Age-Friendly Advisory Committee

MINUTES

MEETING DATE: September 18, 2025, **TIME:** 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM **LOCATION:** Zoom

CHAIR: Tracy Hill, Program & Support Services Supervisor, Seniors Services, County of Simcoe, Age-Friendly Champion

RECORDER: Catherine Ivanyshyn, Administrative Assistant II, County of Simcoe

ATTENDANCE:

Kassandra Barteaux, Senior Director, Canadian Red Cross
Jacqueline Berchtold, Project Coordinator, Health Systems Integration & Planning, County of Simcoe
Kristen Corbiere, Director of Quality, Performance and Special Projects, Helping Hands Orillia
Jenna Davis, North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services (NSMSGS)
Marshall Green, Senior Counsel and Community Representative
Councillor Randy Greenlaw, Mayor Oro-Medonte
Sandra Gagnon, Regional Lead for Seniors, Ontario Health
Holly Hartshorne, Coordinator, Assistive Technology & Aging at Home, Independent Living Services Simcoe County
Pam Hillier, Executive Director, 211 Community Connection, Ontario
Beatrice Jean, French Language Services Coordinator, County of Simcoe
Gwen Kavanagh, Chair, Senior Community Fund Committee, CARP Barrie Chapter (36),
Sarah Orr-Shaw, Public Health Nurse, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
Liza Parry, Member, Age-Friendly Orillia
Cheryl Wilson, Executive Director, Independent Living Services

GUEST:

Inga Thompson, Prevention of Senior Abuse Network Simcoe County

Guest presentation is attached to the Minutes

ITEM	Action Items, Noted Events & Links
1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS All committee members were welcomed to the meeting.	
2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA and PREVIOUS MINUTES **2.1. Approval of Agenda** The Agenda was approved as presented by Councillor Randy Greenlaw and seconded by Marshall Green.	

ITEM	Action Items, Noted Events & Links
2.2. Approval of Previous Minutes (June 19, 2025) The Minutes were approved by Gwen Kavanagh and seconded by Marshall Green.	
PRESENTATION: Abuse of Older Adults Inga Thompson, Prevention of Senior Abuse Network Simcoe County Presentation is attached. • The network originated in **1996** under the **District Health Council**, focused on developing protocols to prevent abuse of vulnerable adults. • The initial outcome was the **Vulnerable Adults Protocol** document, which was used for many years. • Over time, the focus shifted more toward **senior abuse prevention**, reflecting the needs observed in the community. • In **2007**, a strategic plan led to the renaming of the group to the **Prevention of Senior Abuse Network in Simcoe**. • Membership has grown significantly — now including **about 40 members** representing **19 agencies**, expanding beyond healthcare providers. **Agencies Involved** include healthcare, police (Barrie Police Services, South Simcoe Police Services, OPP, fire department, library, LGBTQ+ organizations, Indigenous groups, mental health services, retirement homes, hearing impairment services, and senior networks. • **The Executive Team** consists of a group of five members providing guidance and direction. • PSAN has now completed a new **3-year strategic plan**. • **Monthly meetings** take place both in-person and via Teams at the Emergency Services Campus in Barrie. • This Network is unincorporated, volunteer-led, with no formal registration and operates solely on grants and donations. • **Participants** are Volunteers that include individuals personally committed to the cause and others encouraged by their agencies to engage. There are no paid staff or a physical office. Work is done remotely or in community spaces.	**To book a presentation:** **Website:** www.psan-sc.ca **Email:** psansimcoecounty@gmail.com Inga to connect with Beatrice Jean, French Services Coordinator, County of Simcoe.

ITEM	Action Items, Noted Events & Links
• The team actively engages with the community through individual **presentations** at seniors' clubs, service organizations, retirement homes, and any venue willing to host the Network. These sessions often include collaboration with local police departments—such as Barrie Police and South Simcoe Police—particularly when addressing topics like fraud and scams. • A key component of outreach is raising awareness about the organization, website, and resources offered. An impactful program, **"It's Not Right"**, is a Canadian initiative originally developed in Ontario. This program is designed to empower bystanders—neighbors, friends, and family—to recognize signs of abuse and offer support in a non-judgmental and safe manner. The goal is to help without escalating the situation, acknowledging that confronting abuse can sometimes worsen it. • Members of the Network attend senior fairs and events and recognize **Elder Abuse Awareness Day** annually on **June 15th**, helping raise awareness and support. • Every **meeting** begins with a presentation on topics like elder abuse, ageism, and senior-related resources. Resources are shared by providing a mix of self-produced and externally sourced materials, including the ***Age-Friendly Seniors Safety Booklet***. • Through these efforts, the Network aims to foster **safer, more informed communities** where individuals feel supported and empowered to act compassionately and responsibly. • The Network plays a vital role in connecting people with the right resources, especially in challenging situations. The Network does not provide direct services and will not go into homes but rather will act as a hub that helps guide people to the support they need. PSAN has a website with resources and a Facebook page. • Projects include: – Website: www.psan-sc.ca – Safety Kits	

