

ICOPE

INTEGRATED CARE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

# Social care and support



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# Learning objectives

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Describe the care pathways to offer social care and support
- Explain how to assess social care and support needs
- Identify signs and behaviours in older people, carers or family members that may suggest potential abuse of the older person
- Inform how to provide social care and support







## Ensuring dignity through social care and support

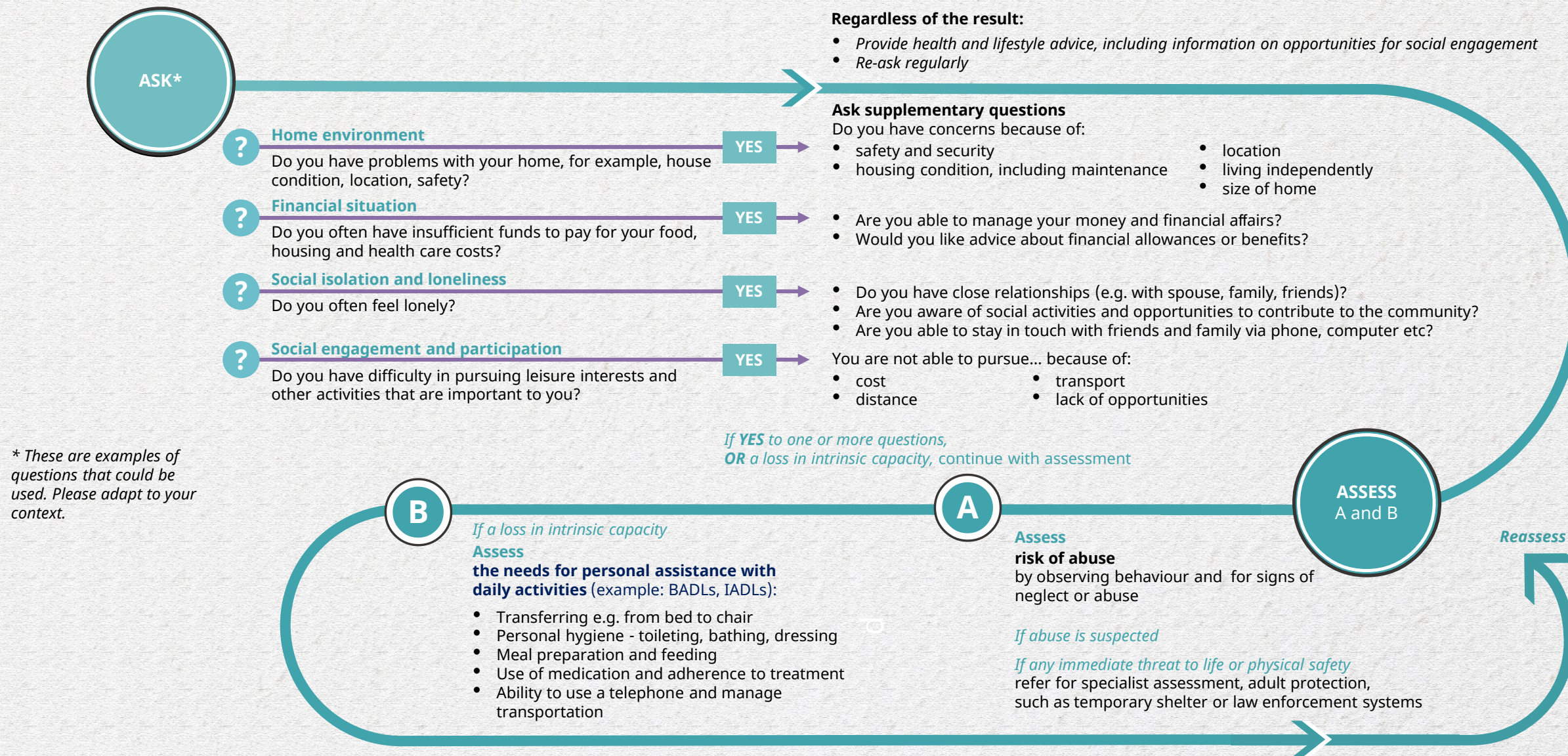


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- Older individuals may require social care and support to lead meaningful and dignified lives. This need can arise irrespective of their intrinsic capacity and may change over time.
- People with significant loss of intrinsic capacity often depend on others for care, support and assistance to maintain their dignity.
- Social care and support include help with daily activities, meaningful engagement, reducing isolation, financial stability, stable housing and protection from abuse.
- Identifying these needs may involve consulting a trusted person, especially if cognitive impairment is present.



# Care pathway to manage social care and support







# Assess and manage social support needs

Regardless of intrinsic capacity and functional ability, always assess and manage social support needs.



Home environment (e.g., place's size, access, condition, safety, security)



Financial situation (e.g., sufficient money to meet basic needs)



Social isolation and loneliness (e.g., close relationships, social activities, ways to connect with friends and families, etc.)



Social engagement and participation (e.g., leisure activities, spiritual activities, etc.)



