

Queensland Focus



The Elder Abuse Prevention Unit Newsletter

Edition 1, June 2004

Older Victims of Violence and Abuse

Over the past decade, the abuse of older people "Elder Abuse" has increasingly become a local, national and international concern.

Elder Abuse is "any act occurring within a relationship where there is an implication of trust, which results in harm to an older person. Abuse can include physical, sexual, financial, psychological, social and or neglect" (Australian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, 1999). A relationship of trust may involve a daughter, son, spouse, other relative or possibly a neighbour.

Elder Abuse happens to older people across all ethnicities, levels of education and economic background.

Crisis care, community services, respite care, counselling, alternative accommodation and legal interventions are some of the options that an older person may consider when experiencing abuse. Treatment or counselling for the abuser may also be available in some areas.

The Elder Abuse Prevention Unit promotes the right of older Queenslanders to live free from abuse. The Unit operates a Helpline **1300 651 192** which provides *confidential* support and referral information for people who may be experiencing abuse, witnessing abuse or who fear that they may be responsible for abuse. Service providers and anyone else who would

like further information on Elder Abuse are also welcome to use the Helpline.

DID YOU KNOW

Both national and international research indicates that approximately 5% of older people experience abuse from people whom they claim they have a trusting relationship with. Many experts believe that this statistic is just the 'tip of the iceberg'

New Elder Abuse Service to be funded

To date, the Elder Abuse Prevention Unit in Queensland is the only service in Australia that has been fully funded to respond to situations of elder abuse.

The service was set up in 1997 in response to research conducted in Queensland. The Queensland Government (Department of Communities) is

responsible for funding this state-wide service and Lifeline Brisbane has been the auspice for the past 4 years.

Other states have also conducted research and momentum has been gathering with both Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory working towards funded programs.

The EAPU has engaged

in consultations with delegates who came to learn more about the service response and data collection methods used in Queensland. The ACT project is to be launched later this month. We will keep you posted on further developments with this new service.

WELCOME TO EAPU NEWS

Welcome to the first edition of the Elder Abuse Prevention (EAPU) online newsletter.

We hope to reach a wide range of Seniors and Service Providers around Queensland.

The newsletter is free and so is any contribution that anyone would like to make to the content.

- If you have anything interesting you would like to add – please email us for inclusion.

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The Multidisciplinary Peer Support Network

The Peer Support Network (PSN) was launched in May 2003 and now has over 100 members and affiliates around Queensland. Membership includes both paid and unpaid workers and community groups who are key resources in rural and remote communities.

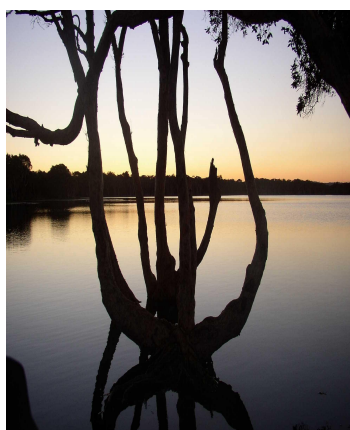
The PSN was established as a means of supporting rural and remote workers from multidisciplinary backgrounds in responding to the abuse of older people.

Last year EAPU had the privilege of supervising a student from Griffith University. The student, Jodie Lockwood produced as part of her placement, a 'Handbook for Isolated Workers'.

PSN communication strategies also include teleconferencing and an online forum on the EAPU

website. It has been acknowledged that not all members to date have access to Internet facilities. Teleconferences and newsletters provide additional mechanisms for the flow of information.

More details on the PSN can be gained from the EAPU Annual Report on www.eapu.com.au.



WHAT'S ON PSN

The EAPU will travel over 2,300 kilometres between Sunday 18th July and Friday 23rd July to deliver Elder Abuse training and awareness to the central west. If you would like more information on any of these sessions please contact EAPU on (07) 3250 1955.

