World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
Personal Reflections

Creating and sharing stories about the lives of others can help communities to better understand the unique experiences of its members. Below are two sets of questions you can ask when creating personal reflections for those in your community. The first section is an example of questions you can ask an older adult about their life. This line of questioning can expose ageist attitudes in our communities or just illuminate the way society has changed and what the older adult has learned throughout their life. The second section focuses on elder abuse and its impacts. These questions can be asked of an older adult, a service provider or a community member who has experience with elder abuse. Remember that elder abuse is a very sensitive topic, and sharing stories about abuse can trigger traumatic memories that can cause distress. You should only undertake these questions if you know how to respond to a person who becomes upset or emotional. If you plan on publishing personal stories you need to have the permission of the individual(s) you are interviewing. Some ideas for questions are:

Questions for Older Adults (Born inside and outside Canada)

► When/where were you born?
► Are there any stories about the day you were born or your early infancy?
► Do you know why you were given the name(s) you have?
► Where did you grow up and what was it like there? Why did your family live there?
► What was your home like? Did you share a bedroom? Where did you play?
► What was life like when you were growing up?
► What were you like as a child? What were your parents like?
► Did you have any childhood heroes?
► Did you have siblings? What were they like? Were you close? Where are they now?
► Were you close with your grandparents? Did you have big family holidays?
► What kind of school did you go to as a child? (What did it look like? Was it a big school?)
► What was your favourite subject? What did you want to be when you grew up? Where did you go to high school?
► Did you go to college? What was it like?
► What is the highest honour/award you ever received?
► What was the world like when you were growing up? What did everyday life look like?
► Where were you when the Second World War ended? Where were you on 9/11?
► How did major news events affect your life and your view of the world?
► What was your profession? How did you choose it?
► What was your day-to-day work life like?
► Did you ever serve in the armed forces?
► How did you meet your partner? What was your courtship like? What do you admire most about your spouse?
► Are there any birthdays or milestones that you were most/least excited for?
► How did you feel when you found out you were going to be a parent? What was the pregnancy like? What was the delivery like?
► Why did you choose the names you did for your children?
► What was it like raising your family? Were your children easy?
► What were some of your proudest moments as a parent?
► What are the biggest differences between the way you raised your family and the way kids are raised today?
► What are your family’s best recipes?
► Do you have any famous/infamous family members?
► Are there any family scandals that are too good not to tell?
► What accomplishments are you most proud of?
► If you had to describe your personality in three adjectives, what would they be?
► What are your best and worst qualities?
► Do you have any favourite sayings or expressions?
► If you could go back to any age, which would it be and why?
► If you won $1 million tomorrow, what would you do with the money?
► Do you have a philosophy on life? What’s your best piece of advice for living?
► How have you dealt with the aging process? What have been the best/hardest parts?
► Do you have a bucket list? What’s on it?
► How do you think attitudes towards older adults have changed over your lifetime, both positively and negatively?

**Questions for Older Adults, Service Providers and Community Members**

► How do you think attitudes towards older adults have changed over your lifetime, both positively and negatively?
► How do those attitudes increase or decrease the likelihood of abuse and neglect in later life?
► How can we help promote world awareness of abuse in later life here and around the world?
► Do you know anyone who has suffered from abuse? What happened? Was the abuse reported? Was the person using abusive behaviour someone close to the victim?
► Do you know what elder abuse is? What are the warning signs?
► Do you know how to tell if someone is being abused?
► What can be done if elder abuse is suspected? What is being done to prevent elder abuse?
► What can be done to reduce the risk of elder abuse? Are there laws against elder abuse?