**RELEVANT POLICIES and RESOURCES**

This tool should be used in conjunction with the following documents:

- Your organisation’s internal policies, e.g.: Emergency Policy, Clinical Practice Guidelines, Diversity Policy, Supervisor / line management responsibilities
- Your program /funding policies regards reporting, etc e.g. Home and Community Care (HACC), Residential Care, Mental Health, Disability, etc
- Loddon Mallee resources e.g. Legal service: [http://lcclc.org.au/](http://lcclc.org.au/); Psychosocial Entry Points Chart (Accommodation & Respite); [www.connectingcare.com](http://www.connectingcare.com)

**DEFINITION OF ELDER ABUSE**

Any act occurring within a relationship where there is an implication of trust, which results in harm to an older person.

**ABUSE TYPE**

- Financial
- Physical
- Psychological/Emotional

**INDIVIDUAL RISK FACTORS**

- Carer Stress
- Family conflict
- Isolation
- Dependency
- Medical or psychological conditions or cognitive disability
- Addictive behaviour
- Diversity, including cultural and language barriers

**ORGANISATIONAL OR COMMUNITY FACTORS**

- Environmental Design
- Culture
- Transport

**PROTECTIVE FACTORS**

- Financial connections & supports
- Community services
- A connected service system: ‘team approach’
- A substitute decision maker (if relevant)
- Support for the carer
- Access to information
- A Safety or Emergency plan

**KEY PRINCIPALS**

**COMPETENCE**

- All adults are considered competent to make informed decisions unless demonstrated otherwise.

**SELF-DETERMINATION**

- With appropriate information and support, individuals should be encouraged to make their own decisions.

**APPROPRIATE PROTECTION**

- Where a person is not competent to make their own decisions, it may be necessary to appoint a guardian or administrator. If a person is represented, their wishes should be taken into account as far as possible.

**BEST INTERESTS**

- The interests of an older person’s safety and wellbeing are paramount. Even when they are unable to make all decisions themselves, their views should be taken into account.

**IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS**

- All responses to allegations of abuse should be respectful of the existing relationships that are considered important to an older person.

**COLLABORATIVE RESPONSES**

- Effective prevention and response requires a collaborative approach which recognises the complexity of the issue and the skills and experience of appropriate services.

**COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY**

- The most effective response is achieved when agencies work collaboratively and in partnership with the community.

**DUTY OF CARE**

A duty of care encompasses a duty not to be careless or negligent, and arises from a relationship between parties that are regarded as sufficiently close as to infer than an obligation to care exists in some form.

Duty of care involves a legal obligation to avoid causing harm to self or another person. This only arises where it is reasonably foreseeable in a particular situation that the other person would be harmed by an action or an omission, without the exercise of reasonable care.

Legal information and resource

- Seniors Rights Victoria: [www.seniorsrights.org.au](http://www.seniorsrights.org.au)
- Fact sheets for powers of attorney and other matters can be found at [www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au](http://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au)

**KEY QUESTIONS & PROMPTS**

To help build rapport and support conversational interviewing, use questions that elicit more than “yes” or “no”. During the conversation look for visual and non-verbal cues to respond to. These can prompt you to ask questions about their current living arrangements, safety, social supports, etc. For further information on key questions & prompts see pages 20-22, “With Respect to Age”, 2009

Open questions that could assist you with gaining more information, include:

- What services are the person currently receiving?
- What other supports/help would they like?
- What might be worrying them?


- A single prompt (IN) screening question on the Single Page Screener for Health and Social Needs
- Specific family violence, abuse and personal emergency plan questions on the Accommodation and safety arrangements profile
- Emergency plans are also referred to on the Care Relationship, Family and Social Network profile.

**Safety Plans** are now on [www.seniorsrights.org.au](http://www.seniorsrights.org.au); Information - Personalised Safety Plan

**Professional Development:** It is a challenge to frame personal questions in sensitive situations. Senior Rights Victorians has online information aimed at strengthening the capacity of those working with older people to respond appropriately to incidents of suspected elder abuse: [www.seniorsrights.org.au](http://www.seniorsrights.org.au)

This document is based on the Women’s Health Loddon Mallee Regional Pathways and the Bendigo EAP Pathway
