violation of this code.

##### **Principle 3: Competence**

A CFP professional shall provide services to clients competently and maintain the necessary knowledge and skill to continue to do so in those areas in which the CFP professional is engaged. One is competent only when one has attained and maintained an adequate level of knowledge and skill and applies that knowledge effectively in providing services to clients. Competence also includes the wisdom to recognize the limitations of that knowledge and when consultation or referral is appropriate. A CFP professional shall make a commitment to continuous learning and professional development.

##### **Principle 4: Fairness**

A CFP professional shall perform financial planning in a manner that is fair and reasonable to clients, principals, partners and employers and shall disclose conflicts of interest in providing such services.

Fairness requires impartiality, intellectual honesty, and disclosure of conflicts of interest. It involves a subordination of one's own feelings, prejudices, and desires so as to achieve a proper balance of conflicting interests. Fairness is treating others in the same fashion that one would want to be treated and is an essential trait of any professional.

### **Principle 5: Confidentiality**

A CFP professional shall maintain confidentiality of all client information. A client, by seeking the services of a CFP professional, expects to develop a relationship of personal trust and confidence. This type of relationship must be built upon the understanding that information supplied to the CFP professional will be confidential.

### **Principle 6: Professionalism**

A CFP professional's conduct in all matters shall reflect credit upon the profession. A CFP professional shall behave in a manner that maintains the good reputation of the profession and its ability to serve the public interest.

### **Principle 7: Diligence**

Diligence is the provision of services in a prompt and thorough manner. Diligence also includes proper planning for and supervision of the rendering of professional services.

## **4 - 14 ETHICS AND THE HEALTH CARE FIELD**

Most companies and employees in the Canadian Healthcare industry are committed to ethical principles similar to the ones identified below.

### **4 - 14.1 Principle I: Respect for the Dignity of Persons**

Healthcare workers have an abiding respect for individuals who are experiencing illness. They are committed to recognizing the inherent dignity that people possess, with all the personal, social, spiritual, and cultural diversity present in society.

They tend to make every effort to provide interventions with respect to the dignity of those they serve as a primary ethical commitment. It is not their right to judge others, but rather assist them, to understand, and ultimately come to terms with the devastating events they have experienced.

They are dedicated to helping individuals, groups, and communities build on their unique strengths, to help enhance their coping skills, and, in the best possible time, encourage their strengths so that they once again become self-reliant and independent.



#### **4 - 14.2 Principle II: Responsible Caring**

The Healthcare industry is dedicated at all times to approaches that are caring, compassionate, and positive in their interventions. This commitment requires a dedicated sense of responsibility to those they serve. It is the requirements and interests of others that are paramount in their work.

They support their peers and colleagues in their work and interventions and are available as involved colleagues when their own members need help. Their dedication is to a collegial atmosphere of non-judgmental support for their colleagues.

They are committed to engage in proactive self-care and ongoing support and education. Whether they are part of a hospital staff, a debriefing team, individual trauma counsellors, members of a community response team, or members of a victim assistance group, they are committed to being available and providing co-operative support and help with issues of personal stress associated with ill health and traumatic events.

They engage in mutual support and continuing education, not only to remain current and enhance the training, but also to ensure that their work approaches are appropriate and up to date.

#### **4- 14.3 Principle III: Integrity in Relationships**

They are dedicated to a strong sense of integrity in the relationships that they develop with the individuals and groups to whom they provide assistance. They have a positive attitude about the well-being of others to the point where they are confident that their work makes a difference.

They tend to hold fast to the Commitment of Confidentiality as a guiding principle in the work they do. Many are not afraid to indicate they do not have all the answers and they are open and willing to learn.

#### **4 - 14.4 Principle IV: Responsibility to Society**

The Canadian Healthcare industry's ethical goal is a strong commitment to bring their services to every area of the country, with a sense of responsibility to the people they serve.

#### **4 - 14.5 The CMA Code of Ethics**

The actual Canadian Medical Association (CMA) code of ethics goes into far greater detail than the principles covered above. The CMA code is an ethical guide for all Canadian physicians including residents and medical students. It focuses on the core activities of medicine, including such things as: health promotion, advocacy, disease prevention, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, education and research.

It is based on such fundamental principles and values as compassion, beneficence, non-maleficence, respect for persons, justice and accountability. It is designed to provide a common ethical framework for physicians.

#### **4 – 14.6 Fundamental Responsibilities**

- ❖ Consider first the well-being of the patient
- ❖ Practice the profession of medicine in a manner that treats the patient with dignity and as a person worthy of respect
- ❖ Provide for appropriate care for your patient, even when cure is no longer possible, including physical comfort and spiritual and psychosocial support
- ❖ Consider the well-being of society in matters affecting health
- ❖ Practice the art and science of medicine competently, with integrity and without impairment
- ❖ Engage in lifelong learning to maintain and improve your professional knowledge, skills and attitudes
- ❖ Resist any influence or interference that could undermine your professional integrity
- ❖ Contribute to the development of the medical profession, whether through clinical practice, research, teaching, administration or advocating on behalf of the profession or the public
- ❖ Refuse to participate in or support practices that violate basic human rights
- ❖ Promote and maintain your own health and well-being

*In addition to the above ten fundamental responsibilities, the CMA code goes on to describe an additional 44 responsibilities, under the broad topics of:*

- ❖ Responsibilities to the patient (covering such topics as: initiating and dissolving the patient-physician relationship; communication, decision making and consent; privacy and confidentiality; and research)
- ❖ Responsibilities to society
- ❖ Responsibility to the profession
- ❖ Responsibility to oneself

#### **4-14.7 Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) Code of Ethics**

##### **Who They Are**

Nursing is too important, too valuable, and too expensive to be left like a rudderless ship with no one at the wheel. The CNA helps steer and develop the discipline of nursing for all regulated nurses across all 13 provinces and territories, as well as nurses who live and work in hundreds of Indigenous nations and communities.

*As the national voice of nursing in Canada, the CNA::*

- ❖ Act in the public interest for Canadian nursing and nurses, providing national and international leadership in nursing and health
- ❖ Advocate for a publicly funded, not-for-profit health system
- ❖ Advance nursing excellence and positive health outcomes
- ❖ Promote profession-led regulation

Their members include unionized and non-unionized nurses, retired nurses, nursing students, and all categories of nurses (registered nurses, nurse practitioners, licensed and registered practical nurses, and registered psychiatric nurses).

