



Recognising and Responding to Elder Abuse in CALD Contexts

Why it Matters

Elder abuse can affect older people from any cultural, linguistic or religious background. Older people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds may experience additional barriers to recognising, disclosing or seeking help for elder abuse. Language barriers, migration experiences, cultural expectations, reliance on family and fear of shame or community stigma may all influence how abuse is experienced and reported.

Elder Abuse in CALD context

- Elder abuse can occur in any family, culture or community.
- Cultural values do not cause abuse, but they may influence how it is understood or disclosed.
- Strong family involvement or shared decision-making does not automatically indicate abuse.
- Focus on the older person's safety, dignity, choices and wellbeing

Signs to notice

- Changes in behaviour, mood or confidence.
- Fearfulness, withdrawal or reluctance to speak openly.
- Unexplained financial concerns or changes in living arrangements.
- Signs of neglect or unmet care needs.
- The older person appears unable to speak privately or relies entirely on others to communicate.

Supporting CALD Older Persons

- Create opportunities to speak privately where appropriate.
- Use accredited interpreters rather than family members for sensitive conversations.
- Listen without judgement and avoid making assumptions.
- Record observations and follow organisational safeguarding procedures.
- Seek advice early and support the person's safety, dignity and choices.

Practice Tip

Cultural values such as respect for family, intergenerational living or shared financial arrangements do not automatically indicate abuse. Focus on the older person's wishes, safety and wellbeing. Culturally responsive practice means understanding the person's circumstances without stereotyping or overlooking risk. Always consider the individual's experience, preferences and safety.

Learn More: [Micro-learning sessions by MAC](#)

