

Good Spirit Good Life Package

Recommendations and Strategies



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PRINCIPAL AUTHORS

The principal authors of the Good Spirit Good Life assessment are University of Western Australia's Assoc Professor Kate Smith, Lianne Gilchrist, Professor Dawn Bessarab, Kevin Taylor, Dr Christine Clinch, Dr Paula Edgill, Prof Leon Flicker, Shondell Hayden, and student Carina Petersen; University of Melbourne's Dr Dina LoGiudice, Harry Douglas, Kate Bradley, and Flinders University's Professor Julie Ratcliffe.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

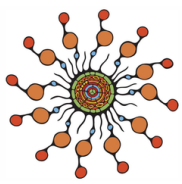
The Good Spirit Good Life assessment and recommendations package was co-developed with older Aboriginal participants and our Nyoongar Elders Governance Group in Perth, Western Australia. We would like to acknowledge the contribution of the following Elders and senior community members: Aunty Doris Getta(Decd), Uncle Charles Kickett, Aunty Helen Kickett, Aunty Doreen Nelson, Aungty Vonita Walley, Aunty Yvonne Winmar, Carmel Kickett, Marie Walley, Rose Walley and Teresa Walley. We would also like to acknowledge the contribution of our service partners in Perth and Melbourne -Hall and Prior, People Who Care, Rise Network, Moorditj Koort and the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service and thank our Perth based Service Providers Advisory group members: Jennifer Grieves, Carmel Kickett, Debbie Armstead, Alison White, David Bell, and Violet Bacon. We would like to acknowledge the assistance of University of Western Australia students Ciara Donohoe and Morgan Bowen in compiling the recommendations from the interview data.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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The below recommendations and strategies aim to assist service providers to improve the wellbeing of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

If the person's response is '**never**, **not much**' or '**sometimes**' for any of following the questions, with their approval, service providers may implement some of the strategies provided.

Please note, it is important to develop an individualised care plan using strategies that are appropriate for the older person. This is not an exhaustive list. Where possible, work with the older person or their family to find meaningful ways to enhance their quality of life.

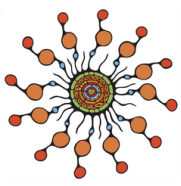
Family and Friends

Do you get to have a yarn and spend time with family or friends?

1. Identify the person's existing supports and who the person would like to spend more time with. Help them in connecting or reconnecting with these supports.
2. Liaise with the person and identified family and/or friends to determine ways to enhance social engagement.
3. Support the person in engaging with social/activity groups based on the person's interests e.g. attend Elders groups, Men's Sheds, art centres or other community-based groups. The person may need support with:
 - An accompanying family member/companion/staff member.
 - Arranging transport.
 - Dietary requirements.
 - Managing medical and equipment needs.
4. Encourage yarnning and reminiscing about the old days with family and friends.
5. Encourage intergenerational activities to support the older person to pass on cultural knowledge and stories.
7. Discuss how the person's family or friends can be supported to complete activities with the older person. For example, going fishing, attending sports matches, playing music, visiting relatives etc. This may involve education around wheelchairs or mobility aids, managing medication/diet/personal care, giving opportunities for rest.
8. The older person may need support to engage with technology/communication platforms to maintain connections with family and friends, such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Facetime. For example, support the older person in setting up a WhatsApp group with family members or friendship groups.
9. In residential care: support the person in connecting and spending time with family. This can be through facilitating:
 - Regular Family Days, with food and activities.
 - Assisting the person to visit family and friends outside of the residential facility (e.g. going out for a meal, attending family events and visiting Country/Island/community).
 - having a welcoming space for family and friends to gather with tea/coffee facilities, tranquil garden spaces.
 - provide activities such as board games, cards, quoits, boules etc for the older person to play with family and friends.

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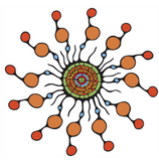
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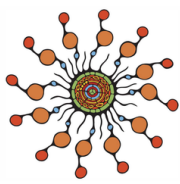
Country/Island Home

For Aboriginal people: Do you spend enough time connecting to Country?

