



MONEY\$TALK

Serving the Niagara Region since 1975

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Fraud is the Number One Crime Against Seniors

The financial abuse of seniors is a topic you may be hearing more about now that governments and community groups are taking increased steps to draw attention to the problem.

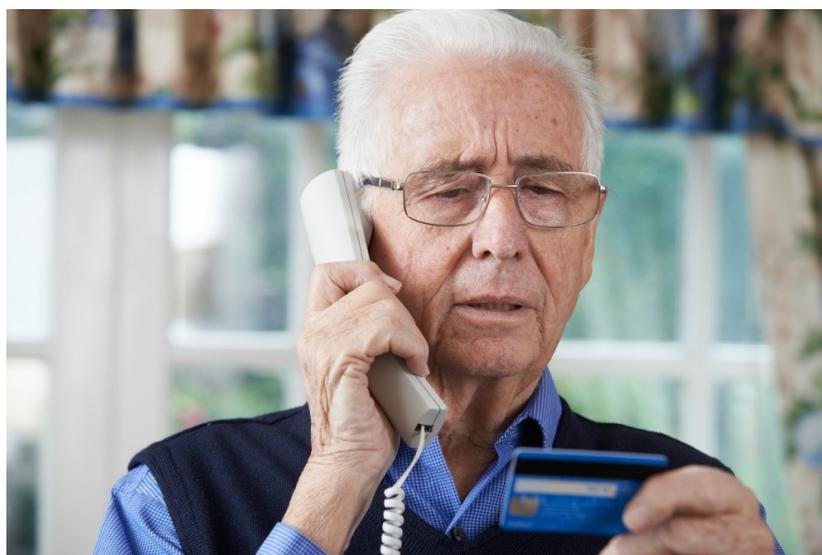
At CCRN, we often work with seniors who have been victims of different kinds of financial abuse, for example, a man in the early stages of dementia who borrowed on his credit cards to give over \$20,000 to the clerk at the local corner store, and a woman who put herself \$25,000 in debt giving money to charities that kept calling and harassing her.

In recent statistics, the Niagara Region Police Services Fraud Unit reported 731 incidents of fraud and theft against seniors, while the Ontario Public Guardian and Trustee dealt with 299 cases of abuse of seniors through Power of Attorney. In the vast majority of these cases a family member or friend is the person committing the abuse.

If you want to learn more about protecting yourself from fraud and financial abuse, check out the Family Service PEI toolkit *It's Your Right: Protecting Yourself Financially As You Age* at www.itsyourright.ca. If you or a senior you know is experiencing financial abuse you can contact the Niagara Elder Abuse Prevention Network, run by the Alzheimer Society, or call the Seniors Safety Line (24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 150 languages) 1-866-299-1011.

You can also check out the publication *BE AWARE... TAKE CARE: A Safety Guide for Older or Vulnerable Persons* - available on the Alzheimer Society website in both French and English at <http://www.alzheimer.ca/en/niagara/We-can-help/Elder-abuse>.

The RCMP website is a good resource for educating yourself about fraudulent schemes: Go to www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca and choose Scams/ Fraud on the right-hand menu.



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Doing Your Taxes – Don't Leave Money on the Table

If I said you could get paid for doing your taxes, would that make you more motivated to get them done? Every year people with low incomes miss out on money they are entitled to because they don't file their taxes. Credit Counselling Niagara and other agencies in the region provide free tax clinics for people with low incomes and a simple tax situation. Check out the Canada Revenue Agency website to find a tax clinic provider in your area.

https://apps.cra-arc.gc.ca/ebci/oecv/external/prot/cli_srch_01_ld.action



Where to Find Savings

Finding ways to economise is often a matter of saving a few dollars here and there rather than saving a bundle all in one place. Here are some tips from Trent Hamm at thesimpledollar.com that can help you cut back on expenses.

- Switch your bank accounts. The Financial Consumer Agency of Canada website has an interactive tool that can help you comparison shop for the most cost-effective bank account: www.fcac.gc.ca
- Master the thirty day rule. Whenever you're considering making an unnecessary purchase, wait thirty days and then ask yourself if you still want that item. Quite often, you'll find that the urge to buy has passed and you'll have saved yourself some money by simply waiting.
- Invite friends over instead of going out.
- Start a garden.
- Don't beat yourself up when you make a mistake. Even if you make ten good choices, it's easy to beat yourself up and feel like a failure over one bad choice. If you make a big mistake and realize it, think about why you realized it now instead of then, and try to apply that later on. The memory of that mistake can end up being very valuable, indeed.

Our counsellors are available at 5 locations!

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