



## **VIOLENCE AGAINST SENIOR WOMEN.....**

### *MORE THAN PHYSICAL ABUSE*

Over the next two years, Every Woman's Centre in cooperation with the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and the Pictou County Women's Centre will be taking part in a very important initiative, funded by Status Of Women Canada. This project "Violence Against Women & Girls...A Rural Response", will concentrate on the small communities of Northeastern Nova Scotia. For our portion of the work, Every Woman's Centre will focus on Senior Women and the challenges faced by this particular group. Within the four counties of Cape Breton, our goal is to invite these courageous women to join us in speaking out on the difficulties experienced in their daily lives.

Violence means many things to many people and does not always involve physical assault. Often times there are grave financial hardship for seniors, who through no fault of their own, find themselves held captive in a world of desperate choices. Do I fill my prescriptions or buy oil to keep warm? I love my pet but I can barely keep myself in food, what will I do? I can no longer drive, and live in a remote location, how can I ever continue to be independent without help?

There are situations where loved ones become dependant on the help of seniors and when demands are not met, acts of intimidation are used to pressure a senior to hand over their money or their prescription drugs. Sometimes threats of violence are used to take control of a seniors' life.

Sometimes those in whom seniors have developed trust take advantage of lessened mobility and poor eyesight in order to help themselves to hard earned comforts whether financial or material possessions.

All of these scenarios constitute a "Violent" lifestyle for a senior. Many have lost hope in ever recovering their voice. Perhaps their isolation has played a role in their inability to speak out on their own and others behalf.

Along with giving senior women their voice, we hope as well to educate and encourage individuals and organizations to become more aware of this lifestyle crisis and work with us in offering support for those who have fallen through the cracks in what should be their golden years.

Over time one thing that has changed is the face of seniors. No longer are they only women over 65. Today's definition of seniors includes women much younger than in previous generations. Early retirements have expanded the age range for what we are accustomed to labeling as seniors.

As a member of the 'support' community, we hope that you will feel a sense of pride in helping us shed light on the variety of difficulties faced by some senior women in Cape Breton. We hope to speak to as many organizations and individuals as possible to share your particular experiences in dealing with seniors in your work, and social networking.

In the coming weeks I hope to contact you by phone to discuss the project further. In the meantime if you have any questions, concerns or would like to become involved please call 567 – 2157. I look forward to speaking with you.

**Wanda Earhart**

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