# Elder Abuse in Context

Leyden Academy on Vitality and Ageing

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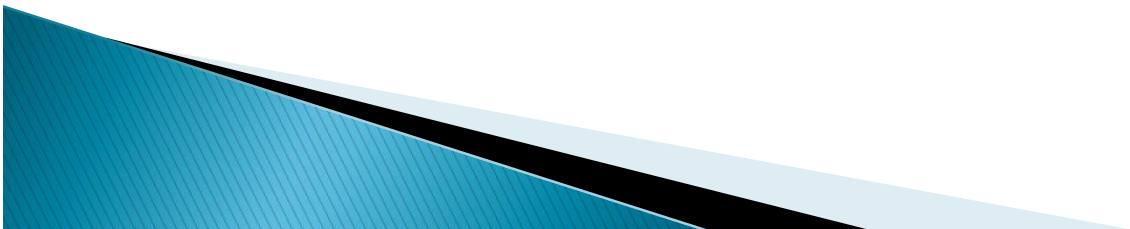
March 30, 2011

Longing to Belong: Social Inclusion in Elder Abuse Context

# Social Inclusion

"We can flourish only to the extent that we are recognized. Each consciousness seeks recognition in another."

(Hegel paraphrased in Taylor 1992: 50)

"Social inclusion is the capacity and willingness of our society to keep all groups within reach of what we expect as a society – the social commitment and investments necessary to ensure that socially and economically vulnerable people are within reach of our common aspirations, common life and its common wealth."

(Freiler, 2002)

"Inclusion is characterized by a society's widely shared social experience and active participation, by a broad equality of opportunities and life chances for individuals and by the achievement of a basic level of well-being for all citizens."

(Sen, 2001)

# Social and Economic Exclusion

Happens when people do not have – and cannot get – the education, jobs, decent housing, health care, and other things they need to live comfortably, to participate in society, and to feel that they are valued and respected members of their community

# Social and Economic Inclusion

▸ Must address poverty and exclusion

▸ Include the voiceless and powerless in shaping policies

▸ Individual and groups need to be part of the planning, decision making and policy development in the community

▸ Empower people = give opportunities, resources and support

# Backstory of Social Inclusion

- Movement over past three decades

- Policy developers in Europe ➡ Oceana ➡ North America

- Term coined in France by Lenoir in 1970s – people called *"les exclus"*

- Also called the *"Othered"*
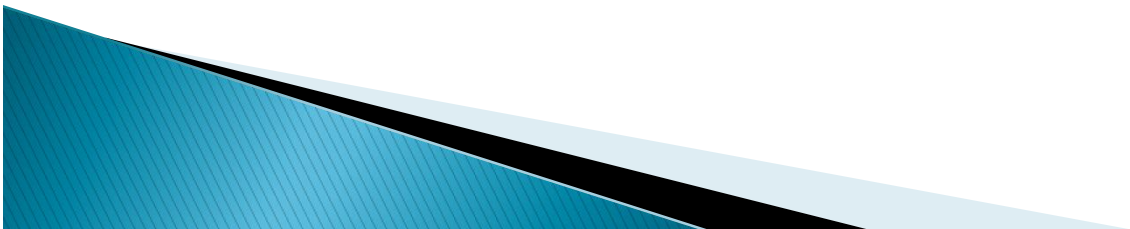
# Backstory of Social Inclusion (Cont'd)

- 1980s European Community (EC) launched a social inclusion program

- 1997 – United Kingdom created "Social Exclusion Unit" – championed by Prime Minister Tony Blair

- 1998 – Programs in Scotland and Northern Ireland initiated
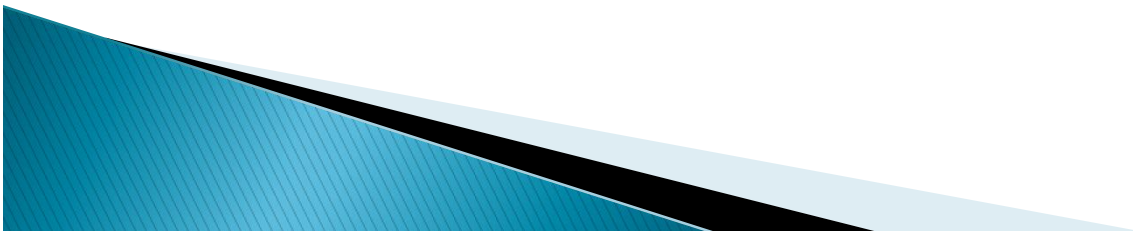
# 2010 – Landmark Conference in Melbourne, Australia

