The Impossible Predicament

Challenges and approaches to working with clients experiencing abuse from adult children

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ROSE Rights of Seniors in the East

ELSA Engaging & Living Safely & Autonomously

Supported by
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Acknowledgement of the Traditional Custodians

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land we are meeting on today, the Kombumerri people, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We also acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation, on whose Country Eastern Community Legal Centre is based.

“Bunjil’s Wings” - Simone Thomson
Wurundjeri/Yorta Yorta Artist

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Elder Abuse Programs

ROSE
Rights of Seniors in the East

ELSA
Engaging & Living Safely & Autonomously

Community Lawyer, Financial Counsellor and Elder Abuse Advocate meet together with the client.

ELSA and ROSE work from a human rights framework, with a client-centred focus.

Clients are always in control. Client's guide the process, at their own pace. Clients are never forced to take action.

The Impossible Predicament

- Abuse is occurring within an important relationship
- Often involves an adult child or close family
- Relationship is both valued and harmful
- Family, housing, care, or hope for change, may outweigh legal action
- **Challenge:**
  Balancing safety, autonomy, needs and relationships.
  This presentation explores how integrated practice and flexible legal responses can support clients facing these competing priorities.

Barriers to Disclosing Abuse

- May not recognise the abuse
- Shame and embarrassment
- Desire to preserve the relationship and support an adult child
- Accommodation concerns
- Feelings of parental failure
- Fear of change, police/legal intervention, and escalation of violence

Client story:
Jane

Client:
Jane 70, widow, self-referred.

Client Vulnerability Factors:
Limited awareness of rights, chronic PTSD. Identifies as advocate for persons experiencing mental ill health.

Elder abuse:
Financial, controlling behaviour, physical, emotional and psychological abuse.

