

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE



This Facilitator's Guide supports trainers, educators, and practitioners to deliver the Hear Our Voices training package. It provides a trauma-informed, age-aware, rights-based framework for engaging workers across sexual assault, domestic and family violence, aged care, health, community services, disability, and advocacy sectors.

The guide assists facilitators to:

- Build participant understanding of sexual assault of older women
- Strengthen workforce skills in recognition, response, and prevention
- Challenge ageism and improve inclusion
- Integrate the nine Fact Sheets into practice
- Deliver training safely, confidently, and effectively

Preparing to Facilitate

Facilitators should ensure the learning environment is safe, respectful, and supportive.

Key preparation steps:

- Review all nine Fact Sheets prior to training.
- Ensure familiarity with trauma-informed and age-aware practice.
- Prepare printed copies of Fact Sheets and worksheets if needed.
- Ensure the room is accessible (seating, lighting, toilets, sound).
- Provide quiet spaces for participants who may need a break.
- Establish processes for managing disclosures safely.
- Provide content warnings at the start and throughout the session.
- Ensure cultural safety for Aboriginal women, CALD women, LGBTQ+ older women, and women with disability.

Creating a Safe Learning Environment

Training on sexual assault and ageing can raise strong emotions for participants. A safe, respectful environment enables learning and minimises harm.

To create safety, facilitators should:

- Begin with a clear content warning and explain the nature of the material.
- Establish group agreements (confidentiality, respect, "I" statements, right to pass).
- Encourage participants to check in with themselves throughout the session.
- Provide access to quiet spaces, breaks, and emotional support if needed.
- Normalise emotional responses without pressuring participants to share personal experiences.
- Ensure cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, CALD women, LGBTQ+ older women, and women with disability.
- Model grounding techniques and encourage self-care before and after the session.

Managing Disclosures

Participants may disclose personal or professional experiences of trauma during training. Facilitators must respond with sensitivity and clear boundaries.

Facilitators should:

- Acknowledge the disclosure with warmth and respect.
- Avoid asking for details or probing questions.
- Normalise the person's feelings and thank them for sharing.
- Offer a break or quiet space if needed.
- Provide information about support services (1800RESPECT, Full Stop Australia, OPAN).
- Ensure the person is safe to continue or leave the session.

Facilitators must not:

- Attempt to conduct a counselling session in the training space.
- Promise confidentiality if risk of harm is identified.
- Disclose the participant's information to others unless required for safety.

Session Structure Options

This training can be delivered in multiple formats depending on the needs of your organisation. Each structure includes recommended pacing without minute-by-minute rigidity.

3-Hour Session

- Welcome, Acknowledgment, Content Warning (10 minutes)
- Overview of Hear Our Voices + Key Concepts (20 minutes)
- Fact Sheets 1–3: Inequalities & Ageism (30 minutes)
- Activity 1: Mapping Inequalities (20 minutes)
- Fact Sheets 4–6: Dementia, Aged Care, Data (30 minutes)
- Break (10 minutes)
- Activity 2: Recognising Indicators of Harm (20 minutes)
- Fact Sheets 7–9: Recovery, Outreach, Inclusion (25 minutes)
- Case Study Discussion (20 minutes)
- Closing Reflection & Support Pathways (10 minutes)

Half-Day Training (4 Hours)

- Same content as 3-hour session with expanded discussion and activity time.

Full-Day Training (6–7 Hours)

- All Fact Sheets covered in depth with:
- Extended discussion
- Additional case studies
- Three practical activities
- Dedicated planning time using the Audit & Planning Tool

Facilitator Scripts

Welcome Script

"Welcome, and thank you for being here. Today's session focuses on the experiences of older women who have survived sexual assault. This is a sensitive and important topic, and your presence reflects a commitment to improving safety, dignity, and justice for older women."

Acknowledgment of Country

[Insert local Acknowledgment.]

Content Warning

"This session discusses sexual assault, ageism, trauma, and institutional responses. You may leave, pause, or take a break at any time."

Transition Script

"Let's move now from understanding inequalities to considering how these play out in practice."

Closing Script

"Thank you for your care and engagement today. Please take time to ground yourself before leaving. Support details are available if needed."



Case Studies

Case Study 1: Cognitive Impairment and Missed Indicators

Mary, 82, lives in residential aged care and has moderate dementia. Staff notice she becomes agitated when a particular male resident enters the lounge room. Her sleep deteriorates, and she begins refusing showers. These changes are documented as "progression of dementia." One afternoon, a staff member walks in to find the male resident standing too close to Mary. Only then is sexual assault considered.