▸ Convened by the International Federation on Ageing (IFA) "Social Inclusion for an Ageing Population"

▸ Brought together senior government officials from developed/developing countries

▸ Forum to examine current social inclusion trends, policies and programs
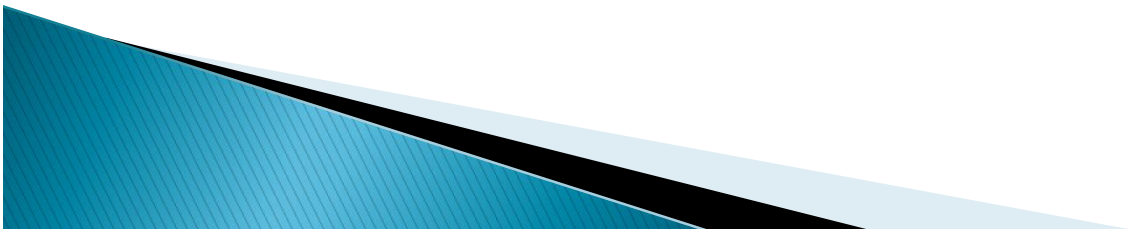
▸ **Opportunity for dialogue and interaction among senior government officials**

▸ **Focus on older people**

# Health and Social Determinants of Health

- Canada is committed to a population health approach to social inclusion

- Social determinants provides a broad and inclusive framework within which to situate prevention, early detection and effective intervention of the abuse of older persons

- Also helps identification of those vulnerable and at risk

- Results in early screening/ prevention

# Ageism

▸ While not a determinant, it is well known for marginalizing older people

▸ A key factor for social isolation and exclusion

# Determinants of Health

▸ **Income, income distribution, and social status**

◦ Research indicates that income and social status are the single most important determinants of health.

◦ Studies show that health status improves at each step up the income and social hierarchy.

◦ Societies which are reasonably prosperous and have a equitable distribution of wealth have the healthiest populations, regardless of the amount they spend on health care.

# Determinants of Health (cont'd)

- **Social support networks**
  - Better health is associated with support from families, friends, and communities.
  - Some studies conclude that the health effect of social relationships may be as important as established risk factors such as smoking, obesity, high blood pressure, and a sedentary lifestyle.

# Determinants of Health (Cont'd)

- **Education and literacy**
  - Health status improves with the level of education and literacy, including self-ratings of positive health or indicators of poor health such as activity limitation or lost work days.

  - Education increases opportunities for income and job security, and provides people with a sense of control over life circumstances – key factors that influence health.

# Determinants of Health (cont'd)

- **Employment and working conditions**
  - People who have more control over their work circumstances and fewer stress-related demands on the job are healthier.
  - Workplace hazards and injuries are significant causes of health problems.
  - Unemployment is associated with poorer health.

# Determinants of Health (cont'd)

- **Social environments**
  - Societal values and rules affect the health and well-being of individuals and populations.

  - Social stability, recognition of diversity, safety, good human relationships, and community cohesiveness provide a supportive social environment which mitigates risks to optimal health.

# Determinants of Health (cont'd)

▸ **Physical environment**

- Physical factors in the natural environment such as air, water, and soil quality are key influences on health.

- Factors in the human-built environment such as housing, workplace safety, community and road design are also important factors

# Determinants of Health (cont'd)

- **Healthy child development**
  - The effect of prenatal and early childhood experiences on health in later life, well-being, coping skills, and competence is very powerful.

  - For example, a low birth weight links with health and social problems throughout the lifespan.

  - In addition, mothers at each step up the income scale have children with higher birth weights, on average, than those on the step below.

# Determinants of Health (cont'd)

▸ **Personal health practices**

- ◦ Personal practices such as smoking, using of alcohol and other drugs, healthy eating, physical activity, and other behaviours, affect health and well-being.

- ◦ Many of Canada's most common health problems are linked to these practices.
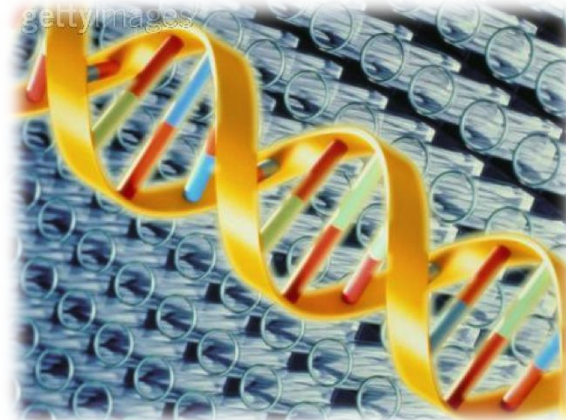
# Determinants of Health (cont'd)

- **Individual capacity and coping skills**
  - Social environments that enable and support healthy choices and lifestyles, as well as people's knowledge, intentions, behaviours, and coping skills for dealing with life in healthy ways, are key influences on health.

