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| Respect Older People: ‘Call It Out’ 2022 |
| Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) |

### Who is running this campaign?

* Respect Victoria is an independent statutory body dedicated to the primary prevention of family violence and all forms of violence against women. Its focus is on stopping violence before it starts by changing the norms, practices and structures that allow it to happen.
* As of 30 June 2022, Respect Victoria’s Respect Older People: ‘Call It Out’ campaign has aired over six runs, at a total media buy investment of $1.843m (ex GST), with the primary aim of raising awareness of elder abuse as a form of family violence, and to increase the public’s knowledge of what constitutes as elder abuse.
* For more information on the work of Respect Victoria, visit [www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au](http://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au)

### Why is Respect Victoria running this public awareness campaign?

* This family violence campaign focuses on the prevention of elder abuse – i.e., any act occurring within a relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which results in harm to an older person.
* While elder abuse and violence against older people is underreported, available data tells us that up to 14 per cent of older people experience violence in some form. Elder abuse is a significant human rights issue, with ageism as one of its core drivers.[[1]](#footnote-2) Yet the real number is estimated to be much higher than this as elder abuse often goes unreported.
* As community restrictions designed to reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) have changed, so too has concern that the occurrence of elder abuse has risen with social distancing and self-isolation measures posing an increased risk. With many Victorians’ losing their jobs and now unable to live independently, anecdotal evidence suggests that more people have or will move to live with older parents or other relatives out of financial necessity. Often the perpetrator of elder abuse is a family member or carer, but it could be a friend or neighbour whom they depend on.
* Risk and incidence are likely to increase as the population ages. With older people being at a point in their life where they can access their superannuation, clinicians and researchers recognise that an increasing number of older Australians have access to substantial wealth giving rise to potential pressure to relinquish or share with family members.
* Financial barriers to accessing housing and increasing costs of living for younger family members can also add to this pressure.
* The demand for family violence services for older people is increasing. A 2015 report by Advocare shows calls to elder abuse hotlines across Australia have doubled within one year[[2]](#footnote-3).
* Greater community awareness about family roles, expectations, boundaries, rights, and responsibilities, and managing conflicts and effective communication. Community awareness must also include broader societal issues that include ageism and gender.
* Respect Victoria’s elder abuse prevention campaign is one of the multiple, mutually reinforcing initiatives the Victorian State Government (through Respect Victoria) is implementing with industry partners as part of the Victorian State Government’s family violence strategy: *Free from violence (Victoria’s strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women)*.
* By building community awareness around the driver’s family violence (including elder abuse) and all forms of violence against women, we can influence the norms, practices, and structures to lead positive change.

### What is elder abuse?

* Elder abuse is a form of family violence, and it is unacceptable.
* Elder abuse is any act occurring within a relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which results in harm to an older person. Elder abuse may be physical, sexual, financial, psychological, social and/or neglect.
* Elder abuse that occurs in aged care facilities and nursing homes has received a lot of media coverage, particularly in the wake of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. This form of abuse violates human rights and is both illegal and abhorrent. However, it is not considered a form of family violence. The distinction is significant.
* This campaign refers to violence and elder abuse that occurs in a family context that is perpetrated by either a relative, friend or known and trusted associate (such as a carer).

### What are the forms of elder abuse?

* Family violence against older people can take many forms. It is not uncommon for older people to experience multiple forms of elder abuse at one time.
* Some common forms of elder abuse are listed below:

 **Financial abuse**One of the most common forms of elder abuse reported by older Victorians.Examples may include:

* + - Coercing an older person into giving money to a relative
		- Taking money to compensate for looking after an older family member
		- Pressuring an older relative into making financial decisions
		- Forcing an older relative to change their Will.

 **Emotional (or psychological) abuse**

Using threats, humiliation or harassment causing distress and feelings of shame, stress, or powerlessness. Emotional abuse is often used alongside other forms of elder abuse.

**Neglect**Failing to provide the necessities of life. Examples may include:

* Failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical attention, or dental care
* Using medication improperly
* Keeping older people in a state of poor hygiene.

**Physical abuse**

 Inflicting pain or injury through physical force. Examples may include:

* Hitting
* Slapping
* Pushing
* Using restraints.

**Social abuse**

Forced isolation and increased helplessness. Examples may include:

* Restricting access to support networks (family, friends, help services)
* Discouraging visitors/social outings
* Opening mail/screening phone calls without permission.

**Sexual Abuse**

Any form of forced or unwanted sexual activity, including taking advantage of a person unable to give consent.

