



Best practice guidelines for interviewing older people at risk



northern suburbs
community
legal centre



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Communities**

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Foreword from the Minister

Older Western Australians have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect in our community.

Sadly, the problem of elder abuse and the mistreatment of older people in its various forms including financial; psychological and emotional; social; physical; and sexual abuse; and neglect, is a challenge to this basic human right. The abuse of older people can have devastating consequences for older people, their families and our community.

This guide is a first of its kind and supports legal and justice professionals, law enforcement, financial advisors and other relevant service providers in providing best practice legal and advocacy support services to older people in our community through improved interviewing practices. I would like to acknowledge and thank the team of researchers, industry experts and individuals who contributed to this important body of work.

The State Government provides a diverse range of initiatives to tackle elder abuse, including the development and implementation of the WA Strategy to Respond to the Abuse of Older People (Elder Abuse) 2019-2029. Further information is available on the Department of Communities website at www.wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/elder-abuse-support-services-and-resources.

I trust this guide will be an important step towards supporting work across the State to making older Western Australians feel safe and supported in our communities.



Hon. Don Punch MLA

Minister for Regional Development; Disability Services; Fisheries;
Seniors and Ageing; Volunteering



Foreword from the CEO

There is no doubt that older people are at the heart of our community. They bring knowledge, wisdom and a sense of stability that we should aspire to build on and preserve in a rapidly changing world. As our population ages, how we listen to and promote the rights of older people must be at the forefront of all our planning.

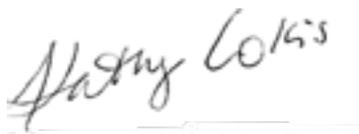
This guide forms a starting point for people in the legal and associated professions to reflect on how to support those who may be at risk of, or experiencing harm. A driving principle was to create a 'best practice', evidence-based approach, and this has been achieved through the collaboration of a dedicated group of people who could appreciate the vision. My heartfelt thanks to everyone involved.

I encourage you to read through and consider the information included - much of which is applicable to many scenarios when engaging with older people.

Ageism is a root cause of the abuse, mistreatment and harm that older people living in our communities experienced. Addressing ageism at every level is necessary step to promote the rights and safety of all older people.

The change we want begins with each of us.

Thank you.



Ekaterini Cokis

CEO, Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre



Introduction to this guide

Older people are a rapidly growing proportion of our community. Interacting with older people is likely to become an increasingly common part of all service provision.

This guide provides best practice guidelines for service providers and professionals who conduct interviews with older people at risk of or experiencing harm.

When an older person at risk of harm is attending an interview, you are interacting with this person at what may be one of the most difficult and traumatic points in their life.

Your manner and how you approach that interview is fundamental to how the older person will respond to you, and may influence how much information they are willing to share. Importantly, your interviewing practice may also play a significant role in determining next steps for the older person.

Elder abuse is experienced by almost one in six older Australians.¹ Yet it is a form of family violence that is poorly understood in our community.²

In situations where a person has experienced mistreatment, abuse or harm, the need to effectively engage with them, to earn their trust, and to carefully work to understand their personal circumstances becomes even more acute.

In 2020-22, research was commissioned by the Department of Communities (Communities) as an initiative of the WA Strategy to Respond to the Abuse of Older People (Elder Abuse) 2019-2029. This study identified the need for interviewing guidelines to support professionals working with older people who have experienced or are at risk of elder abuse.

These guidelines were funded by Communities and developed with reference to relevant literature and informed by the extensive professional experience of legal practitioners and client advocates working at the Older People's Rights Service at the Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre (NSCLC) in Perth, Western Australia. Researchers from the ECU Social Ageing (SAGE) Futures Lab conducted focus groups and interviews with Western Australian professionals from relevant sectors.

This process was guided by an advisory group comprising representatives of the following organisations: Advocare, Council on the Ageing WA (COTA WA), Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre, Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing, Office of the Commissioner for Victims of Crime, WA Department of Communities, and WA Police Force.

The authors thank everyone who contributed their time and expertise to the development of these guidelines.

Note on authorship:

This Guide was created by researchers in the ECU Social Ageing (SAGE) Futures Lab at Edith Cowan University on behalf of the Older People's Rights Service at Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre with support from the Western Australian Government Department of Communities.

Suggested citation:

Stevens, C., Du Plooy, M.G.C., & Baldassar, L. (2023). Best Practice Guidelines for Interviewing Older People at Risk. Perth: Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre.

1. Working with complex life histories and family dynamics

Older people have lived long lives, accumulating knowledge and experience over many decades. This can be a source of strength and of resources that an older person can draw upon when addressing difficult circumstances.

However, difficult family dynamics and life histories may also lead to older people having complex trauma, feeling overwhelmed, and experiencing negative emotions that may limit their ability to act.

The recent Australian national elder abuse prevalence study highlighted that adult children and other family members are the people who most commonly perpetrate the harm.¹ These relationships feature complicated dynamics that may have extended over decades of people's lives and encompass significant life changes.

Because of these complicated personal circumstances, an older person who is experiencing or at risk of harm may take a long time to seek help. Their situation may have reached a point of acuity where they have become desperate and fearful.³

An older person at risk of harm may be experiencing a combination of fear, shame, guilt, anger, confusion, embarrassment, loneliness, uncertainty, mistrust, or lack of self worth.

These emotions can affect an older person's ability to engage in an interview, to accurately recall and clearly communicate relevant information, and/or to retain and act upon the information that they receive during the interview.

Older people may also be affected by ageism and self-ageism. Ageism is the biggest barrier to ageing well,⁴ and a root cause of the abuse, mistreatment and harm experienced by older people living in our communities.

This first section presents some guidelines that should inform interviewing practice with older people who are experiencing or are at risk of harm. These guidelines will not only help the older person feel safer and more comfortable, they are also likely to support a successful interview that delivers your required outcomes.

Key guidelines to incorporate into interviewing practice when working with older people at risk of harm:

- Demonstrate your belief in the older person
- Recognise red flags that may indicate mistreatment or harm
- Practice trauma-informed interviewing
- Take a strengths-based approach
- Understand other possible sources of support
- Recognise the importance of self care

Demonstrate your belief in the older person

One of the main barriers to effective interviews with older people is whether they feel they are going to be believed by you or not.

Therefore, it is critically important that you demonstrate your willingness to believe their account when working with people who have experienced or are at risk of harm.

Research conducted with survivors of family and sexual violence shows that people are more inclined to seek help if they have confidence in being believed. If older people feel they have experienced disbelief from formal services or other trusted individuals in the past, they are:

- less likely to seek help.
- less likely to disclose harm.
- less likely to provide clear and accurate accounts of their circumstances.

The ways people address their traumas, whether they decide to act and engage with services, is closely related to the reaction they perceive when they first confide in a professional.^{3, 5, 6, 7}

Older people may also have internalised ageist attitudes that assume their accounts of events are less credible than those of younger people. These prevalent and pernicious attitudes can result in stereotype assimilation whereby some older people conform to behaviours consistent with this stereotyping.⁸ Red flags to watch for include:

- ▶ **Saying they think their explanation of the issues will not be considered accurate.**
- ▶ **Expressing a lack of confidence in their own account of events.**
- ▶ **Appearing to self-censor or omit details, only presenting information they think the interviewer will want to hear.**

To address these challenges, ensure your behaviour affirms your belief in the interviewee. Demonstrate this belief from the start of the interview, during their account, and at point of closure.

Relatedly, it is just as important to understand and support people to express their own wishes and decisions. This extends to respecting people's decisions following the interview, regardless of the options they choose to exercise.



