



VICTORIA POLICE

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

INFORMING AND ENHANCING POLICING RESPONSES TO ELDER ABUSE

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- Priority Communities Division established in 2013
- Seven priority communities identified:
 - Aboriginal
 - Disability
 - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and gender diverse and Intersex (LGBTI)
 - Mental Health
 - Multicultural and Multifaith
 - **Seniors**
 - Young People
- Underpinned by a Human Rights approach

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EQUALITY IS NOT THE SAME...

VICTORIA POLICE RESPONSE TO COMMUNITY CONSULTATION AND REVIEWS ON
FIELD CONTACT POLICY AND DATA COLLECTION AND CROSS CULTURAL TRAINING



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Family Violence Quick Guide



Learn about elder abuse at development day

A professional development day will be hosted by the Priority Communities Division and Family Violence Command to mark World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD).

The event will be at the Victoria Police Academy from 9.30am to 2pm on Friday, 16 June and will feature a discussion panel of internal and external experts as well as other sessions and activities.

Elder abuse is a form of family violence defined as a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, within a relationship of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person. It includes financial, emotional, psychological, physical, social and sexual abuse and neglect.

It is estimated that between one and five per cent of older people may experience some form of elder abuse, with more than 90 per cent of instances

committed by adult children.

About 50 per cent of elder abuse is related to financial matters.

WEAAD is recognised internationally on Thursday, 15 June and members are encouraged to engage with local seniors organisations and participate in local events.

To register for the professional development day on Friday, 16 June, contact Priority Communities Division's Dahn Houseman via email.

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Victoria Police Gazette article

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Elder Abuse Factsheet



Elder Abuse

The purpose of this factsheet is to encourage police to always consider appropriate family violence responses to elder abuse.

We all have a right to respect and dignity as we get older. The World Health Organisation defines elder abuse as a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person. It includes financial, emotional, psychological, physical, social and sexual abuse and neglect.

Elder abuse is often a complex, hidden problem which may occur regardless of a person's gender, sexuality, culture, ethnicity, religious or socio-economic background.

Elder abuse:

- is most often intra-familial, perpetrated by intimate partners or adult children,
- can occur in a range of environments including family and friendship networks, aged care facilities or hospitals,
- may not be reported to police due to a combination of fear, shame and love on the part of the affected older person.

Historically in Australia, people 65 years and over are generally considered to be older persons. However, in some cultural contexts, such as in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities a person in their 40s or 50s may be considered older.

Elder abuse is not . . .

Offences committed against older people by strangers or people who are not in a relationship with trust in them are not considered elder abuse. They are crimes.

For example:

- Fraud or theft by door to door comen.
- Physical assault by a stranger grabbing a handbag whilst walking down the street.
- Sexual assault by a carer not in a family-like relationship.
- Dispute with a neighbour over a fence line.

The scope of the problem

The incidence of elder abuse is likely to increase with population ageing. In 2050, over 20% of the population is projected to be over 65.

Current research estimates indicate that in the general population of Australia:

- 2-10 % of older people may experience some form of elder abuse;
- over 90% of elder abuse is perpetrated by a person related to the older person, or in a de facto relationship with the older person.

Best practice response

Elder abuse is a form of family violence and must be treated as such. It is often a crime and you should investigate it using all available means including offences under the Crimes Act 1958.

With the exception of some forms of neglect, elder abuse falls under the Family Violence Protection Act 2008. Your response should be guided by the Code of Practice for the Investigation of Family Violence.

You should use your powers under the Act where relevant to ensure the Affected Family Member is kept safe and the perpetrator(s) held to account.

The Family Violence Risk Assessment Ready Reckoner may be used to identify high risk factors for the older person, and prepare quality narratives in LEDR Mk2. Civil and criminal actions are available to you and referrals must be made.

Elder Abuse Suspicion Index

When undertaking a welfare check with an older person it is recommended that you also apply the Elder Abuse Suspicion Index as a screening tool to identify whether or not the older person may be a victim of abuse. Ask the person:

1. Has anyone prevented you from getting food, clothes, medication, glasses, hearing aids or medical care, or from being with the people you wanted to be with?
2. Has anyone made you afraid, touched you in ways that you did not want, or hurt you physically?
3. Has anyone forced you to sign papers or use your money against your will?

A "yes" response to any of these questions should raise concerns about elder abuse and the Code of Practice for the Investigation of Family Violence should be applied.

An older person may have difficulties understanding these questions due to cognitive impairment or language barrier.



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