## **CNA CODE OF ETHICS**

### Purpose of the Code

The Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses (herein called the Code) is a statement of the ethical values of nurses and of nurses' commitments to persons with healthcare needs and persons receiving care. The Code is both aspirational and regulatory. It is an aspirational document designed to inform everyone about the ethical values<sup>1</sup> and subsequent responsibilities and endeavours of nurses. <sup>2</sup> It is also a regulatory tool. Nursing in Canada is a self-regulating profession; thus, nurses are bound to a code of ethics as part of a regulatory process that serves and protects the public.

The Code provides guidance for ethical relationships, behaviours and decision making and is used in conjunction with professional standards, best practice, research, laws and regulations that guide practice. It provides guidance for nurses working through ethical challenges that arise in practice with persons receiving care and with colleagues in nursing and other fields of health-care provision.

The Code is intended for nurses in all contexts and domains of nursing practice (clinical practice, education, administration, research and policy; CNA, 2015c) and at all levels of decision-making. It is not based on a particular philosophy or ethical theory but arises from different schools of thought, including relational ethics, an ethic of care, principle-based ethics, feminist ethics, virtue ethics and values. The Code is developed by nurses for nurses, and it has a practical orientation supported by theoretical diversity. It is a means for self-evaluation, feedback and peer review and is a basis for advocacy. The Code also serves as an ethical basis from which nurses can advocate for quality practice environments that support the delivery of safe, compassionate, competent and ethical care.

The societal context in which nurses work is constantly changing and can be a significant influence on their practice. The Code is revised periodically to ensure that it is attuned to the needs of nurses by reflecting changes in social values and conditions that affect the public, nurses and other health-care providers, and the health-care system.

Periodic revisions also promote lively dialogue and debate and create greater awareness of and engagement with ethical issues among nurses in Canada. The Code may interest and be useful to all health-care providers.

### Foundation of the Code

Nursing ethics is concerned with how broad societal issues affect health and well-being. This means that nurses endeavour to maintain an awareness of aspects of social justice that affect the social determinants of health and wellbeing and to advocate for improvements. Although these elements are not part of nurses' regulated responsibilities, they are part of ethical practice and are important educational and motivational tools for all nurses.

## **The Code Is Organized Into Two Parts**

### Part I

Nursing Values and Ethical Responsibilities — describes the ethical responsibilities central to ethical nursing practice articulated through seven primary values and responsibility statements. These statements are grounded in nurses' professional relationships with persons receiving care as well as with students, nursing colleagues and other health-care providers.

*The seven primary values are:*

1. Providing safe, compassionate, competent and ethical care
2. Promoting health and well-being
3. Promoting and respecting informed decision-making
4. Honouring dignity
5. Maintaining privacy and confidentiality
6. Promoting justice
7. Being accountable

### Part II

Ethical Endeavours Related to Broad Societal Issues — describes activities nurses can undertake to address social inequities. Ethical nursing practice involves endeavoring to address broad aspects of social justice that are associated with health and well-being.

## **Using the Code in Nursing Practice**

The seven primary values are related and overlapping. It is important for all nurses to work toward adhering to the values in the Code at all times for persons receiving care — regardless of attributes such as age, race, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, and others — in order to uphold the dignity of all. Nurses recognize the unique history of — and the impact of the social determinants of health on — the Indigenous Peoples of Canada. In healthcare practice, values may be in conflict. Such value conflicts need to be considered carefully in relation to each practice situation.

When such conflicts occur, or when nurses think through an ethical situation, many find it helpful to use an ethics model for guidance in ethical reflection, questioning and decision-making.

While nursing practice involves both legal and ethical dimensions, the law and ethics remain distinct. Ideally, a system of law would be compatible with the values in the Code. However, there may be situations in which nurses collaborate with others to change a policy that is incompatible with ethical practice. When this occurs, the Code can guide and support nurses in advocating for changes to law, policy or practice. It can be a powerful political instrument for nurses when they are concerned about being able to practice ethically.

Nurses are responsible for the ethics of their practice. Given the complexity of ethical situations, the Code can only outline nurses' ethical responsibilities and guide them in their reflection and decision-making. It cannot ensure ethical practice. For ethical practice, other elements are necessary, such as a commitment to do good, a sensitivity and receptiveness to ethical matters, and a willingness to enter into relationships with persons who have health-care needs and other problems. Practice environments have a significant influence on nurses' ability to be successful in upholding the ethics of their practice. Nurses' self-reflection and dialogue with other nurses and health-care providers are essential components of ethical nursing practice.

## **4 - 15            CREA AND THE REAL ESTATE PROFESSION**

The Real Estate industry is governed by its own organization as well. Their responsibility is to ensure that their members abide by the ethics and follow the applicable consumer regulations.

The Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA) is one of Canada's largest single-industry trade associations, representing more than 70,000 real estate brokers/agents and salespeople working through more than 100 real estate boards, 10 provincial associations, and one territorial association.

CREA's primary mission is to represent its members at the federal level of government and to act as a watchdog on national legislation that pertains to the real estate industry. CREA has frequently taken strong stands to defend the public's right to own and enjoy property.

### **4 - 15.1            The CREA Code of Ethics**

CREA's Code of Ethics and Standards of Business Practice has been the measure of professionalism in organized real estate for over 40 years. The first code was approved in 1913 at the convention of the National Association of Real Estate Boards held in Winnipeg.

The first Code of Ethics specifically prepared for members of the Canadian Real Estate Association was approved by members in 1959.

The Code establishes a standard of conduct, which in many respects exceeds basic legal requirements. This standard ensures that the rights and interests of consumers of real estate services are protected.

As a condition of membership, all realtors agree to abide by the Code.

### **Some of the Requirements of the Code Include:**

Realtors must disclose in writing whom they are representing as an agent in the transaction. Parties to a transaction must be told what their agency relationship is to the Realtor. Definitions, terminology, and presumed agency relationships vary from province to province. Most jurisdictions have their own forms for complying with disclosure requirements, which have been drafted to accommodate agency relationships as they exist in each province or territory.

