Respecting our Elders

Abuse Prevention Referral and Information Line (APRIL)
02 6205 3535

Respecting Our Elders
ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION IN THE ACT

WHAT IS ELDER ABUSE?
For the purpose of this publication Elder Abuse is defined as the mistreatment or exploitation of an older person by someone that they know and trust. It includes:

FINANCIAL ABUSE
The illegal or improper use of an older person’s finances or property. It may include stealing, misappropriating money, forcing changes to a will or other legal documents, denying access to personal funds forging signatures or misusing Power of Attorney.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE
Inflicting mental anguish through actions that cause fear of violence, isolation or deprivation, and feelings of shame and powerlessness.

PHYSICAL ABUSE
Physical coercion or the infliction of pain or injury.

SEXUAL ABUSE
Unwanted sexual behaviour including sexual assault, indecent assault, sexual harassment or inappropriate touching.

SOCIAL ABUSE
Preventing a person from having contact with friends or family, or access to social activities. It includes intrusion, isolation, and preventing independence using threats, manipulation, and control.

NEGLECT
The failure of a carer to provide the necessities of life to a person for whom they are caring.

APRIL PHONE LINE – 02 6205 3535
The Abuse Prevention Referral and Information Line (APRIL) is a telephone service provided by the Community Participation Group that provides a single point of contact for people who want to discuss elder abuse issues and seek advice and referral on options. The service operates Monday - Friday during business hours.

Each year the ACT Government promotes elder abuse awareness on or near this day. If you would like to assist in promoting awareness in your neighbourhood, organisation or group, please contact the Community Participation Group on 6205 3535.
**AT RISK GROUPS**

Abuse of older people crosses gender, socio-economic, religious and cultural boundaries. Abuse is most likely to be inflicted by family members, especially an older person’s adult children. Older people are at increased risk of abuse when they:

- have a disability or poor health;
- are living with mental health issues;
- are in dependent caring relationships, particularly where a carer is experiencing carer burden or carer stress;
- are isolated and/or without personal supports;
- have a past history of violence or conflict within the family;
- exhibit particularly difficult and/or inappropriate behaviour, and/or confusion or memory loss;
- Persons from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; or
- exhibit signs and symptoms of cognitive impairment including dementia.

**PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO ABUSE OF OLDER PEOPLE**

The ACT Elder Abuse Prevention Program is coordinated by the Community Participation Group within the ACT Community Services Directorate. The Elder Abuse Prevention Working Group and the ACT Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing provide advice about this program as required. Other key contacts include:

**Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT)**

www.alsnswact.org.au | 02 6249 8488

Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) is an Aboriginal community organisation giving information and referral, and legal advice and court representation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men, women and children across NSW and ACT.

**ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal**

www.acat.act.gov.au | 02 6207 1740

Guardianship and management of property orders.

**ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service (ADACAS)**

www.adacas.org.au | 02 6242 5060

Provides advocacy and information for people with disabilities, older people and their carers.

**ACT Human Rights Commission**

www.hrc.act.gov.au | 02 6205 2222

Deals with complaints about discrimination, health services and services for elderly people and their carers.

**ACT Law Society**

www.actlawsociety.asn.au | 02 6274 0300

The ACT Law Society represents, advances, and defends the interests of an independent legal profession in the ACT.

**Aged Care Complaints Scheme**

Commonwealth Department of Social Services


Provides a free service for anyone to raise their concerns about the quality of care or services being delivered to people receiving residential or community aged care services subsidised by the Australian Government.
ACT Policing:
Police Emergency Response (24hrs): Triple Zero 000
Police Assistance Line (24hrs): 131 444
Crime Stoppers: 1800 333 000
General enquiries: 02 6256 7777
Canberra Community Law
www.canberracommunitylaw.org.au | 02 6218 7900
Canberra Community Law (formerly Welfare Rights and Legal Centre) is a community legal centre providing legal services to people on low incomes or facing other disadvantage in Canberra and its region.

Care Inc
www.carefcs.org | 1800 007 007
Care Inc. is a community organisation set up to ensure low income consumers are treated fairly and have support to overcome debt.

Council on the Ageing – ACT (COTA ACT)
www.cotaact.org.au | 02 6282 3777
COTA ACT is the peak non-government organisation concerned with all issues related to ageing in the Australian Capital Territory.

