

Gippsland Elder Abuse & Family Violence Prevention Forum

Case Study

This case study has been prepared in line with the Department of Health reporting requirements for the Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy (EAPS).

Wellington Primary Care Partnership received funding to implement the Elder Abuse prevention Strategy, Phase 1 (Community Awareness Raising) and Phase 2 (Development of policies, protocols and practices) in the Gippsland Region.

Liaison and consultation with agencies throughout the Gippsland Region indicated that there was a lack of referral knowledge and pathways in relation to suspected elder abuse. Agency staff cited numerous incidences of suspected / identified elder abuse which have taken a significant amount of time to resolve (18 months plus, in some instances), or have remained unresolved due to a lack of knowledge in relation to referral pathways and / or agencies who can respond appropriately.

The Gippsland EAPS Project Workers consulted with the Gippsland Family Violence Regional Integration Coordinator (RIG) regarding linkages between the Family Violence and Aged / Community Care sectors. It was decided to convene a cross sector forum to foster relationships between the sectors and to start to map out opportunities for secondary consultation and referral pathways.

The EAPS Project Workers worked together with the Family Violence RIG, and Family Violence Support Worker over a number of months to determine the purpose of the forum, desired attendees, and the agenda for the day. The forum was scheduled in to the Family Violence Training Calendar and promoted via the Family Violence Network.

The Family Violence RIG liaised with the Family violence sector, and the EAPS Project Worker liaised with the aged and community services sectors regarding the forum. Having the support and commitment of the Family Violence RIG was critical to the success of the forum.

Involving local professionals with expertise in their chosen field (Home and Community Care, Aged Care, Family Violence - Intake teams, Case Managers and Counselling, Men's Behaviour Change Programs) to give an overview of their service, and provide information on service response in relation to the scenario's presented assisted in engaging the sectors.

The fact that the forum was driven from the ground up (in response to feedback from aged / community agencies) also contributed to the number of attendees and ultimately the success of the forum.

Learnings.

The forum was viewed as successful by many attendees. It achieved the aims of fostering relationships, and identifying a range of agencies and roles in responding to elder abuse. Ongoing commitment and work is required in relation to developing sustainable cross sector relationships and mapping referral pathways. Ideally, a regional working group would be developed to pursue this further.