Or

For Torres Strait Islander people: Do you spend enough time connecting to your Island Home?

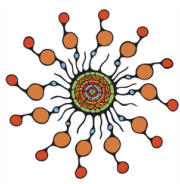
1. Support the older person to stay at home and to receive health care on Country/on their Island.
If the person expresses the need to return to Country/their Island, help investigate options to facilitate this (contacting regional or remote services that may be able to assist).
2. Honour the person's end of life wishes, which may include wanting to die on Country or their Island Community. Sensitive explore options to facilitate this (as above).
3. Support the person to spend time on Country or their Island (if possible). Service providers may be able to liaise with other health services (e.g. dialysis, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services) to provide short term care while the person is visiting. Provide assistance with organising medication and equipment supports (e.g. wheelchair, pressure cushion/postural supports for long distance travel) and appropriate accommodation).
4. Assist with transport to Country or their Island Home. Consider any access issues and support/manage medical and equipment needs.
5. Engage in activities that promote connection and caring for Country/Island Home e.g. land/cultural heritage management, painting/art, gardening, going for a walk in nature, yarning sessions etc.
6. Support the older person to engage in activities outdoors such as fishing, sitting and yarning around a fire, bush walks.
7. If the older person is unable to physically access their Country/Island Home, support participation in activities to bring Country/Home to them through cultural activities such as singing, yarning, painting, dancing, weaving etc.
8. Encourage the person and their service provider to develop and create tranquil garden areas incorporating native plants and bush tucker.
9. Facilitate yarning sessions by inviting people to speak and share stories about Country/their Island. Consider inviting outside speakers; gathering around the fire; using photos or artwork to prompt discussions; inviting younger children to listen and learn from the Elders and promote respect.
10. Consider regular day trips to national parks, country towns, cultural centres, etc. Have a barbecue, eat traditional foods, make damper or billy tea.
11. Support attendance to native title, land council or land management meetings. Assist with transport, access issues, dietary issues, equipment and medical management.
12. Simple activities such as removing shoes, walking outside and listening to nature can allow persons to feel more connected to the land. The older person may wish to talk to Country, the animals or their ancestors.
13. Use of available technology to connect to Country, such as video calls, 360 degree camera and virtual reality experiences.
14. Provide opportunities to connect to nature to experience peace and healing when a person is feeling unwell. Support the person to access and use bush medicines or natural remedies if they wish.
15. In residential care: create a memory box for or with the resident. This may include items such as sand from their Country/Island, family photos, photos of Country/Island. Ask family members to assist with this to ensure items are appropriate.
16. _____



Community

Do you feel connected to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community?

1. Support intergenerational opportunities where the person can share knowledge and stories about their life and culture with younger people. The older person may enjoy volunteering for a school or other community programs and activities. The person may need regular transport support or support with completing administrative requirements e.g. applications, working with children checks etc.
2. The older person may wish to become a volunteer and offer their skills in supporting other members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Transport/and/or administrative support (as above) may be required.
3. Promote and support community events, such as NAIDOC Week, Reconciliation Week and Sorry Day within your organisation. Support the older person's attendance and engagement in these events.
4. Assist the person to attend sport games that family or community members are playing in. This may require forward planning to ensure the person is supported with their medical, mobility and access needs.
5. Link in with local community groups to provide the person with opportunities for social engagement and inclusion. The person may need support with:
 - An accompanying staff member/ family member/ companion (if the person is not comfortable going alone)
 - Arranging transport
 - Dietary requirements
 - Managing medical, equipment and access needs
6. Community groups that an older person may wish to be involved in include Elders groups, arts and crafts, church groups, or exercise groups. These may be found through Aboriginal Health and Community Organisations or other local organisations.
7. Service providers could link in with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander volunteers/volunteer groups that visit elderly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in residential facilities to yarn and support connections to the older person's community.
8. Consider ways in which your organisation can support connection to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. For example, hosting activities (e.g. karaoke, movie night) providing a venue, tea/coffee/food, and facilitating access (transport etc) for Elder's groups, men's or women's groups etc.
9. Support attendance to funerals of family and friends. Again, transport, dietary, medical and equipment needs requires consideration.
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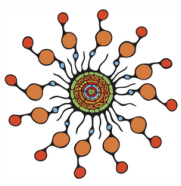
Culture

Do you feel connected to cultural ways? (Can prompt if needed e.g. through cultural events and meetings, sharing traditional foods, activities such as painting, weaving, dancing).

