

DISCUSSION RESOURCE

together  
making  
change

PROJECT OF  
5TH NATIONAL ELDER  
ABUSE CONFERENCE

HOSTED BY SENIORS  
RIGHTS SERVICE



# ELDER ABUSE AND CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE (CALD) COMMUNITIES

JENNY BRAY





## ABOUT THIS PROJECT

In February 2018, Seniors Rights Service hosted the 5th National Elder Abuse Conference, which brought together more than 500 delegates from a broad range of backgrounds. The conference culminated in an announcement by the Commonwealth Attorney-General, Hon Christian Porter MP, that a “National Plan” would be developed to ensure the protection of older people in Australian society.

To further the conversations generated by the conference, Seniors Rights Service engaged Ellen Fanning to conduct a series of interviews with experts who attended the conference. These videos, along with a discussion sheet for each video, are freely available to community members, professionals and students of all sectors, to enable engagement with the content using suggested discussion questions and to follow up with further reading.

### IMPORTANT! READ THIS BEFORE HOLDING A DISCUSSION GROUP

Many people will share and benefit from participating in study and discussion on the topics.

Due to the sensitive nature of the topics, however, group leaders should ensure they are prepared to support individuals to find qualified assistance in a timely manner, should a topic generate personal concerns or issues for individuals.

As a minimum, group leaders should have available information sheets and phone numbers from the relevant seniors' legal rights service and/or elder abuse prevention service in your state or territory (on page 4 and current as of 2018).

## ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

Ms Bray explains how ageism is involved in elder abuse, starting with older people being patronised and/or having their decision-making rights ignored as they age. Referring to research she conducted with seniors of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, she discusses the complexities of understanding elder abuse within multicultural contexts. She explains how elder abuse prevention needs more research, but research is difficult because these matters are taboo and are kept hidden. She shares the ideas for prevention strategies that were offered by the seniors she consulted with. She also highlights some of the findings of a review of prevention projects aimed at CALD communities conducted for Seniors Rights Service and the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW.

### FOCUS AREA

Elder abuse and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities

### RELATED TOPICS

Elder abuse prevention, elder abuse intervention, cultural views of ageing, cultural views of aged

care, CALD communities, community education, ageism

### AUDIENCES

Community members, aged-care workers, health workers, researchers, students, advocates, policy officers

### MATERIALS FOR FURTHER READING

Bray, J. (2018), Scope of Current Elder Abuse Awareness/Prevention Strategies Targeted to CALD Communities, 5th National Elder Abuse Conference – Together Making Change, Sydney, 2018, accessed from [http://jennybray.com.au/sites/default/files/resources/BRAY\\_CALD\\_Models\\_5th\\_National\\_Elder\\_Abuse\\_Conference.pdf](http://jennybray.com.au/sites/default/files/resources/BRAY_CALD_Models_5th_National_Elder_Abuse_Conference.pdf)

Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils (FECCA) Submission #292, Australian Law Reform Commission Elder Abuse Enquiry, accessed from [www.alrc.gov.au/inquiries/elder-abuse/submissions](http://www.alrc.gov.au/inquiries/elder-abuse/submissions)

### SUGGESTED AGENCIES

Contact the Ethnic Communities' Council in your state listed at <http://fecca.org.au/about/membership/>



## JENNY BRAY

DIRECTOR, JENNY  
BRAY TRAINING AND  
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## BIOGRAPHY

Jenny Bray is an independent consultant and trainer to the community care, aged care, disability support, early childhood intervention and local government sectors. She operates from a fundamental regard for the human rights of service users and great respect for volunteers and workers within the sector. Ms Bray's previous experience has included delivering direct care, community development, sector development and policy work for peak bodies and government agencies, delivering training for service providers and TAFE, assisting agencies to plan strategically, and project-managing a vast array of projects for government and non-government clients. Ms Bray has assisted hundreds of organisations to respond successfully to community needs and changing environments. Self-employed for 20 years, Ms Bray speaks from experience about the opportunities and challenges of operating a values-based service on a business footing.

