STAND UP SPEAK OUT
27-29 JULY 2026

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Leading support for Relationships AUSTRALIA · QLD

2026 AUSTRALIAN ELDER ABUSE CONFERENCE

Effective interventions to prevent and respond to people who abuse older adults

Dr Emily Moir
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EAAA Elder Abuse Action Australia

caxton COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE

ADAAustralia Your Aged and Disability Advocates

Betty's Story

A situation all too common

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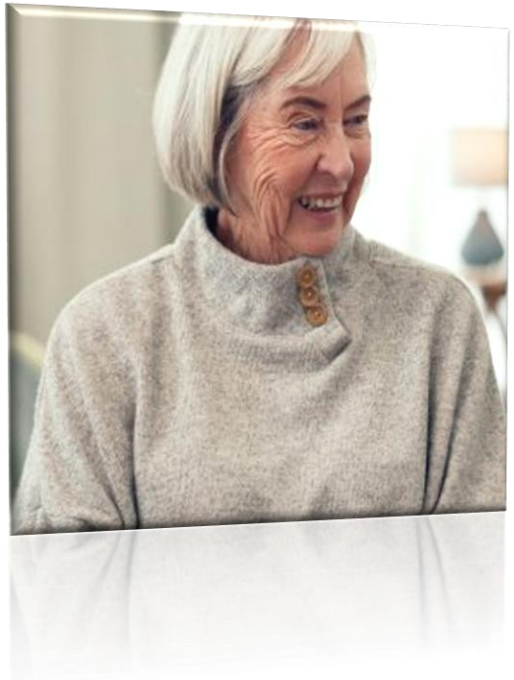
Betty's Story

What are her options?

What services can help?



Elder Abuse Action Australia

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ADA Australia Your Aged and Disability Advocates

What works: informal carer support programs

BACKGROUND	DESIGN	FINDINGS
Limited studies (*n* = 5) since 2010 focused on **emotional, psychological, physical (shaking, slapping) abuse & neglect**	All **voluntary**; mix of individual and group based, home & clinic settings	**Reduced negative mental health** (e.g., depression, anxiety, fatigue); **improvements in quality of life** (e.g., sleep, emotional wellbeing)
Mostly **family carers** of older adults with **dementia** (primarily adult daughters)	Successful programs included at least **8+ sessions** over **2-6 months**	Carer self-reports abuse at baseline: **small, but not significant reductions in abusive behaviours**
Education: caring for someone with dementia, managing behaviour, positive communication **Care:** support group, relaxation, self-care	**Delivered by professionals** – therapists, psychology graduates, dementia community clinics	**May prevent informal carers from becoming abusive –** *effective as primary prevention*

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What works: user of abuse programs

BACKGROUND	DESIGN	FINDINGS
Very lmited studies (*n* = 4) since 2010, mostly focused on **financial, emotional, and psychological abuse**. One study on physical abuse, control and neglect.	All **voluntary**; mix of victim self-referrals and service providers/concerned others	Significant **reductions in emotional, financial, and neglect** forms of abuse (*n* = 2), with family relationships maintained
Family based (mostly adult children), included **cognitive behavioural models, restorative justice, multi-disciplinary teams** (social, justice & health)	Successful programs included at least **5-8 sessions (1-1.5 hours)** over **4-5 weeks, plus ongoing support** around risk factors	More **positive outcomes when UoA risk factors addressed**
Family: decision making, safety planning, positive communication **Individual:** victim support, capacity assessment & support **Risk factors:** substance misuse, gambling, employment & housing support	**Delivered by professionals** (social workers, family therapy & mediation counsellors)	**No evidence** for what works to prevent **physical or sexual abuse**

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RAQ's Elder Mediation Service

Elder Mediation is a co-operative, problem solving process. The practitioner assists participants to:

- Have difficult conversations and communicate openly and respectfully about concerns, issues or matters involving an older adult
- Explore, develop, and consider a range of possible options, and
- Achieve voluntary, agreed, and sustainable outcomes.