ITEM	Action Items, Noted Events & Links
– Developed 10 informational videos (6 of those on aspects of financial abuse) available on our website. – Currently working on the 3-year strategic plan for the next 3 years. – Partnering with 3 Senior Centres across Simcoe and 2 different Theatrical groups to put on shows showcasing older adults with a focus on ageism and elder abuse. • **Definition of Senior Abuse**: Any action or inaction by any person which causes harm or threatens to cause harm to an older adult. Several types of abuse – financial, physical, verbal/psychological, sexual, neglect and spiritual. Many of elder abuse cases are under-reported. • **Senior abuse instances rarely go to court** (due to expense and hassle for seniors). The Criminal Code of Canada does not have a specific offense called elder abuse. However, there are many instances when the abusive behaviour is a crime. **Questions and Comments:** • **Simcoe County Paramedics** can support individuals by facilitating direct connections to healthcare services. Additionally, **PSAN** is exploring the integration of crisis planning materials into the safety kits. • The **Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario Network** regularly delivers presentations to various registered organizations. For further collaboration locally, consider reaching out to the **Simcoe County Law Association**. • **211** offers three-way calling with interpreter services, which can be especially helpful for individuals who may have difficulty articulating their needs. Organizations can also utilize https://volunteerconnection.ca/ to post opportunities and recruit volunteers. • Inga Thompson to connect with Beatrice Jean, French Services Coordinator, County of Simcoe.	
3. AGE-FRIENDLY COUNTY INITIATIVES UPDATE Link: Age-Friendly Communities – Simcoe County **3.1. Business & Individual Recognition Program**	Age-Friendly Communities – Simcoe County

ITEM	Action Items, Noted Events & Links
The **2025 Age-Friendly Business and Individual Recognition Awards Ceremony** will take place October 7th. This year, the County will be honouring **thirteen (13)** businesses and organizations and **seven (7)** individuals. Age-Friendly Businesses - Simcoe County Individual Recognition Awards Program - Simcoe County This year, we were excited to be adding a Youth Nominations Form. However, we had not received entries and hope to bring this back in 2026. The **Age-Friendly Business and Organization Awards Program** is a program that assists Business owners to assess if their business or organization is designed to serve individuals of all ages and abilities. This is done through the Age-Friendly Business Recognition Program Self-Evaluation Checklist. The **Age-Friendly Individual Recognition and Achievement Program** recognizes an individual who demonstrates an outstanding commitment to creating age-friendly communities, enriches the lives of older adults in their community, demonstrates leadership in and a commitment to age-friendly development, projects and/or initiatives in their community(s), improves the overall quality of life of vulnerable older adult residents and the community as a whole, devotes their time to selfless voluntary service, serves as a role model and champion for others within their community(s) and exemplifies the spirit of community service.	
3.2. Calendar of Activities for Older Adults Launched June 1st - https://agefriendlyactivities.simcoe.ca/ A new addition to the website is a "**submit**" button. Tracy demonstrated how to submit events and how to register to include an organization. The County hired a Volunteer Coordinator who will be assisting in recruiting volunteers for the Activity Calendar.	**Age-Friendly Calendar:** https://agefriendlyactivities.simcoe.ca/
3.3. 2025-2030 Positive Ageing Strategy Update 2025-2030 Positive Ageing Strategy is now complete and approved. Within this strategy, there are 40 completed priorities, 83 complete and ongoing priorities, and 23 priorities in progress. Hard copies of the Strategy are being printed and distributed.	Positive-Aging-Strategy-2025-30-v4.pdf