Central-West Presentations

Monday 19th July

Tambo 9:30am •
Blackall 1:30pm •

Tuesday 20th July:

Barcardine 9.30am •
Isisford 1.30pm •

Wednesday 21st July

Longreach 9.30am •
Winton 2.00pm •

Friday 23rd July

Emerald 9.30am •

For Your Interest

Links to both National and International Elder Abuse Websites

Elder Abuse Prevention Unit (EAPU)
www.eapu.com.au (Aus)
Aged Concern New Zealand
www.ageconcern.org.nz/
Aged Concern United Kingdom
www.ace.org.uk/
International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA)
www.inpea.net/ (international info)
National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (NCPEA)
www.preventelderabuse.org/ (USA)
National Centre on Elder Abuse
www.elderabusecenter.org/ (USA)
Elder Justice Coalition
www.elderjusticecoalition.org/ (USA)

National/International Events

Australian Association of Gerontology
37th National Conference
17-19 November 2004 Melbourne

The 5th Biennial International Conference: Dementia/depression in the Elderly, 23rd to 25th June 2004
The Powerhouse Museum, Sydney

International Conference on Longevity
18th to 20th March 2005 Brisbane
Convention & Exhibition Centre

ELDER ABUSE HELPLINE

The EAPU operates a state-wide telephone information, support and referral service for anyone experiencing abuse or witnessing the abuse of an older person. Callers may choose to remain anonymous and can call HELPLINE on 1300 651 192 between 9 am and 5 pm Monday to Friday for the cost of a local call from anywhere in Queensland.

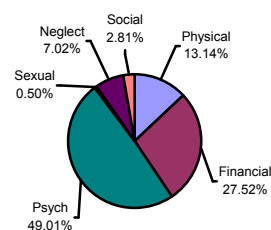
Non-identifying data is collected through the Helpline enabling the EAPU to provide statistics relevant to elder abuse.



ELDER ABUSE HELPLINE
PHONE: 1300 651 192

Abuse Rates

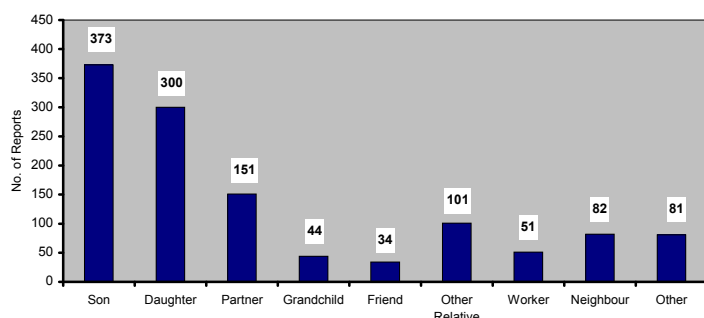
Abuse Types- Helpline Reports:1/11/99 to 31/10/03,
(N=1217, Unreported N=7)



EAPU STATS

Current literature suggests that between 3% and 7% of people over the age of 65 will experience abuse from someone with whom they have a relationship of trust. The most common relationship for this form of violence is the parent/adult child relationship. Helpline data displays 373 reports (30.65%) of abuse perpetrated by an adult son and 300 reports (24.65%) where the adult daughter was recorded as the abuser. Abuse perpetrated by a partner was recorded in 151 or 12.41% of calls. Other relatives (including brothers/sisters, nieces/nephews, in-laws, etc) were recorded as the alleged abuser in 101 (8.3%) reports.

**Relationship of Alleged Abuser to the Abused
Helpline Reports: 1/11/99 to 31/10/03 (N=1217)**



The Multicultural Taskforce

The Multicultural Taskforce for the Prevention of Elder Abuse was established in October 2002 as part of the EAPU Multicultural Initiative. Membership was identified following a forum and extensive networking and consultation with key stakeholders and members of various communities. Since commencement the Taskforce has worked together to identify a range of similar issues that confront human service workers and inhibit service delivery across culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in Queensland.

The aim of the Multicultural Taskforce is to ensure that elder abuse issues in CALD Communities remain on the agenda and that appropriate strategies to address these issues are developed and implemented. The Taskforce consists of service providers representing a wide range of organisations who work with older people from CALD communities.

