

## *Signs of elder abuse*

- Broken bones or fractures
- Poor Physical Appearance
- Depression, tearfulness
- Frequent Infections
- Bruising, welts or cuts
- Unexplained weight loss
- Refusal to speak
- Signs of dehydration
- Lack of cleanliness
- Social withdrawal

## *Health Issues caused by elder abuse*

The health consequences of elder abuse are serious. They can be:

- Declining functional abilities
- Increased dependency
- Increased sense of helplessness
- Increased stress
- Worsening psychological/mental decline
- Premature death and sickness
- Depression and dementia
- Malnutrition, bed sores
- Death

The risk of death for elder abuse victims are three times higher than for non-victims.

## **Report elder abuse**

### **Ring Triple zero 000**

#### **NSW Elder Abuse Hotline**

1800 628 221

#### **My Aged Care**

#### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people**

1800 200 422

#### **Seniors Rights Service**

1800 424 079

#### **TTY users call**

13 36 77 (then ask for 02 9281 3600)

Office Hours 9am - 5pm

#### **National Aged Care Advocacy Line**

1800 700 600 (freecall)

#### **The Aged-care Rights Service (TARS)**

is an advocacy service for older residents of nursing homes, hostels and retirement villages and people receiving Community Aged Care Packages.

02 9281 3600 - NSW country callers can phone toll-free 1800 424 079.

#### **Lifeline**

13 11 14

Lifeline has a national number who can help put you in contact with a crisis service in your State.



NSW Police Force

## **Elders Abuse**

Working Together to Build  
a Safer Community



No older person should be subjected to any form of abuse, referred to as elder abuse

### *What is elder abuse?*

Elder abuse (or abuse of older people) is any act or lack of proper care, that happens in a relationship where as an older person you expect care and assistance but instead causes you harm or distress. The abuser may be a:

- son or daughter
- grandchild
- partner
- other family member
- friend
- neighbour
- carer

The abuse can be accidental or deliberate. The harm caused to an older person may range from the effects of poor care through to serious deliberate physical injury. Harm can also include emotional harm and financial loss including the loss of a home and belongings.

The older person may be dependent on the abuser and rely on the abuser for care. It is also common for the abuser to depend on the support of the older person, for example for accommodation.

Sometimes, there may be a relationship where both the older person and the abuser depend on each other.

### *Is elder abuse family violence?*

Elder abuse is a form of family violence. Family violence can occur between any family members (parents, spouses, children, partners) whether living together or not. Legal protection is available to older people who experience family violence/ elder abuse. This includes the right to apply for a Domestic Violence Order to protect someone from further abuse.

### *What are the types of elder abuse?*

Elder abuse can take many forms. Often more than one type of abuse can be used.

**Emotional (or mental) abuse:** Using threats, bullying, shaming, verbal abuse including name-calling, or preventing contact with family and friends, frightening and/or threatening to harm someone, threats to harm someone's pet or breaking things, taking control of the person's home without their consent.

**Neglect:** Failure to provide proper: food, shelter, clean clothing, heating/cooling, medicines, medical or dental care. Under- or over-medicating, exposure to danger or lack of supervision, refusal to permit others to provide assessments or proper care or preventing the person from accessing services and/or equipment and support.

**Financial abuse:** Threatening, forcing or manipulating a person to change their Will or sign documents. Taking control of a person's

money against their wishes and denying access to their own money, stealing things e.g. jewellery, credit cards, cash, food or other possessions. Stealing money such as pension –skimming and selling belongings without the person's permission. Recent addition of a signature on a bank account.

**Physical abuse:** Inflicting pain or injury by hitting with a weapon or object, slapping, pushing or using restraints - physically or medically.

**Social abuse:** Forcing someone to become isolated by restricting their access to others including family, friends or services.

**Sexual Abuse:** Any sexual activity for which the person has not consented: - touching or penetration of the vagina or anus, any unwanted sexualised behaviour such as grabbing someone's breast or penis; exposing genitals, cleaning or treating the older person's genital area roughly or inappropriately, any unwanted or unwelcome sexual behaviours

Physical and sexual abuse are a crime and should be reported to the police.

**Ring Triple zero 000.**

