

Mandatory Reports (Elderly Abuse)



Please read the following information sourced from SA Health Elder abuse information pages website.

Once you have read the information, complete the multiple-choice competency questions.

AQC suggests you take notes as you work through the training.



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As Carers for elderly, frail and vulnerable consumers it is of great importance and part of your duty of care that *YOU* as an employee of Adelaide Quality Care are informed and complete this Mandatory training module.

As per SA health directions:-

“Workers have a responsibility to uphold the rights of a person and prevent carelessness, neglect or harm to another person, in a professional relationship between people where there exists a responsibility or obligation of care”.

More information about [Duty of Care \(PDF 110KB\)](#).



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INTRODUCTION

What is Elder Abuse?

****Please note this information applies also to Vulnerable people, those with Mental Health illness and NDIS consumers in your care . Whenever the word Elder is used it refers to all consumers.**

Elder abuse is

Any deliberate or unintentional action, or lack of action, carried out by a person in a trusted relationship, which causes distress, harm, or serious risk of harm to an older or vulnerable person. Or loss or damage to property or assets.

Elder abuse is more likely to be carried out by a relative such as a son or daughter, spouse or domestic partner, grandchildren, friend or neighbour, or paid or unpaid carer.

Elder abuse can be experienced at home, in places visited regularly, or where services or care are accessed. However sadly, it is not uncommon for elder abuse to remain hidden and continue unsuspected.



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TYPES OF ABUSE

Psychological	Psychological or emotional abuse is any language or actions designed to intimidate another person and cause fear of violence, isolation, deprivation, or feelings of powerlessness. These actions are intended to undermine a person's identity, dignity or self-worth.
Physical	Non-accidental actions that result in physical pain or injury to an older person
Financial	Financial abuse involves the illegal or improper use and/or mismanagement of a person's money, property or resources.
Social	The forced isolation of older people, with the sometimes, additional effect of hiding abuse from outside scrutiny and restricting or stopping social contact with others, including attendance at social activities.
Neglect	Involves the failure of a carer or responsible person to provide life necessities, such as adequate food, shelter, clothing, medical or dental care, as well as the refusal to permit others to provide appropriate care (also known as abandonment).
Chemical	Substance (or chemical) abuse is any misuse of drugs, alcohol, medications and prescriptions, including the withholding of medication and over-medication. Some types may be subtle and difficult to recognise. In more extreme cases,
Sexual	Non-consensual sexual contact, language or exploitative behaviour.

Signs and Indicators of Physical Abuse

Behaviour

- physical actions coercion
- bullying
- physical restraint locking up in a room confining to chair or bed
- hitting
- slapping
- burning
- pushing
- punching
- pinching
- biting
- arm twisting
- Cutting
- hair pulling

Indicators or Signs

Carer/relative – overly protective or controlling, conflicting stories, delay in seeking care or reporting an injury, does not leave person unattended, older person described as ‘accident prone’ or having a history of sustaining injuries.

Physical – injuries in different stages of healing, broken bones, sprains, or dislocations, abrasions, welts, rashes, blisters, lacerations, swelling, signs of being restrained, weight loss, hair loss, poor hygiene

Arousal – lack of awareness, drowsiness, vagueness, confusion, sleepiness

Behavioural – cringing or acting fearful, agitation, catatonia, frequent requests for care or treatment for minor conditions, unexplained anger, fear or shutting down behaviour around the carer or relative.

Signs and Indicators of Financial Abuse

Behaviour

- Forgery
- Stealing
- Forced changes to a will
- unusual transfers of money or property
- Withholding of funds from the older person
- Incurring debts for which the older person is responsible
- Failure of others to repay monies loaned
- Lack of financial information provided to an older person

Indicators or Signs

- unpaid bills, inability of the older person to pay for necessities
- defaulting on payments (e.g. rent, service fees)
- missing documents
- credit cards or personal belongings and unusual activity in bank accounts
- changes to a will or other documents when appearing incapable or subject to possible coercion
- confusion regarding assets property and income
- being accompanied by another person when attending financial institutions or using ATM and the other person is reluctant to allow a conversation with the older person regarding transactions
- being overcharged for repairs or services, overdrawn
- or depleted accounts.

