

# Helpful Hints

A guide to  
preventing  
elder abuse

A resource for the  
Central Highlands Elder  
Abuse Prevention Network





# Introduction

This guide will provide your organisation with helpful information about how to address the causes of elder abuse as well as how to undertake actions that improve the health and wellbeing of older people. These actions will address:

- negative views of older people and stereotypes around ageing and the value of older people
- assumptions that older people are not capable of making decisions about their own lives
- attitudes and media that view older people as a burden –including financially on families and society.

# Action Areas

There are four key action areas for organisations that are wanting to help prevent elder abuse in their workplaces and for staff, clients and the community:

1. Improve systems, structures and processes.
2. Challenge the causes and factors contributing to elder abuse.
3. Develop partnerships with other organisations motivated to prevent elder abuse.
4. Raise awareness of elder abuse in the community.

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We recommend carefully choosing only those actions that your organisation can support. Not all actions areas have to be addressed and you may only choose one or two from the list above. Ensure your actions are challenging the causes of elder abuse and are things that apply to your environments.



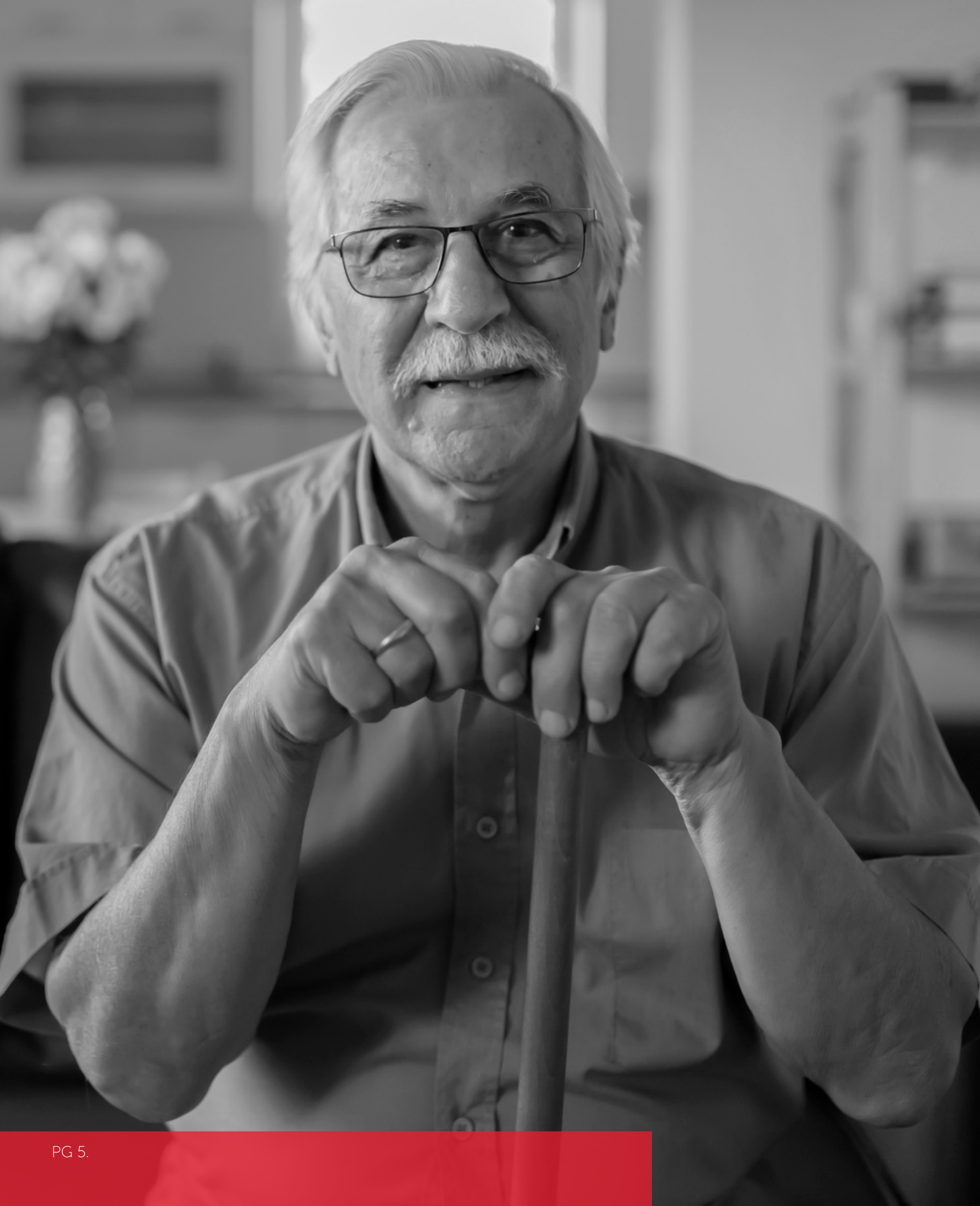


## ACTION AREA 1: Improving systems & processes

Potential actions to take to improve your organisation or group's processes, structures and systems.

- ☐ Respond appropriately to members of the community who may disclose elder abuse.
- ☐ Promote training to your organisation, through the network, in understanding elder abuse and how to address it, including promotion of the free online course: [elderabuseprevention.e3learning.com.au](http://elderabuseprevention.e3learning.com.au)
- ☐ Develop elder abuse information, policies and protocols about accessing services to increase awareness of elder abuse.
- ☐ Embed roles and responsibilities regarding elder abuse prevention, identification and support into position descriptions and also in agendas for networks and partnerships.
- ☐ Provide training in awareness of fraudulent business practices and how to protect one's self.
- ☐ Review referral networks and pathways between specialist elderly abuse prevention and local support services.
- ☐ Create a service environment where staff are supported to seek a secondary consult or build in circles of accountability (informal amongst colleagues i.e. where colleagues can provide informal feedback)
- ☐ Familiarise yourself with the MARAM Practice Guide. See: [www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources](http://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources)





## ACTION AREA 2: Challenging factors that enable abuse

Potential actions to take to address the causes & factors that enable elder abuse to happen in the community.

- ☐ Conduct workshops about Power of Attorney and where to access legal advice and information.