RED FLAG

Things to listen out for and be aware of throughout the interview process

Recognise red flags that may indicate elder abuse or mistreatment

There is generally low public awareness about what abuse of older people is and how to identify warning signs.² Older people are less likely to recognise abuse than younger people, and are more likely to think that abusive behaviours can be justified.¹

Despite low awareness of the issue, one in six older Australians living at home experience some form of abuse or mistreatment. The estimated prevalence of the various types of abuse from most to least common are: psychological or emotional abuse 11.7%; neglect 2.9%; financial abuse 2.1%; physical abuse 1.8%; and sexual abuse 1%.^{1,a}

Resources are available to support professionals, older people and the wider community to recognise and respond to elder abuse. See further resources at the end of this document.

The World Health Organisation defines elder abuse as “a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, that occurs in a relationship with an older person where there is an expectation of trust and where that action causes harm or distress to the older person.”

There are six main types of abuse:

- **Financial abuse** – The misuse or theft of an older person’s money or assets
- **Neglect** – The intentional or unintentional deprivation of basic and professional care
- **Psychological / Emotional abuse** – Any behaviour that causes an older person mental anguish, and/or to feel shame, fear, powerlessness or worthlessness
- **Social abuse** – Intentional prevention from having social contact with family or friends, or accessing social activities
- **Physical abuse** – The infliction of pain, injury and/or physical force on an older person
- **Sexual abuse** – A broad range of unwanted sexual behaviours

Older people living at home most commonly experience harm perpetrated by family or people in family-like relationships.

It is therefore critically important to explore complex family dynamics and to consider if and how they might contribute to risk. This may involve accounts that go back over years or decades. Points to consider:

- **Family composition**, taking time to understand their relationships, especially in the case of blended or stepfamilies.
- **Grandchild relationships**, including the role of the older person as grandcarer, or adult children denying access to grandchildren as a form of control.
- **Longstanding conflict**, particularly problems in the parent-child relationship or between siblings. Ageing parents may experience self-blame for abusive behaviours exhibited by their adult children, and emotional gridlock limiting their ability to respond.
- **Complex emotions**, such as shame or embarrassment of having to disclose to a professional that their own child is responsible for harm. Interviewees may minimise the extent of the issue, and propose or accept solutions that will have further negative impacts for them.
- **Parental responsibility**, which can be strongly felt even towards adult children who are causing harm. This may inhibit older people from responding to harmful circumstances for fear of the outcome for their child. Even a single action may seem too difficult if they anticipate a domino effect arising from that action.
- **Carer relationships**, including changing levels of dependency on family or friends providing care, the shifting power dynamics that accompany higher care needs, and risks of carer burden and burnout.
- **Family and cultural values**, as the interests of the family unit might supersede their individual interests and cultural obligations. Addressing one person's behaviour may be seen to have an adverse impact on the wider family or broader community.
- **Legal documents**, as older people at risk of harm may be dealing with the creation or consequences of advance planning documents, such as wills or powers of attorney and guardianship. Consider when, why and by whom these documents were prepared. Be mindful of how they may impact the older person's circumstances now and in the future.

coercive control

is a pattern of controlling and manipulative behaviours whereby one person asserts power and dominance over another through intimidation, isolation, and fear.

Coercive control and undue influence are forms of psychological and/or social abuse that may facilitate other forms of abuse, such as financial abuse. Consider using a set of predefined questions to assess power dynamics in an older person's close relationships and screen for undue influence.^b

Relationships with an imbalance of power show the highest prevalence of coercive control and undue influence.^{1,10} This includes intimate partner relationships, but coercive control may exist in any relationship of trust. Remain vigilant for red flags, such as:

- ▶ **Social isolation from friends or family. This may include limiting access to communication technologies or transport assistance.**
- ▶ **Denying access to grandchildren, a form of emotional and social abuse that can be part of blackmail or other forms of pressure.**
- ▶ **High dependency on a caregiver for daily activities, where the caregiver exhibits belittling, aggressive or otherwise critical behaviours.**
- ▶ **Unreasonable demands for financial support or domestic labour, such as housework or childcare.**
- ▶ **Use of threats and/or aggressive jealousy to control a relationship or secure sexual compliance.**

undue influence

is a legal term that describes a situation where one person uses power and unfair pressure to influence another person's free will and ability to make independent decisions.

Practice trauma-informed interviewing

Trauma-informed interviewing practice recognises the impact of trauma on people. It is important to understand whether a person has experienced a single traumatic incident, or a series of traumatic events, that may have recently occurred or may extend across a lifetime.¹¹

Trauma-informed interviewing practice involves:

- understanding what has happened to a person,
- considering how it affects them now, and
- exercising caution to avoid re-traumatisation.

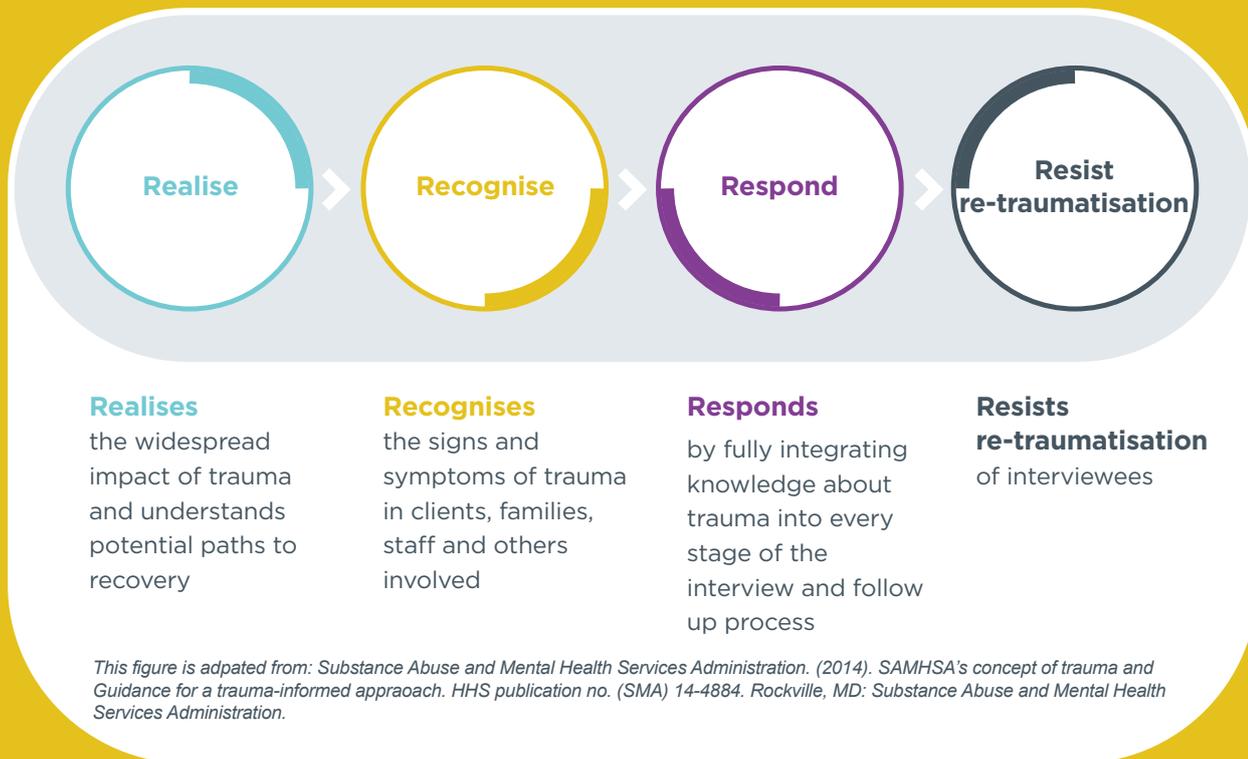
It is essential to recognise that an interview and related service interactions have the potential to either exacerbate harm for an interviewee through re-traumatisation, or to ameliorate trauma through empowerment, coming to terms with past experiences, and helping them to establish a sense of control.^{11,12}

Further resources are available to implement and improve trauma-informed care in your interviewing practice and throughout your organisation. See further resources at the end of this document.

trauma

is an event or circumstance that results in physical, emotional or life-threatening harm and that has lasting adverse effects on a person's mental, physical emotional, social and/or spiritual health and wellbeing.