#### *Key Areas of the Code:*

- ❖ All financial arrangements between Realtors and others (e.g., Referral fees, compensation from more than one party, rebates or profits on expenditures) must be fully disclosed to clients
- ❖ Realtors cannot acquire an interest in property (either directly or indirectly) without disclosing the fact that they are real estate professionals
- ❖ Realtors cannot use the terms of an agreement of purchase and sale to negotiate commission

While the Code of Ethics establishes obligations that may be higher than those mandated by law, in any instance where the Code of Ethics and the law conflict, the obligations of the law must take precedence.

A Realtor's ethical obligations are based on moral integrity, competent service to clients and customers, and dedication to the interest and welfare of the public. The Code has been amended many times to reflect changes in the real estate marketplace, the needs of property owners, and the perceptions and values of society. For more than forty years, through a variety of updates, the CREA Code of Ethics is unchanged in demanding high standards of professional conduct to protect the interests of clients and customers and safeguard the rights of consumers of real estate services.

In the interpretation of his or her obligations, the Realtor can take no safer guide than that which has been embodied in the Golden Rule - "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

No inducement of profit and no instructions from clients or customers can ever justify departure from the ideals of fair dealing and high integrity resulting from adherence to a lofty standard of moral conduct in business relations.

Accepting this standard as his or her own, each Realtor pledges to observe the spirit of the Code in all dealings and to conduct business in accordance with the Standards of Business Practice as adopted by The Canadian Real Estate Association.

## **4 - 16 ETHICS AND THE ACCOUNTING PROFESSION**

In Canada, Accountants are members of The Certified General Accountants Association. This organization is a national self-regulating association of approximately 60,000 Certified General Accountants and students.

CGAs are professional accountants working in industry, commerce, finance, government, and public practice. They are represented nationally through CGA-Canada and regionally through their provincial/territorial/regional associations and local chapters.

CGA-Canada sets national educational standards and professional standards and practices, provides services to affiliates and members, contributes to international accounting standard setting, and represents CGAs nationally and internationally. CGA-Canada works with its provincial/territorial/regional affiliates to deliver the CGA program of professional studies.

CGA-Canada promotes cooperative professional relationships with other accounting associations, both nationally and internationally. It is a full partner in several international accounting bodies.

CGA-Canada also promotes professionalism through a Code of Ethical Principles and Rules of Conduct and mandatory continuing professional development.

### **4 - 16.1 Structure of CGA-Canada**

CGA-Canada is a professional organization, and its members are granted the legal right by society to organize themselves, to control entrance into the profession, and to formulate standards of behaviour governing its members. In return for this right, members of the profession are to act in the interest of society and its members.

Provincial and Federal Acts, and the Code of Ethical Principles and Rules of Conduct formalize this arrangement. In order to fulfil this responsibility, professionals must have a number of important character traits, as well as the skill to make expert technical and moral judgments that serve the interest of society.

Certified General Accountants thus have an important role to play in society. In the performance of that role, many of a professional's actions have an effect on the welfare of other people. Because of their societal responsibilities, members of a profession are obligated to act in the interest of these other parties, who have a stake in the nature and quality of professional activities.

These stakeholders include employers, clients, various identifiable third parties, and the public at large. Therefore, the professional organization and its members have a stake in the performance of individual members. The Code of Ethical Principles and Rules of Conduct apply to the behaviour of members of the Association when they either perform the role of a professional accountant or represent themselves as members of the Association.

The role of a CGA is broad and general. It is defined in two ways: first, by specifying the tasks which accountants characteristically perform and second, by specifying the parties who are to benefit from the performance of those tasks and how professional accountants should act in order to benefit them.

The characteristic tasks performed by Certified General Accountants include the production, analysis, and distribution of information. In addition, the provision of ancillary services is related to the core expertise in accounting. The Code of Ethical Principles and Rules of Conduct govern the CGA's actions in the performance of these tasks.

Certified General Accountants are committed to providing professional services competently and with due care. This requires extensive knowledge and experience, and the ability to make appropriate judgments. Competence and due care imply the necessity and ability to make ethical judgments. In addition, CGAs are committed to improving the quality of professional services and the profession itself.

Certified General Accountants are committed to the public interest. Normally, acting in the public interest is achieved by acting in the interest of one's client or employer. However, whenever there is a conflict between these interests, the professional's first obligation is to the public at large. Acting appropriately in such situations may require the courage of one's convictions.

In virtue of their commitment to the public interest, Certified General Accountants owe an obligation to other parties. In order to satisfy that obligation, two elements of character are crucial to members of the CGA profession.

They must act with integrity and be trustworthy. Acting with integrity means that they are committed to a high standard of behaviour and strive to achieve it in their work. It implies the highest standard of behaviour, and thus exceeds the minimum allowable under laws, regulations, or specific professional pronouncements.

Trustworthiness means that others may safely put themselves in a position in which a CGA is expected to help them. Integrity and trustworthiness imply the possession of other character traits, including honesty, prudence, competence, loyalty to the proper beneficiaries of their actions, and objectivity.

Objectivity, in turn, requires that Certified General Accountants should be truthful and impartial, and should act fairly with regard to the interests of themselves and others.

Certified General Accountants are also committed to avoiding conflicts of interest.



#### **4 - 16.2 CGA-Canada Code of Ethical Principles and Rules of Conduct Responsibilities to Society**

Members have a fundamental responsibility to safeguard and advance the interests of society. This implies acting with trustworthiness, integrity, and objectivity. This responsibility extends beyond a member's own behaviour, to the behaviour of colleagues, and to the standards of the Association and the profession.

##### **Trust and Duties**

Members shall act in the interest of their clients, employers, and interested third parties, and shall be prepared to sacrifice their self-interest to do so. Members shall honour the trust bestowed on them by others and shall not use their privileged position without their principal's knowledge and consent. Members shall avoid conflicts of interest.

##### **Due Care and Professional Judgment**

Members shall strive to continually upgrade and develop their technical knowledge and skills in the areas in which they practice as professionals. This technical expertise shall be employed with due professional care and judgment.

##### **Deceptive Information**

Members shall not be associated with any information which the member knows, or ought to know, to be false or misleading, whether by statement or omission.

##### **Professional Practice**

Members shall act openly and fairly towards others in the practice of their profession.

