

SUSPECT ABUSE OR NEGLECT OF AN OLDER PERSON?

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

*Older person refers to someone 65+ or 50+ for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Prevention of abuse of older people is everyone's business

- The City of Sydney and Eastern Suburbs Abuse of Older People Collaborative is committed to raising awareness to prevent abuse and identify and respond to abuse of older people.
- This guide outlines the steps to assist community care services that support older people, to know what to do and where to refer, if there is suspected or alleged abuse of older people accessing their services.
- It is based on the 5-step approach outlined in the NSW Elder Abuse Toolkit.

Identifying abuse

- Familiarise yourself with what is meant by abuse, including the unacceptable behaviours associated with different forms of abuse.
- Staff are often well placed to recognise changes that may suggest a client is being abused. Staff should remain observant and aware to the indicators of abuse, especially where there is no disclosure or witnessing of the abuse.

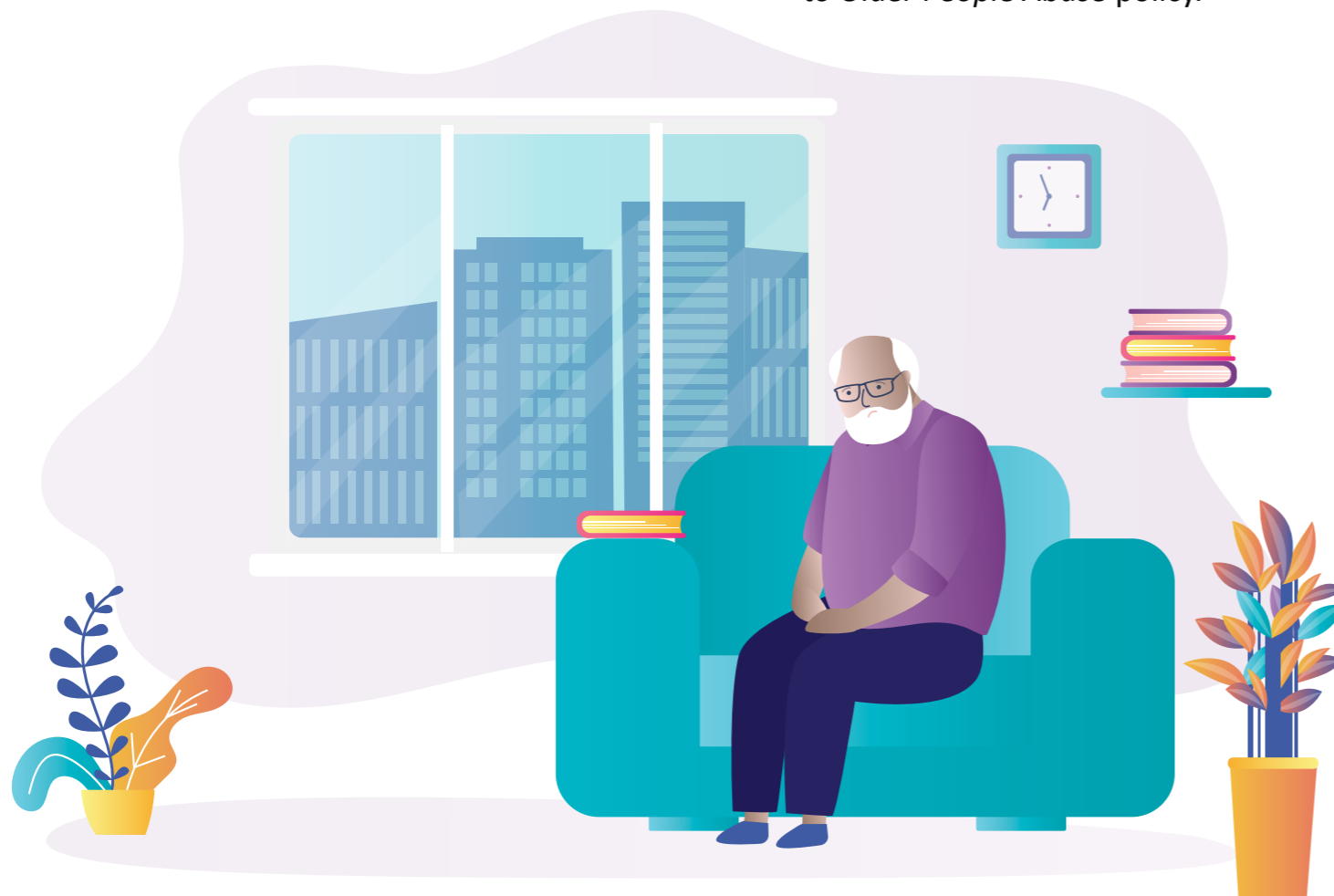
Expectations

- All community care services funded by the Australian Government expect employees, contractors, and volunteers to behave in accordance with their organisations *Responding to Older People Abuse* policy.