Case Study 2: DFV in Later Life

Aisha, 70, migrated to Australia decades ago and has been financially dependent on her husband. He becomes increasingly controlling, refusing her access to money and preventing her from seeing friends. When she attempts to leave, he coerces her into unwanted sexual acts. She does not contact services because she believes she will not be taken seriously at her age.

Case Study 3: Family Member as Perpetrator

Lily, 76, relies on her adult son for transport and shopping. He begins entering her room without permission and touching her while she sleeps. Lily feels ashamed and fears she will be placed in aged care if she reports him. A neighbour's gentle inquiry eventually leads to a disclosure.

Case Study 4: Institutional Response Failure

Roberta, 79, reports that a staff member touched her genitals during night care. The provider dismisses the allegation as confusion due to dementia. Only after her daughter insists on escalation is the incident reported to SIRS and the police.

Activities & Exercises

Activity 1: Mapping Inequalities

Purpose: To help participants understand how lifelong inequality shapes older women's experiences of violence.

Time Required: 20 minutes

Materials: Whiteboard or butchers paper, markers

Steps:

1. Divide participants into small groups.
2. Ask each group to list historic inequalities older women have lived through (employment, finance, health, legal rights).
3. Ask them to map how these inequalities affect safety, help-seeking, and disclosure today.
4. Groups report back.
5. Facilitator highlights links to Fact Sheets 1–3.

Debrief Questions:

- What surprised you?
- How do these inequalities show up in your service today?

Activity 2: Recognising Indicators of Harm

Purpose: To build workforce confidence identifying signs of sexual assault in older women.

Time Required: 20 minutes

Materials: Case study scenarios

Steps:

1. Present participants with early warning signs (behavioural, emotional, physical, relational).
2. Distribute case studies and ask participants to identify indicators of harm.
3. Ask participants what assumptions might prevent staff from recognising sexual assault.
4. Groups report back.
5. Facilitator links indicators to Fact Sheets 4–7.

Debrief Questions:

- Which indicators are commonly missed?
- What systems reinforce misdiagnosis?



Activities & Exercises

Activity 3: Ageism Unpacked

Purpose: To challenge ageist attitudes and improve inclusive practice.

Time Required: 15–20 minutes

Materials: None

Steps:

1. Ask participants to reflect on common stereotypes of older women.
2. Write responses on a board (e.g., frail, confused, asexual).
3. Ask how each stereotype can contribute to harm or invisibility.
4. Discuss how to counteract ageism within services.
5. Link to Fact Sheet 2 and outreach strategies.

Debrief Questions:

- How does ageism appear in your organisation?
- What can be changed immediately?

Activity 4: Using the Inclusion Audit Tool

Purpose: To guide organisations toward substantive improvements in inclusion.

Time Required: 30 minutes

Materials: Inclusion Audit Table

Steps:

1. Provide each group with the Audit Tool.
2. Ask them to assess their service honestly using at least five indicators.
3. Groups identify areas “Unmet / Partly Met / Met.”
4. Each group selects one priority action and drafts next steps.
5. Facilitator links results to Fact Sheet 9.

Debrief Questions:

- Which indicators were hardest to meet?
- What long-term improvements are needed?

Optional Reflective Activity: Body-Mapping Lite

Purpose: To promote empathy and deeper understanding without requiring personal disclosure.

Time Required: 10–15 minutes

Materials: Paper & coloured pencils

Steps:

1. Provide each participant with an outline of a human figure.
2. Ask them to mark areas where older women might carry stress, fear, or resilience.
3. Invite volunteers to share insights (optional).
4. Link reflections to trauma-informed practice.

Slide Outline

Purpose of This Slide Outline

This outline provides facilitators with a structured sequence for building a slide deck to accompany Hear Our Voices training.

Slide 1 – Title Slide

Title: Hear Our Voices: Understanding Sexual Assault of Older Women

Logos: Organisation + Partners (optional)

Visual: Photograph or illustration representing older women (ensure diversity and dignity)

Slide 2 – Acknowledgment of Country

Include facilitator's local wording

Visual: Respectful image or artwork (with permission)

Slide 3 – Content Warning

Brief note that session contains discussions of violence, trauma, ageing

Visual: Calming background

Slide 4 – Why Older Women?

Key message: Older women are under-recognised in violence prevention and response

Include 2–3 statistics (no more)

Visual: Silhouette or age-diverse women illustration

Slide 5 – The Silence Around Older Women

Themes: Invisibility, ageism, lack of data, normalisation of harm

Visual: Muted colours / symbolic artwork from Body Mapping (if available)

Slide 6 – Overview of Hear Our Voices

Purpose of the project

Methods: Body Mapping, sector consultations, fact sheets

Visual: Icons for each method

Slide 7 – Historic Gender Inequalities

Key message: Older women lived through eras of legal, financial, and social discrimination

Include 3 examples

Visual: Timeline graphic

Slide 8 – Ageism

Key stereotypes and impacts

Visual: debunking myths chart

Slide Outline cont.