##### **Responsibilities to the Profession**

Members shall always act in accordance with the duties and responsibilities associated with being members of the profession and shall carry on work in a manner that will enhance the image of the profession and the Association.

#### **4 - 17 ETHICS AND THE LEGAL PROFESSION**

When it comes to the legal profession in Canada, each province has its own self-regulatory body called Law Societies that regulate and set guidelines for their members.

As with any other profession, lawyers are continually updating their education and trying to better themselves so that they are in a position to provide the best possible legal advice available.

Their code of ethics is a substantial document (172 pages long) that addresses among other things: the client lawyer relationship; the duties of a lawyer an adversary in an adversary proceeding, dealing with persons other than clients, advertising, maintaining the integrity of the profession, etc.

Respect for client confidence, candor, truthfulness in statements to others, and professional independence are some of the defining features of legal ethics.

*Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to go into detail on the Law Society code, the following provides a detailed summary of the various topics covered:*

- ❖ Integrity
- ❖ Competence and quality of service
- ❖ Advising clients
- ❖ Confidential information
- ❖ Impartiality and conflict of interest
- ❖ Outside interests and the practice of law
- ❖ Preservation of clients' property
- ❖ The lawyer as advocate
- ❖ The lawyer in public office
- ❖ Fees
- ❖ The lawyer and the administration of justice
- ❖ Advertising, solicitation and making legal services available
- ❖ Responsibility to the profession
- ❖ Public appearances and statements
- ❖ Avoiding questionable conduct
- ❖ Non-discrimination
- ❖ The lawyer as mediator
- ❖ The independence of the bar

## **4 - 18      PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITY**

Professionals from all occupations have a fiduciary responsibility to their clients -including their elder clients. Many professional associations have standards that members must abide

### **4 - 18.1      What is a Fiduciary Relationship?**

According to Black's Law Dictionary, a fiduciary relationship involves "... A person holding the character of a trustee... in respect to the trust and confidence involved in it and the scrupulous good faith and candor which it requires." In simple terms, a fiduciary responsibility is a duty to act fairly, honestly, and only in the client's best interests.

#### **4 - 18.2      Types of Fiduciary Relationships**

- ❖ Trustee/executor to the beneficiary for testamentary trusts and estates
- ❖ Trustee for inter vivos trusts
- ❖ Agents to principals
- ❖ Company directors of companies/shareholders
- ❖ Lawyers to clients. Financial professionals to clients
- ❖ Doctors with patients
- ❖ Court appointed guardians of incompetent adults to that adult
- ❖ Parents managing children's property
- ❖ Attorneys under enduring powers of attorney

*Fiduciary relationships have been expanded to many other relationships that would include purely commercial relationships:*

- ❖ Real estate agents to clients
- ❖ Stockbrokers to clients
- ❖ Mutual fund salespeople to clients
- ❖ Financial advisors licensed to do business with clients for risk products and insurance-based investments

#### **4 - 18.3      The Creation of Fiduciary Relationships**

A commercial relationship becomes a fiduciary relationship when:

- ❖ The advisor has discretion or power
- ❖ The advisor can unilaterally exercise the discretion or power to affect the client's interest
- ❖ The client is vulnerable to, or at the mercy of, the advisor
- ❖ The relationship is characterized by trust, confidence, and the need for independence

#### **4 - 18.4      Sources of Liability**

- ❖ Breach of contract
- ❖ Negligence
- ❖ Breach of fiduciary duty
- ❖ Errors and omissions

#### **4 - 18.5      When Might You Be at Fault?**

- ❖ Failure to warn the client of the risks of their actions
- ❖ Failure to warn the client of changing market conditions
- ❖ Recommending inappropriate investments
- ❖ Failure to warn of a problem with a policy
- ❖ Failure to inform the client of difficulties in obtaining the desired coverage or its unavailability

- ❖ Failure to disclose a conflict of interest
- ❖ Failure to abide by statutory regulations, industry practice, or company policy
- ❖ Receiving a secret profit
- ❖ Failing to provide impartial advice or recommending certain products all the time

## **4-19            WHAT DOES THE CANADIAN INITIATIVE FOR ELDER PLANNING STUDIES EXPECT FROM YOU?**

Every professional occupation place significant emphasis on market conduct and compliance - on ethical selling and marketing.

It all comes down to building trusting relationships and making appropriate recommendations based on the client's needs. There can be no negotiation when it comes to doing what is right for an elder.

Many studies and surveys dealing with ethics have found that the best way for a person to establish or enhance their ethical standards is to follow a specific code of conduct. It is no different for Elder Planning Counselors.

As an Elder Planning Counselor, you will be asked to sign a copy of the Member Code of Conduct prior to writing your qualifying examination. We expect every Elder Planning Counselor to follow the guidelines of this code.

In addition, every Elder Planning Counselor will have to acquire Continuing Education credits each and every year in order to maintain their membership and good standing within the organization. The current annual requirement is 30 acceptable CE credits.

### **4-19.1            The EPC Member Code of Conduct**

The EPC Member Code of Conduct was designed to promote active, uniform ethical thinking and actions that spans different industries and professions.

The objective of the code is to specify and set forth the means to enforce the minimum ethical conduct accepted and to facilitate voluntary compliance with standards that are considerably higher than the required minimums. Accordingly, the code prescribes two kinds of standards: Tenets and Principles of Professional Conduct.

The Principles are specific standards of a mandatory and enforceable nature. They prescribe the absolute minimum level of conduct required of every member.

### **4-19.2            Eight Guiding Principles**

The Canadian Initiative for Elder Planning Studies and its member Elder Planning Counselors stand for the highest of professional principles and standards regardless of their profession. This Code of Professional Ethics sets forth the minimum ethical conduct for all members. Voluntary compliance at the very highest levels is our expectation. The EPC

designation is an earned privilege and CIEPS reserves the right to deny anyone membership for behaviour it determines detrimental to its members and principles.

