

Rotary Safe Families  
[www.rotarysafefamilies.org.au](http://www.rotarysafefamilies.org.au)

## SPRING IS HERE! WHAT ARE WE PLANNING?

THANK YOU to these CLUBS

### ROTARY CAROLINE SPRINGS

Thank you Caroline Springs for promoting the "3RRR's" of primary prevention in your latest Bulletin. You rock!



#### Rotary **SAFE Families** "3RRR's" are simple:

1. **RECOGNISE:** Recognise signs of abuse
2. **RAISE:** Raise your concerns safely with victim
3. **REFER:** Refer victim to appropriate support - 000/1800 Respect OR Make the call yourself!

To find out more click on the image above and show your support.

Video Rotary Melbourne's **SAFE Families** – Stopping Abuse in Families Everywhere

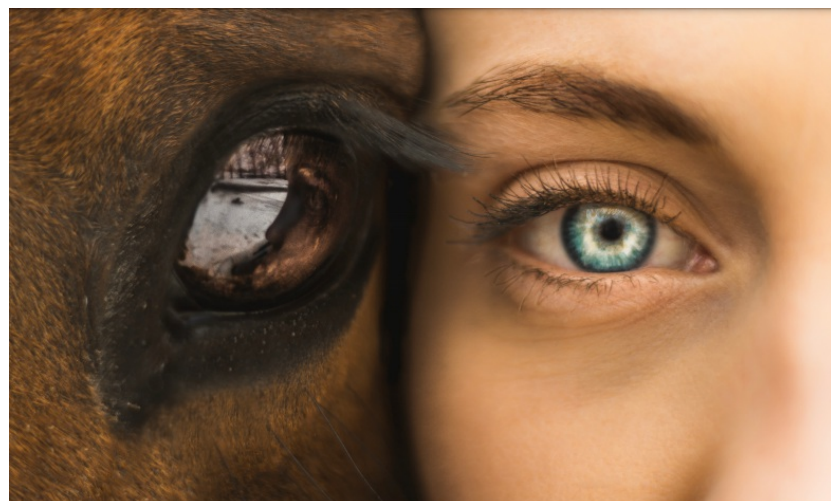
## ROTARY NOMADS - E CLUB of AUSTRALIAN NOMADS

What a terrific club brimming with Rotary fellowship! I was invited to present last week at the Rotary Nomads E-Club of Australia online. Thank you for making me so welcome. Did you know when I asked if they might have a Champion to represent their Club, **FIVE** hands shot up! One member asked if they could download and show the film on Elder Abuse at a theatre night. "Yes please!", I replied. Thank you Rotary Nomads. You rock!!! <https://www.rotarynomads.org/>



## LATEST NEWS for PRIMARY PREVENTION EQUINE PROGRAM WORKING with WOMEN

Check out the details for yourself: [Rebuild\\_Program\\_Information\\_Brochure\\_\(1\).pdf](#)



REASON TO THRIVE  
*Skills for Life*

**Life Skills** - "Rebuild Program"

**Target Group:** Women who are rebuilding their lives from trauma, grief, abuse, violence or mental health issues.



What the participants will learn is important; however, what they remember from this series is priceless! Working with horses creates a unique memory that causes the attendee to remember the training far longer than sitting in 'just-another classroom'. Each woman will gain empowerment through group exercises that focus on individual qualities and at the same time, they will have some extreme fun and life changing moments. All skills learned in the arena are paralleled back to their everyday lives, ensuring that the learned skills are transferred to how they deal with people, choices and the world around them. By working with their teachers, women will build strong, solid skills that they can draw upon when they are faced with choices in everyday life. Our 8-week program series builds on one particular skill each week and then continues building on those skills as the participants move to the next week.