Interviewing practice that is trauma-informed



Older people at risk of harm rarely present with a single concern but rather have long and complex personal histories that led them to this point.

Interviewers should take a life course perspective, considering the series of events, possibly over decades, that have resulted in the person's current circumstances. This may also involve an understanding of the specific historical, social and cultural factors that shaped their past experiences.

Factors to consider when discussing complex life histories:

- Most older people have experienced loss and grief. The person being interviewed may be actively grieving their partner, friends, siblings, even their children. They may also be experiencing grief in relation to their own declining health, independence or abilities.
- Grief and loneliness, both feared and experienced, can hinder self-advocacy and can leave a person feeling overwhelmed and unable to act.
- Try to recognise when the interviewee is feeling overwhelmed. People are less able to respond to questions, provide accurate accounts, and receive and retain information or advice when they are experiencing strong emotions.
- Recognise that changing or severing significant relationships is hard under any circumstances, but especially hard for older adults without an adequate network of supportive relationships.

Trauma-informed principles to consider during an interview: ^{11, 13, 14}

- **Build rapport** – Focus on building trust first.
- **Demonstrate belief** – Fear of not being taken seriously is a significant barrier to communicating important information.
- **Grant control** – Empower the older person to take control of the interview process by leading their own narrative and taking breaks when they need.
- **Support memory** – People who have experienced trauma can exhibit unique and non-linear memory patterns. By giving the older person control to tell their narrative in the way that makes most sense to them you will also elicit the most accurate recall of the situation.
- **Use verbal and non-verbal language carefully** – Take care in word choice, facial expressions and gestures, avoiding emotive words/expressions or attributing blame. Focus on what the person is saying and follow their language use, where appropriate.
- **Listen actively** – Be attentive and non-judgemental. Use body language to reassure the person and encourage information sharing.
- **Understand emotionality** – Recounting traumatic events will likely bring up some emotions in the older person. Remain calm and empathetic to maintain a safe environment. Approach the conversation gently without sudden movements or sudden changes in demeanour.
- **Avoid re-traumatisation** – If possible, record details of the interview in an appropriate manner to spare the older person from repeating the traumatic events multiple times to various authorities and service providers.
- **Seek consent** – Ensure you have explicit consent to share information with other service providers and to make referrals.

Take a strengths-based perspective

Negative or abusive life experiences often lead to low self-worth and self-doubt, impeding a person's ability to act or respond to a situation. It is important to validate the older person by communicating their worth and to empower them to take the action they want.

Remember the older person may have previously engaged with other professionals or service providers. Recognise that if they did not have a positive experience in the past, they may not feel empowered to share information during your interview.

A strengths-based approach focuses on the interviewee's existing strengths, resilience, and capabilities. A strengths-based perspective stands in opposition to deficit-based perspectives that focus on what is wrong with the person, pathologise their problems, and position them as a passive recipient of services or interventions.^{11, 14, 15}

Taking a strengths-based involves:

- Recognising that all people have strengths and that all experiences, even negative ones, may present opportunities for growth.
- Acknowledging that older people have the power to learn, grow and change, taking on life lessons that facilitate ageing well.
- Supporting older people to participate in the decisions that affect them, making choices and determining what changes they want to make.
- Emphasising the interviewee's agency and autonomy in their personal lives.

Consider a negotiation or mediation process as a way to empower the older person to seek the outcomes they want.

- Mediation can be an appropriate first response in some circumstances.
- Mediation can often resolve problems if there has been a lack of communication and / or miscommunication.
- This type of approach should be explained in detail to the older person so they can fully understand what mediation would involve and the objective.
- It may require several discussions for an older person to be able to consider any questions they have and contemplate engaging in mediation.

Understand other possible sources of support

An older person experiencing or at risk of harm or abuse will likely require interventions and support from a range of professionals and services. Relevant sectors may include legal or financial services, health care, aged care, policing and statutory response agencies, community organisations, counselling, mediation, advocacy and others.

The complexity of this service landscape can be confusing, both for the older person themselves and for professionals providing advice and making referrals. The service pathway of an older person is contingent on the knowledge of the professional to whom they disclose their concerns.²

Despite the challenge of navigating a complex assemblage of government and non-government agencies and organisations, enlisting other services may be an important step for safety planning and advocacy:

- During the interview, clearly communicate your role, what you and your organisation are able to do, and where your limitations lie.
- Explain issues that concern you, red flags you have observed, and where you perceive a need for other services or supports.
- Find out if there are any service providers the older person already knows and trusts. Map out their own personal service landscape and experiences.
- Accept the older person may not want to engage with other services at this stage. Making the suggestion normalises help-seeking and may lead to them seeking further support in the future.
- Seek consent for warm referrals where appropriate.
- Remember that repeated on-referrals may result in re-traumatisation and fatigue. Recounting their circumstances to multiple services may discourage a person from seeking the help they need.

Recognise the importance of self-care for professionals working with trauma

Interviewers should be aware of the emotional toll that working with older people and their circumstances may take, both professionally and personally. Interviewers may need to listen to significant incidental conflict while seeking to understand the relevant information.

Although you may aim to maintain professional distance, it is important to be aware of the potential effects of repeated exposure to other people's trauma, their complex lives and family dynamics.

Professionals who work with traumatised individuals risk experiencing secondary traumatic stress, compassion fatigue, and vicarious trauma. These are natural and well documented responses to being exposed to and having knowledge about another person's traumatising experiences.^{16, 17}

If you begin to feel overwhelmed, distressed or disconnected, and this impacts on your practice and decision-making, consider talking with your GP about possible sources of support.

You may also be able to talk with trusted colleagues, your supervisor, or an Employee Assistance Program through your place of work. Interviewers who work in private practice or are self-employed may be able to access support through professional associations.⁵

2. Ageism: recognising and addressing biases

Ageism is a prevalent and pervasive form of bias against individuals and groups, with 1 in 2 people globally holding ageist views. These guidelines are designed to tackle ageist thinking by providing practical strategies to support and improve the status of older people.

- Ageism can occur across all ages, however it is most often experienced by older people.
- Ageism reduces the status of older people in society, and negatively impacts the way older people are treated understood and valued.
- When ageism is internalised by older people, it can limit their belief in their own abilities, and constrain them from advocating for their own interests.

ageism

*The World Health Organisation defines ageism as the **stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination** directed towards others or towards oneself on the basis of age.⁴*

Address ageism in yourself and your organisation

Before conducting each interview, take a moment to reflect on the expectations and assumptions you might hold about older people. Similarly, reflect on any ageist assumptions embedded in the ways that your organisation operates. It is important to recognise when your beliefs, attitudes, and consequent behaviours may inhibit conducting a successful interview with an older person.

Consider how ageism may be present and may affect an older person's interactions with you and with your colleagues. For example, do your assumptions affect the way that you speak or listen to older people? Do your organisational processes facilitate treating everyone equally?

Resources are available to address ageism within your organisation, drawing on available resources. See further resources at the end of this document.

Address self-ageism in older people

Older people may also be ageist towards themselves and towards others.

Self-ageism may manifest in different ways. For example, some older people worry they are a burden to others, not wanting to be "a bother".

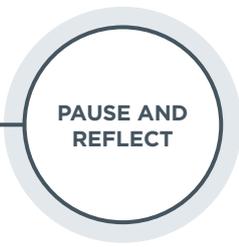
- It is important to recognise such narratives and to validate the older person, their experiences and their choices.
- These self-ageism narratives can be a barrier to effective interviewing, preventing the interviewer from securing a comprehensive understanding of the situation when an older person is more concerned about your time than their problem.
- These narratives can be a barrier to follow-up action after the interview.
- Self-ageism may cause an older person to distrust themselves or their own decisions. Watch for red flags that may indicate self-ageism:

- ▶ **Deferring decision making to children or other relatives or friends.**
- ▶ **Not reading documents carefully, relying on others to interpret information provided.**
- ▶ **Not acting upon information or advice provided, or similar self-limiting behaviours.**

Take note of the older person's self-perceptions during the interview. Where possible, address self-ageism when it arises, emphasising the older person's right to self-determination.