Signs and Indicators of Psychological Abuse

Behaviour

- Pressuring, intimidating or bullying
- Name-calling, degrading or humiliating
- Threatening to harm the person, other people or pets
- Verbal abuse, insults or harsh commands silencing and emotional blackmail
- Talking about not coping as a carer
- Repeatedly telling an older person they have dementia, are a burden or unwanted
- Treating the person like a child

Indicators or Signs

Behaviours may fluctuate, and may show improvement temporarily around some people, reverting back when abuser returns.

- depression, sadness, tearfulness
- confusion, disorientation
- social isolation and withdrawal
- feeling helpless and ashamed
- insomnia, unexplained paranoia
- fearfulness, intimidation, nervousness, anxiety
- marked passivity, reluctance to make decisions
- changes in self-esteem, lack of confidence
- anger, frustration
- rocking behaviour
- changes in behaviour when around the abuser
- apathy, listlessness.

Signs and Indicators of Social Abuse

Behaviour

- Restricting, stopping or discouraging social contact with others such as family or friends
- Preventing, stopping or restricting activities – either In the community, or residential aged care facility
- Withholding mail
- Prohibiting, preventing access or not disclosing phone calls
- listening in to calls
- restricting participation in religious or cultural practices

Indicators or Signs

- Loss of interaction with others
- Sadness and grief of people not visiting
- Worried or anxious after a particular visit by specific person(s)
- Appears shamed
- Low self-esteem, or is very sad
- Withdrawn
- Passive (not wanting to participate; listless, uninvolved)
- Repeated unanswered phone messages.

Signs and Indicators of Neglect Abuse

Behaviour

- Lack of social, cultural, intellectual or physical stimulation
- Lack of nutrition, accommodation, clothing, medical, hygiene or dental care
- Lack of safety precautions or supervision, injuries that have not been properly cared for
- Inappropriate medication management
- Repeated justifications or excuses for older person's absence or not returning messages

Indicators or Signs

Observations of neglect can be camouflaged by overly attentive behaviour in the company of others.

Signs include:

- Inadequate nutrition, accommodation, clothing
- Inadequate medical or dental care poor personal hygiene and skin integrity, exposure to unsafe, unhealthy, unsanitary conditions
- Malnourishment and unexplained weight loss
- Hypothermia or overheating
- The person left alone or unattended for long periods

Signs and Indicators of Sexual Abuse

Behaviour

Physical actions –

- Rape
- Sexual assault
- Indecent assault
- Sexual harassment

Non-physical actions –

- Obscene language or viewing obscene material or
- Making obscene phone calls in the presence of the older person without their consent

Indicators or Signs

Physical– unexplained bruising, sexually transmitted diseases, infections, internal injuries, frequent incontinence, difficulty walking, human bite marks, scratches, bruises, pain on touching, choke marks on throat, burn marks, injury to face, neck, chest, abdomen, thighs or buttocks, trauma, including bleeding around the genitals, chest, rectum or mouth, torn or stained clothing

Arousal – lack of awareness, drowsiness, vagueness, confusion

Behavioural – fearfulness, agitation, disturbed sleep, withdrawal, lack of awareness

Medical – is similar to physical

Carer/relative – overly protective or controlling, conflicting stories, attends appointments with older person, does not leave the older person unattended, requests behaviour that may be unusual.

Signs and Indicators of Chemical Abuse

Behaviour

- Inappropriate use (underuse or overuse) of prescribed medication
- Failure to provide or supervise medication
- Taking prescriptions or dispensed medications for addiction or financial gain
- If the carer is a substance abuser, he/she may be giving drugs or alcohol to the older person

Indicators or Signs

- Over-sedation, reduced physical or mental activity, grogginess or confusion
- Reduced or absent therapeutic response to prescribed treatment may be the result of undermedication, or failure to fill prescriptions
- Pills/medication scattered about may be signs of inappropriate use of drugs, medications and/or alcohol
- Medical – reports of drug overdose, prescription medication missing or not taken, poor management of medical conditions, repeated accident or emergency department presentation, frequent falls.

Elder abuse - when should you seek help?