Abuse of older people (e.g., check the behaviour of the older person, the behaviour of their caregivers, or signs of physical abuse)





# Observational cues for potential abuse

## Behaviour of the older person

- Appears to be afraid of a relative or a carer
- Hesitates or shows anxiety when responding to questions in the presence of the carer or relative
- Displays changes in behaviour when the carer or relative is present
- Refers to the carer using terms such as strong-willed, frequently tired, irritable, highly stressed, anxious, or quick-tempered
- Demonstrates exaggerated respect or deference towards the carer



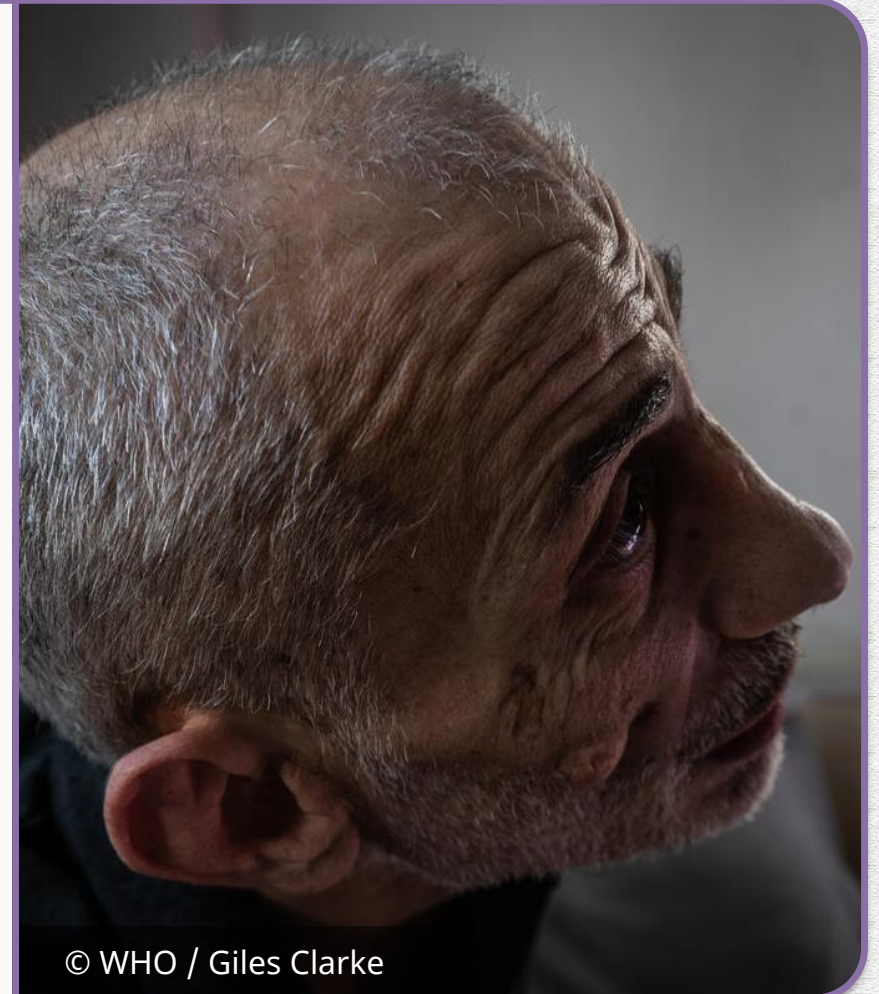




# Observational cues for potential abuse

## Behaviour of the carer or relative

- Restricts or hinders communication between staff and the older person
- Frequently interrupts assessments by entering the room
- Insists on answering questions directed to the older person
- Creates barriers to providing home assistance or support
- Expresses dissatisfaction or resentment about caregiving responsibilities
- Attempts to discredit the older person by portraying them as “confused” or unreliable without justification
- Exhibits hostility, impatience or signs of fatigue during interactions