1. Assist the person in accessing/preparing traditional foods if wanted. This could range from cooking dampers and stews, to fishing, hunting or collecting bush tucker.
2. Assist the person to participate in caring for Country/Island activities including land management, planting, sustainable practices, gardening, sharing knowledge of the land.
3. Encourage the person to attend cultural days and activities (plays, dances, art exhibitions, festivals and celebrations, commemorations) and link in with local cultural groups/community centres.
4. Assist the person in accessing bush medicine and Traditional Healers (only if indicated, and you will need an Aboriginal person to organise this with the family).
5. Assist the person in finding opportunities to speak and listen to language if appropriate. This needs to be sensitively addressed (services must remain mindful of the continuing impact of past policies prohibiting speaking Aboriginal languages and the grief/trauma/loss caused).
6. Support persons in engaging with social groups, family and community members. This can be through art, dance, attending events, Elders groups etc.
7. Support the person to attend funerals, complete Sorry Business (known as Sad News in the Torres Strait) or pay their respect in other ways. For example, visiting the family members of those who have passed on, making phone calls, visiting gravesites, having smoking ceremonies as appropriate.
8. Encourage participation in activities that provide cultural connection to Country/their Island. This may be travelling to their Country/Island or if this is not possible, spending time outdoors, fishing, hunting, sitting by the fire, talking about Country/their Island and sharing their life stories.
10. When indicated, support the older person's involvement in women's or men's business. Allocate staff appropriately to ensure gender based cultural protocols and practices are respected and valued. eg. male carers showering male clients.

Service strategies

11. Ensure staff have a respect and understanding of the need to follow local cultural protocols, whilst understanding the person may come from a different area with different protocols.
12. Promote cultural safety through staff members completing cultural competency training with local Elders.
13. Have a calendar of significant events, contributing to celebrations and demonstrating sensitivity to commemorative events e.g. Sorry Day, NAIDOC week, Reconciliation Week. Support participation in these events.
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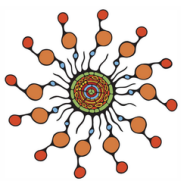
Health

Do you do things to take care of your health?

1. Support the older person to access Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led/operated and/or culturally appropriate health services to meet their medical/health needs.
2. Support the older person in understanding, feeling comfortable and complying with treatment plans and medications. This can be done through:
 - Explaining medical conditions and treatment options in a culturally appropriate manner (yarning, respecting non-verbal communication such as reduced eye contact and the use of silence).
 - Creating a medications list. For example, explain to the older person what they are taking, what it is for, what their dose is and how often they should take it.
 - Running health groups for community members with similar medical conditions so they can yarn and share ideas/feelings, or providing information on these groups.
 - Helping the person to access appropriate health information on communication platforms.
 - Helping the person with dietary changes to manage health needs. Potentially creating sample diets with traditional foods, budgeting ideas.
 - Keeping in regular contact with the person to provide ongoing support.
 - Respecting privacy e.g. not talking in an open area about personal information.
 - Having an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander support person or family member present.
 -
3. provide information on free/subsidised health and personal care services that the older person can access for themselves/a family member they are caring for (e.g. equipment/aids, exercise programs).
4. Assist the person in seeking emotional support for chronic illnesses and changes to independence (e.g. counselling services, yarning groups and/or healing workshops).
5. Encourage the person to develop or continue personal interests or hobbies, either through group activities or independently.
6. Encourage healthy lifestyle choices such as exercise and healthy eating.
7. Encourage the older person to spend time outdoors and engage in meaningful activities for them. E.g. attending sports games, having a barbecue with family and friends, going for walks, exercising.
8. Provide support to access traditional healing options and bush medicines (through an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander family or community member).

