

What can be done?

- ✧ Using services and community resources is everyone's right, not a charity. Many services assist older people to remain living at home and retain quality of life.
- ✧ There are organisations and groups that provide assistance to carers.
- ✧ Participation of older people in social and educational activities might benefit the whole family and reduce stress, anger and conflict.
- ✧ Talking it over with someone you trust, eg your doctor.
- ✧ Living with the family is not always the best option and separation might improve relationships.
- ✧ Do not make decisions or sign any papers without a proper explanation or a legal advice.
- ✧ If in immediate physical danger you should call the police.
- ✧ When in need, request an accredited interpreter for a confidential service.

Older people's rights

Independence - to have food, shelter and health care, live in safety and stay at home for as long as possible.

Participation - to share their knowledge, contribute to the community and tell the government what they want.

Care - to access culturally appropriate care and protection. To receive services for the improvement of their health. To have their wishes, dignity and beliefs respected.

Self-fulfilment - to be able to develop own interests and to participate in educational, cultural, spiritual and social activities.

Dignity - to be free of mental and physical mistreatment and not to be discriminated against.

For more information call:

Mistreatment of Older People

LET'S OPEN THE DOOR
TO HOPE AND
FAMILY HARMONY



Elder Abuse Prevention Unit

PO Box 108 - Fortitude Valley 4006

Helpline 1300 651 192

Conversational English needed
or an interpreter

The Elder Abuse Prevention Unit is

Auspiced by



What is Mistreatment of Older People?

Any behaviour within a relationship of trust that harms an older person.

Who is at risk?

Mistreatment of an older person can happen to anyone, across all ethnic groups, all levels of education and all economic backgrounds.

What is regarded as Mistreatment of Older People?

Financial Mistreatment — illegal or improper use of one's money or possessions.

Psychological Mistreatment — causing fear or shame, intimidating, humiliating or threatening.

Physical Mistreatment — inflicting pain or injury, eg hitting, slapping, restraining or over-medicating.

Sexual Mistreatment — sexually harassing, assaulting or embarrassing.

Social Mistreatment — preventing a person from having social contact with family members or friends.

Neglect — the intentional or unintentional failure to provide necessities of life and care.

Why don't we hear more about it?

- ✧ It's only recently that the mistreatment of older people has been recognised as occurring.
- ✧ Those who suffer mistreatment might be isolated.
- ✧ People might feel ashamed to admit that a close person mistreats them.
- ✧ Some people might blame themselves for what is done to them.
- ✧ The older person might think that it does not happen to others.
- ✧ Some might fear what can happen if they tell about their situation.
- ✧ The negative way the community may view older people.

What contributes to mistreatment?

- ✧ Some older people become more dependent on the family due to frailty, deteriorating health.
- ✧ Increased isolation from others.
- ✧ Language and cultural barriers restrict the knowledge about services or the access to them.
- ✧ Family members might feel it's their duty to provide care to ageing parents and refuse to accept outside assistance.
- ✧ Widening cultural gap between the generations in the family.
- ✧ A family member might be financially dependent on the older person.
- ✧ The abuser might have drug dependency.
- ✧ A person suffering from dementia might contribute to the carer's stress.

It is estimated that in Queensland up to 22,000 people over 65 experience mistreatment by someone they trust.