

I'm a caregiver, am I at risk of abuse?

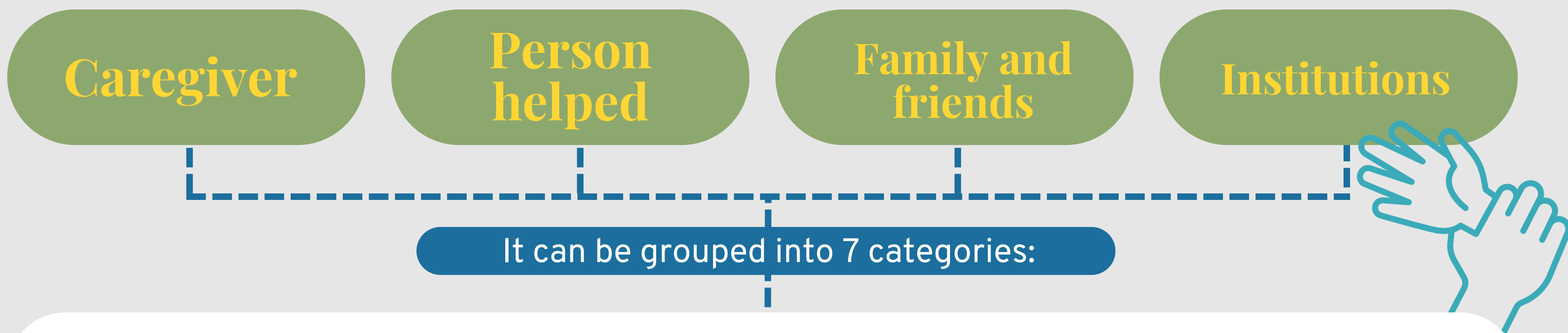
Abuse is a taboo subject, but it's nonetheless part of everyday life. Sometimes so common that it is often normalized. According to Quebec's national public health institute, "abuse occurs when a singular or repetitive gesture, or lack of appropriate action, whether intentional or not, occurs in a relationship where there should be trust, and that it causes harm or distress to a person".

Caregivers can be considered potentially abusive towards the person they are helping. They may also be responsible for ensuring that their loved one is not abused. Is it conceivable that caregivers could also be abused?

Action research was conducted on the subject by Sophie Éthier. Here are the highlights:

(Sophie Éthier, a full professor at Université Laval and a researcher in the field of caregivers (VITAM, CEVQ, IVPSA, CREGÉS), is the lead researcher for the principal investigator of the partnership action research)

Abuse of caregivers can come from 4 sources:



Imposition of the role of caregiver and over-responsibility :

You can keep him at home, he is so much better with you.

Judgment of the caregiver's way of doing things:

If you were more patient with him it would go better.

Normalization of the caregiver's role and the abuse experienced in the exercise of this

Yes: no you worry too much, he looks fine.

Denial of the caregiver's expertise and family and social contribution :

We'll take care of everything now, so get some rest. Come and see him less often, we're here to take care of him.

Denial of the caregiver's needs:

No, there's no question of a stranger coming into the house when you're away.

Use of psychological, physical or sexual violence against the caregiver:

You're never there for me, you always leave me alone, you're unreliable...

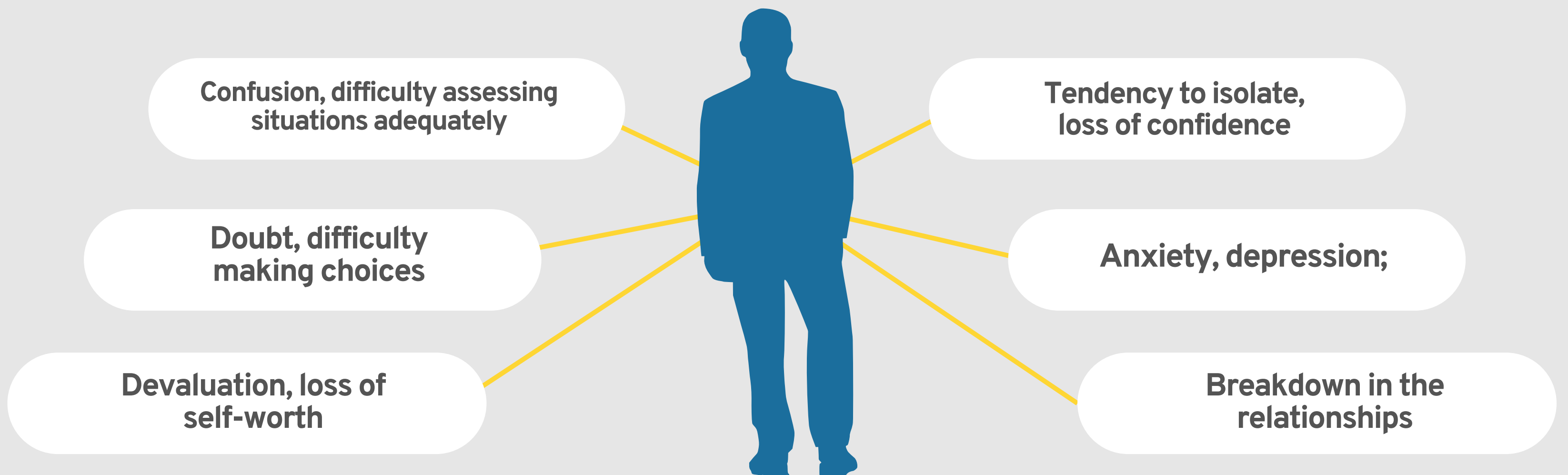
Contribution to the impoverishment of the caregiver:

I'll save my money to pay for gas for my loved one's appointments instead of going to the hairdresser.

**Have you ever experienced this kind of situation?
If so, would you have associated it with abuse?**

I'm a caregiver, am I at risk of abuse?

What impact does abuse have on caregivers?



Here are a few tips to help me recognize the presence of abuse in my role as a caregiver :

Becoming aware of the power game, is there a balance of power in the dyad (caregiver and person helped)?

Recognize the role guilt plays in my decisions, in my posture or stance in certain situations;

Listening to the distress I may feel discomfort, physical discomfort, thoughts physical discomfort, recurring thoughts.

So, just as a gardener distinguishes between the herbs he grows and those he doesn't, we are the gardeners of our own existence. Neither bad nor good, unwanted weeds are part of life. Mistreatment can be weeded out, but more importantly, kindness can be sown.



Whether intentional or unintentional, abuse should never be tolerated. Together, let us work the earth, choosing the seeds of our thoughts and actions. Let's create a beautiful garden where everyone lives in harmony with its surroundings. Let's compost weeds, because nothing is lost, nothing is created, everything is transformed!

Ressources

- Elder Abuse Helpline : [1-888-489-2287](tel:1-888-489-2287)
- SOS violence conjugale 24/7 : [1-800-363-9010](tel:1-800-363-9010)
- Crime victim assistance centers : [1-866-532-2822](tel:1-866-532-2822)
- Kids Help Phone : [1-800-668-6868](tel:1-800-668-6868)
- Toll-free line for victims of sexual assault : [1-888-933-9007](tel:1-888-933-9007)
- Youth Protection Service : [1-800-567-681](tel:1-800-567-681)