*The guiding principles of the Elder Planning Counselor code of conduct are summed up by the following:*

***Elder Planning Counselors will at all times:***

1. **Place the needs, objectives and interests** of their clients, customers, patients and prospects above their own at all times.
2. **Protect their clients, customers, patients and prospects** from unscrupulous business and professional activities.
3. **Give clients, customers, patients and prospects** the same advice and service they would expect themselves if the circumstances were the same.
4. **Keep confidential** all personal and business details of their clients' affairs they become aware of during the course of their work.
5. **Keep the quality** of their recommendations high through continuing education and training.
6. **Abide by the letter and spirit of the law** or any applicable regulations or professional codes in all their business or professional activities.
7. **Shield the CIEPS and fellow EPCs from dishonour** by agreeing to immediate suspension of their membership if charged with an offence of a criminal or civil nature or professional misconduct until a full review has been completed by the CIEPS Compliance Department.
8. **Charge a fair and appropriate fee** (If on a fee for service basis) based on the time, skill and expertise required.

## **4-20 THE TENETS**

The Tenets serve as model standards of exemplary professional conduct. They express the general concepts and approaches from which more specific rules (the principles) are derived.

### **Tenet 1**

The member should endeavour as a professional to place the public interest above his or her own.

The member has a duty to understand and abide by all principles of professional conduct. These are prescribed in the Code of Conduct.

The member shall not directly or indirectly condone any act that the member is prohibited from performing by the principles of this Code of Conduct.

The member shall place the needs and best interest of the client above the needs and interests of the member, member's employees and/or business associates in all cases and shall not allow the pursuit of financial gain or other personal benefit to interfere with the exercise of sound professional judgment and skill.

## **Tenet 2**

Members should be diligent in the performance of their occupational duties.

The member shall competently and consistently discharge his or her occupational duties to every employer, client, purchaser, or user of the member's services, so long as those duties are consistent with what is in the client's best interest.

In the making of oral or written recommendations to clients, the member shall (a) distinguish clearly between fact and opinion, (b) base the recommendations on sound professional evaluation of the client's needs, and (c) support the recommendations with appropriate research and adequate documentation of facts.

In the rendering of a professional service to a client, the member has the duty to maintain the type and degree of professional independence that (a) is required of practitioners in the member's occupation, or (b) is otherwise in the public interest, given the specific nature of the service being rendered.

## **Tenet 3**

The member shall not disclose to another person any confidential information entrusted to or obtained by the member in the course of the member's business or professional activities, unless a disclosure of such information is required by law or is made to a person who necessarily must have the information in order to discharge legitimate occupational or professional duties.

## **Tenet 4**

Members should seek continually to maintain and improve their professional knowledge, skill and competence.

The member shall be kept informed on all matters that are essential to the maintenance of the member's professional competence in the area in which he/she specializes and /or claims expertise.

## **Tenet 5**

Members must obey all laws and regulations and avoid any contact or activity that would cause unjust harm to those who rely upon their professional judgment and skill.

The member shall be subject to disciplinary action for professional misconduct and has the duty to know and abide by the laws and regulations and all legal limitations pertaining to the members' professional activities.

In the conduct of business or professional activities, the member shall not engage in any act or omission of a dishonest, deceitful, or fraudulent nature. The member shall not knowingly misrepresent or conceal any material limitation on the member's ability to provide the quantity or quality of service that will adequately meet the needs of the client.

In marketing a product, a member shall not knowingly misrepresent or conceal any material limitations on the product's ability to meet the financial needs of the client and shall scrupulously avoid any statements that are likely to mislead the client regarding the future results of any recommendation.

The member has the duty to disclose fully and accurately the material facts representing the true cost, benefits, and limitations of any service or products recommended; and disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest that could impair objectivity.

### **Tenet 6**

Members holding the designation EPC should use the fact of membership in a manner constant with the principles of professional conduct.

The member shall not misrepresent the criteria for admission to the Canadian Initiative for Elder Planning Studies. *Those criteria are:*

- ❖ Successful completion of required qualification programs, and
- ❖ A written commitment to abide by the agreements and the Code of Conduct of the Canadian Initiative for Elder Planning Studies

Members will not misstate their authority to represent the Canadian Initiative for Elder Planning Studies.

Members may use the EPC facts for the following non-commercial purpose: in introductions if the speaker clearly states that the ideas presented are their own and not necessarily those of the Canadian Initiative for Elder Planning Studies.

Members or prospective members applying for the EPC designation will not misrepresent any credentials or affiliations with other organizations.

### **Tenet 7**

Members should assist in maintaining the integrity of the Member Code of Conduct of the EPC designation.

The member shall not sponsor as a candidate for membership any person who is known by the member to engage in business or professional practices, which violate the rules of the code.

A member possessing unprivileged information concerning an alleged violation of the code shall, upon request, reveal such information to the body or other authority empowered by the Canadian Initiative for Elder Planning Studies to investigate or act upon the alleged violation.

The member shall immediately notify the Canadian Initiative for Elder Planning Studies of any accusation or actual violation of the code of professional conduct of any professional organization to which they are subject, and full details must be given.

The member shall immediately notify Canadian Initiative for Elder Planning Studies of a revocation or suspension by a provincial or federal licensing or regulatory agency, and forward complete details to Canadian Initiative for Elder Planning Studies. All candidates and members of the Canadian Initiative for Elder Planning Studies applying for and holding the Elder Planning Counselor designation are expected to sign, acknowledge and follow this Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.



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# Chapter 5

## Putting It All Into Perspective

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### 5– 1 INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Initiative for Elder Planning Studies (CIEPS) has endeavored to provide you, the student, with crucial knowledge that will not only provide some invaluable insight into the elder population, but also enhance your ability to build relationships in this important market segment.

The time that you have invested in attaining your Elder Planning Counselor designation will become a part of the value-added proposition that you can bring to the table. The Elder Planning Counselor designation is all about people helping people. It's about helping you to proactively position your practice or business in an "elder friendly" fashion.

Even with this said earning an Elder Planning Counselor designation is merely a first step. You have just begun an ongoing process—one that will require you to keep on top of changing times and new demands.

Elders are different. They have a unique set of issues, concerns, and values that need to be understood and appreciated as a total package. They also hold a special place in our society. They are an invaluable source of experience and knowledge for every younger generation. And they are the heart of the family and the foundation of your communities.

### 5 – 2 THE IMPACT OF AN AGING SOCIETY

It is encouraging that individuals are living longer than ever before, but changes in government policies are necessary to ensure that the needs of our growing elder population are appropriately addressed. The dramatic aging of our population will be felt in many areas of national concern: health, income security, employment, and education to name but a few.

