



# Elder Relationship Service

## Client Handbook

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If you need support to read or understand this information, then please let our staff know. We can make arrangements to help you.

## Welcome to Relationships Australia Tasmania (RA Tas)

We want your experience with us to be a positive one and to make a positive difference in your life.

We work with people to change and transform their lives through:

- counselling,
- mediation,
- dispute resolution and
- support and training.

Our values are.

- ✓ Willing to serve
- ✓ People matter
- ✓ In it together
- ✓ Looking forward

We show these values through positive client experience and a well-functioning organisation.

The aim of this handbook is to provide you with important information about using our Elder Relationship Service.

If you would like to talk to someone about any of the information in this handbook, you can call us on 1300 364 277.

Or you may choose to read more about what we offer on our website [www.tas.relationships.org.au](http://www.tas.relationships.org.au).

## Who we are

A leading not-for-profit provider of relationship support services. We have a team of highly qualified professionals offering services state-wide. We also provide support to Tasmanian's living on the Islands.

We have 70 years of experience, helping over 8000 Tasmanians every year.

We have no religious affiliations. Our services are for all members of the community, regardless of their religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, lifestyle choice, cultural background, or economic circumstances.

We offer people the support they need, when they need it, to assist them when life presents challenges. This may include help with relationships, work issues, past trauma or other personal challenges.

RA Tas is a child safe organisation and we are committed to protecting children and young people from harm. All our employees undergo an extensive screening process before appointment. All clients can ask for information about safeguarding children and safeguarding policies. These are also available on our website. You can discuss these documents with your practitioner or their manager.

## What you can expect from us

We support Tasmanians of all ages and at different stages of life. Anyone can call us to gain access to our services.

Our Elder Relationship Service focuses on the needs of the older person. We provide a safe and positive environment for people who want to improve support for senior members in their family.

## Elder Relationship Service

The service aims to support older people and their family to:

- make decisions that affect an older person
- improve quality of life for older people
- plan for the future

Elder Counselling and Elder Mediation both offer clients information and support around life issues related to older people.

Elder Counselling is available to:

- All older people for any issue
- Families dealing with issues related to supporting older people

Some examples of issue addressed through Elder Counselling are:

- grief
- emotional reactions to a family situation
- comments or concerns from other family members
- feeling overwhelmed when not being able to support an older person
- difficulty to make care decisions for an older family member
- helping older people make or communicate their own decisions

Elder Mediation is a dispute resolution process where people identify their concerns, hear other people's comments, then develop options with the aim of reaching a workable solution and agreement.

Mediators are independent and do not take sides. Their role is to help this to occur by asking questions or asking people to wait and let others finish talking.

Mediation is a voluntary and confidential process to help reach a clearer understanding and see if there are agreements. Mediation involves two or more people who are worried about a situation or want agreement to change a situation. Examples of this may be:

- older couple who want to talk about future care arrangements for one another,
- an older person and their adult children
- adult children who want to agree on the care, medical, financial, or living arrangements for their parents

We offer this service with the knowledge, informed consent and input from the older person involved. The wishes, welfare and well-being of the older person is the primary focus of mediation.

## The Service Pathway

If you are an older person or are concerned about issues that relate to an older person you can access Elder Relationship Service by calling us on 1300 364 277. Relationships Australia Tasmania. It is free and confidential.

An experienced practitioner will first call you and discuss the situation. They will discuss the services that may be of help and how you might like to proceed. If you decide that you would like to continue, we will arrange an appointment.

Before your first appointment you will need to complete some registration forms. You will be asked to read and sign our Privacy and Confidentiality document. If you have any questions about the paperwork that we give you, you can discuss your concerns during your appointment.

The information you share enables the practitioner to be aware of relevant topics which will assist in supporting you.

During your first counselling appointment, the practitioner will work with you to gather relevant details about your situation and how we may be able to help. There will be in depth discussion about your current situation, what is working and what you hope to achieve.

After the first appointment you will be able to book more counselling sessions as needed.

If you want to use our Elder Mediation service, our staff will make an appointment with an Elder Mediator.