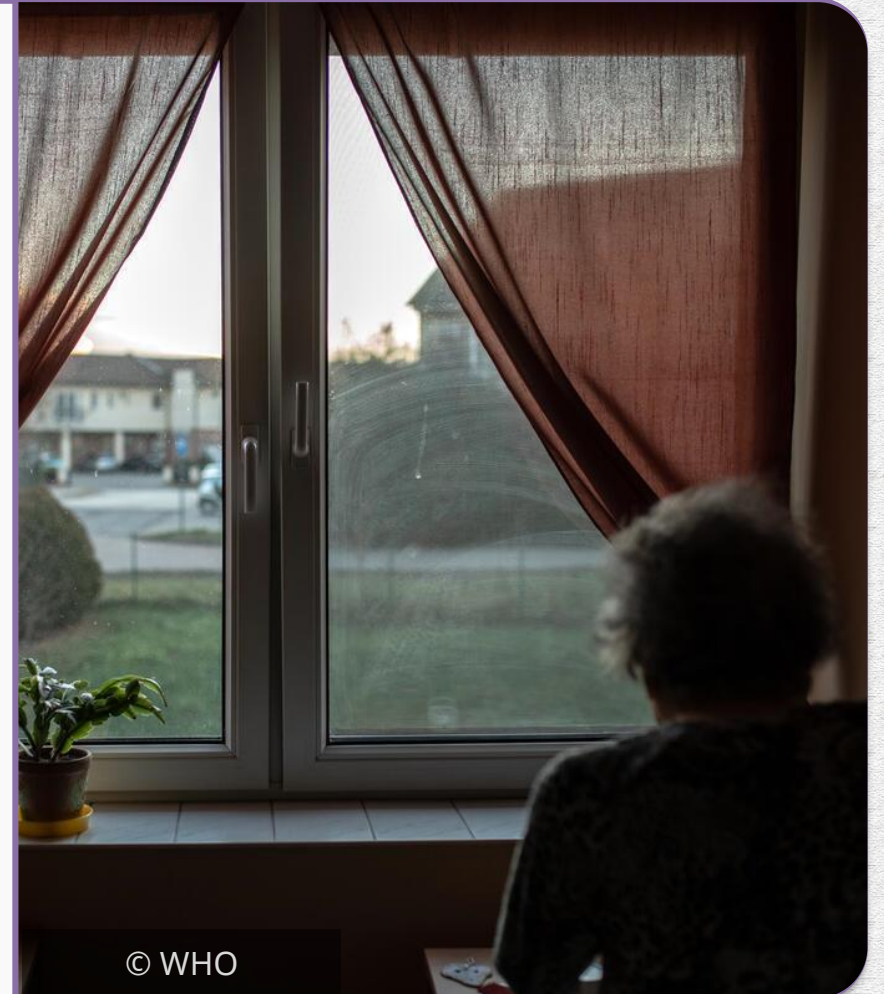




# Observational cues for potential abuse

## Neglect and physical abuse

- Malnutrition, dehydration, pressure sores
- Poor body and oral hygiene
- Dirty, severely worn clothing
- Delay between the onset of illness and seeking medical attention
- Injuries
- Bruising that has the shape of fingers, indicating rough handling
- Improper use of medications, whether underuse or overuse







## Recommended actions in cases of suspected abuse

### If you suspect abuse:

- Refer the case for further assessment through social services
- Ensure close monitoring (e.g., visits by a community health or social worker; encourage attendance at health facilities or support services)
- Consider referral to psychosocial services, such as counselling
- If there is an immediate threat to life or physical safety, involve law enforcement and arrange temporary shelter where possible







## Assessment of social care needs

A person's care and assistance needs depend on strategies to compensate for loss of intrinsic capacity, while respecting their preferences, choices and goals.

An in-depth assessment should evaluate the ability to perform basic and instrumental activities of daily living (i.e., ADLs, IADLs), such as:

- Transferring
- Personal hygiene
- Meal preparation and feeding
- Medication management
- Using a telephone and managing transportation







## When specialized knowledge is needed

Social care and support involve many sectors in addition to health, which can provide services for:

- **Housing** – Home adaptation or repair, access to these services, or legal advice in relation to disputes
- **Financing** – Financial support and provision of financial advice
- **Legal protection** – Assessment of the need for delegation of financial and health care decision-making
- **Advising** – Support for employment, education, volunteering opportunities, support groups and rights
- **Protection** – Assessment of the risk of abuse and provision of protection and law enforcement
- **LTC services** – Assessment of eligibility for and provision of formal LTC services
- **Assistive devices** – Assessment of the need for assistive products, ensuring access and providing advice





# Manage social support needs



## Home environment

- Consider simple home adaptations
- Consider alternative accommodation options
- Refer to social welfare, community housing programmes or support networks



## Financial situations

- Refer to social services for access to pensions, grants and allowances
- Suggest professional financial advice
- Provide guidance on delegating financial decisions, ensuring protection against abuse



## Social isolation and loneliness

- Support in managing difficult personal relationships
- Share local opportunities for social activities, volunteering, employment or education
- Help with using digital tools to stay connected with family and friends



## Social engagement and participation

- Identify interests and share local opportunities for leisure, learning, volunteering and work
- Recommend services that support participation (e.g., transport, discounted activities)
- Encourage social connections with community or spiritual groups





# Manage social care needs

## Helping older people stay safe, mobile and well-supported at home

- Adapt the home environment to enhance mobility and reduce fall risk.
- Recommend appropriate assistive products (e.g., shower chairs, dressing aids, modified cutlery, plates, cups, pill organizers) and provide guidance on access and maintenance.
- Evaluate the need for rehabilitation services and facilitate access where available.
- Assess support from spouse, family, or other carers, and identify the needs of the carer.
- Review requirements for assistance from care workers.
- Connect individuals to locally available services such as home-based care, day-care programs, or residential LTC facilities, ensuring options are culturally acceptable.



# Summary



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- Health workers and community stakeholders should identify the needs for social support of older people.
- Collaboration across sectors like social services, long-term care, and legal services is essential.
- Personal assistance to accomplish tasks of daily living may be necessary for older people with a significant loss of intrinsic capacity.
- Primary care workers and community stakeholders must observe and address signs of abuse and neglect.
- Community stakeholders play a key role in providing social care and organizing home-based care and activities.



# References

1. Abuse of older people [website]. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2023 (<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/abuse-of-older-people>). Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.
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