

Readiness checklist for organisations to identify and respond to elder abuse

This Readiness Checklist was developed to compliment the Elder Abuse Prevention and Response Toolkit¹. It provides organisations some important elements of being an organisation well governed and ready to support their staff to identify and respond to elder abuse. The checklist items are offered as suggestions only².

| Key element | Comment |
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| Organisational Elder Abuse framework | |
| Best practice would mean that your agency has values and a culture in line with the following key principles: | |
| That ageism is not acceptable in any form in the organisation. Pay particular attention to professional practice and communication both internally and to external stakeholders. | |
| Ensure that the organisation and its staff are clear about their legal responsibility (Duty of Care) to their clients to avoid causing harm or prevent harm from occurring. | |
| That respect for the older person and their right to make decisions is paramount. | |
| If the older person has difficulty with decision making they can choose someone they trust to support them to make valid decisions. | |
| Elder Abuse policy³ | |
| Best practice would mean that your agency has a clear policy around elder abuse that: | |
| Could be a broad Violence, Abuse and Neglect Policy or Family Violence Policy, but it should specifically include the circumstance of elder abuse. | |
| Recognises the risks and signs of elder abuse. | |
| Outlines staff duty of care and a responsibility to respond. | |
| Requires staff members to respond in a non-judgemental way and upholds human rights of the older person. | |
| Recognises that many older people want the abuse to stop but at the same time seek to maintain important relationships, which may include the perpetrator. | |
| Ensuring the specific needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities such as LGBTIQ+, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and those living with a disability are considered and included in the policy. | |
| Elder Abuse procedure | |
| Best practice would mean that your agency has a clear documented process for responding to elder abuse that ensures: | |
| Clear role expectations and responsibilities of all program areas and staff regarding identification and response to elder abuse, including volunteers. | |
| That a risk assessment be undertaken so that the level of risk for an older person is clearly identified. | |
| There are clear processes for documenting suspected and confirmed incidents of elder abuse. | |
| There is a response and referral pathway consistent with organisational structure and policy. | |

1. North Metro EAPN – [Elder Abuse Prevention & Response Toolkit](#)

2. This Checklist was published in August 2019 and is available on the [NM EAPN Webpage](#)

3. See also: [NSW Elder Abuse Toolkit 5.10 Policy Checklist](#)

| Workforce development | |
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| Best practice would mean that staff are aware of the signs of elder abuse and are confident to respond and know what to do according to the responsibilities of their role. This may be achieved by: | |
| Conducting training need analysis or an audit to ascertain the type of training completed about elder abuse by staff working with older people. | |
| Setting a minimum training package on elder abuse for all staff working with older clients, for example the online DHHS training module DHHS– Elder Abuse Prevention. | |
| Ensuring a process for all staff to be given the details of elder abuse training opportunities and resources as they become available. | |
| Considering mandating online DHHS elder abuse training for all staff and having it on the internal training portal (this may require negotiating with Human Resources and providing time for staff to complete the training). | |
| Providing an opportunity to discuss real scenarios so that staff can work through how they would recognise, respond and refer appropriately. | |
| Ensuring volunteers are also provided some training on elder abuse if the agency auspices a volunteer program that works with older clients. | |
| Communication about Elder Abuse across the organisation | |
| Best practice would be reflected in the following ways: | |
| Implement an annual elder abuse communication plan to ensure there is regular communication across the organisation and particularly in the programs working with older community members. This could be through a staff newsletter, staff information breakfasts, computer screensavers and/or agenda items at team meetings. | |
| Display relevant elder abuse posters and/or pamphlets in all agency sites e.g. examples of positive ageing, case studies of elder abuse to increase understanding of what constitutes elder abuse and where to go for support. | |
| Include relevant elder abuse pamphlets in information packs provided to clients of the agency. | |
| Provide community group leaders with information about elder abuse and where to go for support. | |
| Community responsibility | |
| Best practice would mean that the agency considers the following items: | |
| Ensure that they are working collaboratively with older people and their communities to uphold the rights of older people. | |
| Ensure that agency staff respond to elder abuse when it occurs. | |
| Other considerations | |
| Your agency may also like to consider undertaking the following actions: | |
| Consider conducting an audit of current responses to elder abuse disclosures to ensure appropriate response is provided by agency. Identify gaps and improvements where possible that can be made. | |
| If agency engages contractors, identify if they are similarly prepared to respond to disclosures of Elder Abuse. | |
| Consider membership of organisations and networks that will assist and maintain current understanding on elder abuse for example: COTA / Senior Rights Victoria, North Metro Elder Abuse Prevention Network. | |
| Consider forming an internal Elder Abuse Working Group, or at least have a representative on an internal Family Violence Working Group delegated to contribute from an elder abuse perspective. | |
| Consider delivering elder abuse prevention activities as a single entity or in partnership with other agencies. | |

Acknowledgement

The Melbourne City Council Elder Abuse Action Plan Summary was used in the development of this Checklist.

The North Metro Elder Abuse Prevention Network is supported by the Victorian Government

