



Beyond Bullying: Building Healthy Seniors' Communities

This is a made in Alberta community development project, by seniors, for seniors

The South East Edmonton Seniors Association Activity Centre's (SEESA) mission is "To provide programs and services that will help seniors maintain and enhance their quality of life". The mission at Greater Edmonton Foundation (GEF) Seniors' Housing is "Leaders in friendly, affordable, secure housing and services for seniors".

In 2011, when local residents noted disturbing behaviours in their seniors' housing, they designed a presentation to identify and talk about bullying behaviour with other seniors and the larger community. SEESA supported the development of a program to address this complex problem. Three years later the Government of Canada's New Horizon's for Seniors program and GEF Seniors' Housing partnered with SEESA staff and volunteers to further develop this program.

Senior to senior bullying in seniors' buildings is common across the country. It can lead to depression, anxiety and isolation that puts significant strain on the health care system. The development of healthy seniors' environments is critical. Neuroscientist J.T. Cacioppo says "...a sense of isolation or social rejection disrupts not only our thinking abilities and will-power but also our immune systems and can be as damaging as obesity or smoking" (*Loneliness, 2009*).

A program and toolkit have been developed to help prepare seniors for communal living, negotiate healthy relationships, and explore ways to meet the immediate needs of both those who suffer the effects from bullying behaviours, and those who use bullying behaviours.

We invite you to watch the Beyond Bullying: Building Healthy Seniors' Communities video. We welcome feedback from anyone who has watched the video, attended a presentation or participated in a workshop to assist us with improving the Beyond Bullying program.

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Updated Dec. 14, 2015