Sectors such as health care, housing and even employment are largely unprepared for an aging population. They do not have the proper systems in place or equipment in hand to address the needs of seniors today. Current funding and focus is not responding enough nor fast enough to keep up with growing demand. The Covid-19 pandemic exposed the deficiencies in standards and quality of care particularly in nursing homes and long-term care facilities. Hospice facilities are too few and far between and require mostly private funding to operate.

*Among the startling facts covered in the earlier chapters of this program:*

- ❖ Between 2018 and 2036, the number of Canadians age 65 and older will grow by roughly 50%
- ❖ There about 7.6 million people age 65+ in Canada.
- ❖ This age group outnumbers children under the age of 15 and has done so for almost a decade. Contrast this with the fact that in 1971, 8% of Canada's total population was aged 65+ and 30% was under the age of 15.
- ❖ The senior population is expected to exceed 11 million people by 2043.
- ❖ Approximately one in four Canadians will be age 65+ by 2043.
- ❖ During the past 100 years, the most vulnerable segment of the elder population (i.e., those aged 85 and over) has until recently been the fastest growing segment of the population. Between 1911 and the present day, Canada's population experienced a fourfold increase. During the same period, the age 85 and older segment of our population grew by more than twenty- fold.
- ❖ Canada has almost 13,500 centenarians, representing a 43% increase compared to 2018.
- ❖ Among elders age 85 and older, women outnumber men by a ratio of two to one. Among centenarians, women outnumber men by a ratio of nine to one.
- ❖ While, on the whole, elder households are the wealthiest households in Canada -there are pockets of elders with an extremely high concentration of people with low incomes (e.g., unattached elderly females)

Increases in longevity coupled with historically low fertility rates - among other factors - will ensure that the proportion of elders, relative to the rest of the population, will remain very high for the foreseeable future. Even extremely high levels of immigration would be ineffective in addressing this issue. And while both our provincial and federal governments have been proactive in making numerous programs and benefits available to elders – Some cracks are already developing in this foundation.

### Age trends and projections in Canada (1921–2046)

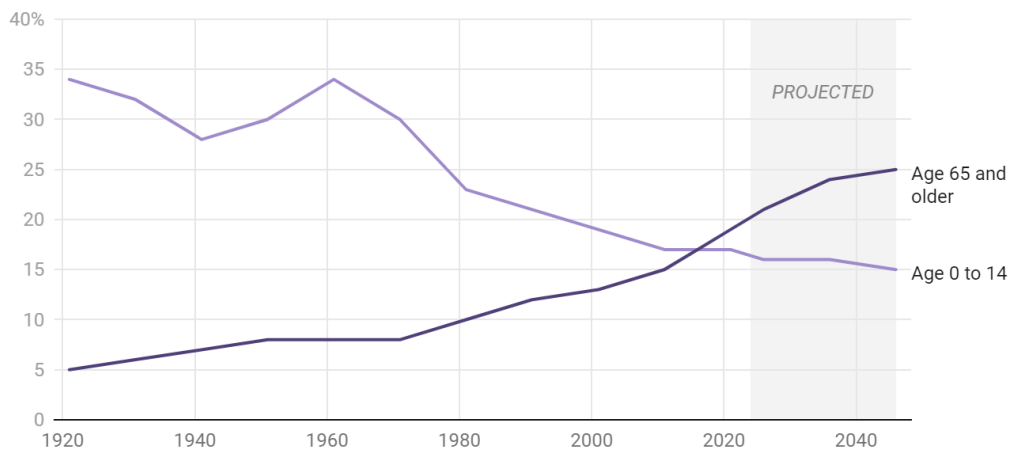


Chart: CTVNews.ca • Source: Environics Analytics, Statistics Canada • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

## 5 - 2.1 Future Financial Issues

Governments are already spending an inordinately large portion of their revenues on elder specific programs. As the number of Canadians age 65 and over explodes in the coming years - both in percentage and absolute terms - one can only imagine the severity of the strain. Median total income is about \$33,200 for people aged 65+ (*most recent data available from Statistics Canada, 2020*). That may well not be enough for many, though with proper planning, most of this gross income will translate in net spendable income, an important point to keep in mind when planning for retirement.

*Consider the following frightening facts:*

- ❖ Old Age Security payments are already the largest expenditure of the federal government
- ❖ The Chief Actuary of Canada indicates that the CPP is sustainable over a 75-year projection period. A sustainability report is completed every three years. The assessment was published in 2021 and at the time of writing, is the most current one. That means, the plan will last until almost the next millennium. The most recent report (2022) projected that CPP contributions to base CPP and additional CPP will exceed annual benefits paid until 2025 and 2057, respectively.
- ❖ The old age dependency ratio is poised to skyrocket in the immediate future. In 2017 there were only four people working for every retiree - and in 2036 there will only be two people working for every retiree. That said, the next cohort, Gen X is much smaller, and Millennials now outnumber the Boomers.
- ❖ Fully 50% of the typical elder's income comes from two sources: Old Age Security and Canada Pension Plan. At lower income levels, particularly those with low incomes, the Guaranteed Income Supplement serves to boost this, driving up the overall proportion of elder income.

## 5 - 2.2 Future Health Care Issues

Our existing universal health care system is also under significant strain - and enormous amounts of cash will have to be injected into the system just to maintain the status quo. *The situation is nothing short of bleak:*

- ❖ Today's elders (age 65 and over) make up 19.3% of the population and consume just short of half of all public health care expenditures
- ❖ Public health care expenditures for elders who are age 85 and over (historically the fastest growing segment of our population) are 3 to 4 times higher than expenditures on elders who are between the ages of 65 and 74

- ❖ In the next three decades, the fastest growing segment of Canada's population will be "high need" centenarians
- ❖ As governments cut back on services (e.g., shorter hospital stays, weaker access to long term care and respite services, etc.) additional burdens - financial and otherwise - will be placed on family caregivers.
- ❖ Staffing shortages in the health care sector were an issue prior to the pandemic. Demands on staff have driven many out of their professions given the shortages that existed during the pandemic and the aging healthcare population. The long-term care sector continued to see losses in the number of direct care nurses when comparing just one-year changes from 2021 to 2022. The yearly change saw about 2,500 fewer direct care nurses employed in long-term care in 2022, representing a 5.1% decline. The demand for health care is outpacing the gains in supply of regulated workers. Very high entrance bars to nursing programs and medical schools have not helped; nor has the challenge faced by health care professionals immigrating to Canada who face enormous challenges working in their chosen field here. Some minor movements by the government is being made. Policies targeting recruitment, retention and optimization of scopes of practice have been increasingly adopted across Canada. Unfortunately for many, it's too little, too late. This can be fixed.
- ❖ Older Canadians are already less likely today, than in the past, to live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities as they are trying to stay in their homes longer. This is not only a lifestyle choice; it dramatically increased with the experiences and learnings of the deficiencies and poor conditions in senior living and long-term care. With this said, more seniors are living in a collective dwelling and recent government subsidies and incentives have been created to help families help elderly members create independent living space in existing homes.