The mediator will explain the process, help you work out who will be invited to a meeting and get their contact details from you. The mediator invites the other people to participate.

The mediator meets with all people invited to mediate by themselves first, then a time for a joint mediation session will be made. The mediation sessions will usually be 2 hours, but we can make these shorter if people want to take small steps or need a break.

All people involved can talk and share their concerns and suggestions during a mediation.

From the conversations, agreements may be made, about who will do what or if something needs to stop. The agreements will be checked before the sessions ends. The people involved will also decide if they need another session to follow up if the agreements are working.

When the people involved agree that everything is sorted, the mediation process is complete. Everyone will be asked to complete a short survey.

## Support Person

If you need a support person to attend sessions with you, please discuss this with the Practitioner before the appointment. For elder relationship service, we encourage support people to be involved if it will help you. A support person can help you emotionally or with practical things like transport.

## Your Rights

At RA Tas we are committed to providing an outstanding service that meets the needs of all our clients. This means offering a service that:

- Respects the uniqueness of you, your situation and your family
- Recognises your need and identity, with respect to culture, religion, gender, sexuality, language, disability or mental health
- Supports your access to an interpreter if required
- Respects your privacy and confidentiality, dignity and lifestyle
- Is inclusive and free from abuse, discrimination, neglect, force and favouritism
- Is in an environment that is safe, accessible, clean and secure
- Is engaging and empowering

In addition, whilst children and young people may be less involved in the processes of the Elder Relationship Service, we are committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing and empowerment of them. This means:

- A zero-tolerance approach towards all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation of children and young people
- Creation of child safe services and environments
- Engagement and empowerment of children and young people and their families
- Care, protection and support from all the adults involved in their lives

## Privacy and Confidentiality

We care about your privacy and confidentiality and are committed to protecting it.

When providing you with a service, we need to collect information about you and your circumstances. We will only do this when it is relevant to your service or it is required by law.

Our services are completely confidential. We will not give your name or any information about you to anyone outside Relationships Australia, unless someone's personal safety is at risk, or it is required by law.

In protecting your privacy, we must:

- Keep all information we collect about you confidential
- Respect your safety, privacy and dignity when using your information
- Protect information from any misuse or loss
- Take steps to ensure that the information we have about you is accurate, complete, up to date and relevant to the service you are accessing
- Not share your information with anyone else unless you have given clear written consent or if it is necessary to maintain your safety or otherwise required by law.

You have a right to:

- Complain if you feel we have not respected your privacy
- Know why and how your personal information is collected
- Know how your personal information is used, who it may be shared with and when

- Give or refuse consent before information is collected about you
- Ask for information or records to be explained or changed if you believe it is inaccurate, misleading, incomplete or out of date
- Request a copy of our Privacy and Confidentiality Policies

## Your Responsibilities:

As a client of RA Tas Elder Relationship Service, you are responsible to:

- Respect the rights of others, such as allowing them time to speak, respecting their privacy and to be safe from abuse
- Inform us of any concerns you may have in relation to the service as soon as possible

## Giving feedback or making a complaint

We want you to tell us what you think about your service. We know the best way for us to improve our services is to receive feedback from you. You have a right to:

- Give feedback on what is working well or what could be improved at any time
- Be listened to respectfully
- Make a complaint about the service you receive
- Have your complaint kept private
- Have your complaint responded to fairly and in a timely manner
- Be informed of what has happened with your complaint or feedback
- Be safe from negative consequences should you make a

## complaint

We will review all feedback and complaints to evaluate the quality of our services, identify what is and what is not working well, and consider how we can improve our services.

How can you make a complaint or provide feedback?

You can raise a complaint, compliment, or give feedback to the Elder Relationship Service Practitioner, or their Manager.

**Complaints and feedback can also be given via:**

Our website: <http://www.tas.relationships.org.au/>

Phone: 1300 364 277

Post:

South: 20 Clare Street, New Town, 7008

North: 6 Paterson Street, Launceston, 7250

North West: 68 North Fenton Street, Devonport, 7360

## Acknowledgement

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