A strengths-based approach, focusing on their abilities, life experiences and achievements, may help address self-ageism, while also reducing any interviewer bias.

Are you the right person to conduct the interview?



PAUSE AND REFLECT

Many people hold conscious or unconscious biases towards others on the basis of their personal characteristics. Characteristics that can affect how a person is perceived include age, gender, accent, and visible markers of ethnicity, race or religion.

Both interviewers and interviewees may hold internalised stereotypes about what a person with particular characteristics can be or do. For example:

- An older person may perceive their interviewer is too young to understand the matter being discussed.
- The interviewer may remind them of a younger relative or acquaintance, affecting their ability or willingness to share the details of what has occurred.¹⁴
- Some people may feel unable to share intimate details with an interviewer of a different gender.

Be sensitive to possible communication barriers arising from such biases. Misaligned personal characteristics may affect the quality of an interview, limiting the information that is disclosed.

Strategies to address these possible barriers include:

- Asking the older person if they prefer a male or female interviewer.
- Checking if they have other concerns about the person interviewing them.
- Inviting a colleague with different personal characteristics (gender, age, cultural background, etc) to join you for some or all of the interview.
- Ensuring culturally appropriate supports are available.

3. Interviewing diverse older adults

Older people are among the most diverse demographic cohorts in our society. These guidelines provide general advice about working with older interviewees. However, each person should be approached as an individual with their own unique life experience and individual attributes and abilities.

This section provides high level information and points to consider when interviewing diverse older adults. Further targeted resources are required to support best practice for these groups of people.

Interviewing Aboriginal older people

Aboriginal older people ^d may experience and understand harm and mistreatment in ways that are distinct from other older Australians. Previous research into the financial abuse ¹⁸ and research into the mistreatment¹⁹ of older Aboriginal Australians in Western Australia has explored these differences.

These guidelines do not provide expert guidance on working with Aboriginal people.^e

Interviewing Aboriginal older people requires specific and often highly localised cultural knowledge and expertise.

Professionals should access appropriate cultural support to assist them when interviewing older Aboriginal people. This may include providing the option of an Aboriginal interviewer, where possible, or including an Aboriginal cultural liaison in the interviewing process.

Interviewing culturally and linguistically diverse older people

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) older people may have different understandings of what elder abuse means, and different perceptions of appropriate family behaviour. These differences can impact when and how older people at risk of harm seek support and respond to service interventions.²

CaLD older people are likely to experience intersecting disadvantage arising from low English proficiency, limited education, limited employment opportunities, limited income, dependency on family for tasks of daily life, and higher than average levels of need for assistance with core activities.²⁰ These factors combine to form a cycle of vulnerability,²¹ resulting in elevated exposure to risk factors for abuse, mistreatment and harm.

When interviewing CaLD older people, be aware of cultural and family dynamics that may be relevant.^{2, 3} Factors to consider include:

- Shame and fear of repercussions for the whole family can be a significant barrier to seeking help.
- Generations within CaLD families may have differing attitudes towards family care obligations and related values. These differences can lead to intergenerational conflict, or feelings of neglect and abandonment for an older person.

- CaLD older people may defer to their adult children as their spokesperson and decision-maker. This could reflect either their linguistic ability or a more collectivist approach to family decision making.
- Many CaLD older people perform significant unpaid household and childcare labour to support the workforce participation of their adult children. They may consider their work an appropriate and fulfilling contribution to the wellbeing of the family.
- Amongst CaLD people a sense of pride often leads to secrecy about any familial problems, and a belief that they should be hidden from the broader community.
- Fear of disapproval from family can be a barrier to help-seeking.
- Limited availability of culturally appropriate services may prevent CaLD older people from receiving non-familial sources of support, e.g. aged care services.

Effective and appropriate use of interpreters during interviews

Interviewing older people with low or no English may require the support of an interpreter. Where the interviewee is at risk of harm, extra care should be taken. Points to consider:

- Adult children or other known community members may not be appropriate interpreters and should be avoided where practical alternatives exist. Be aware of possible undue influence or coercive control.
- Independent interpreters should be used in the first instance, family and social connections as a last resort.
- Consider engaging support from Translation and Interpreting Services (TIS).
- Be aware of confidentiality concerns, especially when interviewing an older person from a numerically small CaLD population. Interviewees may not disclose important information for fear of judgement or of information being shared when talking with a co-ethnic interpreter.
- Telephone interpreting services may overcome some privacy concerns, but may not be appropriate where the older person has a communication disability.
- Ensure the interpreter can work with the dialect of the interviewee. Older people may not speak the standard language of their country of origin.

- Gender-matching of interpreter may be important where cultural or religious factors limit inter-gendered interactions outside of family settings.
- Consideration should be given to the importance of matching the interpreter to the religious, regional, age, social class and other personal characteristics of the interviewee.

Interviewing LGBTIQ+ older people ^f

Gender and sexuality are key identity categories that play a fundamental role in shaping a person's experiences and interactions with family and friends, employment, and public services.

LGBTIQ+ older people⁹ may present with past and current trauma due to institutional and societal discrimination, lived experience of hate crimes, and barriers to accessing inclusive services.²² Many older Australians feel unsafe disclosing their sexual or gender identities in institutional settings.²

Factors to consider when interviewing LGBTIQ+ older people at risk of harm: ^{22, 23, 24}

- Systemic discrimination experienced throughout the life course contributes to institutional avoidance and reluctance to seek help.
- Confidentiality is extremely important, as LGBTIQ+ older people may fear disclosing their sexuality or gender identity to friends, family and acquaintances as well as to services.
- LGBTIQ+ people experience higher rates of social isolation.
- LGBTIQ+ people are less likely to have the support of a spouse or de facto partner.
- Many LGBTIQ+ older people are estranged from biological family, including siblings and children.
- "Families of choice", including friends, partners and community, may be more significant in the social support networks of LGBTIQ+ older people.
- Families of choice may be more effective advocates for LGBTIQ+ older people than biological family. Despite this, service providers may not adequately recognise these forms of informal, non-family support.

Interviewing older people with diverse abilities

Older people may present with diverse physical or cognitive abilities that impact how they engage with the interview process. People may have been living with diverse abilities throughout the life course, or they may experience changes in their abilities because of common health conditions associated with ageing.

Recognising and supporting the needs of people with diverse abilities will improve interview outcomes.

Some older people may take longer to express themselves than younger people, and may have different communication styles.

- Older people may speak more slowly, provide information out of chronological order, or include superfluous details and subjective impressions.⁸
- Older people may be inclined to only present the information they feel their interviewer should hear, omitting or obscuring relevant information that they perceive is unhelpful.
- Older people may sometimes have difficulty remembering specific points of information or the most appropriate word to use.²⁵

Responding to communication differences in a negative (i.e., ageist) manner, such as using a frustrated or condescending tone, damages rapport and reduces your ability to gather information.⁸

Some older people may have mobility impairments.

- Mobility impairments may affect gross motor skills, such as walking, or fine motor movement, such as holding papers or other manual tasks.
- Consider how the interviewing environment may be adapted to support safety, comfort and full participation.

3. INTERVIEWING DIVERSE OLDER ADULTS

Some older people may have complex communication needs.^{26, 27}

- Where possible, prepare additional resources, visual aids, or other forms of communication support before the interview.
- People who have trouble speaking may compensate with other forms of communication. Pay attention to a person's entire response, watching closely for body language, etc.
- When an interviewee is hard of hearing, speak slowly and clearly with simple sentences. Take care not to seem condescending, and do not raise your voice unnaturally. Use your body language to aid in communication.
- When an interviewee has a verbal communication impairment, be prepared to use alternate forms of communication, such as written communication. Allow extra time to facilitate a slower communication process.

