



Queensland Focus

Edition 37—Christmas Special

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Seniors Surviving the Silly Season

Elder Abuse Prevention Unit

The Christmas holiday season is fast approaching and the first thought that may come to mind are what shall I get my family this year and how will we fit in such a small space. Two things that can steal the joy of the season are MONEY and OVERCROWDING.

This is a time of great joy, celebration, anticipation and excitement, however there are families where pressure is intensified and people may feel bullied or intimidated to give or spend more than they are comfortable with. Older family members can be seen as an easy target because “they already own their house and can afford to spend more”, or “they are going to give it to me as inheritance so they may as well spend more on me while they are alive” and so forth.

Here are some ideas that may help take the pressure off:

- Rethink gifts - Some alternatives may include Kris Kringle (Secret Santa), making gifts instead of buying or pot luck presents.
- Find time to have some relaxing space to yourself, especially if the celebrations go over a few days and you have guests staying with you from out of town.
- Sometimes having the celebrations away from people’s homes is the most relaxing option. Consider meeting at a park or the beach if there are lots of people and the house is too small. Also backyards can make a great alternative “dining room” to the inside of the house.
- Create new traditions—place a card in neighbours’ letter boxes, volunteer at a soup kitchen or invite people who are alone to join you for a meal, dessert or a drink.

It is important to note that family habits and traditions of decades don’t change in a week so changes may need to be slow and gradual. Have an enjoyable and safe holiday.

UnitingCare Community Elder Abuse Prevention Unit Holiday Hours of Operation:

- 22—24 December 2014— Open 9am to 5pm
- 25 December 2014 (Christmas Day) until 2 January 2015— Closed
- 5 January 2015— Reopen 9am to 5pm

Service funded by:



Grandma's secret

Elder Abuse Prevention Unit

Grandparents and grandchildren have a special bond that only they can understand. This year I took my 2 year old to Romania to visit my grandmother who I grew up with. I have extremely fond memories and loved every minute we got to sit together and share stories. She has a wicked sense of humour and even though she has many health concerns, her outlook is so positive and infectious that I couldn't help being happy and smiling in her company. One thing that struck me and still brings a huge smile to my face was watching my toddler with his great grandma. From the first moment they laid eyes on each other there was a connection and we were all outsiders to their secret language. They played games and laughed at jokes that none of us understood. Now it is true that she and I have a special bond but the one she has with my baby is even more magical.

Grandparents are the "passers down of traditions and stories". They have family secrets and stories that make the family come together and hold them strong during the hard times.

Let me say that this includes "adopted" grandparents. If you haven't got parents or they are overseas, find a surrogate and help your children build these relationships with older people who may be missing their grandchildren due to distance this holiday season.

A NOTE FOR SENIORS:

Callers to the Helpline can remain anonymous. The data we collect is non-identifiable. We operate from a Human Rights approach and your rights and dignity are important to us.

Editorial

Domnica Sparkes



The festive season is both an exciting and stressful one. We spend so much time and energy buying presents, organising meals and invites that we often grate on each other's nerves and say things that can hurt those we love the most. During the season of love and giving it is often easy to miss the signs of mistreatment.

Family gatherings can be the perfect time to slow down and check-in with older relatives and see how they are travelling. Especially if you suspect something is amiss and don't want to raise suspicions before you've had a chance to do some investigating.

During this time when tensions may be high it is important not to make significant changes and to take the time to do some research. Finding out what services are available helps empower an older person and give them some confidence. Call the EAPU to discuss options and debrief on 1300 651 192 (*please note our office closure during the holiday period*).

From the team at EAPU we wish you all a wonderful festive season. Stay safe and have a great break.

Seniors Legal and Support Service (Brisbane) - Christmas Holiday Hours

Closed: 22 December 2014 to 2 January 2015
Reopens: 5 January 2015

Christmas Pudding

1kg mixed fruit
750mL orange juice, iced coffee or brandy
2 cups self-raising flour



Soak fruit in iced coffee for 24hrs. Add flour and mix well. Line slow cooker with baking paper and pour mixture in. Use tea towel under lid. Cook on high for 4hrs then low for 4hrs.

Note:

Times may vary between slow cookers so test with a skewer which should come out clean. Consider making these as cupcakes and giving them as gifts.

Courtesy of Slow Cooker Central—recipe submitted by Sherrie Sutcliffe
<http://www.slowcookercentral.com/recipe/3-ingredient-christmas-cake/>

Support for Queensland victims reaches five-year milestone

Victims Assist

Victims of violent crime in Queensland are accessing support sooner following Victim Assist Queensland's five-year service delivery milestone.

Following a statewide Queensland Government consultation in 2008, the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act (VOCAA) 2009* was introduced in parliament, establishing a raft of reforms to place victims' needs at the centre of its financial assistance scheme.