There are other problems and concerns as well. Both nurses and doctors in Canada are getting older themselves, leading to concerns about who will provide care to aging Canadians in the future.

Approximately 9% of physicians in Canada were 65 years of age and older in 2000 and 7% were between the ages of 60- 64. By 2022, the figures had jumped to 15 aged 65+ and just under 10% aged 60-64 years of age. Currently about 4.4 million Canadians do not have a regular physician. Although many of these are confident with getting care at a walk-in clinic, there are still about 800,000 people who do not have a regular physician. From all indications this situation will get worse due to the shortage of Doctors in the future.

Of concern is that the overall supply of physicians, regulated nurses, pharmacists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists in relation to the size of Canada's population has remained unchanged over the last 10 years.

*The supply of some of these professionals per 1000 population are broken down as follows:  
(all figures from 2022)*

- ❖ Physicians: 2
- ❖ Family medicine physicians: 1
- ❖ Nurse practitioners: <1 (though highest annual growth rate at 9%. This is a much-welcomed trend given that the proportion of nurse practitioners in rural and remote areas had been steadily declining over the past decade.)
- ❖ Regulated nurses: 12
- ❖ Occupational therapists: 1
- ❖ Physiotherapists: <1
- ❖ Pharmacists: 1

The Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) latest report published in early 2024 found that there were 459 thousand regulated nurses eligible to practice in Canada in 2022. Some 255,200 were employed in direct patient care in 2022. The average age of nurses in Canada was 43-44 in 2021, with those 50 and older representing more than 40 percent of registered nurses. Nurses closest to retirement age, 60 or older, were more likely to work outside the hospital sector, CIHI said.

### **5 - 2.3        The Consequences**

Combine these findings and keep in mind that patients are becoming older as well. With reduced access to health care and delays in seeing someone, there is increasing demand for health-care services and that health care is needed for now more serious conditions. This rise in demand for physicians as well as caregivers is raising questions about who will fill these roles in the years to come.

### **5 - 2.4        The Impact on Public Policy**

In the future, the onus will be put more and more on the individual to make sure that they have set aside the necessary resources to fund their own retirement income, health care and long-term care needs.

*Virtually all areas of public policy will be affected by our aging population. To mention only a few:*

- ❖ Labour markets will have to be adjusted to - among other things - accommodate aging workers, who want to or need to work and or come back to work after retirement
- ❖ Education must be reformed to introduce lifelong learning
- ❖ Adjustments will have to be introduced to pension schemes and age of entitlement to pensions to prevent bankruptcy. Proposed bankruptcy protection for pension plans are very important.

- ❖ Policies for "aging in place" and "active aging" will be required
- ❖ Solutions for the long-term care of the very elderly will have to be found
- ❖ More financial support is needed to help elders age in place and accommodate aging and disabled family members while giving them some independence.
- ❖ Massive changes will have to be introduced to public health care
- ❖ Decisions will have to be taken by our government about the level - and type - of immigration required from developing countries to rejuvenate the age structure and skill level of our own population as well as certify foreign workers with accreditations elsewhere on a fast-track basis so that they can be employed in key sectors in Canada, like healthcare and some trades.

Bill C-228 introduced in 2022, aimed to greatly expand super priority status by amending bankruptcy and insolvency legislation to cover pension liabilities referred to an unfunded liability, the amount needed to permit a pension fund to continually pay plan members indefinitely. This also includes the amount needed to ensure a plan's obligations if the plan is wound up. All this is of particular interest to defined benefit plans where the employer takes on the risk of providing guaranteed lifetime income to pension plan members. The bill received Royal Assent on April 27, 2023.

## **5 – 3 THE ROLE OF AN ELDER PLANNING COUNSELOR**

As an Elder Planning Counselor, you are now in a better position to assist Canada's elders. The knowledge that you have acquired will put you on the "cutting edge" when it comes to meeting the challenges of this dynamic market.

We strongly encourage you to see your Elder Planning Counselor designation as the start of an ongoing process. If you commit yourself to this market and to active continuous learning - the rewards can be substantial, and they will come to you in many ways.

You may enjoy monetary benefits, or you may thrive on the good feeling that you receive in knowing that you were able to help an elder or their family in a meaningful way.

This program is about being smart and being effective - it is the first step on a journey to a greater awareness.

And remember, you now have a substantial number of resources to fall back on if you need them. Your potential is near limitless. You have become a specialist in a field that has very few knowledgeable practitioners.



### **5 - 3.1 Current Elder Planning Counselors**

As of 2024, there are well in excess of 5,000 people who have availed themselves of the Elder Planning Counselor program. Most of them hold various other designations and degrees. This program then has been viewed as a valuable supplement, a deep dive into a specialty, in this case a comprehensive study of Elders, the age 55+ segment of the population.

The EPC designation was not designed to replace or compete with any other designation that the graduate currently holds. It is instead, a practical specialty tool that will help to make any existing designations, as well as the holder of these various designations, more effective in dealing with elders.

The majority of Elder Planning Counselor graduates which filled the ranks were and still are from the financial services arena. Over time the mix of graduates has evolved to include more health care professionals, lawyers, accountants and others specializing in the needs of the elderly population and their families. All had expectations of what they would gain from taking the program and availing themselves of the information. Elders have expectations too regarding the interactions and services offered and provided to them. The Canadian Initiative for Elder Planning Studies (CIEPS) has expectations from students and graduates as well.