Forms of abuse

- **Financial abuse** – mismanagement or improper use of an older person's finances such as stealing money or possessions or controlling finances without permission.
- **Psychological or emotional abuse** – an intentional threat or action that causes fear of violence, isolation, deprivation, humiliation, or powerlessness.
- **Neglect** – a carer's failure to provide basic necessities such as food, shelter, or medical care, or preventing someone else from providing them. A common sign of neglect is poor personal hygiene.
- **Physical abuse** – a deliberate act that causes pain, injury, or intimidation. This includes all forms of physical assault and restraint.
- **Sexual abuse** – any sexual interaction that occurs without an older person's consent or through coercion.



If you are not sure what to do, speak to the Ageing and Disability Helpline on 1800 628 221 In an emergency call 000.

The 5-step approach to identifying and responding to the abuse of older people

Source: [NSW Elder Abuse Toolkit](#)



STEP 1 Identify abuse

- Ask questions and gather information.
- Discussing what was observed with a manager can help determine the health and safety of an older person.

STEP 2 Assess immediate safety

- Determine the level and urgency of safety concerns for the older person.
- In the event of an emergency, contact emergency services on 000.
- Consent of the older person is not necessary in emergency situations.
- Protect evidence.
- Follow your workplace policy and procedures for internal reporting.
- If not an emergency, continue to Step 3.

STEP 3 Provide support

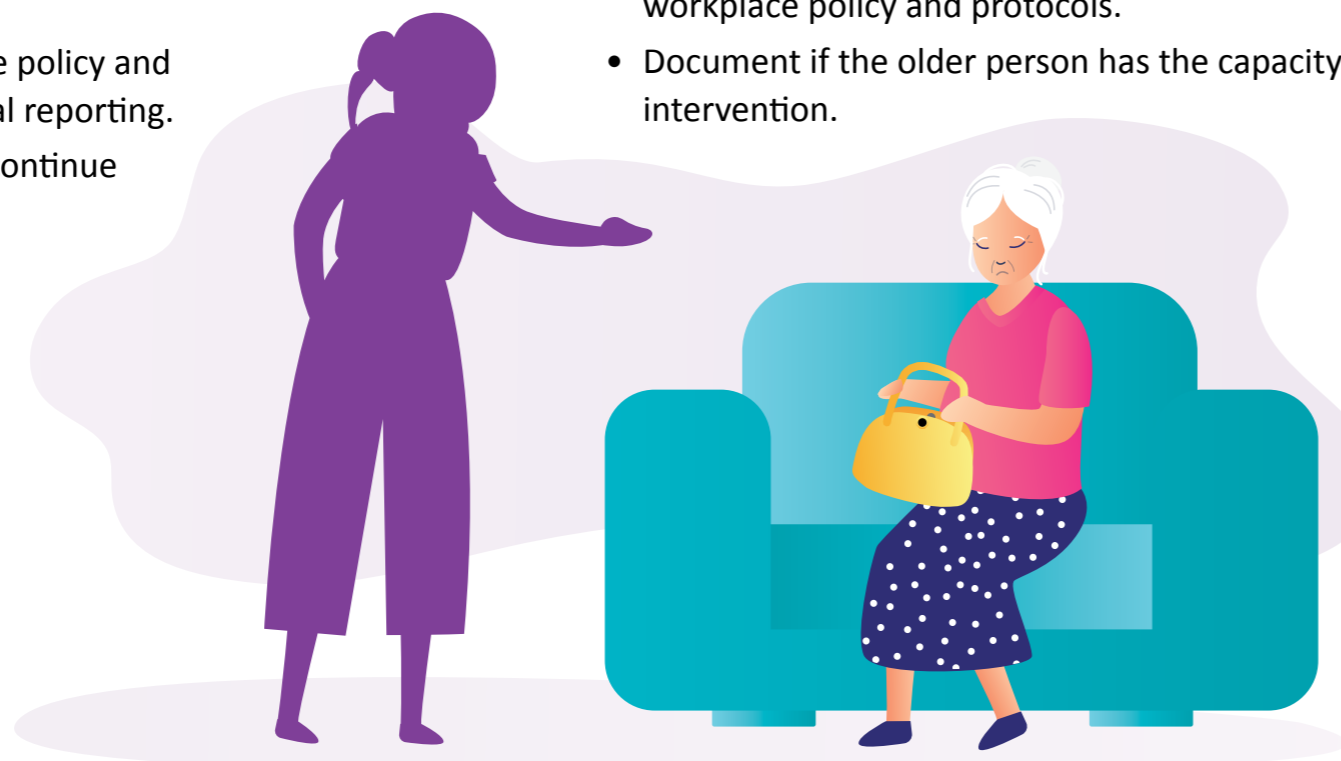
- Listen to the older person.
- Acknowledge what they tell you and validate their experience.
- Check for capacity indicators – if you notice that the person may not have capacity.
- Contact TIS if an interpreter is needed.