Health Services Commissioner
www.hrc.act.gov.au/health | 02 6205 2222
The Commissioner’s mandate is to consider complaints about the provision of health services and services for older people, and complaints about contraventions of the Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997.

Legal Aid ACT
www.legalaidact.org.au | 02 6243 3411
Legal Aid ACT helps people in the ACT with their legal problems, especially people who are socially or economically disadvantaged.

Public Trustee for the ACT
www.publictrustee.act.gov.au | 02 6207 9800
Help and advice with will-making and with asset services under Enduring Power of Attorney.

Public Advocate of the ACT
www.publicadvocate.act.gov.au | 02 6207 0707
Provides a range of advocacy and statutory functions on behalf of individuals who are in need of protection from abuse, exploitation and neglect.

Victims of Crime Coordinator
www.victimsupport.act.gov.au | 1800 822 272

Women’s Legal Centre
www.womenslegalact.org | 02 6257 4377
The Women’s Legal Centre is a community legal centre for women in Canberra and the surrounding area. The Centre is run by women and aims to improve women’s access to justice.
## Elder Abuse Prevention Pathways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABUSE</th>
<th>FIRST RESPONSE QUESTIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FINANCIAL ABUSE</strong></td>
<td>Do the person require medical assistance?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Involves the illegal or improper use of a person’s finances or property by another person with whom they have a relationship implying trust.</td>
<td>Is the person in danger or a victim of a crime?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What if I don’t know who to call?</td>
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<tr>
<td>May include:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• misappropriation of money</td>
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<td>• forced changes to a will or other legal document</td>
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<td>• denial of the right to access personal funds</td>
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<td>• forging of signatures</td>
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<td>• misusing enduring power of attorney</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE</strong></td>
<td>Does the person need assistance with decision making?</td>
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<td>Is the infliction of mental anguish involving actions that cause fear of violence, isolation or deprivation and feelings of shame, indignity or powerlessness?</td>
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<tr>
<td>May include:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• verbal intimidation</td>
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<td>• threats of institutionalisation</td>
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<td>• humiliation or embarrassment</td>
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<td>• shouting</td>
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<td>• threats of physical harm</td>
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<td>• removal of decision making powers</td>
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<td>• withholding of affection</td>
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<td><strong>PHYSICAL ABUSE</strong></td>
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<td>Is the infliction of physical pain or injury or physical coercion.</td>
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<td>May include:</td>
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<td>• hitting, slapping, pushing, punching, kicking, beating, biting, scratching, shaking, arm twisting, dragging or burning</td>
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<td>• inappropriately restraining or medicating</td>
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<tr>
<td>• locking a person in a room</td>
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<td><strong>SEXUAL ABUSE</strong></td>
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<td>Is sexually abusive or exploitative behaviour.</td>
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<td>May include:</td>
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<td>• rape—sexual intercourse against the wishes of an individual</td>
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<td>• indecent assault—inappropriate sexual handling or touching</td>
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<td>• sexual harassment—inappropriate comments/labelling about general appearance, attitude and behaviour</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
• any behaviour that makes an older person feel uncomfortable about their body or gender

SOCIAL ABUSE
Involves preventing a person from having social contact with friends or family, or access to social activities.
May include:
• isolating a person from the support of family or friends
• not allowing a person to use the telephone or monitoring calls
• not allowing a person to socialise or meet neighbours

NEGLECT
Is the failure of a carer to provide the necessities of life to a person for whom they are caring? Neglect can be intentional or unintentional.
May include:
• inadequate or inappropriate food and drink, supervision, clothing or accommodation
• lack of mental, physical, social or cultural contact/stimulation
• unmet physical needs or medical treatment

Is the issue or concern about a health service or service for older people?

Is the issue or concern about a Commonwealth funded Service?

ABUSE PREVENTION REFERRAL AND INFORMATION LINE (APRIL)
6205 3535
www.ageing.act.gov.au
A confidential telephone service for callers who are seeking advice on elder abuse

Accessibility
The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events and venues, accessible to as many people as possible. If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like to receive this publication in an alternative format - such as large print and audio - please telephone (02) 6205 3535.
If English is not your first language and you require the translating and interpreting service - please telephone 131 450.