Interviewing people living with dementia ²⁸

Older people living with dementia have the right to self determination and should be supported to participate in all decisions that affect their lives and wellbeing. With these principles in mind, it may be necessary to adapt interviewing practice for people living with dementia.

Younger people sometimes modify their voice and speed when talking with older adults, particularly where some cognitive decline exists or is perceived. Avoiding this kind of 'elderspeak' improves cognitive abilities in older people.^{29, 30}

More respectful approaches can result in more effective interviewing.

Points to consider:

- Seek consent as an ongoing process throughout the interview. Reintroduce yourself regularly and remind the person of the reasons for the interview.
- Consider what location will support a productive interview. An unfamiliar office might be distressing or confusing to a person living with dementia.
- Language and speech expression is often a challenge for people living with dementia. Difficulty finding words, word replacement with unrelated words and other idiosyncratic word uses should be expected. The interview may require extra time.
- Offer replacement words if a person cannot recall a word, but take care not to jump in with suggestions too early or too often. Take care not to correct someone when they are telling their story, only offering vocabulary suggestions if a person becomes stuck.
- People living with dementia have decreased abstract reasoning, so maintain clear topics of conversation.
- Prepare appropriate "comfort" topics in advance, e.g. family, pets, happy past experiences, to draw upon on in case the interviewee becomes distressed.
- Watch for signs of fatigue, distress or frustration, lapses in attention and concentration.
- Manage the conclusion of the interview and departure with sensitivity. Give sufficient forewarning and reassurance.

4. Before the interview: preparing well

Long before the interview, there may be opportunities to gather relevant information, to gauge the older person's understanding of their circumstances and possible interview outcomes, and to make appropriate arrangements for the interview itself.

Effectively preparing for interviews requires your whole organisation, including scheduling, reception, and other frontline staff, to understand the different requirements and risk factors that should be considered when interviewing older people.

A pre-interview checklist may help ensure key information is captured. Consider the following points prior to the interview to ensure you are well prepared.

Reason for the interview and the older person's prior understanding

Consider the reason for the interview and the older person's understanding of that reason.

- Is this a service referral or a self-referral?
- Does the older person understand the reason for the interview?
- Try to ascertain what the older person is expecting during the interview.
 - What prior knowledge can be established?
 - What outcomes are they expecting to achieve?
- Are there concerns the person may not fully understand the information provided?^{31, 32}

For self-referrals, consider who has arranged the interview. If the older person has not arranged the interview themselves, this is potentially a red flag.

An older person may need help from a friend or relative to make the appointment, perhaps because of hearing loss or other disabilities.

Carefully consider any elements of coercive control that may be present.^{1, 3, 10}

- If possible, speak with the older person directly to ensure they understand the reason for the interview.
- Listen carefully for possible red flags:
 - ▶ **Is the older person present on the call while the appointment is being made?**
 - ▶ **Does the support person exhibit concerning behaviours, such as interjecting or speaking over the older person unnecessarily?**
 - ▶ **Are there signs the person may need other services or sources of support? Referral documents or information sheets may be prepared in advance.**

Interview location and environment

Location

Some older people may have limited mobility or limited access to transport.

- Consider the location for the scheduled interview, including proximity to parking.
- Check if the older person needs assistance getting to the interview. How will they travel? If they need transport, who will provide it?
- Ask if an outreach interview at the older person's home or another location that they nominate would be more suitable.

Environment

Some older people may have mobility, sensory or communication needs that require environmental modifications.

- Where possible, establish these needs in advance of the interview so appropriate adjustments can be made.
- Conduct an audit of your interviewing space to assess for hazards and barriers.

Timing

Interviews with some older people may require more time than standard interviews.

- Ensure you book enough time for an effective interview. Factor in time for rapport building, rest breaks, and careful closure.
- Ask the older person when is the most appropriate time for an interview, for example do they prefer mornings or afternoons?

Older people may have mobility, sensory or communication requirements that require environmental modifications. Establish these needs in advance of the interview so appropriate adjustments can be made.

See the next section of these guidelines for more detailed information about interviewing environment, location and timing.

Interview support people

Some older people may prefer having a carer or support person join them during the interview to assist with communication or advocacy needs.

Establish prior to the interview if the older person expects to be joined by a carer or support person.

- Consider conflicts of interest, undue influence and coercive control.
- Ideally the support person should have no interest in issues or transactions being discussed.⁽³⁴⁾
- Set the expectation before the meeting that the interviewer will speak one-on-one with the older person for at least some of the interview (i.e., without their support person present).

Establish prior to the interview if other supports are needed, such as an interpreter if English is not the older person's first language.

5. Interviewing environment and arrangements

Allowing sufficient time for the interview and modifying arrangements to support an individual's sensory, mobility and communication requirements can lead to better interview outcomes.

When interviewees feel physically comfortable, safe, heard, and well supported, they are more able to clearly communicate their circumstances, to provide accurate details, and to understand and retain any information they are given. ^{13, 33}

Interview environment

It is important to think about how the interview setting may be adapted to support the needs of older people. Points to consider:

- Consider access to the interview location, including distance from building entrance and bathroom facilities. Note any steps, width of corridors, and other access concerns.
- Be aware of flooring. Limit falls hazards such as uneven floors or floor coverings such as rugs.
- Position chairs so you and the older person can comfortably face each other. Avoid placing barriers, such as a desk, between you and the older person.
- Position chairs close enough to address any sight or hearing difficulties for the older person, while remaining respectful of their personal space.
- Offer chairs of varying heights and firmness that can be adjusted to the older person's needs. Cushions may help with finding a comfortable position. Remember that comfort and seating positions may change during extended interviewing sessions.
- Ensure at least one chair option has high, strong armrests for accessible and safe seating.
- When offering refreshments such as tea or coffee, consider dexterity and frailty. Do not overfill containers, provide small cups with large handles for easier handling.

Interview time and timing

Good interviewing practice can be time consuming. A longer interview may be needed to allow time to build trust, gather relevant information, and ensure the older person understands the interview outcomes and next steps. An effective interviewing process may need to be conducted over a series of appointments.

Points to consider:

- Some older people will find interviews emotionally and/or physically strenuous.
- Empower the older person to take a break when needed. Ensure they know they can access a bathroom and where the bathroom is located.
- Time-related social and health factors such as sleep schedules and medication schedules could impact on the older person's responsiveness during the interview.
- Be alert for signs of fatigue, diminishing concentration or emotional distress. Reschedule interview if necessary.
- When planning the meeting, allow sufficient time for the interview. Older people have decades of life experience that may be relevant to the issue being discussed. It may take some time to recount all the detail.
- Communicate the allocated time clearly to the older person. This will enable them to regulate the amount of information they provide and ease any sense of feeling rushed or unworthy of your time.
- Allowing sufficient time for a successful interview has implications for both scheduling and for costs. Some professionals providing fee-based services may take a considered approach by offering longer appointments at discounted rates to older people in recognition of their different needs.

Including support people in interviews

Some older people will require the support of a carer or trusted companion, both during the interview and to assist with any follow up actions. A support person may help with transport and mobility, with overcoming communication disabilities, and with advocacy, including for follow-up actions.

However, interviewers should watch for signs of undue influence or coercive control.

- At least part of the interview should be conducted one-on-one.
- Some older people may feel anxious about being separated from their support person.
- It may help to clearly communicate when the appointment is made that part of the interview will be one-on-one.
- Explicit consent should be sought from the older person to ensure they do want their support person to join them during the interview.