STEP 4 Inform manager and document

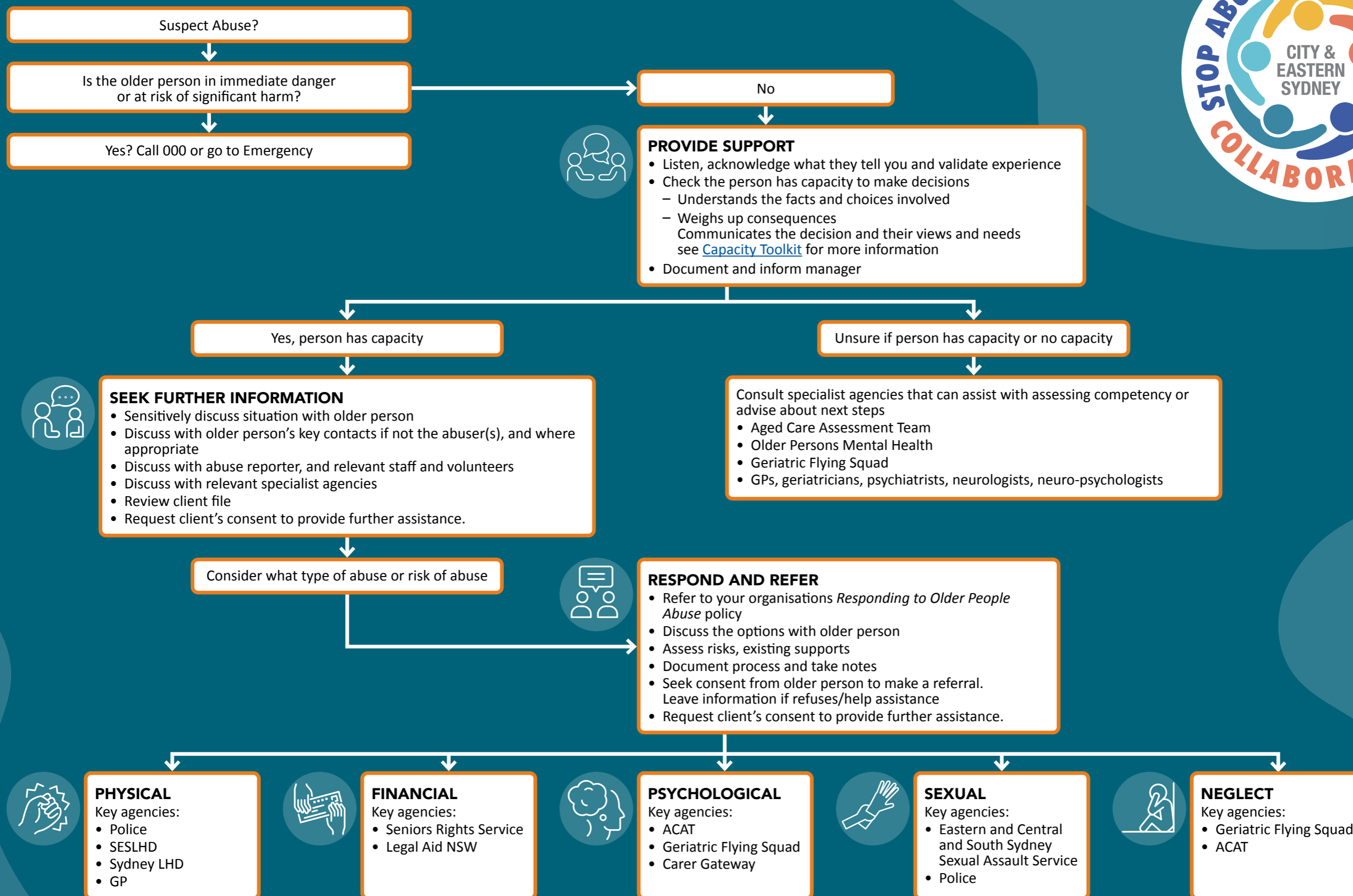
- Report suspected, witnessed, or disclosed abuse to your manager or supervisor.
- Document the abuse and action/s taken, following your own workplace policy and protocols.
- Document if the older person has the capacity and refuses intervention.

