



## How Service Providers Can Assist Older People

Aged Rights Advocacy Service can liaise with and support service providers who are working with older people. In situations where older people's rights are at risk of abuse by someone they trust such as, family or friends, it may be useful to confide in a service provider. The following 'Principles for Assistance' can act as a guide for the type of assistance the service provider can give.

### Principles for assistance

- Uphold the rights of the older person
- Do not escalate the situation
- Do no harm - the course of action is legal, moral, what the older person wants
- Respectfully listen to and accept what the older person says
- Identify significant others in the older person's formal/informal relationships
- Maintain relationships important to the older person, wherever possible
- Increase the control the older person has over the abuse e.g. strategies and options for action
- Be aware of possible conflicts of interest
- Do not be co-opted into other's agendas.

### What is the priority?

- The safety and well-being of the older person is always paramount
- If there is danger, the older person should be encouraged to talk to the police
- Any intervention must be at the older person's direction and at their pace
- If the older person is unable to give direction due to mental incapacity, it may be necessary to consider an application to the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT).

### Service providers must know their 'Duty of Care'

Duty of care issues can include the obligation to ensure the rights of an older person are safeguarded, upheld and considered alongside physical safety, the right to take risks and confidentiality. Service providers should follow their organisation's policy and seek advice from their manager or refer the matter to someone able to deal with the situation. Not taking action may amount to a failure to meet service provider obligations or duty of care.

## Contact an Advocate

Older people or service providers can contact an Advocate for information about options and safeguards. This may include information about other available support services.

## What can you do if abuse is suspected?

- Be cautious about making judgements too early
- Consider whether the person has the capacity to make their own decisions
- Try to find out whether the person wants things to change. If there is a risk to the person's physical safety or there is an emergency, contact the police (ideally with permission)
- Be careful not to make the person's situation more difficult
- Encourage the person to seek support from appropriate service providers or to contact ARAS
- Consider the 'Principles for Assistance' overleaf
- Be aware that each instance of abuse is unique
- Provide continuing support as needed.

**A healthy community  
is one where we all take responsibility,  
value and respect each other.**

## To raise awareness on abuse of older people, ARAS provides:

- Informative and interactive education sessions to service providers, TAFE/Universities/medical students and health and allied health professionals in hospital settings
- Information sessions to community groups
- Assist service providers with policies to ensure the rights of older people are upheld

## Please contact ARAS:

Telephone: **(08) 8232 5377** or Aged Care Advocacy Line **1800 700 600** (toll free)

TTY: **13 36 77** or SSR: **1300 555 727**

Translating and Interpreting Service: **13 14 50**

Email: **aras@agedrights.asn.au**

Website: [www.sa.agedrights.asn.au](http://www.sa.agedrights.asn.au)

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