

Examining the use and effectiveness of Elder Abuse Protocols: a Western Australian case study

Dr Barbara Blundell & Ms Diedre Timms

5th National Elder Abuse Conference
19-20 February 2018
Sofitel Sydney Wentworth

Project funded by:



Government of Western Australia
Department of Communities

Overview

- Background and context
- Aims and objectives
- Research process and demographics
- Findings
- 2017 Elder Abuse Protocol
- Next steps



Background and Context



- Advocacy for older West Australians
- Elder Abuse Helpline
1300 724 679
- Elder Abuse awareness & education

APEA: WA

Alliance for the Prevention of Elder Abuse: Western Australia

- High level policy group –
government and non-government
- Elder Abuse Protocols: Guidelines
for Action (APEA: WA versions
2006, 2013, 2017)

Aims and Objectives

Aim: to review, evaluate and update the Elder Abuse Protocols: Guidelines for Action (APEA: WA, 2013)

Objectives:

- To gather data about the usefulness and effectiveness of the previous version of the Elder Abuse Protocols as well as stakeholder suggestions for improvement
- To review relevant literature and other similar documents in relevant jurisdictions and use this to inform an updated document

Research Process and Demographics

- Reviewed similar documents
- 3 Focus Groups (n=19)
 - APEA:WA (n=7)
 - Advocare (n=5)
 - WANPEA (n=7)
- Online Survey (n=44)
 - Frontline Worker 54%
 - Supervisor/Coordinator 20%
 - Senior Management 31%

Participant Organisations	Focus Groups	Survey	Total
Health service provider	1	18	19
Aged care service	1	9	10
Government	4	5	9
Older person's advocacy	6	1	7
Other community service	1	5	6
Legal services and police	4	1	5
Peer volunteers	-	2	2
Policy organisation	2	-	2
(not specified)	-	2	2
Local government	-	1	1
Total	19	44	63

Focus Group Themes

- **Document design and amendments:** target, purpose, design, other information and resources to include, future articulations
- **Effectiveness and usage of previous APEA: WA Protocols (2013)**
- **Elder abuse responses:** policies and procedures, reporting, organisational and service responses
- **Education:** support policies and procedures with education and training


Survey Findings

- Respondent's organisations with elder abuse policy, procedure or process:

Yes = 76% No = 17% Unsure = 7%

- Believed policy, procedure, process followed in 90% of cases
- 84% familiar with 2013 Elder Abuse Protocols
- 100% find it a useful document
- Suggestions
- Limitations

APEA:WA Elder Abuse Protocol (2017)



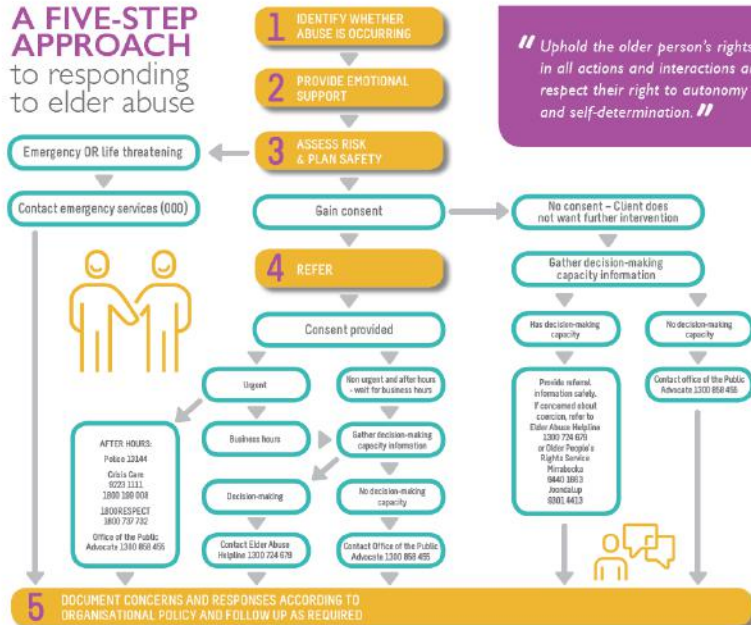
Elder Abuse Protocol:

GUIDELINES FOR ACTION
Assisting staff and professionals working with older people to identify and respond to Elder Abuse