STEP 5 Respond and refer

- Ask the older person what they want to do about their situation. If the older person lacks capacity, include the substitute decision-maker (if this person is not the abuser) in the conversation.
- Discuss referral options.
- Seek consent from the older person or, when lacking capacity, the appropriate substitute decision-maker to make a referral.
- Make referrals - See Appendix 2.
- Leave information (if safe to do so) if the older person refuses assistance. Keep lines of communication open.
- Ensure procedures are in place for coordination and/or monitoring, and follow-up as required.



Appendix 1 – Flowchart



Appendix 2 – Contacts and Referrals



Assess competency or complex situations

Uniting War Memorial Hospital Geriatric Flying Squad

www.uniting.org/services/aged-care-services/types-of-care/uniting-war-memorial-hospital

Provides a rapid response multi-disciplinary service to the Eastern Suburbs for timely identification and management of complex health issues.

Ph: 0408 855 156

Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACAT)

Multidisciplinary teams that assess the physical, psychological, cultural and social needs of older people for support.

South East Sydney Local Health District
ACAT Intake Ph: 8328 7270

Sydney Local Health District
ACAT Intake Ph: 9515 9800

Referrals for ACAT assessments are made via
MyAgedCare

www.myagedcare.gov.au

Mon-Fri 8-8pm Sat 10-2pm
Ph: 1800 200 422

NSW Ageing and Disability Commission

NSW Ageing and Disability Abuse Helpline

www.ageingdisabilitycommission.nsw.gov.au

For information, support or to report abuse of older people and adults with disability.

Ph: 1800 628 221

Mon-Fri 9-4pm

E: helpline@adc.nsw.gov.au

Legal and information services

Seniors Rights Service

seniorsrightsservice.org.au

Provide free and confidential advice, aged care advocacy and support, and legal advice to seniors across New South Wales.

Ph: 9281 3600

E: info@seniorsrightsservice.org.au

Kingsford Legal Centre – UNSW Sydney

www.klc.unsw.edu.au

Free legal advice for people living and working in Eastern Suburbs. To make an appointment call 9385 9566.

Legal Aid NSW

www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au

For free legal help contact **Law Access**

Ph: 1300 888 529

Mon-Fri 9-5pm

NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal – Guardianship Division (NCAT)

www.ncat.nsw.gov.au

Tribunal can appoint guardians and financial managers for people who do not have capacity to make decisions for themselves.

Ph: 1300 006 228

Mon-Fri 8.30-4.30pm

E: gd@ncat.nsw.gov.au

Domestic Violence Helpline

www.1800respect.org.au

24/7 Domestic Violence helpline for information, support and referrals to services.

Ph 1800 656 463

1800RESPECT (1800 737 732)

Carer Support

www.carergateway.gov.au

Carer Gateway

Ph: 1800 422 737

Police

Eastern Beaches Ph: 9349 9299

Eastern Suburbs Ph: 9362 6399

Kings Cross Ph: 8356 0099

St George Ph: 8566 7499

South Sydney Ph: 8338 7399

Surry Hills Ph: 9265 4144

Sydney Ph: 9265 6499

Sexual assault services

Specialist counsellors work with people who have been sexually assaulted. Provide counselling, medical services, legal assistance, and group support.

Eastern and Central Sexual Assault Service

Ph: 9515 9040

After hours crisis service

Ph: 9515 6111

Southern Sydney Sexual Assault Service

Ph: 9113 2494

Mon-Fri 8-4.30pm

After hours crisis service

Ph: 9113 1111

This resource was developed by Waverley Council, War Memorial Hospital – Geriatric Medicine, Justice Connect and JNC on behalf of the City and Eastern Sydney Abuse of Older People Collaborative.