ITEM	Action Items, Noted Events & Links
3.4. Grant Programs **3.4.1. Municipal Grant Program** Launched January 1st and closed May 31st, 2025. This year, the County approved three (3) grants this year. – New Tecumseth – Age-Friendly Community Action Initiative – Town of Innisfil – Enhancing Health Literacy for Seniors in Innisfil – Town of Penetanguishene – Genealogy Course at the Penetanguishene Museum County Council approved $50,000 annually for municipalities who are approved to receive up to $10,000 for programs geared toward older adults in their municipality and/or to create a community engagement survey to determine community needs. This Municipal Grant is open to all 16 member municipalities in the County of Simcoe. **3.4.2. Seniors Housing Grant Program** Launched March 1st and closed May 31st, 2025. This grant cycle received **142 applications**. Applications have been reviewed, and **94** applicants were **approved** for grant funding of various accessible projects. The Age-Friendly Seniors Housing Grant program was recommended within the Simcoe County Positive Aging Strategy. County Council approved $500,000 per year to assist older adults 60+ fund projects that incorporate accessible, adaptable and inclusive designs, which allow them to live independently in their communities for as long as possible. Applicants are homeowners of principal residences in the County of Simcoe who reside in the home and landlords of principal residences who rent to those aged 60 or older. Grant amounts are distributed based on the number of applications received and ability to meet funding criteria. This grant is open to all residents residing in the 16 municipalities of the County of Simcoe only. This program is growing each year.	

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4. PLANNING TOGETHER: 2026 **4.1.** Meetings will be scheduled shortly for 2026 – February, June, October and December. **4.2.** Presentation recommendations: – Jenna Wickens – Local Libraries – Community & Social Services Housing Grants – Support of Rapid Rehousing Program – Third Age - https://thirdagenetwork.ca/ – Simcoe County Housing Alliance (Spring 2026)	Reach out to Tracy Hill Tracy.hill@simcoe.ca for recommendations on 2026 presentations.
5. WHAT'S HAPPENING (local community initiatives) **ROUNDTABLE** **Sarah Orr-Shaw, Public Health Nurse, SMDHU** There has been quite a bit of transition with the reorganization at the Health Unit, especially with the move from Substance Abuse and Injury Prevention to Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention. Despite the shifting of responsibilities, there remains a commitment to advocacy against ageism and supporting of older adults. Assisted on creating the Healthy Aging Public Health Network and collaborated with Waterloo University students (with master's in public health) on an extensive multi-level policy review on ageism in Ontario. A report has been compiled and in the process of reviewing. The report has surfaced some important insights—especially around elder care policy and the gaps in the Criminal Code regarding elder abuse. **Marshall Green, Senior Counsel and Community Representative** The Simcoe County Housing Alliance for Seniors has been looking at a pilot project for months. A developer is now lined up who was offered land and has just recently made a presentation to the city of Barrie. After additional information was provided to the City of Barrie, their response to the project was encouraging. With various time delays, the project should go ahead into spring 2026. Currently, the Housing Alliance is also looking at potential seniors grants that may assist with this project.	

ITEM	Action Items, Noted Events & Links
Gwen Kavanagh, Chair, Senior Community Fund Committee, CARP Barrie Chapter (36) Recently on a CARP council call, the new CARP president, Anthony Quinn, expressed concerns about how banks are advising their clients. The feeling is that banks often prioritize selling their own products—such as their own GICs and mutual funds—rather than offering the best options available in the market. This issue ties into the broader concern of financial security for aging communities. Long-standing customers—those who've been with a bank for 50 years for example—may not be receiving optimal advice that may potentially impact their retirement income. CARP may be preparing to take a stance on this issue. **Kassandra Barteaux, Senior Director, Canadian Red Cross** With new driving law changes in Ontario in September 2025 aimed at improving road safety there will be stricter medical, vision tests and licensing measures. This will impact the older adult population and how they access services, especially in rural areas. Noted BLAISE Transit, a start-up company (pilot project in Gravenhurst, Ontario). A low cost, point to point, door to door transit system. Currently, they're working in Nova Scotia in rural areas. Website: Blaise Transit **Pam Hillier, Executive Director, 211 Community Connection, Ontario** Out of a social prescribing initiative done a while ago, about ten years ago, a pilot project was launched in collaboration with Simcoe County Community Paramedicine Program. This initiative enabled paramedics to identify individuals in need of social support and refer them to appropriate community services. Since then, the South Georgian Bay Ontario Health Team has since invested in a digital integration with 211 Community Connection database. This advancement allows for referrals directly from an EMR and anyone accessing medical records, such as physicians and nurses, can now identify patients who may need social supports or community services and, with patient consent, submit a referral that is automatically received in the system. Once a referral is received, system navigators initiate an outbound call to follow up with the client, providing support and connecting them to appropriate services. A key feature of this process is the ability to send a closed-loop report back to the referring provider, which is uploaded directly into the patient's medical record. This	