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

***What were the findings of the online survey into elder abuse that Ms Bray was involved in?***

The strongest message was that there was a general lack of respect shown to older people, which Ms Bray refers to as "ageism". As an example, Ms Bray shares a story of an older woman who, in an interview for a research project said, "I want my doctor to treat me like the young woman that I used to be, instead of talking to me like I'm an older person; I'm the same person inside." Ms Bray also says she has spoken to many people about their experiences of ageing and that even people in their early 60s talk about how their children start to behave differently towards them. She shares stories from older people in which their children have said such things as, "You shouldn't do this or that because it's too dangerous", or suggest they declutter or downsize their house; and of adult children starting to take over the decisions of their parents.

***How is the definition of elder abuse difficult when considering cultural differences?***

Ms Bray says different cultural perspectives about care arrangements in a family can lead to different ideas of what is elder abuse. As an example, she speaks of a newly arrived migrant family. In the country of origin, the eldest son earns the money and is expected to provide for senior family members. When the family arrives in Australia, they are given social security independently (with each adult receiving a payment). If the family is living in rental accommodation, the eldest son has to ask the senior family member to pay the rent. From the cultural perspective of the senior family member, the eldest son should look after them for free. The senior family member believes that the son asking them for money, even to pay the rent, is not culturally acceptable. They regard this pressure to contribute money as elder abuse.

***How are some seniors caught between cultural rules and Australian law?***

Ms Bray gives the example of a woman who had gold jewellery as dowry. When her husband dies, the son says, "That is my property now." It may have worked that way in the country of origin but in Australian law the jewellery belongs to the wife. But she is in a difficult situation because there is an expectation, in that cultural setting, to give up the jewellery, and she fears that insisting on her rights under Australian law could result in her being thrown out of the house or not being allowed to see her grandchildren.



STATE/TERRITORY	AGENCY CONTACT	CONTACT
<b>AUSTRALIA-WIDE</b>	<b>Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)</b>	1800 700 600 Connects you with aged-care advocacy services in your state or territory
<b>NEW SOUTH WALES</b>	<b>Seniors Rights Service</b>	1800 424 079
	<b>NSW Elder Abuse Helpline</b>	1800 628 221
<b>AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY</b>	<b>Older Persons Abuse Prevention Referral and Information Line (APRIL)</b>	(02) 6205 3535
	<b>A.C.T. Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service (ADACAS)</b>	02 6242 5060
<b>NORTHERN TERRITORY</b>	<b>Elder Abuse Information Line</b>	1800 037 072
	<b>Seniors and Disability Rights Service of Darwin Community Legal Service</b>	1800 812 953
<b>QUEENSLAND</b>	<b>Elder Abuse Prevention Unit</b>	1300 651 192
	<b>Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia (ADA Australia)</b>	1800 818 338
	<b>Caxton Legal Centre</b>	(07) 3214 6333
<b>SOUTH AUSTRALIA</b>	<b>Aged Rights Advocacy Service</b>	(08) 8232 5377 (Adelaide)
	<b>Alliance for the Prevention of Elder Abuse</b>	1800 700 600 (rural)
	<b>Legal Services Commission of South Australia</b>	1300 366 424 (08) 8111 5555
<b>TASMANIA</b>	<b>Tasmanian Elder Abuse Helpline</b>	1800 441 169
	<b>Advocacy Tasmania Inc. (ATI)</b>	(03) 6224 2240
	<b>Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania</b>	1300 366 611 (03) 6236 3800
<b>VICTORIA</b>	<b>Seniors Rights, Victoria</b>	1300 368 821
	<b>Elder Rights Advocacy (ERA)</b>	(03) 9602 3066 1800 700 600 (rural)
<b>WESTERN AUSTRALIA</b>	<b>Advocare Inc.</b>	1300 724 679 (Perth) 1800 655 566 (rural)
	<b>Older Persons Rights Service, Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre</b>	(08) 9440 1663 (Mirrabooka) (08) 9301 4413 (Joondalup)

## DISCLAIMER

This is information only, not legal advice. If you have a legal problem, call our service directly or see your lawyer. The views expressed in the video are the views of the individual making them, not those of Seniors Rights Service Inc.