Since establishment, the Multicultural Taskforce has initiated a range of awareness raising and training sessions for service providers and members of different communities. The Taskforce is planning a major full day Forum that will take place in Brisbane during Seniors' Week 2004. The date will be Friday 20th August. Further details regarding the Forum will appear in the next Newsletter and will also be available on the EAPU website closer to the date. For more information on the Forum please phone Maya on 3250 1968.

Did You Know?



Research Suggests that over 25,000 older Queenslanders are abused each year by someone they trust.

Voice Q&A: Mandatory Reporting

Q. There are currently no mandatory reporting laws for elder abuse in Australia.

What are the arguments for and against the introduction of mandatory reporting? In what situation/s is a consideration of the pros and cons of mandatory reporting likely to arise?

A. I guess it is very important to remember that as adults we have the right to make choices in our lives. Adults of all ages make decisions that are not in their interests. Alternatively there is the issue of undue influence and the cycles of violence that impact a persons' ability to make decisions freely and voluntarily.

Where an adult has impaired capacity, I would suggest that a service provider's duty of care would require them to take appropriate action or notify an appropriate body.

There is probably an essay that can be written on the pros and cons of mandatory reporting of elder abuse. We would be interested to hear other people's comments.

The above is a post taken from the EAPU online Discussion Forum. The EAPU invites all members of the community and service providers to join the Forum and have the opportunity to provide input, receive support and information involving elder abuse.

Response provided by
Les Jackson: Senior Project Officer
Elder Abuse Prevention Unit Brisbane

The forum is available for use at
www.eapu.com.au/psn/board
Please contact EAPU Brisbane on
(07) 3250 1955 for registration information.

For more information Please Contact:

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1300 651 192**

**Fax:
07 3250 1929**

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EAPU@lifelinebrisbane.com.au

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Sowing the "Seeds of Knowledge"

Barcaldine, home of the Australian Workers' Heritage Centre, Australian Labour Party, Tree of Knowledge, and the recent "**Seeds of Knowledge: Town & Country Forum**" which was put together by some of the hardest working people I have ever known. Held over two days after the Labour Day long weekend and at the very start of Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month, it successfully brought together specialist speakers from across the state as well as an international guest, Dr Mike Rosmann, who addressed a number of relevant issues faced by rural communities. The first day focussed on information to seniors from Barcaldine and surrounding districts while the second day was devoted to professional development for regional workers. Information on social isolation, elder abuse and domestic violence, depression, powers of attorney, use of medicines, fire safety as well as other presentations and displays from a number of agencies were packed into the two days. The hospitality was tremendous with visitors wined and dined at a free cocktail hour(s) as well as a \$20 buffet dinner with more great wine thrown in,

but more importantly -who made that mango desert? It was great.

There isn't enough space to thank all those who made the forum a success but Janice Flowers (Rural Family Support Program) and Verna Halsey (EAPU Central Qld) deserve a special mention. Also the Barcaldine Shire Council, Dept of Community Services and Lifeline Central Qld provided great support and it was amazing that businesses contributed all those prizes (over 60 including a trip donated by Qld Rail). There was also a lot of networking done around the sink, which was monopolised by Diana East (Safe & Confident Living) but also noticed Peta Jervoise (Manager Senior's Interests Unit, Dept of Communities) up to her elbows in suds at one stage.

Story By:
Les Jackson
Senior Project Officer
EAPU



Photo courtesy of The Australian Greenhouse Office

THANK-YOU

The EAPU hopes you have enjoyed the first edition of "Queensland Focus". Please contact the Unit if you would like additional information on any of the material within this publication. Updates can be found on the EAPU website at www.eapu.com.au and don't forget to visit the EAPU Online Discussion Forum at www.eapu.com.au/psn/board. Members of the public can register online. Service providers, health care workers and students are invited to join the Peer Support Network. For more information about The Peer Support Network please contact EAPU Brisbane on (07) 32501955. This newsletter is free to distribute though remains the intellectual property of the Elder Abuse Prevention Unit. If you wish to become an online recipient of "Queensland Focus" please email the EAPU to join the mailing list. EAPU@brisbane.lifeline.org.au

www.eapu.com.au

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