Victim Assist Queensland—established for the purpose of administering the Act—has received over 9000 applications and granted close to \$50 million for goods and services associated with a victim's recovery including dental work, counseling, surgery, and physiotherapy.

Under VOCAA's exceptional circumstances provisions, victims of crime have requested and received grants for items which—whilst central to their recovery—fall outside of the traditional medical and psychological needs.

Children who have missed school as a result of their trauma have had tutors funded to support their reintegration back into education. Women who require additional security measures or personal safety courses to enhance their sense of personal safety after a domestic attack, and family members wanting assistance to travel to the homicide trial of their loved ones are just

some of the cases the Victim Assist team considers daily.

And Victim Assist is not only about financial assistance. A central team of information officers have responded to 30,000 requests for information from victims of crime throughout the State and referred 4000 callers to support services since 2009.

For those attending court, the unit's Victim Coordination Officers provide much-needed guidance and coordination including pre-trial preparation and helping victims develop their Victim Impact Statements, enabling victim's voices to be heard in criminal cases.

Further to the central information centre, Victim Assist has officers located throughout Queensland who can help clients apply for financial assistance, and work with service providers to promote the *Fundamental Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime*.

For further information on applying for financial assistance through Victim Assist Queensland, or to speak with our Training team about how Victim Assist can help your clients contact our LinkUp Information team on 1300 546 587 or email victimslinkup@justice.qld.gov.au Further information can also be obtained through the Queensland

Stay sane online

Elder Abuse Prevention Unit

Christmas often means finding that perfect gift that says "I love you". It also means finding it at a bargain price. Now that internet shopping is so convenient why not give it a try??? Like any industry retail has it's good and less than reputable dealers. How do you know which deals are genuine and which ones are scams? The Office of Fair Trading has some great tips on how to avoid some traps and keep yourself safe while buying.

- <http://fairtrading.qld.gov.au/marketplace/consumer>
- <http://fairtrading.qld.gov.au/marketplace/consumer/shop-smart/online-shopping>

Online shopping has really taken off and is a fantastic place to find some real bargains. The world of online shopping can also leave you exposed to unscrupulous businesses. Here are some tips to avoid getting caught:

1. Only use a reputable business. Ask your family and friends if they know any businesses they recommend.

2. Purchase prepaid visa cards (these are often found at supermarkets). This means that you are not using your main bank account to pay for online purchases and in the event that your account gets hacked you are not leaving yourself exposed
3. Compare prices with mainstream department stores. Sometime online sales are not really sales and you end up paying more when you include fees and postage.
4. Check the refund, return and warranty policies as well as your rights under Australian Consumer Law. International purchases may need a little more research and caution.

As always, its shopper beware and even though Australian consumer law also applies to online shopping for Australian businesses; if you are buying from an international vendor it's important to do your homework and keep yourself safe. Lets face it who doesn't love a bargain....

Elder abuse in the media



Expert calls for legal reform on elder abuse http://www.australianageingagenda.com.au/2014/11/28/expert-calls-legal-reform-elder-abuse/	Australian Ageing Agenda	28 Nov 14
Calls for new powers to protect elderly https://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/25623202/calls-for-new-powers-to-protect-elderly/	The West Australian	26 Nov 14
Carer who murdered elderly man in Sydney jailed for 25 years http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-11-27/carers-who-murdered-elderly-man-is-jailed-for-25-years/5922476	ABC News	27 Nov 14
Theatre to discuss and educate on elder abuse http://www.socialjusticesolutions.org/2014/11/25/theatre-discuss-elder-abuse/	Social Justice Solutions	25 Nov 14
Care community co-founder: "the elderly should be cherished, not abused." http://prwire.com.au/pr/48257/care-community-co-founder-the-elderly-should-be-cherished-not-abused	PR Wire	19 Nov 14
Man beheads woman in New York http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/world/man-beheads-woman-in-new-york-20141029-11dokc.html	Brisbane Times	29 Oct 14
Pope Frances shines new spotlight on neglect of elderly http://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/2226302	PRWeb.com	1 Oct 14
Elder abuse victims fear family backlash http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2014/09/03/elder-abuse-victims-fear-family-backlash	The West Australian	3 Sep 14

Events

- FACE IT: Elder Abuse Happens Conference
21—22 May 2015
Calgary, Canada
Website: <http://www.faceitelderabuse.ca/>
- 4th Elder Abuse National Conference 2015
September 2015
Melbourne
Website: www.srv.org.au
- **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day**
15 June 2015

Disclaimer:

Editor's Note: Opinions expressed in this edition "Queensland Focus", do not necessarily reflect those of The Elder Abuse Prevention Unit (EAPU). Articles in this newsletter may be used with the permission of the contributing author. This publication is a guide only and should not substitute independent legal advice.

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