### What are the aims and objectives of this campaign?

* The aim of this campaign is to create awareness around elder abuse to prevent it from happening in the first place and to educate the Victorian public on where and how its starts. Through this campaign, Respect Victoria encourages healthy discussions around attitudes of ageism and entitlement that can often underpin elder abuse. As the campaign is focussed upon prevention, the creative for this campaign aims to depict early behaviours/signs of elder abuse. If early behaviours become normalised, we know that elder abuse, like other forms of family violence, can rapidly escalate and lead to a higher propensity of violence towards older people.
* If the public lacks the knowledge to identify the early signs of elder abuse, the campaign must demonstrate what these ‘red flags’ appear to look like so that the public have the means to ‘call out’ these actions and behaviours, community interaction, reduced access to services, may lead to a spike in elder abuse.
* The campaign’s overarching objectives are to:
	+ - Raise awareness of elder abuse as a form of family violence
		- Shift the attitudes of ageism and entitlement that underpin elder abuse
		- Demonstrate where and how elder abuse starts
		- Shift the attitudes of entitlement that underpin elder abuse
		- Promote the critical role of preventing elder abuse.
* It is important that the community has a clear understanding of the rights of older people to be safe and how these rights can be protected. This includes being aware of the signs of elder abuse and knowing where to go for advice and support. This campaign urges those in contact with older Victorians to speak up when early signs of elder abuse are noticed and to ultimately stop elder abuse escalating further.

### How long will the campaign run for?

* This campaign will run from Sunday 22 May 2022 to Thursday 30 June 2022.

### What are the key messages of this campaign?

* Elder abuse is hard to picture, but it happens every day. What starts out small doesn’t stay that way for long.
* Elder abuse is everybody’s business.
* Elder abuse doesn’t simply ‘appear’ – know your rights and how to protect them.
* Everyone deserves to be safe, equal, and respected.
* Ageing does nothing to diminish your rights.

### What communication channels are being used in this campaign?

* The media buy includes a mix of regional and metropolitan television (including catch-up TV), digital (through social media), radio and regional press...
* As such, a broad mix of media channels must be used to ensure maximum reach and awareness.
* The campaign will be supported by series of website materials and links as well as printed materials to reinforce the messages and calls to action across the broader campaign. These include:
	+ - Factsheets for older people and professionals
		- Posters
		- Wallet sized information cards
		- Postcards.
* This campaign will also focus on five multicultural audiences (Arabic, Chinese, Italian, Greek and Vietnamese) targeted through multicultural radio and press. Other than English, these are the largest languages spoken by older Victorians. And support service is in place to support older Victorians that need assistance in language. Translated printed materials are also available on the Respect Victoria website.

### What testing or consultation has been undertaken on this campaign?

* The campaign was extensively researched and tested throughout its conception and development.
* Consultations for the initial elder abuse campaign began in January 2018 and ended in March 2019.
* The following committees and organisations were consulted over the course of the campaign’s development in 2018-19:
	+ - Seniors Rights Victoria
		- Commissioner for Senior Victorians
		- Elder Abuse Advisory Forum
		- Elder Abuse Prevention Forum
		- DHHS Active and Healthy Ageing Adviser
		- Ministerial Taskforce on the Prevention of Family Violence and other forms of Violence Against Women
		- Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth)
		- Family Safety Victoria (FSV)
		- Whole of Victorian Government (WoVG) Family Violence Communications Working Group
		- The Behavioural Insights Team / Behaviour Insights Unit (Department of Premier and Cabinet)
		- Public focus groups.

### What do you hope people will do after seeing this campaign?

* That people have conversations about the campaign, particularly within families. That people call out abusive behaviour that they hear about or witness if safe to do so. Neighbours are now in a unique position to be active bystanders. Here are some tips for being an active bystander, noting that safety is paramount, and that action does not always mean confronting the perpetrator head-on:
	+ - Keep and even increase connections with older people
		- Call your neighbours/friends, ask questions of them, and check in regularly
		- Observe if they are taking the bins out, going about their regular routine - what is their demeanour?
		- Make it known that someone is around and interested in their wellbeing.
		- If you suspect abuse is occurring, keep a log of the incidents you’re concerned about.
* To encourage the older person to seek assistance and/or in the most extreme instances, telephone emergency services.
* For a person experiencing the elder abuse, to seek telephone assistance from Seniors Rights Victoria 1300 368 821, a GP or trusted friend as well as familiarising themselves with their rights as an older person.