There are many reasons why an older or vulnerable person may be at risk of abuse by a carer. Examples of actions which cross the line include:

- borrowing money and not paying it back
- restricting contact with friends
- restricting religious practices
- not involving the person in making decisions
- inadequate clothing, care, food and housing
- deception, guilt and intimidation
- locking an older or vulnerable person in a room or using medication to sedate them
- Be it deliberate or unintended, elder or vulnerable person abuse is unacceptable. If you are responsible for the care and wellbeing of an older or vulnerable person this is why learning about the, signs and indicators is mandatory when caring for older and vulnerable people.

Elder abuse - when should you seek help?

- Everyone has the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. Learning about the different types and signs of elder abuse and the known risk factors will help you to recognise concerns and may help you take steps for action.
- If you recognise any signs of abuse displayed by a consumer (or if they verbalise any feelings which may indicate abuse)
- They may be feeling pressured, threatened or are pushed to do things they don't want to, being forced or tricked into signing papers, or may feel they are restricted in choice or verbalise they do not feel safe.
- If you suspect any consumer is at risk of or see signs of abuse you must report this to Adelaide Quality Care management in the first instance.

Elder abuse - when should you seek help?

- It is important to be careful
- If you recognise any signs of abuse displayed by a consumer (or if they verbalise any of the following feelings)
- They may be feeling pressured, threatened or are pushed to do things they don't want to, being forced or tricked into signing papers, or may feel they are restricted in choice or verbalise they do not feel safe.
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Elder abuse – the victim may not talk about it

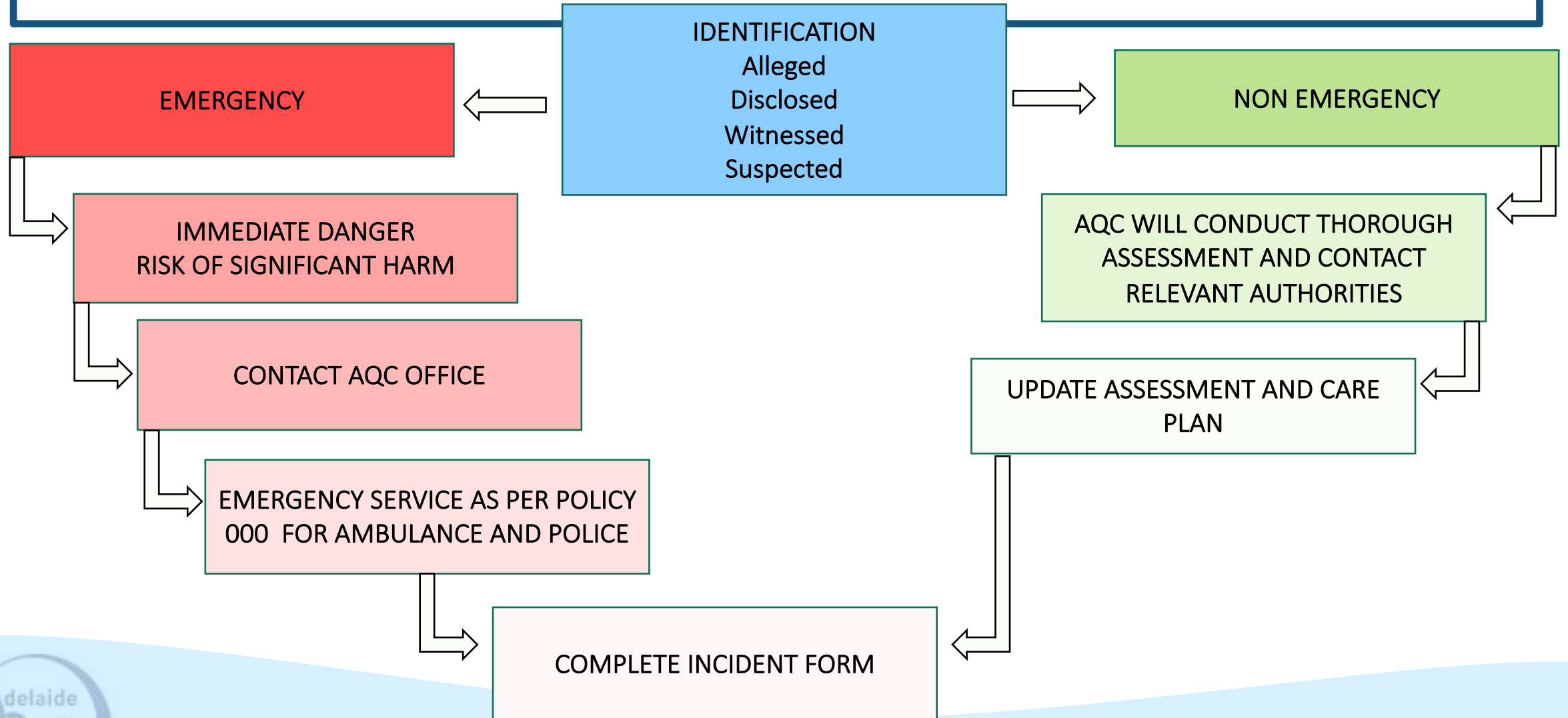
- Many reasons may prevent or deter someone speaking up or talking to someone they trust:
- feeling embarrassed and ashamed about the actions of a family member
- not aware of who to talk to or actions to take
- lack of understanding of abuse and legal and human rights
- not aware of abuse or does not identify situation as abuse
- feeling responsible for the abuse
- dependency on the abuser for food, shelter, clothing, and health care
- fear of retaliation – afraid of what will happen if the abuser finds out
- fear of being placed in residential aged care
- feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness
- belief that there are no agencies which can help them
- lack of opportunity to talk about the abuse.