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ensures continuity of care and allows healthcare providers to track the outcome of their referrals. This referral process has proven to be highly successful and scalable, with potential for further expansion across the region. Teams conducting on-site visits, such as those performing tests on fire systems, are increasingly identifying and referring vulnerable individuals they encounter during their work. This represents a meaningful expansion of their role in community support. There is a new Referral Pathway via communityconnection.ca, allowing for self-referrals by individuals seeking support and third-party referrals by professionals or community members who identify someone in need of assistance. This initiative offers help proactively rather than waiting for individuals to seek it. This shift is particularly important for vulnerable populations who may feel hesitant or anxious about accessing services. **Beatrice Jean, French Language Services Coordinator, County of Simcoe** Currently working on an Intergenerational Project for Georgian Manor in Penetanguishene. The goal is to begin implementing this initiative in the coming months, with a planned launch in January. The project aims to foster meaningful connections between Georgian Manor residents and youth from local schools and organizations. Activities may include holiday-themed visits, such as youth singing during the Christmas season, volunteer opportunities for students to engage with residents, and collaborative programs that encourage interaction across generations. This initiative is still in the planning phase as we explore potential partnerships. **Liza Parry, Member, Age-Friendly Orillia** The committee last met on September 10th, and the executive team continued working through the summer to prepare a report back to the community. The committee has been reviewing the Age-Friendly Orillia Framework and Implementation Plan, conducting a 2025 assessment, and identifying key areas of progress and future focus. To share this work with the broader community, the committee plans to release an infographic summarizing key highlights and a a detailed report outlining findings, recommendations, and next steps. Both will be shared through the committee's network.	

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Cheryl Wilson, Executive Director, Independent Living Services, Member Tay Township Seniors Advisory Committee ILS has received Ontario Health funding. A navigator role has been implemented, working exclusively with discharge planners at Georgian Bay General Hospital and Ontario Health at Home. This navigator is not community-facing, as there are already many navigators in the community. The focus is on supporting hospital discharge by connecting patients with community supports and assisting individuals outside the hospital who require additional support. The initiative builds on 211 Community Connection work and social prescribing, leveraging their database to match individuals with appropriate supports. Also, a member of the Tay Township Seniors Advisory Committee. In October, a quarterly "Senior Talks" event will be hosted in Port McNicoll. This will feature a panel discussion on supporting oneself or a loved one while waiting for long-term care and exploring at-home care options and transitional arrangements. The session will avoid framing the topic as "waiting for long-term care" but will focus on practical supports and strategies.	
6. Closing Remarks **Terms of Reference review – December Meeting** The draft **Terms of Reference for this Committee** will be forwarded to all members prior to the December meeting. Please review and bring comments to the Advisory Committee Meeting on **December 4th, 2025**. **2026 Meetings** 2026 Meeting Dates will be forwarded end of November.	**All members** to review the draft Terms of Reference that will be forwarded prior to next meeting.
7. Adjournment: 12:10 pm	
8. Next Meeting: December 4th, 2025 - 10:30 am-12:00 pm	

Calendar of Activities for Older Adults: https://agefriendlyactivities.simcoe.ca/

PREVENTION OF SENIOR ABUSE
NETWORK
SIMCOE COUNTY

Abuse of Older Adults

The Prevention of Senior Abuse Network-Simcoe County

2025

PREVENTION OF SENIOR ABUSE NETWORK SIMCOE COUNTY

HISTORY

- Founded in 1996 as the Vulnerable Adults Prevention Committee of Simcoe County.
- 1997 District Health Council changed the focus to seniors.
- Renamed PSAN-SC in 2007.

PREVENTION OF SENIOR ABUSE NETWORK SIMCOE COUNTY

ABOUT

- 40 members in Network represent 19 agencies and organizations (health care, police, fire, library, LGBTQ2+, Indigenous, mental health, retirement homes, hearing impairment,) as well as 7 retired seniors.
- 5 member Executive provides direction.
- Monthly meetings: both in person and by Teams
- Not incorporated, no funding, no staff, no office.

PREVENTION OF SENIOR ABUSE NETWORK SIMCOE COUNTY

Vision and Mission

Vision:

- All seniors in Simcoe County live with dignity and respect in a safe environment

Mission:

- To promote education and awareness to prevent abuse of older adults in Simcoe County.

PREVENTION OF SENIOR ABUSE NETWORK SIMCOE COUNTY

Values

- **Community:** We foster a culture of collaboration and support by encouraging active participation to build social capacity and empowerment.

