



**TAKE THE TIME...**  
**VALUE OLDER PEOPLE**

**FAMILY  
VIOLENCE**  
**IT'S NOT OK**

# 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.

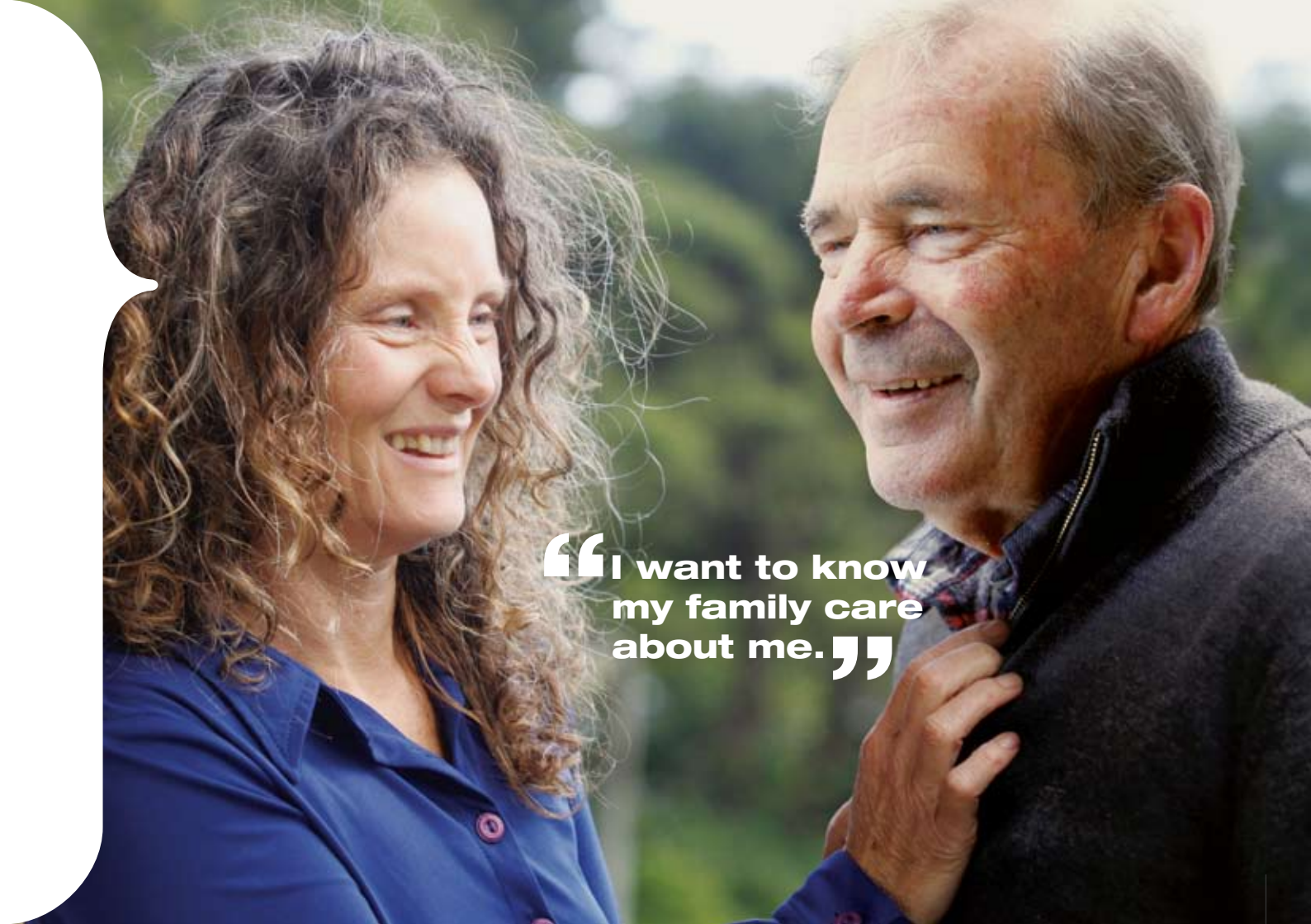
It's not just physical violence or using force like pushing, slapping -

- 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**

A photograph of a woman with curly brown hair and a blue button-down shirt, smiling and looking towards an older man. The man has grey hair, a mustache, and is wearing a dark sweater over a plaid shirt. He is also smiling and looking back at the woman. They are outdoors with a blurred green background. A white quote is overlaid on the image.