# Determinants of Health (cont'd)

▸ **Biology and genetic endowment**

　◦ The basic biology and organic make-up of the human body are fundamental determinants of health.

　◦ Inherited predispositions influence the ways individuals are affected by particular diseases or health challenges.

# Determinants of Health (cont'd)

- **Health services**
  - Health services, especially those designed to maintain and promote health, prevent disease and injury, and restore health, contribute to population health.

# Determinants of Health (cont'd)

▸ **Gender**
  ◦ Refers to the many different roles, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, relative powers, and influences which society assigns to the two sexes.

  ◦ Each gender has specific health issues or may be affected in different ways by the same issue.

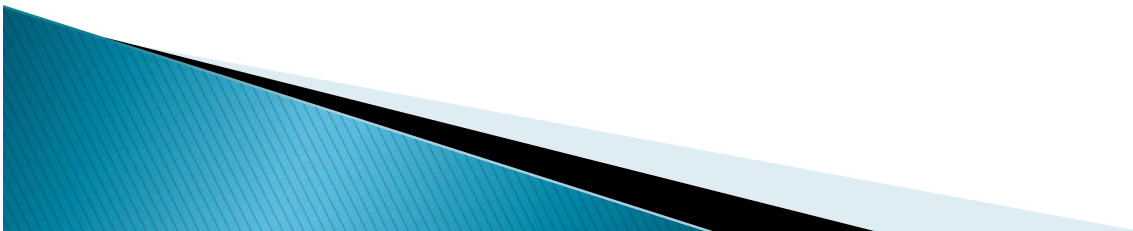# Determinants of Health (cont'd)

- ## Culture and ethnicity
  - ◦ Come from both personal history and wider situational, social, political, geographic, and economic factors.

# Determinants of Health (cont'd)

- It is acknowledged that culture and gender have a cross-cutting, influential effect on all the other health determinants.

(Health Canada, 2001)

# Laidlaw Foundation

▸ Toronto based social justice agency

▸ States proactive social inclusion – means going from non-discrimination to anti-discrimination

▸ Social inclusion more than just bringing outsiders in –about reducing social and economic distances separating people

▸ Involving people at community level

▸ Universal program

# Laidlaw Foundation: Five Critical Dimensions of Social Inclusion

| Cornerstones of Social Inclusion | |
|---|---|
| Valued Recognition | Respect of others/ difference extended through systems |
| Human Development | Nurture peoples' skills and growth to make own choices |
| Involvement & Engagement | Right and support to be involved/ control decisions affecting you |
| Proximity | Share public space; integrated schools; exposure to diversity |
| Material well-being | Housing, food, social activity, etc. |

(2003)

- Valued recognition involves acknowledging and respecting individuals and groups as well as supporting a common worth through universal programs like health care.

- The human development dimension requires fostering the skills, capacities and choices of individuals to live a life they value and one in which they are able to contribute in a manner they and others find meaningful.

- **Involvement and engagement** involves having and being able to exercise the right to be involved in decision making and other activities that directly affect oneself, one's family and community.

- **Proximity** includes reducing social distances between people by sharing physical and social spaces that facilitate interactions.

- **Material well-being** calls for the necessary material resources in order to participate fully in community life.

- Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) focus on inclusion oriented projects for disability communities

- Found main barriers to inclusion for people with disabilities in Canada are poverty and isolation

- Core theme – Fostering a sense of valuing and celebrating processes aimed at improving social inclusion as well as outcomes

(Rajan, 2002)

"We tend to forget that the politics of freedom is rooted in a universal human need for somewhere in the world you can come into your own."

