



## Elder Abuse Prevention Program

Our Elder Abuse Prevention workers at Better Place Australia are specialised Family Violence practitioners with social work backgrounds. This expertise shapes our practice and aligns with our service response model.

### 1. Holistic and Person-Centred Approach

Social workers are trained to look at the whole person within the context of their environment, considering the emotional, psychological, social, and physical aspects of their situation. This means BPA services emphasise a holistic approach to elder abuse, addressing not only the abuse itself but also the wider social factors (e.g., isolation, family dynamics) that may contribute to it.

*Service Impact: Our team is more likely to focus on empowering clients to make informed decisions, ensuring that they have access to a broad range of services beyond just legal or immediate protection (e.g., financial counselling, and mental health support).*

### 2. Trauma-Informed Practice

Our social workers are trained in trauma-informed care. This approach ensures that our interventions are sensitive to the effects of trauma that older people may have experienced, whether from abuse or other life events.

*Service Impact: This informs BPA's practice by ensuring that interactions are empathetic and supportive, minimising the risk of re-traumatising clients. It also helps staff identify and respond to the underlying trauma, allowing for more effective long-term outcomes.*

### 3. Prescribed Service

Better Place Australia staff can share information if an older person is being pressured, coerced, or threatened by a family member or carer. As the only prescribed Elder Abuse prevention service, BPA is recognised for its specialised family violence practice.

*Service Impact: BPA is able to collaborate with other organisations to assess and manage client safety.*

### 4. Deep Knowledge of the Aged Care System

Our team can work in a range of specialty fields. Workers develop a knowledge of aged care systems and collaborative practices that optimise outcomes for their clients.

*Service Impact: Aged care system knowledge allows us to provide older individuals and their families with accurate, up-to-date information on their rights,*

*entitlements, and options within the aged care system. They can identify and access appropriate aged care services that best meet the client's needs, ensuring smoother transitions and reducing barriers to care.*

### 5. Advocacy and Empowerment

We are advocates. We ensure that the voices of older individuals are heard. Our workers prioritise the autonomy of clients. This is particularly important when working with older people, who may feel disempowered in their family or care settings.

*Service Impact: BPA's services are designed to support client advocacy. Our team works closely with clients to understand their wishes, represent their needs in care planning, and advocate for services that respect their rights and preferences.*

### 6. Coordination with Other Services

BPA is very experienced in case coordination and integrating services across different sectors, including health, finance or legal systems.

*Service Impact: BPA's social workers can seamlessly coordinate with financial counsellors and mediators, ensuring clients receive comprehensive, integrated care. They also liaise with external legal services when needed, ensuring a smooth referral process. BPA staff are frequently liaising with Magistrates Court staff and Administrative Tribunal Staff to ensure the best outcomes for clients.*

### 7. Conflict Resolution and Mediation

Elder abuse generally occurs within familial relationships, our team is well-equipped to help clients find non-adversarial solutions to conflicts that may be contributing to the abuse but only when safe and appropriate to do so.

*Service Impact: BPA's approach to elder abuse prevention can refer to family mediation, to help resolve conflicts but prioritise the safety and well-being of the older person.*

### 8. Focus on Social and Emotional Well-Being

The BPA team places a high value on emotional well-being, recognising that elder abuse can have significant psychological impacts on older adults.

*Service Impact: BPA's services include emotional and psychological support, helping clients process abuse, manage feelings of fear or anxiety, and build resilience. This emotional focus complements other aspects of care, such as financial counselling or legal interventions. This support can be provided even during an escalation of risk.*

## 9. Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusivity

Social workers are trained to work with diverse populations, including culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups, people with disabilities and the First Nation community. They are skilled at adapting services to meet the unique needs of different communities.

*Service Impact: BPA's elder abuse prevention services are inclusive and culturally sensitive, ensuring that older adults from diverse backgrounds can access support that resonates with their cultural values and experiences.*

## 10. Preventative and Early Intervention Focus

Our social workers take a preventative approach, focusing not just on reacting to elder abuse but also on identifying risk factors early and intervening before the abuse escalates.

*Service Impact: BPA's practice includes current family violence risk assessment (MARAM) proactive outreach, education, and community-based initiatives aimed at preventing elder abuse before it occurs. This might include working with families or communities to address issues such as financial pressures, or social isolation, and working with sectors to improve identification.*

## 11. Collaboration and Multidisciplinary Care

BPA workers are highly skilled in collaborating with other professionals, including financial counsellors, GPs, Allied Health, Nurses, Aged Care Staff, Geriatricians, and lawyers. This allows for a more integrated care model.

*Service Impact: BPA benefits from a well-rounded, multidisciplinary approach, where our social workers are key in coordinating care but rely on collaboration with a range of experts to ensure that clients receive the full spectrum of support.*

Better Place Elder Abuse Prevention Service offers a multidisciplinary, empowering, and inclusive response to victims and family members where there is the presence of elder abuse. This ensures that clients receive well-rounded support that addresses emotional, financial, and relational challenges while maintaining their autonomy.

## Who is Eligible?

The service is for older people, 65 years and over (or 50 years plus for Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander clients), who are at risk of or experiencing elder abuse. The Elder Abuse Prevention Service can specifically support older people who reside in the regions of Inner Gippsland, Bayside Peninsula, Barwon, North-East Melbourne and the Western Metro Area.

A referral to the service can come from an older person directly, a concerned family member, a friend or a referring agency.

Secondary Consultations are also available to any professional needing advice or referral pathways in cases of suspected or confirmed elder abuse.

## How to refer?

To enquire or refer, please contact Better Place Australia's Elder Abuse Prevention Team on **1800 214 117** or send an email to [respectingelders@betterplace.com.au](mailto:respectingelders@betterplace.com.au) with your contact details.

For more information, visit [betterplaceaustralia.com.au](http://betterplaceaustralia.com.au)