Each woman will learn:-

- that internal dialogue needs to match external actions
- that force does not equate to movement
- that looking back stops movement forward
- how to develop healthy relationships
- how to accept responsibility and accountability
- how to overcome barriers to find change
- that it takes courage to make the changes the horse is telling them
- how to be creative and innovative
- how to find opportunity in working together
- how to develop their decision making skills
- how to take appropriate risks to get out of their comfort zone
- how to develop patience to take it one step at a time
- the importance of communicating their vision with direction
- how to find the leader within themselves
- how to realise the benefits associated with effective communication
- the value of mutual trust, respect, and personal integrity

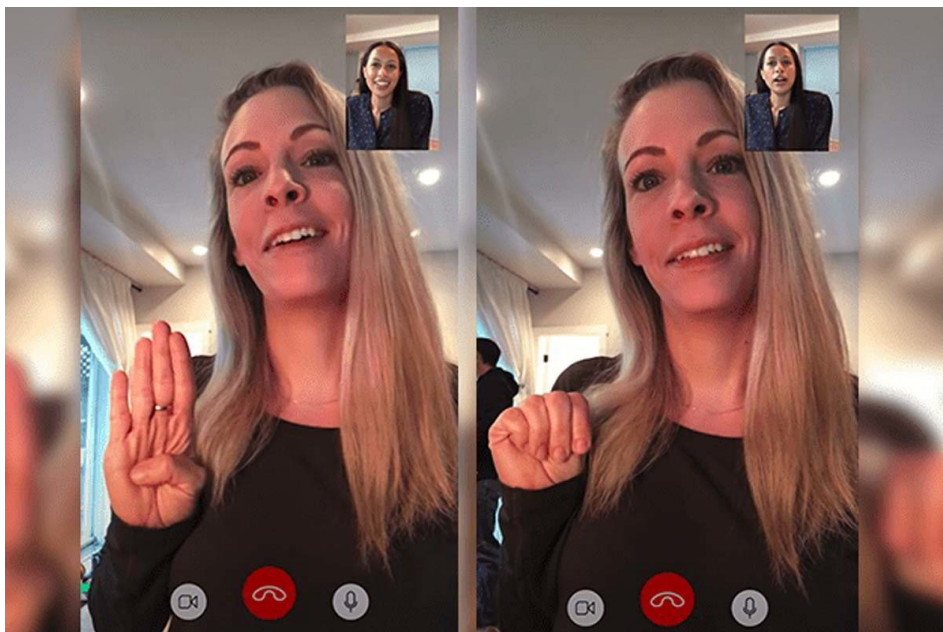
...all while having fun!

Reason to Thrive Inc IA56671 ABN 36 434 589 006 [www.reasontothrive.org](http://www.reasontothrive.org) [enquiries@reasontothrive.org](mailto:enquiries@reasontothrive.org) Phone: 0410 554 091

## 'HAND SIGNAL' ASKING FOR HELP!

### How a simple hand signal could help victims of domestic violence in lockdown.

taken from <https://www.mamamia.com.au/domestic-violence-hand-signal/>



*This article contains references to domestic abuse and may be triggering for some readers. If you or someone you know is affected by domestic violence, please call **1800 RESPECT** (1800 737 732).*

Among the terrifying statistics coming out surrounding COVID-19, there has been another major spike that isn't getting nearly as

much attention: Domestic violence.

As we all returned home, most were thankful to be retreating to their own personal havens to be with loved ones and to spend some quality time with our partners. However, the reality of being locked up at home was much more haunting for victims of domestic abuse.

Abuse rates are up dramatically during this time, with it now being reported that one in 10 Australian women are dealing with domestic violence during the coronavirus pandemic.

A survey conducted by the Australian Institute of Criminology revealed that women who had experienced physical or sexual violence pre-COVID are now experiencing violence much more frequently or severely since the first lockdown.

Speaking to *Mamamia* in May, Renata Field, media spokesperson for Domestic Violence New South Wales (DVNSW), said domestic violence tends to go up whenever people are spending more time at home together - Christmas, Easter, school holidays.

Add to that the pressures of people losing jobs and financial concerns, she said, and you have a “melting pot, where people are at significant risk of domestic violence”.

In Melbourne, with a state-mandated stage 4 lockdown, there's an even more pronounced risk.

“The lockdown is a particularly dangerous time for people experiencing domestic and family violence because social isolation is a tool that people who use violence use to harm their victim,” Field told *Mamamia*. “So if there is an enforced social isolation by the state, then those people are going to be more isolated, and it will be even more challenging for them to reach out for support.”

According to Field, the two most important things we can do if we suspect someone in our lives is experiencing abuse, is to listen and believe. And now, a new official hand signal spreading around the globe - serving as a silent and safe cry for help - might make that easier.