If you have concerns about the relationship between the older person and their support person, appropriate measures include:

- Spending more time interviewing the older person on their own (this may require support from a colleague).
- Making clear file notes that detail your concerns.
- Discontinuing the interview, suggesting you resume on another day with a different support person present.
- Proposing the older person seek support from other services and potentially making the referral yourself.

Consider also how the matter being discussed may affect the support person or other carers. Under some circumstances it may be important to involve them in decision making with the full consent of the older person.^h

Interviews conducted in other locations

Mobility and transport constraints may limit an older person's ability to meet in an office. Conducting interviews in other locations, such as private homes, hospitals, or aged care residential facilities may be necessary or preferable.

- Be aware of privacy limitations in these settings. Extra vigilance is required in settings where interview confidentiality is harder to control. No person with a vested interest in the issue being discussed should be within earshot.
- Confirm that the older person feels safe in their environment and able to communicate freely, an important consideration both for the older person's physical and psychological safety.^{14, 34}

5. INTERVIEWING ENVIRONMENT AND ARRANGEMENTS

- Interviewing an older person in their home may offer insights into personal circumstances and identify further issues and concerns. If necessary, refer the older person to other services.
- Public places such as cafes or libraries are not appropriate for most interviews. A quiet space and privacy are essential for discussing confidential matters.³⁴

Interviews conducted online or by telephone

When older people have mobility limitations and/or difficulty accessing transport it may be appropriate to consider remote appointments conducted by telephone or through virtual interviewing environments (online platforms).

This approach may be particularly relevant in regional settings where distance means outreach interviews are more time consuming and more costly.

However, there are challenges and risks to be considered when conducting remote interviews with older people:

- Some older people may be less confident users of online communication technologies. They may require facilitated digital access to support their participation in a virtual interview.³⁵
- Even older people with better digital skills may face other barriers to communicating in an online environment. Check their devices are fit for purpose, i.e., good speakers for loud volume, tablets with large screens preferred over smartphones, software updates installed.³⁶
- Consider confidentiality concerns when an older person is reliant on someone to support them in accessing an online interview.
- Be aware of other people who may be within ear shot, who under different circumstances would not be privy to the conversation.
- If their home is unsafe or not appropriate for a remote interview, consider environments older people can visit without arousing suspicion, such as a medical centre where a private conference room might be set up.

6. Strategies and techniques for effective interviewing

An effective interview is one that obtains accurate, relevant and complete information.³⁷ Reliable and relevant information is best obtained through interviews that are non-leading, non-suggestive, interviewee-focussed, and interviewee-led.¹⁴

A combination of planning, knowledge, appropriate questioning techniques and empathy are essential for a good quality interview.³⁸

Rapport, trust and clarity - the basics of good interviewing practice

Building rapport and trust is a central element of effective interviewing. Relationality and connection are therefore essential skills to value and develop.

Aside from making the older person feel more comfortable, research has shown that building good rapport results in higher levels of disclosure and delivers more reliable and fulsome accounts of events.^{7, 33, 39}

- Recognise that the older person might be feeling immense fear or anxiety during the interview. Try to address any fears and concerns early in the interview. Throughout the interview, continue to pay attention to any signs of discomfort that may be affecting communication and comprehension.
- Explain how confidentiality applies in the context of this interview. Some older people have negative experiences of breached confidentiality, and are therefore distrustful which may adversely impact on the information they are willing to disclose.
- Always use clear language and appropriate vocabulary. Be direct, using simple sentences and avoiding acronyms, technical terminology and jargon.
- Direct all questions and conversation to the older person. Do not address a support person as their proxy.
- Throughout the interview, practice active listening, paying close attention to the older person, nodding and repeating important phrases or key words.

Communicating your belief in the older person

One of the most significant barriers to help seeking among older people at risk of harm is the fear of not being believed.^{3,5} How the professional they confide in reacts to a disclosure, whether or not they are believed, is also a predictor of how they will engage with formal sources of support.³³

Disbelief may be perceived through actions such as:⁷

- Questioning that focuses on their character rather than their account.
- Closed off or resistant body language.
- Frequent interrupting, rushing the interviewee to complete their account.
- Closed questioning that seeks to establish preconceived assumptions or facts.

Validate the older person's account and their feelings. Show your belief through the following actions:

- Treat the interviewee with respect and compassion.
- Listen to the whole story, including the parts that seem irrelevant. Let the older person feel heard.
- Demonstrate active listening using body language and affirmative interjections to indicate your belief in their story.
- Use narrative interviewing techniques to encourage free recall and the recounting of their story in their own words.

Opening conversation for rapport and information

Rapport is a “communicative alliance” between the older person and the interviewer, it is essential to successful interviewing.⁴⁰

Beginning the interview with personal questions or a short conversation on a topic builds connection and trust between interviewee and interviewer. This requires both verbal and non-verbal communication.

A good opening interview topic may relate to the older person’s family and friends. Consider questions like, “Who is this with you today?”, “How did you travel here this morning?”, leading to a conversation that can map who’s who in the older person’s support systems.

Questions like these serve two purposes:

1. Helping to set the older person at ease in an intimidating environment by talking about a topic they know well and can easily relate to.
2. Providing insight into the close, distant or broken relationships and support networks that the older person might have, some of which may be relevant information.

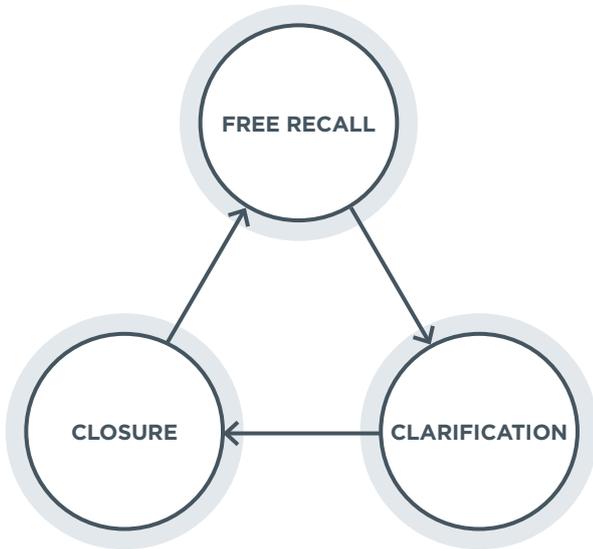
Maintain this rapport throughout the interview. This has a greater consequence to interviewing outcomes than the initial building of rapport alone.⁴¹

Narrative interviewing techniques

A good quality interview includes a narrative component that encourages the free recall of the interviewee, with minimal interruption by the interviewer.¹¹ Interviewees of all ages and abilities produce more fulsome and reliable accounts when open questioning techniques and narrative prompts are used.^{42, 43}

Narrative interviewing usually involves the telling and retelling of a person’s account. This multiple retrieval method further enhances recall and accuracy.¹³ Providing clear instructions to the interviewee about your expectations helps support this repeated narrative approach.

Narrative interviews typically comprise three stages. These three stages may be repeated many times during an interview or series of interviews to address multiple topics or time periods.



1. Free recall

Invite the older person to narrate the story according to their recollection. This may not be chronological.

Two free recalls can help with mapping the narrative. Listen without notetaking during the first free recall. Make notes to signpost important events and information during the second free recall.

2. Clarification

After the free recall, questions are asked to clarify points in the account provided. Use funnelling techniques to move from open ended questions to closed and choice questions.

3. Closure

When a topic has been exhausted, offer closure to the older person by summarising the information covered and confirming mutual understanding. Verify that all important information has been covered. Repeat these stages as many times as necessary during the interview.

