

# ELDER ABUSE: SOCIAL ABUSE

## What is social abuse?

Social abuse is when a person socially isolates or excludes someone from their friends, family, and community.

Social abuse is a form of psychological abuse. It is used to control the victim and prevent them from seeking outside support.

It is critical to seek appropriate support to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the older person.

## Signs of social abuse

- Worry or anxiety
- Social withdrawal
- No access to their own mail
- No access to their own phone
- Having to ask someone else for permission
- Having someone hover around them all the time
- Sadness or grief at the loss of social interaction with others
- Worry or anxiety surrounding visits with a specific person or people

## Behaviours of social abuse

- Withholding mail
- Living in and controlling their home
- Not allowing them to answer the phone
- Keeping them from religious or cultural practices
- Stopping or blocking contact with other family, friends, or community members
- Taking away or removing communication devices such as personal alarms, phones, or computers

## What to do if you or a loved one are experiencing elder social abuse

### 1. Reach out

There is no shame in asking for help. You can ring the [Senior Relationship Services \(SRS\)](#) at **1300 062 232**.

### 2. Organise a confidential discussion

Our qualified, experienced staff can help you explore your concerns in a safe environment.

### 3. Make a plan

SRS will support you in moving forward, including safety plans, legal advice, counselling, mediation, case management, and external referrals.

### 4. Check in regularly

Whether it's yourself or a loved one, we all need to continuously make sure someone is okay when they have experienced abuse.



1300 062 232



raq.org.au

*Relationships Australia*  
QUEENSLAND