

## Elder Abuse

### Elder Abuse

Everyone has the right to live in a respectful and safe environment. However, people may not feel safe if they are experiencing abuse from a partner, a family member or another person who lives in their home, such as an adult child.

It is important to remember there are things you can do to protect yourself from violence or abuse.

### What is Elder Abuse?

Elder Abuse is any act that causes harm or distress to an older person by someone they trust. It can include:

- physical violence such as slapping, hitting, pushing, sexually abusing or restraining you
- calling you names, threatening you, intimidating you, swearing and shouting at you or humiliating you
- pressuring you to hand over money, taking control of your money or property, or forcing you to sign things you don't understand
- refusing to let you go out and do things and stopping contact with your family, friends or support services

- not giving you proper food, clothing or personal care. This can be intentional or unintentional.

Elder abuse can happen to anyone.

No matter how financially secure you currently are, circumstances can change quickly.

It is important you recognise the signs and seek help early.

### Connie's Story

*I agreed to borrow money on my credit card for my son and daughter in law to help them out. They promised it wouldn't cost me anything and they would make all the repayments. A few months later they split up and the repayments stopped.*

*There was no way I could manage the repayments from my pension and when the letters and phone calls came from the credit card company, the worry was making me really sick.*

*It took months to sort out with the help of a lawyer and financial counsellor. I wish I knew then what I know now, because as it turns out, my son and daughter in-law could have got help without involving me*

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### Getting Help

The National Elder Abuse Hotline will direct you to someone who can help.

The National Elder Abuse Hotline number is **1800 ELDERHelp (1800 353 374)**.

Legal Aid ACT can help through our Older Persons ACT Legal Service (OPALS) by providing advice and information about:

- how to set up an enduring power of attorney that will work best for you
- information about a guardian and financial manager
- how an “assets-for-care” arrangement may affect you
- what options you have if you find yourself being abused.

#### **Older Persons ACT Legal Service (OPALS)**

[www.legalaidact.org.au/opals](http://www.legalaidact.org.au/opals)

Phone: **6243 3436**

#### **Legal Aid ACT**

[www.legalaidact.org.au](http://www.legalaidact.org.au)

Phone: **1300 654 314**

#### **National Elder Abuse Hotline**

Phone: **1800 353 374**