Narrative interviewing offers multiple benefits:

- Interviewees are empowered by having control of their own story.¹¹
- An uninterrupted narrative early in the interview significantly improves the recall accuracy.⁴⁴
- People who have experienced traumatic events may have non-linear memories, prioritising different details in their minds. Narrative recall with questioning tailored to an individual's memory of events results in more accurate accounts.¹³

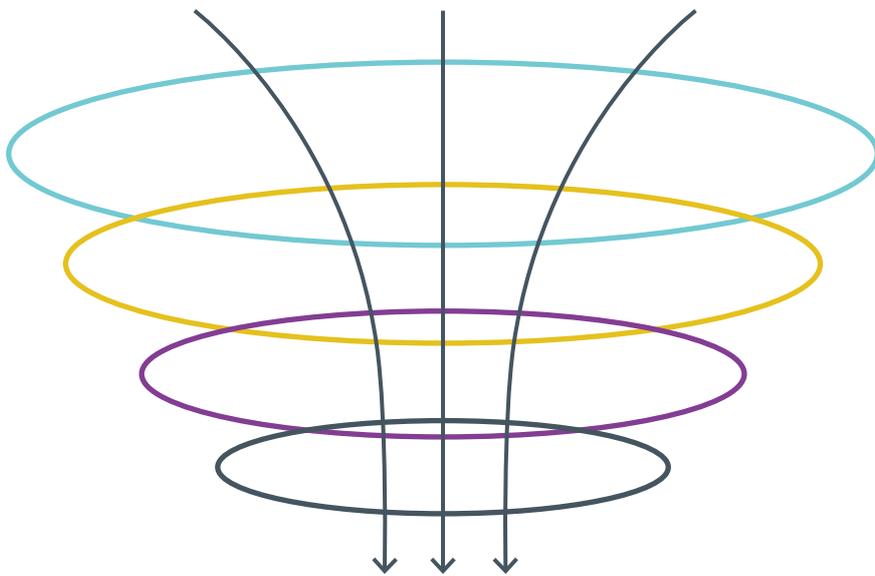
- Narratives can provide valuable insights into an interviewee's experiences, needs, and perspectives. This may help the interviewer tailor a response to their specific situation.
- In a highly aroused mental state, the interviewee may have less capacity for processing questions.¹³

Conversely, interviewing practices that hinder memory recall and break rapport: ^{7, 13}

- Rapid and forceful questioning.
- Frequent interruptions during the older person's account.
- Opening the interview with formal questions instead of building rapport.
- A strict sequence of questions.
- Discouraging the older person from giving "unnecessary" details.

Funnelling questions

The funnel technique is a questioning approach that moves a discussion from the general to the specific. It is an effective way to confirm detailed elements of an account without interrupting free recall or using leading questions that might affect accuracy.



 **General open questions or narrative prompts,**
e.g., *Tell me about your children.*

 **Specific open questions,**
e.g., *What is it you find difficult about discussing this matter with your children?*

 **Choice questions,**
e.g., *Do you find it easier to discuss this matter with your son or your daughter or perhaps with someone else?*

 **Closed yes/no questions,**
e.g., *Has your son refused to talk with you about this matter?*

Essential non-verbal communication skills - what to do and what to watch for

Kinesic communication (body language) and paralinguistic communication (tone and register) can help to gain trust and support clear verbal communication. Similarly, non-verbal cues may also provide warning signs that the older person is feeling unsafe or is withholding information.

While this section provides general advice for good non-verbal communication, remember different people move and communicate in different ways. Gender matching between the interviewer and interviewee, cultural backgrounds, and other factors can affect non-verbal communication cues.

What to do (good interview practice): ⁴⁵

Body language:

- Posture – sit upright with feet flat on the floor and shoulders relaxed.
- Posture – keep body turned towards the interviewee, leaning slightly forward and nodding to show interest, agreement and understanding.
- Eye contact – Maintain eye contact if culturally appropriate to show your interest and respect, but don't stare.
- Facial expressions – Be mindful of how your face conveys emotional state, including through microexpressions and while at rest. Smiling sets people at ease on arrival. During interviews aim to demonstrate empathy through facial expressions.
- Hand gestures – Use natural hand movements, like open palms, to emphasise important points and support comprehension.
- Mirroring – subtly imitate the gestures, posture or speech pattern of the interviewee.
- Proximity – Sit close enough but not too close, approximately 1.5 metres distance without physical barriers between you, such as desks.

Tone and register:

- Pitch, volume, intonation, enunciation and verbal delivery speed can be used to convey various messages.
- Word selection can also convey or incite emotion.

Behaviours to watch for in the older person (potential red flags):

Body language:

- ▶ Posture - Sitting on the edge of the chair with legs and/or arms tightly crossed and shoulders tensed.
- ▶ Posture - Turning away from you, body language seems guarded and shielding.
- ▶ Eye contact - Avoiding eye contact, looking down or away.
- ▶ Facial expressions - Showing unhappy or nervous emotional state through their face. Watch particularly closely for microexpressions of fear, anger, sadness or contempt.
- ▶ Hand gestures - Hands are tightly clasped or gesticulating erratically, both of which may indicate tension or fear.

Tone and register:

- ▶ Pitch - Speaking at a higher pitch than normal
- ▶ Volume - Speaking louder or softer than necessary
- ▶ Control - Stuttering, stumbling or shaky voice
- ▶ Rhythm- Hesitating, pausing, or using short sentences

7. After the interview: closure, advice, and follow up action

An older person's interaction with you and your organisation may not end with the interview. How they leave the interview, how they feel, how well informed they are, and what supports they have available will affect whether, when and how they decide to act.

Working with older people who are experiencing or at risk of harm involves promoting their safety while also supporting their right to self-determination.

Ensuring respectful closure¹⁴

It is important to consider how the older person feels at the end of the interview. Careful and respectful closure can support the empowerment of your interviewee. When concluding an interview:

- Summarise the information covered and confirm mutual understanding.
- Confirm that all relevant information or areas of concern have been sufficiently covered.
- Offer the opportunity to ask further questions. Address any concerns or fears the older person may have after the interview.
- Clarify how any information provided during the interview will be used.
- Confirm future appointment dates and times if any have been set.
- Ensure the interviewee knows how to contact you with concerns or questions later.
- End the interview on a comfortable topic.

Sometimes interviews will suddenly end if the interviewee is tired or overwhelmed. Ensure you have prepared information sheets or other relevant resources in advance.

Providing advice and supporting follow up action⁴⁶

Some interviews may involve providing advice that requires the older person to take follow up action. Points to consider when providing advice:

- Ensure advice is clear. Where appropriate, break any follow up action into manageable steps.
- Repeat the follow-up steps and confirm the person understands and is comfortable with pursuing these actions.
- If follow up action involves legal, financial or other technical matters, take sufficient time to demystify these processes and address any related fears.
- Consider each individual's ability to follow the advice provided. A person may need extra support relating to mobility and transport, communication and literacy, physical or cognitive abilities, prior knowledge and experience.
- Remember that women in older generations may have taken on traditional gendered roles within their households. This means that some older women may have little experience of daily administrative tasks such as banking or managing household affairs.
- Explore possible sources of support, including formal services or trusted family and friends.
- If follow up action requires accessing a website or app, consider individual skills, and explore other ways this action may be taken and/or how they may be safely supported with an online transaction.

Providing written information

After the interview, it may be appropriate to provide a written summary of what was discussed. Written summaries and correspondence should be accessible for a general audience:

- Use plain English, avoiding acronyms and jargon.
- Ensure any technical terms are explained in plain English.
- Avoid the passive voice. Check the agent of every sentence can be clearly understood.
- Provide important information in other languages and other formats where needed.
- Break text down into smaller sections using subheadings, with one idea per paragraph.
- A useful structure for most correspondence is:
 - This is what has happened / what is going to happen.
 - This is what this means to you and your situation.
 - This is what you need to do (including where no action is required – state this clearly to avoid worrying the person that they have forgotten something).
 - This is how you can get more information or help if you need it.