RAQ's Elder Mediation Service

Type of Service	Number of Session
Advocacy/Support	51%
Awareness Session	1%
Community Engagement	1%
Counselling	28%
Family mediation	3%
Information/advice/referral	11%
Intake/assessment	5%

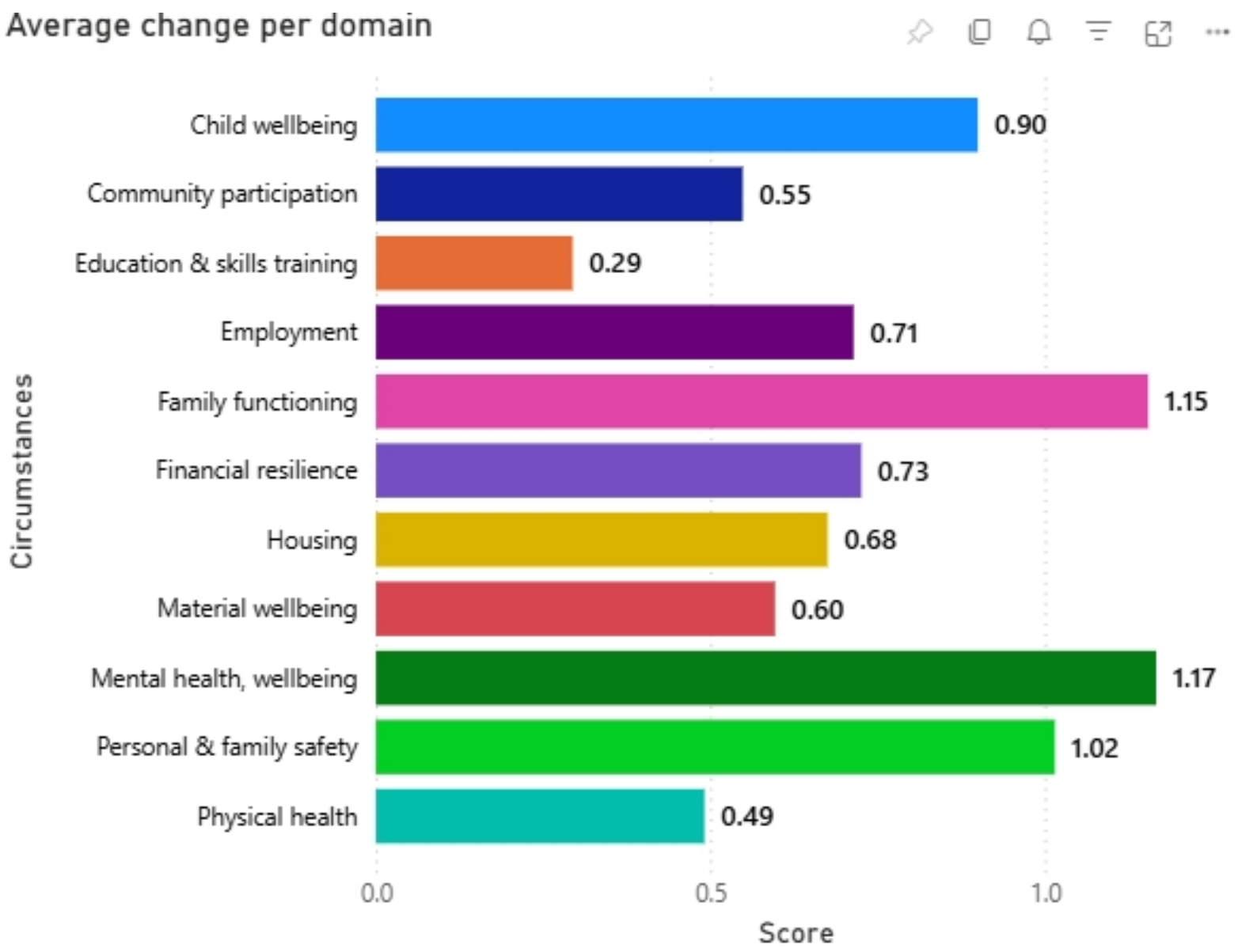
78% Female
20% CALD, 5% First Nations

71% of the time the child was the user of violence
18% the spouse
11% other

Abuse reported included
70% Psychological
58% Financial
9% Physical
6% neglect
13% social
1% sexual

N = 186 Clients
Jan-June 2026

RAQ's Elder Mediation Service



% Clients with overall positive Circumstances

85.1%

% Clients with overall neutral Circumstances

13.9%

% Clients with overall negative Circumstances

1.0%

N = 186 Clients
Jan-June 2026

Betty’s story

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Discussion and Practice Implications

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Scoping review method

Search terms

- Older/elder
- Violence, exploitation, mistreatment, neglect, abuse
- Offender, perpetrator
- Prevention, evaluation, intervention, program
- **Truncations & Boolean operators used*

Inclusion criteria

- Evaluation of program outcomes
- Outcomes can be broad (justice, individual factors)
- Community settings
- National & international
- 2010-onwards
- Quant, qual, mixed-methods

Data bases

- 18 data bases – criminology, psychology, health, nursing, medicine
- 7 Australian organisations (e.g., EAPU, AIFS, OPAN)