Slide 9 – Contemporary Inequalities

Poverty, homelessness, unpaid care, health inequities

Visual: simple infographic

Slide 10 – Living With Dementia

Key risks, myths, and impacts

Visual: Dementia-friendly communication icons

Slide 11 – Sexual Assault in Residential Aged Care

Key message: High risk environment; under-recognised harm

Optional: 50 assaults per week (RCAC finding)

Visual: Safe environment checklist

Slide 12 – Data Collection Failures

Why older women are invisible in national statistics

Visual: Comparison of data gaps

Slide 13 – Healing & Recovery

Key trauma-informed concepts

Visual: Grounding techniques or wellness icons

Slide 14 – Outreach

Barriers older women face

Visual: Community outreach symbols

Slide 15 – Inclusive Services

Summary of what inclusive practice looks like

Visual: Inclusion audit icons

Slide 16 – Case Studies (Activity)

Introduce a scenario

Provide discussion questions

Visual: Simple silhouette graphic

Slide 17 – Activity Instructions

Steps for Mapping Inequalities or Recognising Indicators

Visual: Numbered icons

Slide 18 – Using the Inclusion Audit Tool

Brief overview + purpose

Visual: Table icon or checklist

Slide 19 – Safety & Support Pathways

Key supports: 1800RESPECT, Full Stop Australia, OPAN

Visual: Helpline icons

Slide 20 – Closing Reflection

Prompt participants to reflect: “What will I do differently after today?”

Visual: Soft, reflective imagery

Pre-Training Reflection

Purpose

This tool helps participants reflect on their knowledge, confidence, and assumptions before training begins. Please complete individually.

Questions

1. What comes to mind when you think about sexual assault of older women?
2. How confident do you feel recognising indicators of harm in older women?
3. How confident do you feel responding safely and appropriately?
4. What barriers do you believe older women face in accessing support?
5. What do you hope to learn today?
6. Is there anything you are worried about or want the facilitator to know?

Post-Training Evaluation

Purpose

This evaluation measures learning outcomes and supports continuous improvement.

Questions

1. What are the three most important things you learned today?
2. How has your confidence changed in recognising indicators of harm in older women?
3. How confident do you feel responding to disclosures after this training?
4. What tools or resources did you find most helpful?
5. What improvements would you like to see in the training?
6. What actions will you take in your role as a result of today's session?

Facilitator Self-Assessment Checklist

Purpose

This checklist supports facilitators in preparing, delivering, and reviewing Hear Our Voices training.

Before the session, I have:

- ☐ Reviewed all Fact Sheets and key concepts
- ☐ Prepared a safe, accessible, inclusive learning environment
- ☐ Planned content warnings and safety procedures
- ☐ Ensured cultural safety for Aboriginal, CALD, LGBTQ+ older women and women with disability
- ☐ Prepared outreach, referral, and crisis service information
- ☐ Ensured all materials are printed or displayed accessibly

During the session, I:

- ☐ Delivered content warnings sensitively
- ☐ Maintained a respectful, inclusive space
- ☐ Responded to disclosures safely and appropriately
- ☐ Monitored participant wellbeing

After the session, I:

- ☐ Provided information about support pathways
- ☐ Debriefed with co-facilitators if needed
- ☐ Reflected on strengths and areas for improvement
- ☐ Recorded any issues requiring follow-up



Facilitator Self-Assessment Checklist

Material	Notes / Requirements
Slide deck	☐ Ensure slides are accessible, inclusive, and contain content warnings.
Printed Fact Sheets	☐ Provide copies of all nine Fact Sheets; offer large-print versions.
Audit & Planning Tool	☐ Print table version for group work.
Case Studies	☐ Have printed copies for each group; ensure anonymisation.
Activity Worksheets	☐ Copies for Mapping Inequalities, Indicators of Harm, etc.
Support Services List	☐ Include 1800RESPECT, Full Stop Australia, OPAN, local supports.
Crisis Plan	☐ Have internal procedures ready for managing participant distress.
Accessibility Materials	☐ Large print handouts, microphone, seating options, quiet space.
Cultural Safety Resources	☐ Local Aboriginal services, CALD/language supports.
Room Setup	☐ Tables for group work, whiteboard, markers, good lighting, ventilation.
Technology	☐ Projector, speakers, laptop, chargers.
Grounding Materials	☐ Optional: sensory objects, water, tissues, comfort items for breaks.

