TAKE THE TIME...
VALUE OLDER PEOPLE
What is Elder Abuse?

It’s actions which harm and distress older people.

It’s lack of care, or neglect, by people close to an older person.

It’s not just physical violence or using force like pushing, slapping -

■ It’s using older people’s money without consent
■ It’s controlling who they see, who they talk to, where they go
■ It’s taking decisions out of their hands
■ It’s treating them like children
■ It’s name calling and put downs
■ It’s keeping them at home, denying them the care they need
■ It’s locking them in their room so they don’t wander.

Elder abuse is a universal problem, it is not limited to any one gender, religion, cultural, ethnic or income group.

Most elder abuse is caused by family members.

...and it’s not OK
I want to know my family care about me.
We need to talk with Mum about what she needs.

Respect older people’s wishes

Older people have the right to make their own choices and decisions even if we don’t agree with them.

“Mum wanted to buy a new car. Even though she hardly ever uses it. I decided to help her find one and supported her choice. It’s important to her that she can get around on her own.”
I am respected when...

- I am valued for who I am
- People listen to what I say
- I can choose how I spend my money
- My pension is used for my benefit
- I can choose what I want to do
- I can choose where I want to live
- My physical needs are met
- My spiritual and cultural needs are met
- I am involved in decisions about my wellbeing
- I am well cared for
- People ask my opinion.

"I want to be valued."
You just sign here Dad, it’s kind of like a loan.
Older people have the right to decide how they use their money

Older people need:

- To have their financial decisions respected even if we don’t agree with them
- To choose how they spend their money.

It doesn’t matter how big their house is or the value of their possessions, they belong to them. They have the right to decide how they use, keep or dispose of them.

“She doesn’t need that big house all to herself so we’re all moving in whether she likes it or not.”

“I’ll put our groceries on his card too; he’ll never notice.”
Excuses don’t make it OK

“I’m going to get the money anyway.”

“She’s old, she doesn’t notice.”

“I’m under pressure, I need the money more than they do.”

“He’s got very difficult.”

“I’m just so busy. It won’t hurt just this once.”

“It doesn’t matter if the bread’s stale. He doesn’t eat much anyway.”

“She can wait. She’s not going anywhere.”

“I just locked him in for a little while, I had to have a break.”

Older people deserve respect.
He has become so controlling. I could really do with some help around the house.

I don’t know why we bother getting together with them.

I don’t like the way Mum talks to Gran.

I can manage, don’t interfere in our business.
I’m so glad Grandad’s here.
Value older people’s contribution to family life

- It’s the small things you do that make all the difference
- Take the time to think about how they can be part of everyday family life.

“We’d love you to come to the school concert, we’ll leave half an hour earlier and come and pick you up.”
Value older people’s contribution even when they need support

There’s lots of ways to help older people stay independent longer. Helping them to keep up with friends and activities can help. This could be as simple as helping them to arrange transport to and from a friend’s house or hobby night.

Practical support such as:

- modifications to their home
- help with meals
- putting them in touch with befriending services.

Small things can make a big difference. Phone Age Concern to find out what’s available.

“I want to stay in my own home...”
“Mum still loves to look after my kids, but it really tires her out, so I get my older niece round at the same time to help out.”

...I just need a bit of help around the house.”
I’m not just a Dad, I’m also a valued member of the community.

Help older people to:

- Keep in touch with people they value
- Stay involved in activities outside the home
- Seek independent financial advice when making decisions about large sums
- Know their rights
- Tell someone if they are being treated badly.

The contacts at the back of this book have a list of specialist Elder Abuse and Neglect Services that operate in most major centres.
What can you do?

Include older people in your everyday lives

- Give them time
- Respect their rights
- Value their contribution.

If you suspect abuse or neglect speak out.

Talk to the older person about your concerns.
Encourage and support them to take action.

DON’T sit back while an older person is being abused.
They're both looking much happier.

Daughter

It's so much easier now they understand what I need.

Grandmother

I should have let them help earlier.

Grandfather

Grandad did some really cool things when he was a kid!

Granddaughter
There’s help available

- Talk to someone you trust – a friend or someone in your family
- Talk to someone you see regularly – a doctor, doctor’s nurse, or member of the church or spiritual leader
- If you or an older person are in danger, call the Police
- Call the Family Violence Information Line on 0800 456 450.

For specialist information and support visit:
www.ageconcern.org.nz
or visit www.areyouok.org.nz

For a list of services in your local area go to:
www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory/index.jsp
Under ‘pick your service’ select family violence, then elder abuse.

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