***Watch: The domestic violence hand signal allowing victims to ask for help.***

This signal can be subtly performed while a victim is on a FaceTime call with a friend, using their body to shield any glances from their abuser.

## 'ASK FOR ANGELA' SAFETY CAMPAIGN

### Ask for Angela

# #ASK FOR ANGELA

## SAYING NO MORE TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



Ask for Angela is an international campaign being introduced to South Australia to promote safety in licensed venues.

If a patron feels unsafe, they can discretely ask the staff for 'Angela'. This simple code word alerts venue staff that the person requires assistance. The staff can then follow their own procedures to help the person appropriately and respectfully.

Ask for Angela is being introduced to South Australia in a partnership between Consumer and Business Services, The Office for Women, South Australia Police, The Australian Hotels Association (AHA)(SA), and is supported by YWCA, Yarrow Place and Music SA.

### Information for venue management and staff

Venues in South Australia are being invited to participate in the Ask for Angela campaign by preparing staff to respond appropriately.

Resources:

- [a checklist and discussion points to prepare your staff \(PDF 1.5MB\)](#)
- [a 'tips for staff' poster to display at back of house \(PDF 475KB\)](#)
- [a poster to inform patrons they can 'ask for Angela' at your venue \(PDF 1.5MB\)](#)
- [a video produced by NSW Police](#) when the campaign was introduced in Sydney

*Ask for Angela should only be promoted to patrons at your venue when all of the steps in the checklist have been completed and staff are prepared.*

For industry feedback and queries about the campaign please email [CBSCCommissioner@sa.gov.au](mailto:CBSCCommissioner@sa.gov.au)

### Information for patrons

If you feel unsafe at a licensed venue and see the campaign signage, ask the staff for Angela and they will assist you.

Feedback about your experience can be provided to the venue, or to:

Women's Information Service  
101 Grenfell Street  
Phone 08 8303 0590  
or 1800 188 158 (rural callers)  
Email [wis@sa.gov.au](mailto:wis@sa.gov.au)

## THE HIDDEN STORY OF ELDER ABUSE

'Different from the Dodgy Scammer'

### The Hidden Story of Elder Abuse



August 25, 2021 — 7.00pm The Age [Sarah Thomas](#)

Legal aid lawyer Mary Lovelock hears the same stories over and over again.

A recent case follows what she calls “the granny flat situation”. An elderly woman was told by her daughter to sell her home and move in with her, with the \$400,000 proceeds going towards the building of a granny flat and other renovations.

For some, coronavirus has worsened the situation by forcing many families back together.

There was no written agreement. At some point, the relationship broke down and the elderly woman was told to move out – with no money and no other home to go to.

“She’s just been devastated,” says Lovelock, who is a senior solicitor at the [Central Coast Elder Abuse Unit](#) in NSW. “She’s absolutely heartbroken. She’d lost her husband a few years beforehand. She thought she had a good relationship with her daughter.”



It’s a familiar story to Lovelock because it’s estimated about 10 per cent or nearly 500,000 elderly people experience some form of abuse, usually financial or psychological, according to advocacy group [Elder Abuse Action Australia](#).

And the perpetrators aren’t internet scammers or unscrupulous salespeople hoodwinking the vulnerable – it’s their own blood.

The majority of elder abuse takes place by family members, friends and helpers, research has found. It takes many forms, such as siphoning off dollars when doing the groceries or paying bills, or not contributing to household expenses, or failing to repay loans. There can be psychological abuse such as threatening, shouting and humiliation. There are instances of medical treatment being withheld because family members didn’t want their inheritance impacted.

Lovelock’s unit was set up in late 2019 as part of a three-year national pilot of specialist services funded by the Commonwealth Government. Cases are generally picked up and referred to the unit by other stakeholders such as domestic violence services, hospital social workers or at-home care workers.

The woman who lost her home came across the radar when she was hospitalised for depression and let slip to a social worker that she had nowhere to go once she was discharged. The social worker was able to arrange housing and the woman has also since been connected with legal services to help her recover some of the funds.

“She’s been empowered to take legal action to recover the money she put into that house,” says Lovelock. “That’s really important because when she first came to us, she didn’t want to do that. She just said ‘I want somewhere to live.’ And over the course of her interaction with us, she’s been able to change her perspective to acknowledge that actually it was financial abuse and she has a right to that money.”

