

Media Release

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Relationships Australia supports World Elder Abuse Awareness Day – June 15

Relationships Australia is supporting the United Nations World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) on Thursday June 15. On this day communities across the world honour our older people, and uphold their right to live in safety, with dignity and respect. WEAAD is an opportunity to make the community aware that many older people experience mistreatment from people close to them, often their family members.

Relationships Australia provides a counselling and mediation service to support families who need help negotiating the complex issues related to aging and to reduce the incidence of elder abuse.

“It’s a common story as we age that family conflict emerges around significant health issues, where older parents will live or how estates will be divided. The Relationships Australia Elder Relationship Service will help families to have those often difficult conversations and resolve differences in ways that improve relationships,” according to Alison Brook, National Executive Officer for Relationships Australia.

“Good conversations, respect for older family members and connected communities are primary protection against elder abuse,” Ms Brook said.

Elder abuse is any act which causes harm 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.

In most cases elder abuse is an intergenerational form of family violence. In 2016, people aged 60 years or over made up just over 5,400 of the family members affected in family violence incidents recorded by Victoria Police (Crime Statistics Agency <https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/>).

Warning signs of elder abuse may include an older person seeming fearful, anxious or isolated. There may be injuries, or an absence of personal care. Disappearance of possessions, unexplained financial transactions, and changes to a will, property title or other documents are also of concern. While the mistreatment of an older person may be carried out by a family member, it is often other family members who are best placed to support their parent or grandparent against the abuse, provided they recognise what is happening. Like other forms of family violence, most elder abuse occurs behind closed doors, so it is important for loved ones to watch out for signs, listen and offer help.

To report elder abuse or to seek advice contact the agencies listed on [My Aged Care](#).

To access Relationships Australia services phone 1300 364 277. Elder Relationship Services are available in a number of locations across the country.

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