

ELDER ABUSE

AND GENDER
INEQUALITY

Make The Link



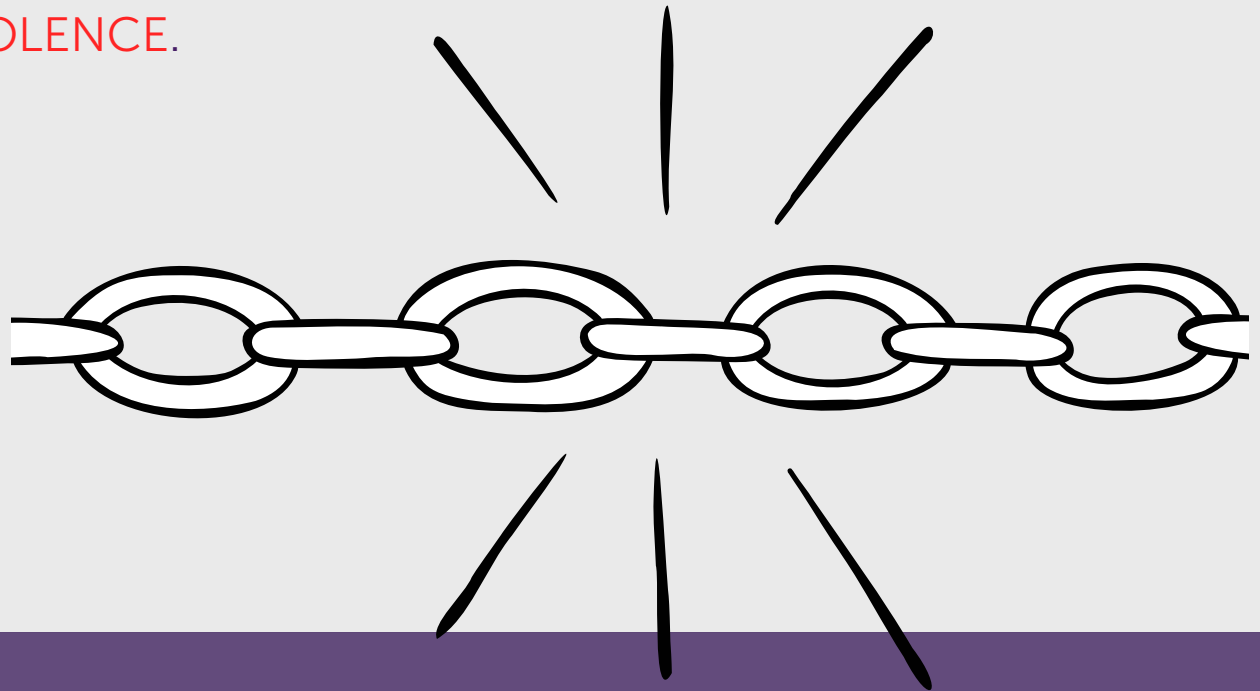
WHG women's
health
GRAMPIANS

A GUIDE TO HOW GENDER INEQUALITY AND AGEISM INTERSECT AND
CONTRIBUTES TO THE PREVALENCE OF ELDER ABUSE FOR OLDER WOMEN.
INFORMATION FOR ORGANISATIONS, BUSINESSES & COMMUNITY GROUPS

GENDER INEQUALITY AND ELDER ABUSE **MAKE THE LINK**

Elder Abuse is defined as any act, or failure to act, which causes harm or distress to an older person and is carried out by someone they know and trust, such as a family member or friend. The abuse may be physical, social, financial, psychological or sexual and can include mistreatment and neglect.

IT IS ALSO A FORM OF GENDERED **VIOLENCE**.



LET'S LOOK AT THE STATISTICS

Elder Abuse is a form of family violence and is also a form of gendered violence.



Senior Rights Victoria data indicates that **72%** of older people seeking support are women.