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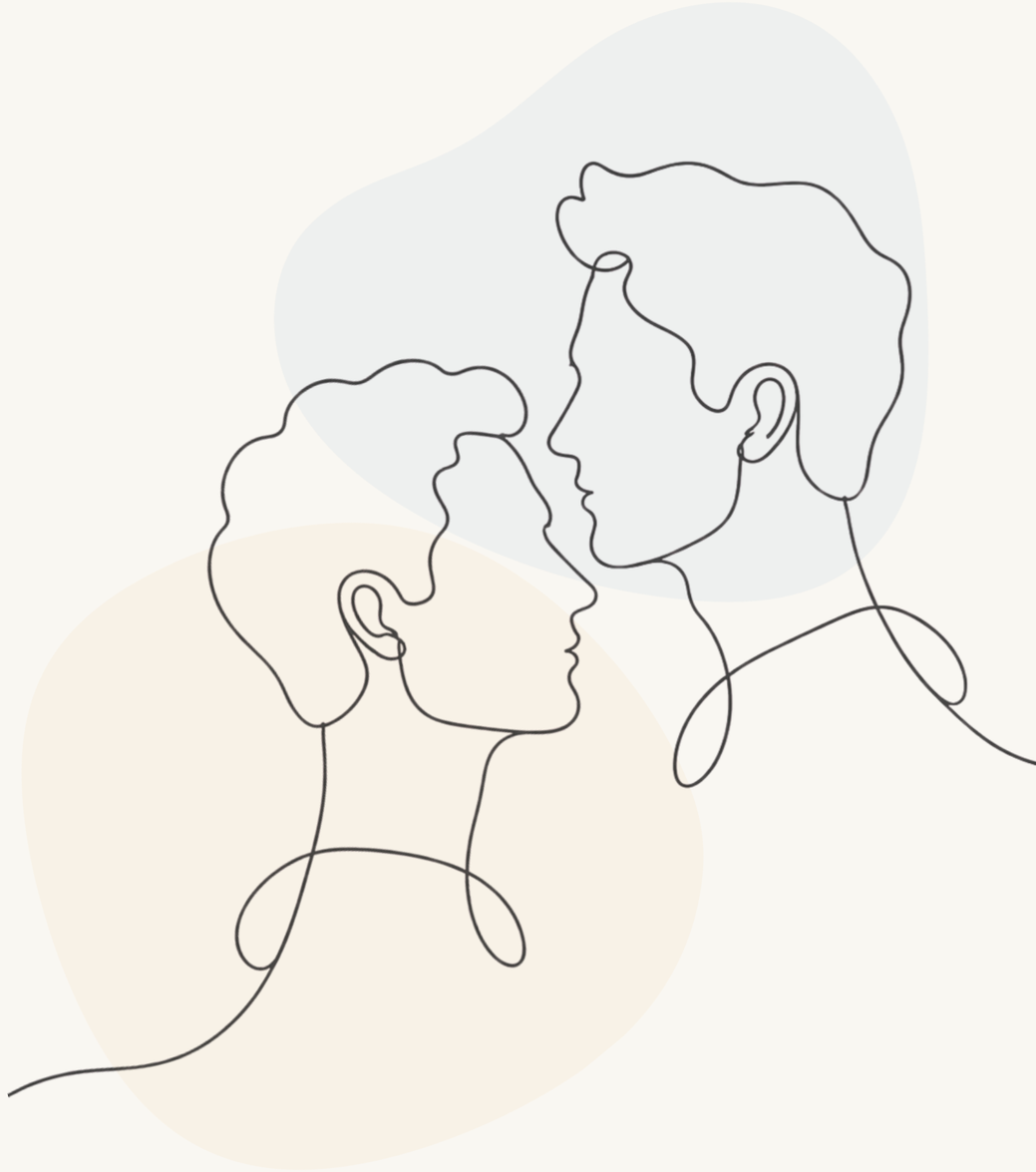
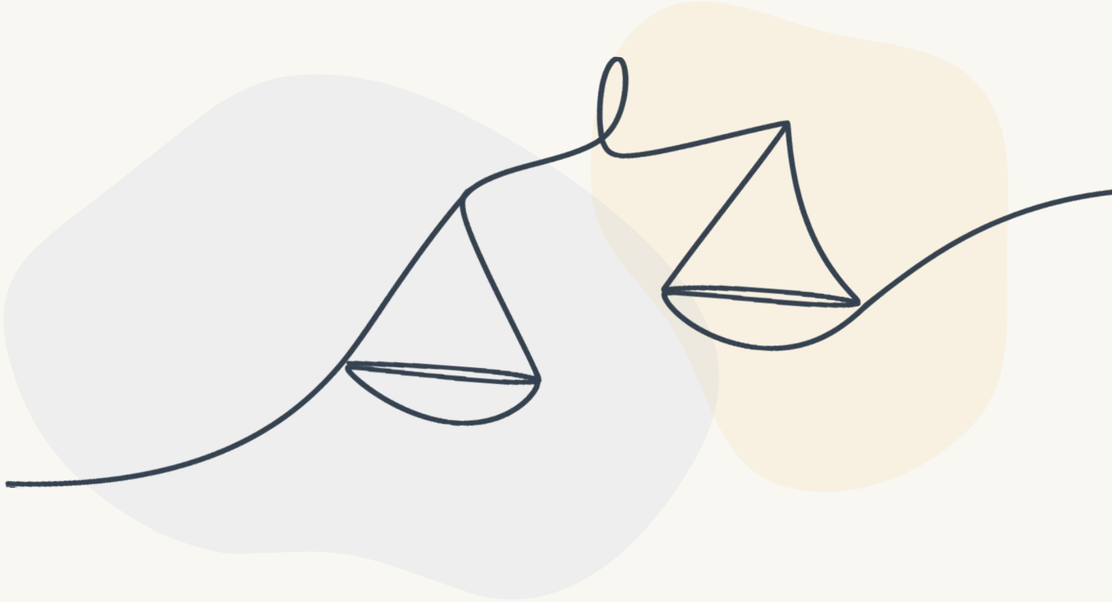
User of Violence and Contextual Factors



- Two users of violence – adult sons with mental health issues.
- One son lives with client, is highly dependent, and “would otherwise be homeless”. The other son lives independently.
- Both sons use illicit substances as well as being mentally ill.
- Both sons pressure the client for money to support their substance dependence – harass client until she gives in.

ROSE Approach: Holistic Support

Law + Advocacy



Legal Advice

- Intervention Order variation

Advocacy

- Referral to The Orange Door
- Risk Ax & Safety plan
- Counselling referral
- House repair and modification

- Validation of client's experience of Elder Abuse (parental dilemma, fear, lack of security, sense of being controlled and self-blame)
- Modelling boundaries

Legal Perspective and Strategies

- Client goals and priorities guide the response
- Support informed decision-making through discussion of risks and options
- Respect autonomy and dignity of risk
- Develop practical safeguards with, not for, the client
- Use creative and flexible legal strategies

Thank you
Questions?

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For more Information

Contact us or scan the QR code below to learn more.

ECLC website
eclc.org.au/elderabuse

Scan to learn more

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