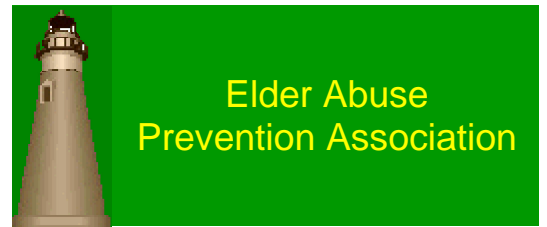


## Elder Abuse Prevention Association Fact Sheet



### Who We Are

The Elder Abuse Prevention Association (EAPA) is an association of advocates, practitioners, researchers, and volunteers dedicated to protecting the safety, security, and dignity of Australia's most vulnerable citizens. It was established in 2002 to achieve a clearer understanding of abuse and provide direction and awareness to prevent it. Our staff members not only have twenty years of investigative experience in elder abuse but also have years of global research in this arena.

### Mission Statement

The Elder Abuse Prevention Association will combat elder abuse and neglect by raising public awareness of the issue, through re-establishing the value and importance of older persons in our community, and by advocating priorities for the safety and welfare of all older persons throughout Australia.

### Goals and Objectives

Every year in Australia, we estimate that there are **over 100,000 elderly persons who suffer** the pain of psychological, physical, sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation at the hands of family members and carers. Their cries for help are often unheard and the victimisation is hidden behind the closed doors of our community and nursing institutions.

Elder abuse is a social problem that many people do not want to address or even acknowledge, making it more difficult to provide protection and services to those who are suffering. Through community efforts and the untiring assistance of volunteers, the Elder Abuse Prevention Association will continuously strive to meet the following objectives:

- Provide services for older persons who are abused, neglected, and/or exploited.
- Provide research initiatives to further investigate causative factors and preventative measures.
- Provide advocacy programs for older persons in need.
- Provide awareness and training to professionals and community groups to increase education levels on all aspects of elder abuse.
- Provide a central repository of data on the incidence of elder abuse and related case studies.
- Advocate appropriate legislative action to protect older persons.
- Establish a uniform model for national policies, procedures and definitions.

### What is Elder Abuse?

Elder abuse is the infliction of physical, emotional, and/or psychological harm on an older, vulnerable adult at the hands of a family member or a paid carer in an institution. Elder abuse can take the form of financial exploitation, intentional neglect of an older adult by the carer, or unintentional abuse due to ignorance of care issues.

**Physical abuse** can range from slapping or shoving to severe beatings and inappropriate restraint. Physical abuse can include hitting, beating, pushing, kicking, pinching, burning, or biting.

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**Emotional or psychological abuse** can range from name-calling or giving the “silent treatment” to intimidating and threatening the individual. When a family member or a carer behaves in a way that causes fear, mental anguish, and

emotional pain or distress, the behaviour can be regarded as abusive.

**Financial exploitation** can range from misuse of an older family member's funds to embezzlement. Financial exploitation includes fraud, taking money under false pretences, forgery, forced property transfers, purchasing expensive items with the older person's money without their knowledge or permission, or denying the older person access to his or her own funds or home. It also includes the improper use of legal guardianship arrangements or powers of attorney.

**Carer neglect** can range from withholding appropriate attention to intentionally failing to meet the physical, social, or emotional needs of the older person. Neglect can include failure to provide food, water, clothing, medications, and assistance with the activities of daily living or help with personal hygiene.

**Sexual abuse** can range from sexual exhibition to rape. It can include inappropriate touching, photographing the older person in suggestive poses, forcing the person to look at pornography, forcing sexual contact with a third party, or any unwanted sexualised behaviour. It also includes rape, sodomy, or coerced nudity.

### Where Do We Go From Here?

So where do we go from here in order to protect our older, more vulnerable friends, neighbours, and family members? There are no easy solutions or answers. We are at the very beginnings of this issue but every year we estimate that **there are 20,000 older Australians in Victoria alone** who are abused and neglected at the hands of their own family members or paid carers in an institution.

### Services Offered by the Elder Abuse Prevention Association

- Keynote Presentations on Elder Abuse for Conferences as well as Presentations to smaller groups
- Workshops on Elder Abuse – 1 day or ½ day specifically tailored for your group
- Policy Initiation and “Best Practices” Guideline Development for Agencies on Elder Abuse
- Independent and Objective Investigations on Incidents for Agencies, Family Members, or Third Party Reporters with Written Summaries Provided
- Counselling for Older Clients, Family Members, and Aged Care Professionals

Presentations, Workshops, Development of Guidelines, and Investigations are offered not only in Victoria but also in all States and Territories throughout Australia.

**To report incidents of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation or for further information please contact our Executive Director, Lillian Jeter.**

### How You Can Help

**Donations - Sponsorship - Membership - Gifts in Kind - Corporate Partnerships - Bequests**

All members receive our quarterly newsletter plus discounts to workshops & training. Donations to the Association are tax deductible.