Whilst **46%** of perpetrators of elder abuse are women and **56%** men, it must also be taken into consideration that the carers of older people are mainly women, so we must consider access to the victim when considering who is perpetrating the violence.



Primary carers in Australia of older people are **68%** female.



Where an older person has no partner – **77.8%** of the carers are female. This changes if the older person needing care is partnered, to **51.5%** female.



WHY ELDER ABUSE HAPPENS?

Discrimination against older people (ageism) is caused by the belief that older people, **particularly women** have less value in society. This includes:

- 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,
- Personal experience of feelings of not wanting to be a burden and don't want to ask for more.

Jenny, Equality Advocate at Women's Health Grampians talks about her lived experiences on ageism in this **VIDEO**.

Older women particularly can often be marginalised, given less power in relationships and society and are afforded less independence as a result. Older women experience discrimination in the community, workplaces and in their homes resulting from both gender inequality and ageism.

For older women there is a high risk of homelessness due to:

- older women having spent their lives caring for children,
- having less superannuation due to not working or part-time work,
- may be divorced.

As a result, they have less access to secure housing and may use superannuation to purchase housing or to pay rent. This can lead to being more likely to live below the poverty line.



WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT ELDER ABUSE FOR OLDER WOMEN?

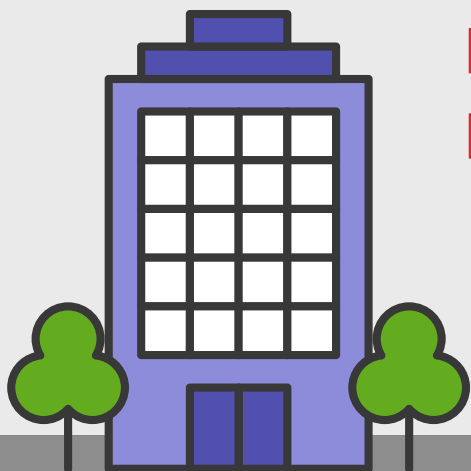
Here are ten tips for older women that you can use to support staff/clients/members:

- ☐ Have zero tolerance for elder abuse, older women should understand and protect their rights.
- ☐ Older women should try to stay connected to family, friends and services. Maintaining social connections is important as people age.
- ☐ Older women should seek advice if they are concerned. Talk to a friend or your GP or call the Seniors Rights hotline. You can also contact local services such as The Orange Door.
- ☐ Older women should plan for the future, don't wait for a crisis to make important decisions. Think about future risks and plan for these and what could go wrong.
- ☐ Older women should consider key legal decisions for the future, i.e power of attorney, wills, advanced care plans and advanced care directives. Older women should be empowered to think about their wishes and make plans accordingly.
- ☐ Older women should be encouraged to talk about their wishes, even if these are challenging conversations, so that what they want is clear to family and friends.
- ☐ Advise older women to take time to make decisions and don't feel pressured or intimidated to make decisions quickly. Seek support if needed.
- ☐ Older women should consider putting things in writing, but remember to not feel pressured to sign documents until they are ready.
- ☐ When considering transferring assets, older women should take time and think carefully about this decision. Take steps to protect your rights in the future.
- ☐ Older women who are concerned for their safety, should act by calling the Police, the Seniors Rights Victoria Hotline on 1300 368 821 or 1800 RESPECT.



What can your organisation do to prevent elder abuse for older women?

- ☐ Use the **Women's Health Grampians Intersectionality Guide**, look at the scenarios and guided questions.
- ☐ Undertake some action using the **Ballarat Community Health Helpful Hints Guide**
- ☐ Staff can undertake the **Elder Abuse Prevention eLearning Module**
- ☐ Lots of resources are available on the **Seniors Rights Victoria Website**
- ☐ Find out more about services available through the **Ballarat Community Health Service Brochure**
- ☐ Join the Central Highlands Elder Abuse Prevention Network – contact **Ballarat Community Health**
- ☐ Listen to **Jenny's podcast**



References:

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