

**Make It Your Business
when you witness abuse of an older adult**

SETTING: A retail store

[The NARRATOR and BYSTANDER (TAMMY) and YOUNG WOMAN (JEN) and GRANDPA (WALTER) are looking at products in the store. The CASHIERS (SARA and BELLA) are behind the cash. WALTER is not much interested in the store and oscillates between finding soft fabrics or interesting textures to rub between fingers and wandering away from JEN. He has a shuffling gait and looks a little uncertain and anxious as he moves. JEN is looking at expensive items, especially expensive leather jackets.]

JEN: [looking up to see WALTER is wandering away from her, speaks not unkindly but a little exasperatedly] **Grampie, stay with me. Don't go wandering off, now.**

[WALTER takes a seat.]

JEN: **I'm almost done.**

[She picks out a leather jacket for herself. She slings it over her arm with obvious satisfaction.]

JEN: [taking WALTER's arm and leading him to the cash] **Okay, Grampie. Time to pay the bill and go home. I'll get you lunch and some pie.**

[JEN guides WALTER to the cash. The NARRATOR and the BYSTANDER TAMMY are still in the store and seen in the shot as the camera follows JEN and WALTER to the cashier (SARA), with the expensive leather jacket. JEN places the jacket on the counter.]

SARA: [friendly as she rings it in and prepares it for a bag] **Ooh, you found my favourite jacket in the whole store. I wanted this myself! It's such a good price, too.**

[BELLA also admires the jacket and is at the cash, ready to help.]

WALTER: [responding to the friendliness with a big smile] **Oh, hi, Rita! Are your parents well?**

SARA: [a little embarrassed, but still kind] **I'm sorry. I'm not Rita. I'm Sara. But my parents are very well.**

JEN: [looking disapproving, but again not unkind, says a little dismissively to JEN...] **Oh, he's always thinking people are Rita. That's his grand-niece who lives out in BC. Don't worry. Take it as a compliment.**

SARA: [to the JEN] **Oh, he's very sweet. So, the jacket comes to \$400, with tax.**

JEN: [to WALTER] **Got your credit card, Grampie?** [He gets his wallet and gives it to JEN.] **Thanks, Grampie.**

WALTER: [to JEN] **You're welcome. You buy the pie afterwards.** [to SARA] **Rita's a very nice girl.**

NARRATOR: **Abuse of older adults can be a single event or a series of events over time that harm an older person or jeopardize their health or welfare. Abuse can be physical, emotional, verbal, sexual, or financial. It can also be neglect or denial of human rights.**

In the scene we just witnessed, a granddaughter is being very kind. But there are still signs she may be financially abusing her grandfather. She is spending his money even though he is showing signs of confusion and might not understand what's happening. This means he might not be able to consent. If you witness or suspect abuse or neglect of an older person, you should contact Adult Protection.

If you were Sara, the cashier noticing signs of financial abuse of an older person, what could you do to address the abuse and keep yourself and the people around you safe? Here's one option.

[Back to scene where it was interrupted]

SARA: [checking the credit card and addressing WALTER] **Walter MacDonald? Is that your name, sir?**

WALTER: **Walter MacDonald? That's always been my name.**

SARA: **And I'm sorry to ask, but is your granddaughter allowed to use your card and your PIN number?**

WALTER: **The PIN is 4-4-6-7. Pin? My pins are in my sewing basket back home. I've never even put on a button on my shirt. Rita does all of that.**

JEN: **It's okay. I buy him everything.** [She puts in his PIN.]

[SARA looks bemused; she's not sure what to do. She lets JEN help WALTER to complete the transaction. BELLA looks confused as well as she folds the jacket and puts it in the bag she has prepared. BELLA hands the bag to JEN, who leaves with her grandpa. When they are out of earshot, SARA goes to the phone on the counter and looks up the number for Adult Protection.]

SARA: [to BELLA] **Who even helps seniors when they may be in trouble?**

BELLA: **I don't know. Maybe you could google "PEI seniors abuse"?**
[SARA googles "PEI seniors abuse."]

SARA: **Okay, it says here to call Adult Protection.**

BELLA: **Sounds like a good place to start. You give them a call. I'll jump on the cash.**

SARA: [Turning or stepping away from the cash register] **Hi, my name is Sara. I'm just calling to report a possible case of elder abuse? [pause.] Yes, the gentleman's name was Walter MacDonald, and I think I just witnessed someone use \$400 of his money without him being able to consent...**

NARRATOR: **You must report suspected abuse of an older adult to Adult Protection if you have a *duty of care* to that person. Even if you don't have a duty of care, it's very important to report abuse. If you think you've seen financial abuse, it's also good idea to document everything you witnessed as soon as possible.**

Here's another example. This time Sara gets some backup.

[SARA is ringing in the purchase of the leather jacket and gazing intently at the cash register – and suddenly scrunches up her face with a look of concern at something on the register.]

SARA: **I'm sorry. The price isn't ringing in with the right code. Can you pass me the jacket? I'm just gonna have to check with my manager. Thank you!**

[BELLA strikes up a pleasant conversation with JEN and WALTER.]

BELLA: **Sorry about that.**

[The scene cuts to another part of the store where SARA speaks to her manager, TREVOR, in an office.]

SARA: Hi, can I talk to you for a minute?

TREVOR: Yeah, sure, come in.

SARA: Perfect. That lady at the cash register is using that older man's credit card – I think he's her grandfather – and he said she could use it, but I think he's confused or has dementia or something. And I saw a presentation from the PEI Seniors Secretariat on abuse of older adults, and they said that could be abuse. What should I do?

[The manager (TREVOR) listens carefully and looks concerned.]

TREVOR: Huh. So the credit card owner is present and seems to have given permission. Did he key in his PIN himself?

SARA: Yeah, he knew his numbers, but he needed some help.

TREVOR: I'm not sure what to do. Who did you say to call? The seniors' office?

SARA: Adult Protection.

TREVOR: Adult Protection. Okay, I'm going to look up the number right now for Adult Protection to get some advice. You head back to cash and tell them I'll be right along – after I make an important phone call.

SARA: Okay. Perfect. Thank you. [Over her shoulder, leaving as TREVOR looks up the number on the computer and lifts the phone.]

TREVOR: Thank you.

NARRATOR: If you want to act in a situation of possible abuse, but you don't know what to do, there are services in the community that can help. And remember, if you think someone is in danger—or if you are in danger—call 911.

Other customers in the shop saw the young woman use her grandfather's credit card. If you were a passerby who noticed this potential financial abuse of an older person, what could you do to help and keep yourself and the people around you safe? Let's ask another customer from the shop.

Excuse me.

TAMMY: Yes?

NARRATOR: I know you saw a young woman use her grandfather's money for an expensive purchase. What's your version of events?

TAMMY: Maybe I'm a black-and-white person, but as far as I'm concerned, she was stealing from her grandfather. He was obviously confused! I actually ducked outside and called the police. They can look into it and make sure the older gentleman is okay.

NARRATOR: A small action might be all it takes to help in a situation of family violence. Recognize signs of violence and abuse. Consider what you can safely do. Reach out for help from community services like Family Violence Prevention Services. *Make it your business* to prevent family violence.