



Steps I can take for others

If you're concerned about an older person's vulnerability to abuse, these are some of the key steps you can take to reduce and minimise their exposure to risk.

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Note: You can find this video on [Compass.info](https://compass.info)

Watch and listen

Listen to and include older people

Older people have a voice. But it's often ignored. Simply taking the time to listen to older people gives them the opportunity to be heard and connect with others. Focussing on listening and supporting them to make their own decisions also supports their personal independence.

Respect the views and wishes of older people

Elderly people have the right to make their own decisions and choices, including choices about where to live, how to live, their money and health. You may not agree with their decisions, but they should be respected and honoured unless personal safety is at risk.

Watch for warning signs

Try to watch out for 'red flags' that might indicate elder abuse. You can find some of these signs on the [Defining Elder Abuse](#) page.



Encourage older people

Encourage older people to stay on top of their financial affairs

It's vital that an older person's financial and legal affairs are in order and up to date. Although it's perfectly normal for an older person to turn to other family members to help manage their finances, the older person should ultimately be in control of them. By knowing where their money is and where it's going, elders are less likely to become victims of financial abuse.

Encourage older people to make their own decisions

We take it for granted that we get to make our own decisions in life, big or small. That ability can decline as we age. But if the older person is capable of making decisions, they should - especially if they affect living or financial arrangements. If the older person does need help, encourage them to use a qualified and independent professional.

How will I know if an elder is capable of making decisions?

Understand what it means to be capable, and why it's legally important.

More Information



Encourage older people to be socially connected

People may feel isolated at any age, and older people are no exception. Helping them to maintain relationships and make new friends is one way you can try to ensure they stay socially connected.

Connecting older people with friends and encouraging them to attend community events can help them establish or keep an active social life. It can also give them an extra sense of purpose and allow them to stay in touch with the people and things that are important to them.

Some older people may enjoy joining a group that's focused on a shared activity, interest or experience. Older people who are a part of a social circle are less likely to become victims of abuse, and they are able to speak with each other about any tensions they may have in their lives.

Encourage older people to stay active and healthy

Physical activity is important for everyone, no matter how old. Getting enough exercise every day can help to curb depression and activate 'happy hormones'. Staying active in old age can also prolong that older person's life and may decrease their chances for abuse.

Encourage older people to increase their online confidence and skills

In an increasingly online world, many older Australians are struggling to keep up with technology and can feel isolated as a result. [Be Connected](#) is a free Australian Government initiative aimed at increasing the confidence, skills and online safety of older Australians. Family and community members are encouraged to help older people access the site so that they can be more connected with the world. Community organisations that are committed to digital inclusion and supporting older Australians bridge the digital divide can join the [Be Connected Network](#). By doing so, they can provide free, personalised training and support to community members.



Other things you can do

Offer caregivers a break

Most caregivers do an amazing job. But they may be overwhelmed with the responsibility and workload. Offering to stay with an older person not only gives you the chance to spend quality time with them, but also gives the carer a break.

Concerned about someone you know?

Find advice and information on how to help someone you're concerned about.

[More Information](#)



Stay close to and connected with older people

Isolated older people can end up feeling depressed, lonely or unwanted. But regular contact – be it through phone calls or visits – mean older people can more easily talk to you for help if needed. You'll also be in a better position to keep tabs on their daily activities and spot changes in behaviour and offer assistance if you notice they need it. Getting a medical alert system and knowing that help is only a button press away can also be a good option.

Check in on ageism

Everyone holds their own personal views on ageing and the elderly. Think about yours and be open to challenging your own perceptions to create positive outcomes and behaviours.

Read more about ageism

“Ageism is stereotyping, discrimination and mistreatment based solely upon age. When directed towards older people, it comes from negative attitudes and beliefs about what it means to be older.”
EveryAGE Counts.

[More Information](#)



Educate others

Once you know how to recognise the types, signs and responses to elder abuse, pass it on. Tell others. Share your knowledge. And be sure to keep asking other people for their advice.

Subscribe to our newsletter

Sign up to our eNewsletter to receive updates on the latest content, resources, news and events from Compass – guiding action on elder abuse.

More Information



Planning for the future



Note: You can find this video on [Compass.info](https://compass.info)

CONTENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Content for parts of this page have been gathered from the following sources:

- [Legal Aid, New South Wales](#)
- [Senior Living](#)