

# Women's experiences of seeking help for domestic elder abuse

Amy Warren

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08 - 10 NOVEMBER 2017  
CROWN PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA



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# Aim

- To identify the barriers and facilitators to women seeking help and support for domestic elder abuse

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# Methodology

- Interpretive phenomenology
- In-depth, semi structured interviews
- Focus groups
- Purposive sampling
- Thematic analysis

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# Key Findings

Barriers	Facilitators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Not recognising the experience as abuse</li><li>Fear, guilt and isolation</li><li>Lack of awareness of available help and support</li><li>Relationship with the perpetrator</li><li>Pressure from family members not to seek help</li><li>Accessibility of services</li><li>Lack of options</li><li>Cultural and generational norms</li><li>Ageism</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reaching “breaking point”</li><li>Increased awareness of available help and support</li><li>Encouragement from a third party</li><li>Wanting help for the perpetrator</li><li>Caring responsibilities</li><li>Relationship with the worker</li></ul>



# Barriers

*“And sometimes they don't even know that it's abuse... Sometimes they just don't even recognise it, especially if it's not physical... a lot of people associate or think of abuse as something you can see...”* (Claudia, practitioner)

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# Barriers

*“... that’s one of the biggest barriers. They don’t want to cut [the perpetrator] off. They still want them to be okay... And they don’t want them to get in trouble...”* (Maria, practitioner)

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# Barriers

*“... unfortunately, when we’re talking about domestic violence, some of the services that are out there to support people do not sometimes treat our clients because it’s not a spousal relationship, so it’s completely different to your child actually perpetrating the abuse. So, some of the services will only cater to people who are in that relationship, husband and wife... So, where do [older women] go for support? They still need Safe at Home programs to help them but they don’t fit under the normal bracket where people fit and they are often left alone.”*  
(Kelly, practitioner)

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# Barriers

*“... the generation we deal with, as well, are a generation of people that have ‘put up and shut up’ and gone without and just dealt with things as they come on. It might be different for the baby boomers once they start going through the system because they'll be much more vocal, but the group that we're dealing with, on the whole now, are people who came through, maybe, the Second World War, times of great hardship, times of great upheaval with migrant movement and, therefore, the mentality is that it's just, you know, ‘it's just one of those things. So, I won't say anything’.” (Jane, practitioner)*

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# Facilitators

*“... it's when it reaches the crisis point, the tipping point. So, it gets to a point of no return, where they feel that they have to, for whatever sort of abuse it is. And that there is a trigger point for them to want to get in touch with someone.” (Jane, practitioner)*

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# Facilitators

*“... sometimes, they just get to the point where they realise the person who's doing the damage needs help.” (Matthew, practitioner)*

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# Facilitators

*“I think it's who you go through, who you speak to, and if you have that relaxed thing, you can open up. Otherwise your doors are closed. You don't get the full story, so you can't really act on that...” (Jamie, lived experience)*

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# Implications

- Builds upon the current body of research on barriers
- First time that facilitators have been identified
- Facilitating help-seeking
  - Raising awareness
  - Expansion of services
  - Measures to improve accessibility of services
- Highlights that more research is needed

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