### **5 - 3.2 What Do Elders Expect From Elder Planning Counselors?**

*Elders appreciate professionals who:*

- ❖ Know the issues and alternatives that are unique to elder life
- ❖ Respect elder circumstances and confidentiality
- ❖ Provide guidance and assistance with the elder's best interests in mind
- ❖ Provide a high-quality product and service that best suits elder lives and evolving circumstances
- ❖ Can accommodate physical, emotional and health challenges when interacting with elders
- ❖ In meeting the needs of the elder market, often little things can make a big difference:
- ❖ The elder community trusts people and they value relationships
- ❖ Elder's process information differently - they are "right brain" and "values based"
- ❖ They like emotion and connectedness
- ❖ They want accessibility
- ❖ They want you to be available in person
- ❖ They want someone to show them how their money can help them to enhance their lifestyle and fulfil their dreams

## **5 – 4            WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM THE CANADIAN INITIATIVE FOR ELDER PLANNING STUDIES?**

- ❖ A member board to act on your behalf
- ❖ Advocacy for you and for elders
- ❖ Continuing Education through the use of specific advanced seminars designed to help you in your practices
- ❖ Our commitment to the evolution and refinement of the Elder Planning Counselor program and its processes
- ❖ Our support in assisting you to promote yourself to professional audiences, associations, and the public in general
- ❖ All of the above is only limited by your efforts, interests, and involvement in the Canadian Initiative for Elder Planning Studies.

### **5 - 4.1            What Are the Benefits of Membership?**

*An EPC member in good standing has access to all of the following:*

- ❖ A member site dedicated to you - [www.epcmember.org](http://www.epcmember.org)
- ❖ Access to an Elder Planning Counselor member only “Resource” Library
- ❖ A resource page on the members only website containing elder specific contacts and information
- ❖ Professional recognition within your industry and community
- ❖ Profile on the Elder Planning Counselor public web site
- ❖ Enhanced marketing opportunities
- ❖ Marketing materials such as promotional brochures and press releases that you can use to promote your Elder Planning Counselor designation within your community
- ❖ Identification as a specialist in a field that currently has few experts
- ❖ The “PULSE” newsletter containing timely messages and tips that will help you serve your elder clients and prospects
- ❖ The opportunity to network with fellow Elder Planning Counselors from a wide variety of professional disciplines
- ❖ Access to "top notch" Elder Planning faculty at any time
- ❖ An Elder Planning Member Board dedicated to ensuring that CIEPS Best Practices procedures are followed
- ❖ Advanced seminars/conferences
- ❖ Preferred access to the annual Elder Planning Issues Conference - EPIC – which is designed to provide networking opportunities and further elder education to keep you up to date on the most recent information on elder issues
- ❖ And much more

## **5 – 5      WHAT DOES THE CANADIAN INITIATIVE FOR ELDER PLANNING STUDIES EXPECT FROM YOU?**

Every professional occupation place significant emphasis on market conduct and compliance - on ethical selling and marketing.

It all comes down to building trusting relationships and making appropriate recommendations based on the client's needs. There can be no negotiation when it comes to doing what is right for an elder.

Many studies and surveys dealing with ethics have found that the best way for a person to establish or enhance their ethical standards is to follow a specific code of conduct. It is no different for Elder Planning Counselors.

As an Elder Planning Counselor, you will be asked to sign a copy of the Member Code of Conduct prior to writing your qualifying examination. We expect every Elder Planning Counselor to follow the guidelines of this code. The code was covered in the chapter on Ethics.

In addition, every Elder Planning Counselor will have to acquire Continuing Education credits each and every year in order to maintain their membership and good standing within the organization. The current annual requirement is 30 acceptable CE credits.

We accept any CE that you have earned for your current profession on a yearly basis, so you do not need to acquire another 30CE annually for your EPC Designation, regardless of the amount of CE you need to acquire. .

While there is some latitude in continuing education credits, members are encouraged to seek out content that is elder focused. Thankfully, CIEPS has an extensive resource library, annual conferences and updates to help with this. The faculty also speaks at many Professional Development Days, conferences and client seminars and webinars throughout the country each year. Reach out to Faculty members or CIEPS for more information.

## **5 – 6      THE FINAL WORD**

While Canadian seniors today enjoy more support and services than ever before, many still face important challenges. For example, seniors' health, financial security, public safety, housing and social participation are areas that need our attention. The thought of living as senior holds promise for some, and uncertainty for others.

As Canada moves forward, there will be many changes. Look around, the "Baby Boomers" are coming, and they are coming of age quickly. As they have shaped the past, they will shape the future.

“There is no reason to fear the future, but there is clearly cause to start planning now. Population aging is predictable. We can project many future services and resource needs based on what we know about the population and about seniors. Preparing for the large waves of seniors will require collaboration across many sectors.

Seniors **and** elders must be consulted and actively involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of policies and programs of importance to them. Decisions taken today, such as building schools, closing hospitals, and training physicians, are decisions that stay with us well into the future. To shape a future of active aging and economic prosperity, the future must begin now.”

Remember that this program is the first “ALL” Canadian professional development standard for elder education across many disciplines and together we will ensure that our aging population will be treated the way that they should be.

*This is only the first step as you continue to be a student of elder issues.*

*All the best in your EPC endeavours!*

## **5 – 7          CHAPTER REFERENCES**

- 2022-23 National Population Health Survey, cross-sectional sample CIEPS Desk Reference materials
- CIEPS Code of Ethics
- Environics Analytics, April 2023
- Statistics Canada, 2024 census information
- 2021 pan-Canadian statistics on regulated nurses from the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI)
- Canadian legislation aimed at protecting pension plans may mean significant changes for lenders, borrowers and employees, Q2, 2023; Author: Candace Formosa

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The Canadian Initiative for Elder Planning Studies (CIEPS) would like to thank all the people who have helped and supported the EPC Designation program and vision since 2003.

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We would also like to especially acknowledge you, the EPC student, for having the insight and vision to understand how demographics are changing the way in which all professionals will interact with Canada's "elders," now and in the future.

We hope that the EPC Designation program is just the beginning of your aging education, as you continue to interact with Canada's aging society.

Congratulations on wanting to becoming an Elder Planning Counselor!