**“I want to know  
my family care  
about me.”**





## **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.”**

**“We need to talk with Mum about what she needs.”**

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.**

It's our inheritance – we need the money now!

Son





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

Grandaughter

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

Daughter


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

Grandmother

I can manage, don't interfere in our business.

Grandfather



A group of five people are gathered around a table, celebrating a birthday. In the foreground, a young woman with dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a beige scarf and a light-colored cardigan, is seated and looking towards a chocolate cake. The cake has white frosting, a pink ribbon, and several lit candles. To her right, an older man with grey hair and glasses, wearing a dark jacket, is smiling broadly. Behind them, three other people are standing and smiling: a woman with long dark hair and an orange scarf, a younger woman with dark hair and a black top, and an older woman with short white hair. The setting appears to be a home interior with a wooden table and a black leather chair.

**“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.”**





**“I want to  
stay in my  
own home...”**

## **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.

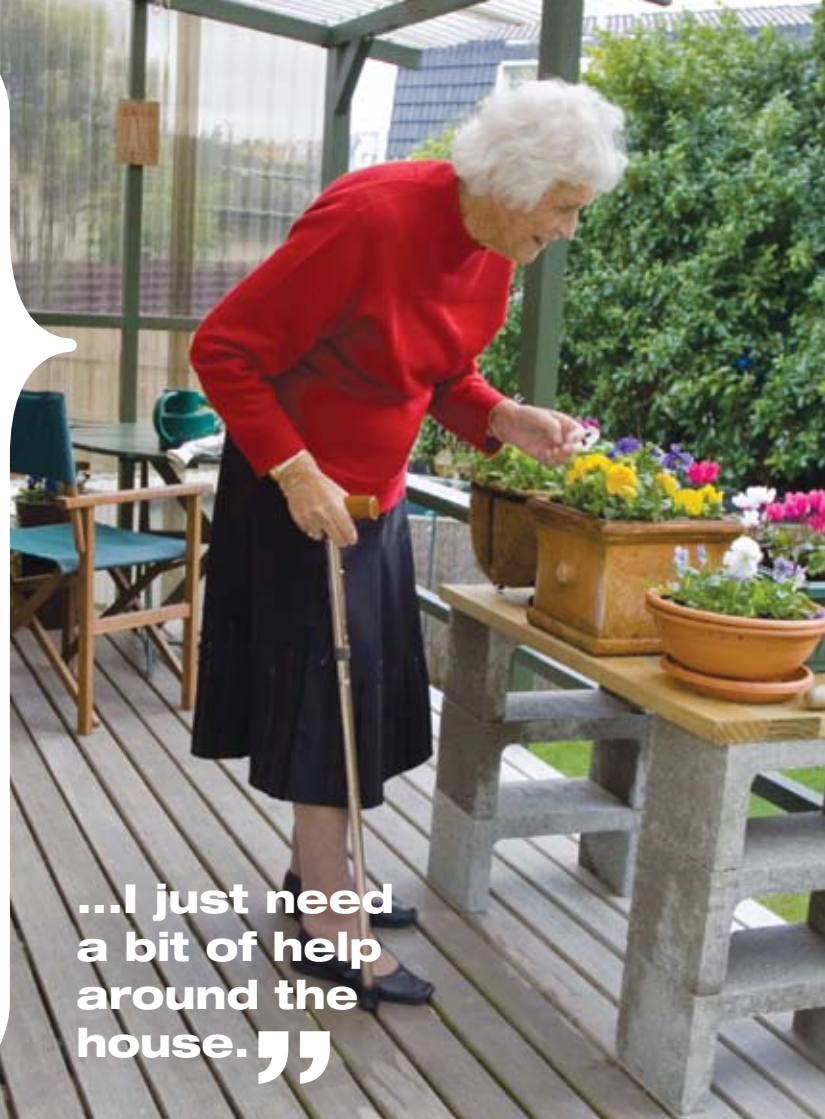
Practical support such as:

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

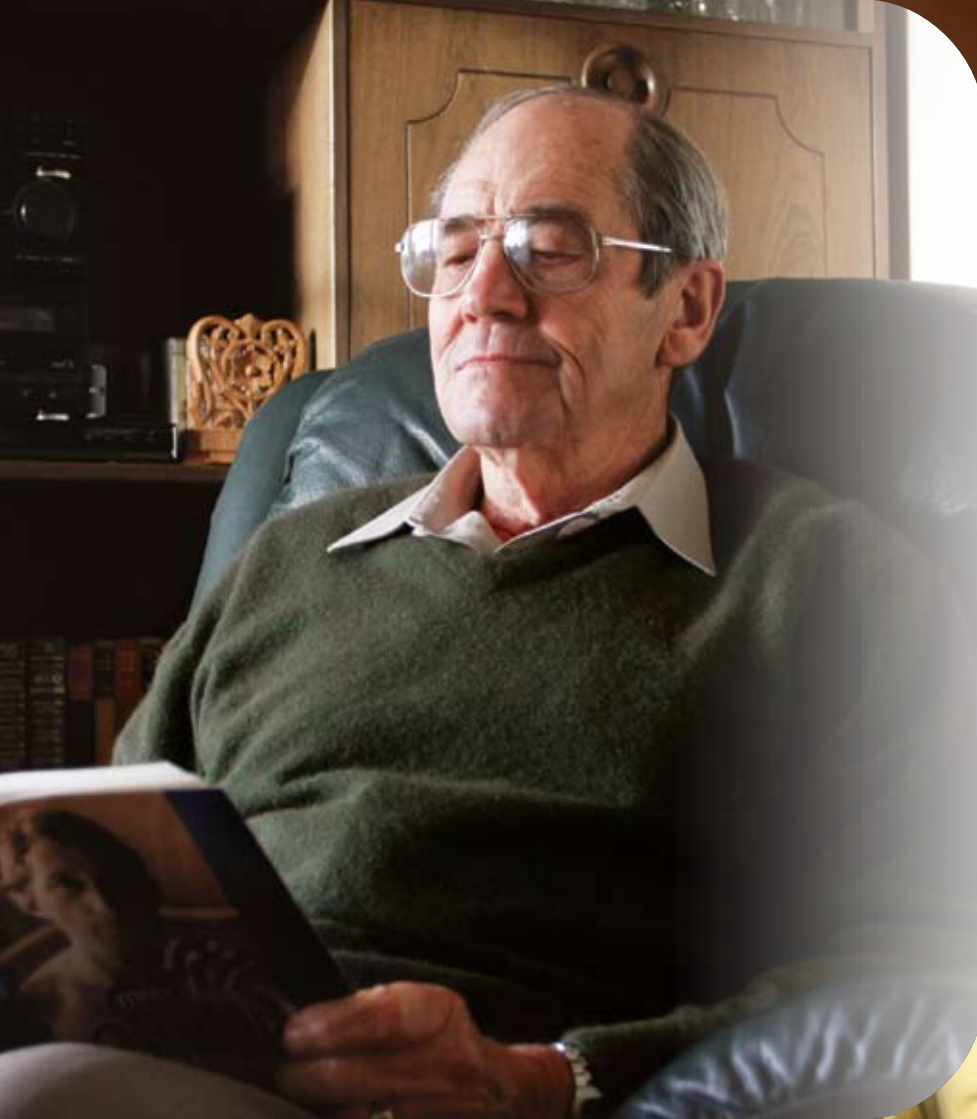
Small things can make a big difference.  
Phone Age Concern to find out what's available.



**“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.

I'm okay with  
whatever decision  
they make – it's  
their money.

Son

IT IS  
**OK** TO ASK  
FOR  
HELP





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!

Grandaughter





## 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](http://www.ageconcern.org.nz)

or visit [www.areyouok.org.nz](http://www.areyouok.org.nz)

For a list of services in your local area go to:

[www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory/index/jsp](http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory/index/jsp)

Under 'pick your service' select family violence, then elder abuse.

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**OK** **TO ASK**  
**FOR**  
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New Zealand Government