“We’ve been able to support her to advocate for herself, and that’s an amazing change from when she first came to us.”

## The hurdle of protective instincts

Lovelock says it takes a long time for elderly people to recognise abuse in close relationships. Even when they do, they are hesitant to take action because they don’t want to get their son or daughter, or whoever the perpetrator is, into trouble. Even after everything, there is still an instinct to protect.

“It’s abuse within a relationship of trust that defines it and makes it different from the dodgy scammer,” she says.

“It can be heartbreaking for old people because it butts up against the nurturing parental instinct to always look after your child. We have to respect that sometimes it may take a length of time for older people to speak out about their children and their abusive behaviour.”

She believes awareness of elder abuse sits at where domestic violence was about 15 or 20 years ago, and says there is much work to be done for older people to recognise it, and for people in the community to see it and reach out, too. And tackling elder abuse needs the coordination of a number of services like counselling, legal help or aged care services, she says.

In her unit, nearly two-thirds of cases are women, and half of all cases involve a son or daughter as the perpetrator. Overall, 75 per cent report financial abuse and 55 per cent psychological abuse. As a result of the abuse, about 40 per cent of cases were at risk of homelessness.

Elsewhere, a [recent report](#) by the Uniting Care Queensland’s Elder Abuse Prevention Unit, funded by the Queensland Government, found that 96 per cent of abuse happened within family relationships, 71 per cent by sons and daughters. More than half were living together. In about a quarter of cases, the perpetrators were providing care the victim was dependent upon. In more than a third of cases, abuse occurred daily. Just under 20 per cent of cases had been experiencing abuse for 10 years or more.

And the biggest barrier to action was not fear of further harm – in 53 per cent of cases it was to protect the perpetrator and the victim’s relationship with them.

### A matter for everyone



Diedre Timms is co-chair of EAAA, which was set up in 2018 and is funded by the Attorney General’s office.

She agrees there is much work to do in getting people to recognise elder abuse. “It’s like family violence in that it’s a complex scenario and we have to make sure older people realise it’s OK to speak up,” she says.

“We had an awareness article in a local paper in January and a woman cut it out. She didn’t call us until June and she said, ‘I’ve been reading that article every couple of weeks. I think that’s me – I think I am being abused.’ It took her that long to actually recognise that she was being abused and get the courage to ring.”

For advocates in the sector, much is hanging on the National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study, a \$2 million research project commissioned by the Australian Government Attorney-General’s Department that claims to be the first large-scale nationwide assessment.

As part of the study, which began in 2019, 7000 people over 65 will be surveyed, and another 3500 aged 18-65 to help understand attitudes.

It's anticipated that in providing concrete data, it will throw weight behind the cause and its pervasiveness, and provide that vital building block for support for funding, policy and services.

But when it will be published remains a mystery, given that EAAA had expected the findings to be released by now and it is unclear why there have been delays.

The Australian Institute for Family Studies, which has been commissioned to do the research, was unable to provide any information about the study.

Similarly, the Attorney-General's office was unable to answer a direct question about when the study might emerge, stating only: "The Australian Government is aware of the high level of community interest in the report findings."

In current times, Lovelock says coronavirus has worsened the situation by forcing many families back together under difficult circumstances. But the other side of it is that the pandemic has sparked a greater sense of community, with people checking in on the vulnerable in their neighbourhoods.

This, says Lovelock, should be the norm.

"It's a benchmark of a society, how it treats its older and more vulnerable citizens. Elder abuse can have devastating consequences for the older person, physically, emotionally and financially, and there's increased risk of stress, depression and of hospitalisation. As a community, we need to do better. We need to look out for our older people."

**1800 ELDERHelp (1800 353 374) is a free phone number that redirects callers seeking information and advice on elder abuse with the phone service in their state or territory. In case of emergency, call 000.**

## WE CAN DO THIS TOGETHER

Click here to view the 1 minute promo to use at Rotary events and to the public audience.

Contact Dorothy Gilmour: [info@rotarysafefamilies.org.au](mailto:info@rotarysafefamilies.org.au)

Email me with your events and projects news for next month's Newsletter

Check out the website for all things SAFE Families: [www.rotarysafefamilies.org.au](http://www.rotarysafefamilies.org.au)

If you decide to unsubscribe, please provide details of a "champion" in your organisation, who wants to prevent family abuse

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