



**Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists  
Association canadienne des ergothérapeutes**

**Occupational therapists launch new guidelines to help stop elder abuse before it starts**

**November, 23, 2011 (Ottawa, ON)** – The Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT) is pleased to have officially launched “*Strategies for occupational therapists to address elder abuse/mistreatment*,” a resource tool developed for occupational therapists that will build health human resource capacity to address and manage elder abuse.

The project was made possible through funding from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), who recognized the vital role occupational therapists play in managing elder abuse.

“Occupational therapists are in a unique position to detect and manage elder abuse due to the strong working relationship they develop with an older adult through having an intimate knowledge of their daily life and routines,” said Rosemary Lester, Chair of the Elder Abuse Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador and External Member of the CAOT Board of Directors. “This tool will support this relationship and be an important resource in the ongoing effort to combat elder abuse.”

The resource tool provides a set of guidelines that strive to assist occupational therapists across Canada in understanding what to look for (indicators), first steps to follow when suspecting abuse (e.g. What do I ask? Look for?), and strategies for discussing the situation with the older adult.

The Minister of State for Seniors, the Honourable Alice Wong attended the event in support of the new documents and the positive impact occupational therapists have on managing and working to prevent elder abuse.

“Our government is committed to support the well-being of seniors,” said Minister Wong. “Elder abuse should be everyone’s concern and that is why our government is ensuring that Canadians are aware of the issue and can take the necessary preventative action or seek support.”

This year the Government of Canada awarded nearly \$567,000 to the National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly, to develop tools to measure elder abuse, which could support the development of strategies for prevention, detection and treatment. This initiative in addition to the release of the guidelines provides an optimistic future for seniors.

*Strategies for occupational therapists to address elder abuse/mistreatment* is available for download off the CAOT website by all practicing occupational therapists across Canada.  
[www.caot.ca/elderabuse](http://www.caot.ca/elderabuse)

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