(Jackson 1995: 125)

# Need to Belong
*Because Belonging Helps us Survive*

- Maslow (1970) proposed belonging was one of the five basic needs required for self-actualization

- Alfred Adler (1930) – All human beings have a need to belong
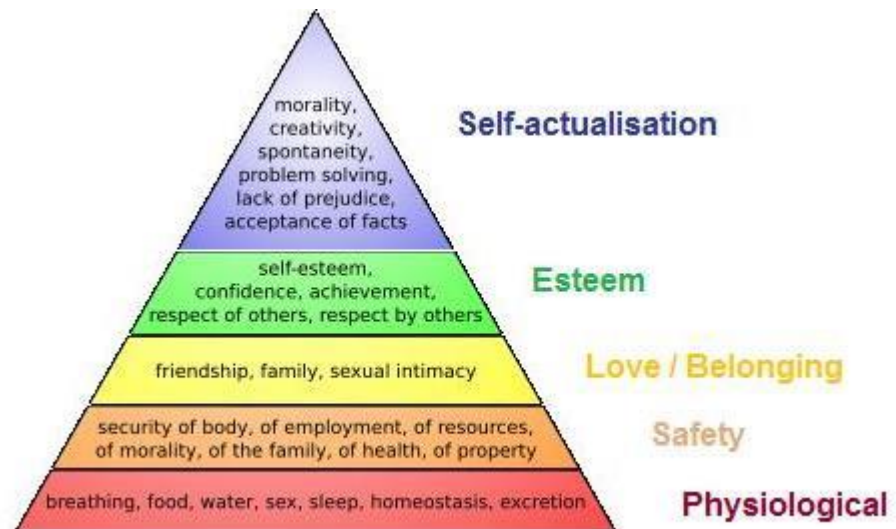
# Need to Belong (cont'd)

▸ Being isolated – not included, is an extremely disturbing experience

▸ Research shows reaction in the brain is comparable to physical pain  (Eisenberger 2003)

▸ MacDonald & Leary (2005) have written an article "Why Does Social Exclusion Hurt? The Relationships Between Social & Physical Pain"

# Need to Belong (cont'd)

▸ **Failure to need to belong relates to negative consequences:**
  ◦ Report poorer health
  ◦ More health conditions
  ◦ Functional limitations

▸ **Further research required**

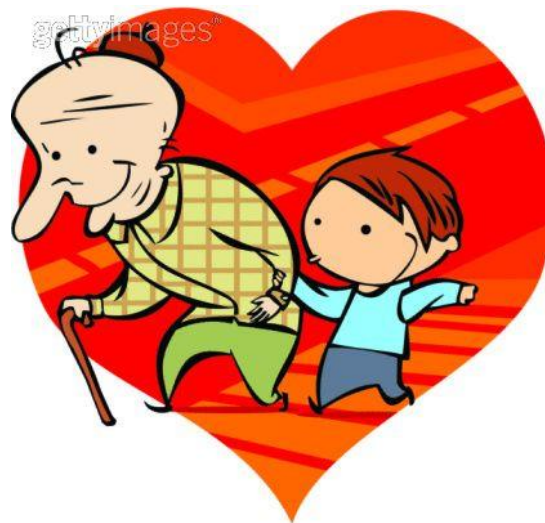▸ **When older person is being abused or mistreated support social network is threatened**
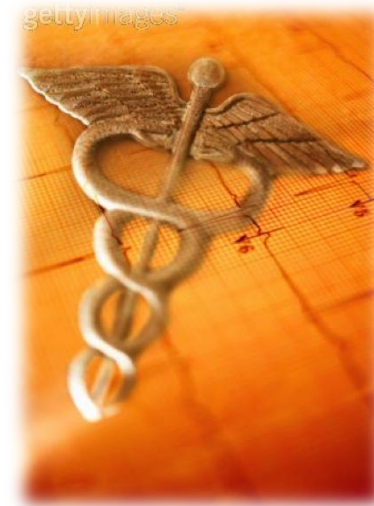
# Need to Belong (cont'd)

- Older person may receive the message:

  "You are not important to society."

- Belonging gives sense of identity – of value – of meaning

# Conclusion

## Social inclusion – the right thing to do

▸ A world concern

▸ Countries looking for ways in which to reshape or improve on a broader multi-dimensional concept of both inclusion and exclusion

# Goals

▸ Poverty reduction

▸ Equal opportunity

▸ Strengthen capability

▸ Increased participation

# Goals (cont'd)

▸ Social inclusion should not only encompass poverty and inequality but also physical, social, economic human asset, social asset and political involvement dimensions

(IFA, 2010)

# Goals (cont'd)

▸ Gatherings such as this symposium at Leyden will hopefully enhance scholarly and policy centered understanding of social inclusion as the agendas of countries continue to unfold and develop.

# Thank you for listening