APEA: WA
Alliance for the Prevention of Elder Abuse:
Western Australia

Advocare Inc.
Department of Communities
Department of Health WA
Department of Local Government,
Sport and Cultural Industries –
Office of Multicultural Interests
Department of Planning,
Heritage and Lands
Legal Aid (WA)
Office of the Chief Psychiatrist
Office of the Public Advocate
Older People's Rights Service
Public Trustee
WA Police
Western Australian Local
Government Association

A FIVE-STEP APPROACH to responding to elder abuse



“ Uphold the older person's rights in all actions and interactions and respect their right to autonomy and self-determination. ”



- ### Intervention principles
- Do no harm
 - Accept what the older person is saying
 - Do not escalate action unnecessarily
 - Assess safety and risks and implement safety management plans
 - Uphold the older person's rights in all actions and interactions and respect their right to autonomy and self-determination
 - If you have doubts about the older person's decision-making ability, make appropriate referrals
 - Recognise the importance of preserving family relationships where possible
 - Responses should take into account the needs of the older person in relation to disability, culture, language, religion, gender, sexual and historical abuse and reporting experience
 - Know your organisation's policies and procedures, including duty of care responsibilities
 - Be aware of the potential for conflict of interest, especially in small communities or within service settings
 - Be clear about your role in supporting the older person and do not be co-opted into other people's agendas
 - Be informed about elder abuse and engage in training where suitable

Next Steps

Advocare, supported by the WA Department of Communities:

- Develop new protocols
- Deliver protocol workshops to inform relevant stakeholders
- Target audience – those that interact with older people
 - Service providers
 - Universities
 - WA Police
 - Emergency services
 - Local government authorities
 - Government departments
 - Community organisations

Contact details

Dr Barbara Blundell

Lecturer | School of Occupational Therapy,
Social Work & Speech Pathology
Faculty of Health Sciences

Curtin University

Email | barbara.blundell@curtin.edu.au

Web | <http://curtin.edu.au>

Ms Diedre Timms

Chief Executive Officer



WA Elder Abuse Helpline: 1300 724 769

E: diedret@advocare.org.au

W: www.advocare.org.au



References

- ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services. (2012). *ACT elder abuse prevention program policy*. Canberra: ACT Government.
- Aged Rights Advocacy Service Inc. (2011). *Protocol for Responding to Abuse of Older People Living at Home in the Community*. Adelaide: ARAS.
- Alliance for the Prevention of Elder Abuse: Western Australia. (2013). *Elder Abuse Protocol: Guidelines for Action*. Perth: APEA: WA.
- Australian Institute of Family Studies. (2015). CFCA Practitioner Resource - Responding to Children and Young People's Disclosures of Abuse: What to do during the disclosure. Accessed 19 October 2017. Retrieved from: <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/responding-children-and-young-people-s-disclosures-abu>
- Community Services (ACT). (undated). Elder Abuse Prevention Pathways. Canberra: ACT Government, Community Services.
- NSW Elder Abuse Helpline & Resource Unit. (2016). NSW Elder Abuse Toolkit: Identifying and responding to the abuse of older people: the 5-step approach. Sydney: NSW Elder Abuse Helpline & Resource Unit. Accessed 16 November 2017. Retrieved from: <http://www.elderabusehelpline.com.au/uploads/pdf/Toolkit%20-%20FINAL%20-%20WEB.pdf>

References

Office for the Ageing. (2015). *Strategy to Safeguard the Rights of Older South Australians: Action Plan 2015-2021*. Adelaide: Government of South Australia, SA Health.

Office of the Public Advocate (QLD). (2012). *Elder abuse resource directory: A Queensland guide to services, assistance and information*. Brisbane: OPA. (QLD).

Elder Abuse Prevention Unit. (2012). *A Guide for Elder Abuse Protocols*. Brisbane, Elder Abuse Prevention Unit.

Family & Community Services (NSW). (2014). *Preventing and responding to abuse of older people: NSW interagency policy*. Sydney: NSW Government, Family & Community Services.

Medibank Health Solutions. (2016). *1800RESPECT: National sexual assault, domestic family violence counselling service*. [web page]. Accessed 27 October 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.1800respect.org.au/>

Pillemer, K., Burnes, D., Riffin, C., & Lachs, M. S. (2016). *Elder Abuse: Global Situation, Risk Factors, and Prevention Strategies*. *The Gerontologist*, 56(Suppl 2), S194-S205. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnw004>