When writing to older people, further adjustments may assist with clear communication and comprehension:^{47, 48}

- Use a large font of minimum 12 point font.
- Use 1.5 or double line spacing and left-aligned text.
- Avoid underlined, blocked or italicised lettering. Avoid splitting words across two lines.
- Ask how they want to receive written correspondence as some older people may prefer post to email.

In some circumstances it may also be appropriate to provide written information to third parties, such as a support person. The older person must consent to any information sharing.

Supporting autonomous decision-making

Older people should be informed of any risks inherent to a situation and their decisions. However, it is important to empower people to act despite these risks **if this is their choice**.^{46, 49}

Points to consider:

- Confirm that the older person understands their rights, all the options available and associated risks.
- Support their decision to choose riskier options, given they fully understand the possible consequences.
- Social isolation can increase risk. If appropriate, identify immediate social supports to alleviate these risks.
- Work with the older person to manage the risk and put appropriate safety plans in place. This may involve referrals to other services.

supported decision-making

relates to individual abilities to make different types of decisions. Some people may not be able to make some decisions but can make other types of decisions. It is important not to have a blanket approach to decision-making ability.

dignity of risk

is a person's right to self-determination and to make autonomous decisions, even when those decisions involve some risk.

8. Further resources

Elder Abuse

WA Government – [Elder Abuse Support Services and Resources](#) as well as general information about elder abuse and the mistreatment of older people

Elder Abuse Action Australia – [Compass resources](#) guiding action on elder abuse

Law Council of Australia – [Best Practice Guide for Legal Practitioners in Relation to Financial Elder Abuse](#)

Law Council of Australia – [Best Practice Guide for Legal Practitioners on Assessing Mental Capacity](#)

WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) – [Recognising, Responding and Reporting the Abuse of Older People Online Learning Modules](#)

National Ageing and Research Institute (NARI) – [Best practice responses to cases of elder abuse in the context of dementia](#)

Trauma-informed care

Blue Knot – [Resources for working with complex trauma](#)

Law Access WA – [Trauma informed practice](#)

Sexual Assault Resource Centre – [Supporters Guide, Care Package, Training](#)

Ageism

World Health Organisation – [Global Report on Ageism](#)

Every Age Counts – [Campaign](#)

WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) – [Ageism Training Modules](#)

WA Government, Department of Communities – [Seniors and Ageing](#)

Accessibility services

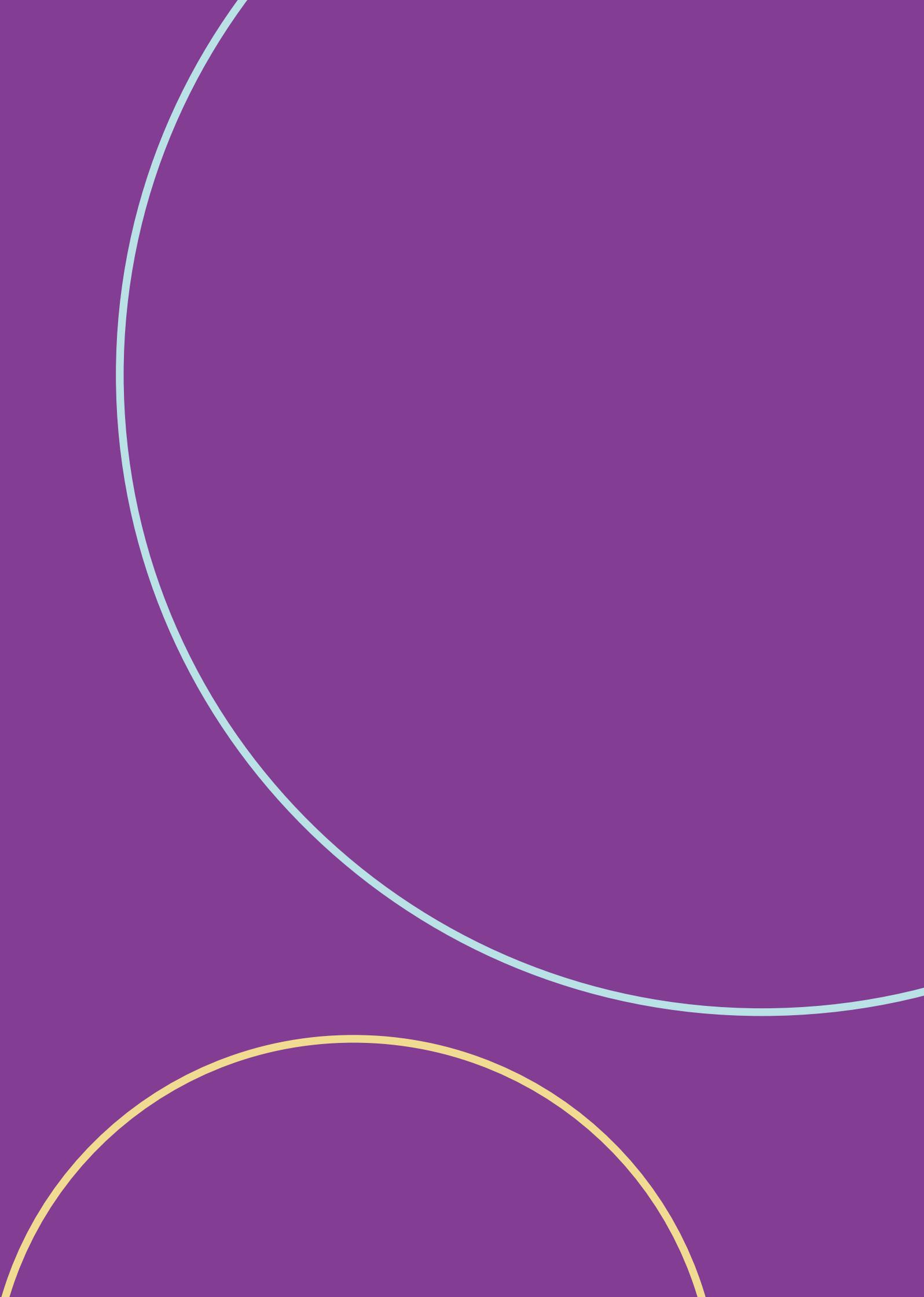
Department of Home Affairs – [Translating and Interpreting Services](#)

Future Planning Documents

Office of the Public Advocate – [Enduring Power of Attorney](#)

Office of the Public Advocate – [Enduring Power of Guardianship](#)

Public Trustee – [Make a Will](#)



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Notes

- a. Note that the National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study did not estimate prevalence for social abuse.
- b. For example, the [California Undue Influence Screening Tool \(CUIST\)](#) developed from Quinn, M. J., Nerenberg, L., Navarro, A. E. & Wilber, K.H. (2017). Developing an Undue Influence Screening Tool for Adult Protective Services. *Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect*, 29 (2-3).
- c. For example, [Law Care WA](#), provided through the Law Society of WA.
- d. These guidelines use the term 'Aboriginal' respectfully to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as the preferred usage by Aboriginal people in WA.
- e. The ECU SAGE Futures Lab has research expertise relating to CaLD and LGBTIQ+ ageing, and diverse abilities in ageing, particularly dementia. Working with Aboriginal older people is specialist area of practice and research. Further research and dedicated resources are required to support interviewing practice with Aboriginal older people.
- f. The authors thank Dr Lukasz Krzyzowski for providing expert input into this subsection of the document.
- g. These guidelines use the acronym LGBTIQ+ that is preferred by many representative organisations and commonly understood among service providers and the general public. However, for some older people 'Queer' is a slur that carries a history of trauma. Interviewers should therefore use caution and follow the language preferences of the person being interviewed.
- h. The Western Australian Carers Recognition Act 2004 (the Act) recognises the role of carers in the community and includes the Western Australian Carers Charter, which outlines how carers are to be treated and how they are to be involved in delivering services that affect them and their caring role'. For more information see Western Australian Government webpage [My Rights as a Carer: Legislation to help support Western Australian Carers](#).