### What impact do you expect this campaign to have on support services?

* We would anticipate that any publicity or campaign on the prevention of elder abuse could result in an increase in calls to support services.
* On this basis, we have consulted with key service providers during the development and introduction of this campaign to enable them to adequately resource frontline agencies and call centres over the course of this campaign.

### Will you run additional ads on elder abuse or ads targeting other forms of family violence?

* Future phases of Respect Victoria’s campaigns will focus on delivering behaviour change, informed by research and evaluation undertaken or commissioned by Respect Victoria.
* Campaign materials will continue to be developed to address specific communities impacted by family violence.
* Further advertising will be informed by consultations with stakeholders and emerging research as part of Respect Victoria’s campaign strategy.

### Are you worried that the commercials will be disturbing for some people, or trigger stress responses for victims?

* If members of the public are personally affected by what is depicted in the campaign, they are encouraged to contact support services.
* Particular care has been taken to not show extreme levels of violence or assault in these commercials.
* A full list of the support services available can be found online at [www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au](http://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au)

### Where can I find more information about the work of Respect Victoria?

* Further information on the work being undertaken by Respect Victoria can be found online at [www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au](http://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au)

### If I am a victim of elder abuse or know of someone who is experiencing elder abuse, where can I go to get help or report?

* The reasons for not reporting elder abuse are complicated and may include:
	+ - Fear, including fear of retaliation or family breakdown
		- Older people may not recognise that what they are experiencing is elder abuse
		- Older people may feel that they are responsible for the behaviour of the perpetrator
		- Feelings of guilt and shame
		- Belief that aggression and violence is a normal part of family life
		- Fear that seeking help will lead to being placed in residential care
		- Lack of knowledge about available sources of help.
* If you or someone you know is experiencing any form of elder abuse, you can discuss these concerns with a trusted family member, GP, or physician. For further information and for independent advice, contact:

 **Seniors Rights Victoria – 1300 368 821**
**Available from 10.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday.**

Seniors Rights Victoria provides information, support, advice, and education to help prevent elder abuse and safeguard the rights, dignity, and independence of older people.
For more information on Seniors Rights Victoria, visit www.seniorsrights.org.au

**Elder Rights Advocacy – 1800 700 600
Available from 8.00am to 8.00pm Mon – Fri / 10am -4pm Sat**
The focus of Elder Rights Advocacy is elder abuse within the context of Australian Government-funded aged care services (residential and home care).
For more information on Elder Rights Advocacy, visit www.opan.com.au

[**Office of the Public Advocate**](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/ageing-and-aged-care/wellbeing-and-participation/www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au) **– 1300 309 337**
**Available from 9.00am to 4.45pm Monday to Friday.**
The Victorian Public Advocate is empowered by law to promote and safeguard the rights and interests of people living with a disability.
For more information on the Office of the Public Advocate, visit www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au

**1800 RESPECT – 1800 737 732**

**Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

24-hour support for people impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse.
For more information on 1800 RESPECT, visit www.1800respect.org.au

**Men’s Referral Service – 1300 766 491**

**Available from 8.00am to 9.00pm Monday to Friday, and from 9.00am to 5.00pm Saturday to Sunday.** **Live chat online is also available online at** [**https://www.ntv.org.au/get-help/live-chat/**](https://www.ntv.org.au/get-help/live-chat/)

Men’s Referral Service is the peak body for organisations and individuals working with men to end family violence in Victoria and New South Wales.

For more information on Men’s Referral Service, visit www.ntv.org.au

**Rainbow Door** provides free specialist advice to LGBTIQ+ people and their friends and families. Rainbow Door is open **10am – 5pm, every day** and can be accessed via phone call, text, or email. Call 1800 729 367, SMS 0480 017 246, email: support@rainbowdoor.org.au or visit the [Rainbow Door website](https://www.rainbowdoor.org.au/)

* **If you are concerned for your immediate safety or that of someone else, please contact the police in your state or territory or call triplezero (000) for emergency services.**

### What should I do if have feedback relating to the campaign?

* Feedback on the campaign must be in writing and can be sent via email to contact@respectvictoria.vic.gov.au

1. Owusu-Addo E, O’Halloran K, Birjnath B and Dow B. 2020. Primary prevention interventions for elder abuse: A systematic review. Prepared for Respect Victoria on behalf of National Ageing Research Institute. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Advocare, National Elder Abuse Annual Report, 2014-15. At <http://www.advocare.org.au/uploaded/files/client_added/NEA%20Annual%20Report%202014-2015.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)