

# Combating Elder Abuse & Building Resilience

## Session 5 – Advocating for Yourself



### Senior Influencers

Older adults who advocate for senior ideas, voices and media presence through fashion, culture and conversation.

Examples include Donald Sutherland (actor), Maye Musk (model), Iris Apfel (businesswoman), the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg (Associate Justice), George Takei (actor), Lyn Slater (professor)

### Manage Difficult Situations (Alice Boyes)

Avoid jumping to conclusions before you have all the information.

Distinguish between a bump in the road and the end of the road.

Ask yourself what you can learn from a difficult situation.

Express your emotions and move

### Enhance Your Confidence

- Walk faster – walk with purpose
- Speak up and use “I” language – I’d prefer, I’d like, I think...
- Practice good posture – sit/stand up straight, shoulders back, head up (superhero stance)
- Express gratitude – practice journaling and recall past successes, unique skills, loving relationships
- Compliment and acknowledge others – look for the best in others and it will make you feel good too

### 3-Item To-Do List

Identify three important tasks you want to complete each day to gain a sense of accomplishment and to build healthy habits. Try to include one each of mental, physical and social habits.

#### **SAMPLE Today, I will...**

- 1) Read the paper online
- 2) Walk the dog for 30 minutes
- 3) Participate in Blair’s Coffee Chat (Zoom)

### 3C’s of Personal Advocacy

1. **Confident** – Trust your ability to handle situations.
2. **Clear** – Is your message clear and easy to understand?
3. **Controlled** – Take a deep breath and deliver your message in a calm, controlled manner.

### Dealing with Difficult People

- The goal is not for someone to win or lose, it’s to gain understanding. (I’m not sure I understood that.)
- Ask questions (What would help in this situation? Could you help me understand that?)
- Listen for emotions (That sounds difficult. It seems like this was hard to manage alone.)
- Know when to walk away. (I think we see this differently and it may be helpful to take a break.)

## Be a Self-Advocate

- Have cheques directly deposited to your account. **Monitor accounts and statements** and be cautious of family, friends or caregivers who express excessive interest in your finances.
- On the **phone, at the door and online** - check that salespeople are legitimate by doing your own online search of the company or by phoning the business directly.
- Consider buying decisions carefully and avoid letting salespeople rush you into signing documentation. **Keep copies of invoices, bills and receipts.**
- Before changing/signing a will, deed, loan, mortgage or Power of Attorney, **contact your lawyer.**
- **Keep personal information**, passwords, PIN, Social Insurance Number and cheques **safe** and **use strong 8-item passwords** that include upper and lower case letters, numbers and symbols.

### 5 Strategies to Enhance Personal Advocacy

1. Focus on having a few close and meaningful relationships.
2. Tap into wisdom and compassion. Keep learning.
3. Create healthy habits around hobbies, chores and exercise.
4. Practice mindfulness and gratitude.

“Our most cruel failure in how we treat the sick and the aged is the failure to recognize that they have priorities beyond merely being safe and living longer. The chance to shape one’s story is essential to sustaining meaning in life.”

Dr. Atul Gawande, Being Mortal

### References (2021)

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Seniors Safety Line 1-800-622-6232  
211ontario.ca or dial “211”  
www.opp.ca or call 1-888-310-1122  
<https://www.askennonia.com>, Askennonia Senior Centre, (705) 526-7609