

Physical abuse

An act that causes physical pain or injury to an older person. It can include, but is not limited to, actions such as hitting, pushing and kicking. Inappropriate use of medical or physical restraints is also an example of physical abuse.

Signs can include:

- Injuries such as skin trauma (e.g. bruising, skin tears, burns, welts, unexplained fractures and sprains)
- Signs of restraint (e.g. at the wrists or waist)
- Unexplained behaviour changes suggesting under-medication or over-medication
- Unusual patterns of injury

Sexual abuse

Any sexual behaviour performed without an older person's consent. It includes sexual contact and non-contact acts of a sexual nature that cause an older person to feel uncomfortable or threatened, or cause physical hurt.

Signs can include:

- Unexplained bruising or infections
- Reports of threats or coercion of a sexual nature

Sources: The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners 2014, Abuse and violence: working with our patients in general practice (4th edition), Melbourne; Seniors Rights Victoria 2021, Online Elder Abuse Tool Kit, <https://seniorsrights.org.au/resources-education/elder-abuse-toolkit/>

Social abuse

Forcing someone to become isolated by restricting their access to others including family, friends or services. This can be used to prevent others from finding out about the abuse.

Signs can include:

- anxiety, sadness or grief at loss of contact with others
- withdrawal or listlessness
- loss of self esteem

Neglect

The failure of a carer, or other responsible person, to meet an older person's basic needs such as food or medical care. It can include, but is not limited to, providing inadequate food, drink or supervision, isolating the older person, allocating medication inappropriately and failing to meet physical needs (e.g. in relation to hygiene and skin care).

Signs can include:

- Decline in hygiene (e.g. bad odour, urine rash)
- Malnourishment, weight loss, dehydration (dark urine, dry tongue, lax skin)
- Bed sores (sacrum, hips, heels, elbows)
- Being over-sedated or under-sedated
- Broken or missing aids such as spectacles, dentures, hearing aid or walking frame

Help is available

Emergency and support services

If an older person is in clear and present danger of harm, call triple zero (000).

Elder Abuse Helpline

If you or someone you know is experiencing elder abuse, call the Elder Abuse Helpline 1300 651 192 for free, confidential advice (Monday to Friday, 9.00 am to 5.00 pm).

Seniors Legal and Support Service (SLASS)

Seniors legal and social support services provide free legal advice, information and social work services for people over 60 who may be at risk of or experiencing elder abuse. Services are available across Queensland.

To find a service contact the Elder Abuse Helpline (1300 651 192) or go to qld.gov.au/stopelderabuse.

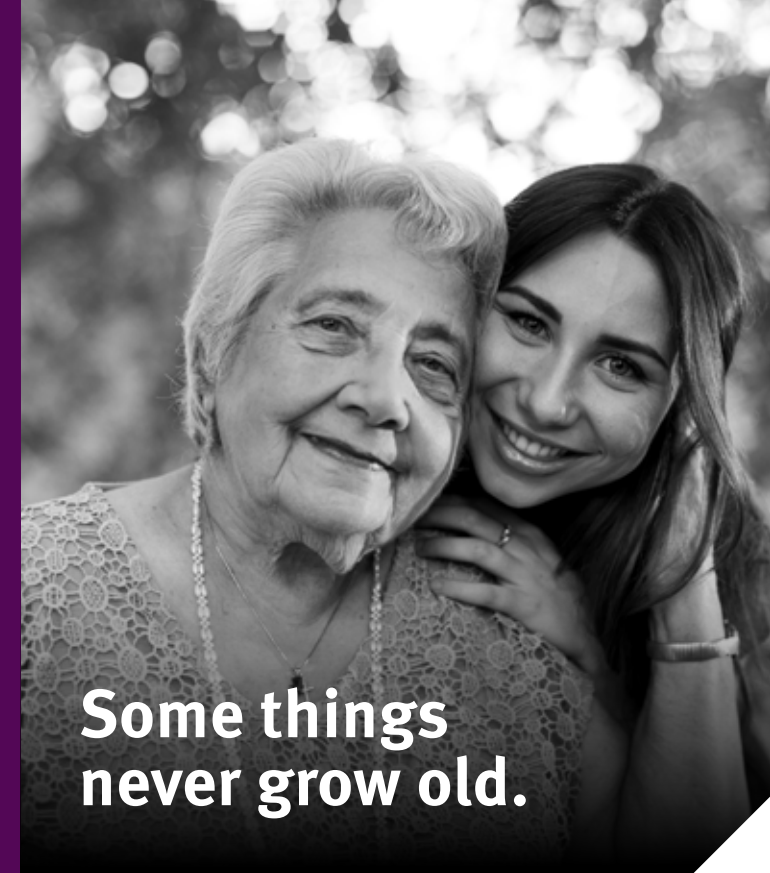
What happens when I call?

A trained helpline operator will speak to you about the situation and provide confidential advice and information about the assistance available.

Do I need proof?

You don't need to have proof to seek help.

For more information on services available across Queensland, visit qld.gov.au/stopelderabuse



**Some things
never grow old.**

**Respect, dignity, and feeling
safe never grow old.**

Elder abuse help or information

1300 651 192

qld.gov.au/stopelderabuse



**Queensland
Government**

Respect, dignity, feeling safe — the simple things people of all ages have a right to.

- I choose how my money is spent
- My will reflects my wishes
- I am treated with respect by those close to me
- I decide what happens in my home
- I feel safe
- I can access the things I need
- I can talk to someone I trust
- I am free to be with who I choose
- Decisions about my life consider my wishes and best interests

If these aren't true for you or an older person you know, help is available.

What is elder abuse?

Elder abuse is 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.

People often believe elder abuse is mainly committed by paid carers or other workers but sadly, most reported cases of elder abuse occur within family relationships.

Everyone has the right to be safe from violence and abuse. Elder abuse, whatever form it takes, violates this right.

We can all play a part in preventing elder abuse in our community. To do this, we need to be alert to the signs, understand that it can happen to any older person, and know where to get help and support.



More common than you think.
1 in 6 older Australians report experiencing abuse

Close to home.
Perpetrators are often in the family, most commonly adult children.

Hidden and underreported.
Almost two thirds of older people don't seek help when they are abused (61%).

There's no shame in seeking help. When you call the Elder Abuse Helpline, trained staff can talk through your concerns in a **safe, respectful, confidential** conversation that can help you with advice about your situation and provide information about other help available. All of this is done on your own terms.

* Source: National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study: Final Report, December 2021

Forms of abuse

Psychological abuse

Any act that causes emotional pain or injury to an older person. It can include, but is not limited to, insults or threats, humiliation or disrespect, and controlling behaviours such as confining or isolating the older person.

Signs can include:

- Reluctance to talk
- Anxiety, nervousness, fear, depression, apathy, resignation
- Withdrawal, avoidance of eye contact
- Rocking or huddling up
- Loss of interest in self or environment
- Insomnia or sleep deprivation

Financial abuse

The misuse or theft of an older person's money or assets. It can include, but is not limited to, using finances without permission, using an enduring power of attorney for purposes contrary to the interests of the older person, withholding care for financial gain, and selling or transferring property against the older person's wishes or without the person's knowledge.

Signs can include:

- Lack of money to purchase medication, food or personal items
- Defaulting on important payments
- Removal of assets from the family home or unauthorised use of assets