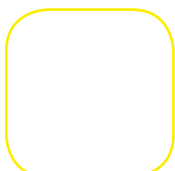


Victorian Government Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy

**What is elder abuse?**

Elder abuse is any act that harms older people and that is carried out by someone they know and should be able to trust, such as family or friends.

Such harm can be financial, psychological, physical, sexual or social, including mistreatment and neglect.

Studies indicate that between one and five percent of older people have experienced some form of abuse or neglect. Any form of abuse is totally unacceptable.

Elder abuse is likely to become more prevalent and prominent because of the ageing population and increasing numbers of people with dementia.

Types of abuse

Elder abuse affects the entire community and can occur in all areas of society, regardless of location, socioeconomic and health status, age, culture, gender, sexual identity, ethnicity or religion.

Research has found that:

- Financial abuse is one of the most common types of abuse,
- Other forms of abuse often accompany financial abuse;
- Elderly women are two or three times more likely to experience abuse than elderly men;
- Sons and daughters are most likely to be responsible for the abuse.

Financial abuse is the illegal, improper use or mismanagement of a person's money, financial resources, property or other possessions.

Who is usually responsible for elder abuse?

Elder abuse can occur in a range of relationships and environments but research has found that it is more likely to be perpetrated by a close relative.

Who is most likely to experience abuse?

Older women are two or three times more likely to experience abuse than older men.

How the Victorian Government is responding

The Government is committed to promoting and supporting the safety, dignity and independence of senior Victorians.

Older people have the right – as do people of all ages – to live safely in their own homes, free from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

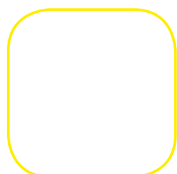
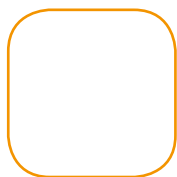
The Victorian Government Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy involves government departments, service providers and the community working together.

Initiatives include:

- General community education emphasising that abuse of older people is not acceptable,
- Strengthening the capacity of funded health and community service providers to follow up on suspicion or allegations of elder abuse;
- Establishing specialist legal and advocacy services to respond to the complex needs of older people, including people of culturally and linguistically diverse and Indigenous backgrounds,

Rights. Respect. Trust.

Victorian Government Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy



The importance of empowerment

All adults, no matter what age, have the right to self-determination and to make their own decisions based on informed choice. That is why empowerment is the key to preventing elder abuse.

Where can you get help?

The Government has established Seniors Rights Victoria. This free and confidential statewide telephone and advisory service aims to help prevent elder abuse and safeguard the rights, dignity and independence of senior Victorians.

Seniors Rights Victoria provides:

- a telephone helpline for information and referral,
- advocacy and support;
- legal advice;
- community and professional education.

The service works directly with older people who ring for advice and representation and with professionals who manage the financial, medical and legal affairs of older people.

Older people suffering abuse may also be identified through family, friends or service providers.

Seniors Rights Victoria can be contacted on **1300 368 821** from 10am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

Online: www.seniorsrights.org.au

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, **call 000**.

Who manages Seniors Rights Victoria?

Seniors Rights Victoria is funded by the Victorian Government through the Office of Senior Victorians and Victoria Legal Aid.

Seniors Rights Victoria is a partnership led by the Council on the Ageing with the Public Interest Law Clearing House, Eastern Community Legal Centre and Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre.

Seniors Rights Victoria operates from central Melbourne, as well as Melbourne's outer east and Bendigo. Pro bono clinics are being established to ensure a stronger regional presence across Victoria.

Further information

For further information on action the Victorian Government is taking to prevent elder abuse, please visit www.seniors.vic.gov.au.