- **Diversity and Inclusion:** We welcome, respect and value diversity and are committed to creating an environment that is inclusive of all perspectives and life experiences.

- **Sharing:** We actively promote an environment of learning, caring and knowledge exchange.

PREVENTION OF SENIOR ABUSE NETWORK
SIMCOE COUNTY

WHAT WE DO

- Speakers (seniors groups, service clubs etc).
- “It’s Not Right" training and presentations.
- Education of members on senior related resources.
- Provision of resources
- Attendance at seniors fairs and events.
- Annually honor World Elder Abuse Awareness day across the County on June 15th.
- Partner with community members including local Police services to educate others.

PREVENTION OF SENIOR ABUSE NETWORK SIMCOE COUNTY

WHAT WE DON'T DO

- Provide **direct** response to senior abuse- we provide information about appropriate supports and resources instead and encourage them to contact them direct.

PREVENTION OF SENIOR ABUSE NETWORK
SIMCOE COUNTY

RECENT PROJECTS

- Updated website www.psan-sc.ca
- Created Safety Kits
- Developed 10 informational videos (6 of those on aspects of financial abuse) available on our website.
- Updated our strategic plan for the next 3 years.
- Partnering with 3 Senior Centres across Simcoe and 2 different Theatrical groups to put on shows showcasing older adults with a focus on ageism and elder abuse.

PREVENTION OF SENIOR ABUSE NETWORK
SIMCOE COUNTY

General Information

- Senior population (over 65) projected to be 4.5 million in Ontario by 2041 (25.5% of the population)
- Simcoe County average about 18% (Provincial 16.7%, National 17%)
- With the growing seniors population and increased longevity, senior abuse will also increase
- Only 1 in 24 cases of elder abuse reported (seniors ashamed, embarrassed, fear retribution, fear being institutionalized, don’t know they are being abused, think no one will believe them)
- Vital to raise awareness of elder abuse and ageism and prevent it whenever and wherever possible

PREVENTION OF SENIOR ABUSE NETWORK SIMCOE COUNTY

SENIOR ABUSE DEFINITION

- Any action or inaction by any person which causes harm or threatens to cause harm to an older adult
- Several types of abuse:
  - Financial
  - Physical
  - Verbal/psychological
  - Sexual
  - Neglect
  - Spiritual

PREVENTION OF SENIOR ABUSE NETWORK
SIMCOE COUNTY

Ageism

- Ageism refers to the stereotypes (how we **think**), prejudice (how we **feel**) and discrimination (how we **act**) towards others or oneself based on age. (W.H.O.).
- Not taken as seriously as other forms of discrimination but can be the basis of various forms of abuse.
- Need to raise public awareness about its existence and dispel common misperceptions and stereotypes about aging.

PREVENTION OF SENIOR ABUSE NETWORK SIMCOE COUNTY

WHO IS AT RISK OF ABUSE

- MYTH - abuse only happens to dependent, frail, elderly people.
- According to the United States Department of Justice, 20- 40 percent of elder abuse cases involve financial exploitation.
- One in ten older adults across Canada experience some form of elder mistreatment each year.
- Older adults with greater vulnerability related to physical, cognitive and mental health status and shared living were at higher risk of elder mistreatment.
- Older adults identifying as Black or reporting financial need were at heightened risk of elder mistreatment.
- Higher levels of social support were protective against elder mistreatment.

Source: Violence against seniors and their perceptions of safety in Canada: July 2022

PREVENTION OF SENIOR ABUSE NETWORK
SIMCOE COUNTY

Is Elder Abuse a Crime?

- The Criminal Code of Canada does not have a specific offense called elder abuse. However, there are many instances when the abusive behaviour is a crime.
- These can include:
  - Assault
  - Criminal Harassment.
  - Intimidation
  - Fraud
  - Failure to Provide the Necessities of Life
  - Criminal Breach of Trust
  - Theft by Holding Power of Attorney

PREVENTION OF SENIOR ABUSE NETWORK SIMCOE COUNTY

Resources

- 911 for an emergency. Call local Police for non-emergency
- Crimestoppers- 1-800-222-TIPS (8477)
- 211- for general resources
- Senior Safety Line: 1-866- 299-1011
- Long Term Care Action Line: 1-866-434-0144
- Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority: 1-855-275-7472
- Advocacy Centre for the Elderly: 1-416-598-2656
- Victims Services-705-725-7025 X 2120

PREVENTION OF SENIOR ABUSE
NETWORK
SIMCOE COUNTY

Contact us through our website:
www.psan-sc.ca

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