- ☐ Ensure you are building positive images that reflect diversity and inclusion of older people in all areas of your organisations/groups, particularly in your marketing and communications materials.
- ☐ Prompt employees and members to show positive attitudes towards older people and question attitudes that discriminate.
- ☐ Be inclusive of older people in your organisation or group and promote accessibility. Encourage participation by older people.
- ☐ Recognise the experience and knowledge of older people and respect their opinions and ability to be leaders (both in an employment and in a community setting).
- ☐ Be inclusive and engage older people from diverse backgrounds. Ensure all older people can participate and be responsible for their own needs.





## ACTION AREA 3: Developing partnerships with others

Potential actions to take to share information, support other organisations and develop strong partnerships.

- ☐ Share local stories and action throughout the network.
- ☐ Collaborate with other network members on action items.
- ☐ Advocate for increased government funding to address elder abuse in the community.
- ☐ Develop a multi-agency coordinated approach for older people experiencing elder abuse (e.g. develop clear referral pathways that can be navigated by older people).
- ☐ Conduct community education programs through Senior Rights Victoria (SRV), legal services etc.
- ☐ Attend training and workshops to increase your knowledge of elder abuse and prevention methods. Share what you learn with your network and others.





## ACTION AREA 4: Raising community awareness

Potential actions to take to raise awareness, promote positive ageing and support people experiencing abuse.

- ☐ Raise awareness of elder abuse, how to recognise it and how to prevent it at community events (try leveraging the Victorian Seniors Festival, 16 Days of Activism, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day etc.).
- ☐ Empower older people by providing information about their legal, financial and societal rights.
- ☐ Increase community awareness of elder abuse through dissemination of resources.
- ☐ Conduct education sessions on dementia. Provide relevant information and support for sufferers.
- ☐ Provide information about elder abuse and the supports available to older people, their families and communities at points of influence (i.e. medical clinics, pharmacies, clubs, libraries).
- ☐ Tell people that you are a member of this network. Talk about it in meetings, train staff and advertise widely (e.g. email signature: "We support the Elder Abuse Prevention Network").
- ☐ Make elder abuse prevention a topic of conversation even in casual interactions.

# References

1. Taking Action to End Violence Against Women and their children, What can your organisation do, Women's Health Grampians - available at: <https://whg.org.au/priorities-programs/core#the-core-taking-action-guide-taking-action-to-end-violence-against-women-and-their-children-what-can-your-organisation-do>

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For more information about elder abuse prevention and the Central Highlands Elder Abuse Network, please contact:

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