



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

## **STEP 1: IDENTIFY ABUSE (suspected, witnessed or disclosed)**

- Ask questions and gather further information.

## **STEP 2: ASSESS IMMEDIATE SAFETY**

- Determine the level and urgency of safety concerns for the older person and others.
- In the event of an emergency, contact emergency services.
- 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.
- Validate their experience.
- Check for capacity indicators.

## **STEP 4: INFORM MANAGER & 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 capacity and refuses intervention.

## **STEP 5: RESPOND & 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 appropriate referrals.
- Leave information (if safe to do so) if the older person refuses assistance, and keep the lines of communication open.
- Consider implementing any local or regional protocols, interagency protocols and service coordination plans.
- Ensure procedures are in place for coordination and/or monitoring, and follow-up as required.