Elder abuse

What if the person does not want assistance?

- Even though a person may feel distress, or fear or frustration, it is common for people to decline assistance.
- It is normal for a person to deny the abuse or to protect or defend the abuser. Even if you do not agree with the person's decision, below are some tips which may support them to find resolution:
 - Communicate your concerns, and that you are available to discuss the abuse with them when they are ready
 - Offer to contact another relative or friend who may be able to support
 - Provide information and means for the older person to contact appropriate support organisations

AQC Mandatory Reporting Procedure



Elder Abuse – Help for people from diverse backgrounds

- Elder abuse may look different for older people and families from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Cultural values and beliefs, including our own, influence the way elder abuse is perceived and responded to.
- Care and respect of older Aboriginal people and Aboriginal Elders is a very important part of Aboriginal culture and society. They are responsible for passing down from generation to generation life lessons, storylines, histories, songs and obligations. Elder abuse is a very complex and sensitive issue. It is recommended that you seek help if you have concerns.
- **For more information:**
 - [Elder abuse – Older People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds \(PDF 124KB\)](#)
 - [Elder abuse – Older People from Aboriginal Backgrounds \(PDF 284KB\)](#)

Elder abuse Contacts

- Talk to someone in Adelaide Quality Care Administration.
- Follow the reporting elder abuse Policy & Procedure process
- Or contact the South Australian Elder Abuse Prevention Phone Line on [1800 372 310](tel:1800372310) for confidential support, advice or to make a report.

Rights of Older South Australians

- Please read the following information guide
- Knowing Your Rights - A Guide to Knowing the Rights of Older South Australians (PDF 1MB)

AQC thanks you for your participation
in
Recognising and responding to Elder Abuse

Please go to the Quiz section and please complete



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References Accessed 8th October 2020

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/conditions/stop+elder+abuse>

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/conditions/stop+elder+abuse/information+for+workers+and+professionals/elder+abuse+-+information+for+workers+and+professionals>

AQC Strongly encourage all staff to familiarise themselves with the following fact sheets

Workers and professionals may often be the first to suspect or have concerns about an older person, their carer, relative or friend, and are encouraged to develop an awareness of the following:

[South Australian Charter of Rights and Freedoms of Older People \(PDF 144KB\)](#)

[Elder abuse, signs and indicators \(PDF 203KB\)](#)

[Risk factors \(PDF 167KB\)](#)

[Elder abuse prevention](#)

[Where can you report abuse? \(PDF 131KB\)](#)

Duty of care

Workers have a responsibility to uphold the rights of a person and prevent carelessness, neglect or harm to another person, in a professional relationship between people where there exists a responsibility or obligation of care.

More information about [Duty of Care \(PDF 110KB\)](#).



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