Service strategies

9. Provide culturally safe health service delivery:
 - Offer the support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health workers or Liaison Officers
 - Assist the older person to easily make and attend appointments (e.g. transport, accompanying support person, preparing documentation e.g. referrals/medication lists/scans, offering reminder phone calls if needed).
 - arrange necessary accommodation and carer support if travelling for health appointments
 - Consider the physical environment of your health service – offer additional seating for family members in appointments/waiting rooms, create a welcoming environment with Acknowledgement of Country, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander paintings/handicrafts/flags on display).
 - Facilitate a social environment, where the older person can yarn with other members of community and feel comfortable.
 - Support and accommodate family members to care for the older person.
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Respect

Do you feel respected and valued as an Elder/older person?

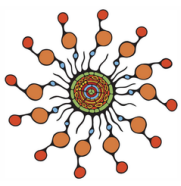
1. Use open communication with the Elder/older person demonstrating active listening, responsiveness and sensitivity. Find common ground and share your own stories to build your relationship.
2. Adopt a person-centred and relationship-centred approach to care - ensuring the Elder/older person and their key support person/s are involved in decisions.
3. Address the person appropriately and according to their personal wishes. For example, refer to an Elder or community leader as Auntie or Uncle only if you have determined they are comfortable with this.
4. Allow time and space for the person and their family to conduct Sorry Business/attend to Sad News when there is a family loss. Be guided by the person and their family, it may be considered disrespectful to mention the deceased person's name.
5. Support the older person in sharing stories through informal yarning, making recordings (audio or video) or writing down their history (determine if family are okay and interested in helping with this).
6. Think about how older and younger people can support each other. For example, a younger person may share their skills by assisting the older person with tasks they have difficulty with e.g. navigating technology, while the older person can pass on cultural skills and stories.
7. Demonstrate understanding and respect for men's and women's business. e.g. personal care for an older woman would be more appropriately carried out by another woman etc.

Service strategies

8. Ensure staff have completed appropriate cultural competency training and demonstrate respect for cultural values, protocols and ways of doing business.
9. Ensure the environment of your service is respectful and offers privacy when required. e.g. when discussing personal information with the older person.
10. Provide a safe and welcoming environment for the Elder/older person and their families to gather and socialise.
11. Avoid displaying or broadcasting images of deceased people, unless given permission. For some older people, it may be disrespectful to use the names of people who have passed away. Check with the older person to see what is culturally respectful for them.

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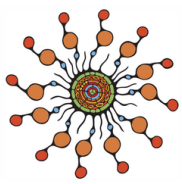
Elder Role

Do you feel you can share your knowledge and stories with the younger people?

1. Support the person in sharing knowledge and culture with younger generations. Service providers can assist the person in recording their knowledge and/or organising yarning sessions/events. Be aware of the correct cultural protocols surrounding this, and obtain support from family members.
2. Assist the person in taking younger family members to significant places on Country/their Island to show them where they grew up and to learn about the history of other important or sacred sites. Assist the older person to participate in culturally meaningful activities e.g. fishing, eating traditional foods, making and sitting around the fire etc. Assist with transport/medical/equipment needs.
3. Set up the environment to facilitate inter-generational activities. For example, yarning/sharing stories, sitting around the fire, gathering for morning/afternoon tea, discussing and teaching about cultural objects and artefacts, participating in music, singing or dance etc.
4. Provide/find a culturally safe space (e.g. community centre) and assist the older person to obtain any materials/resources needed to pass on knowledge and skills through cultural activities such as painting, weaving, singing, dancing and storytelling.
5. Encourage intergenerational activities through community engagement e.g. visiting community centres and schools or encouraging younger people to visit the older person/people in their homes or residential facility. The older person may also wish to support a younger person with their school work, or mentor them in a particular area.
6. Support the older person to attend Native Title and Land Council meetings to share their cultural knowledge and make decisions for their land.
7. The older person may wish to become a volunteer and offer their skills in supporting other members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Transport/and/or administrative support may be required (see community strategy #1).
8. Support the older person to write down or record (audio or video) their stories and histories and share this with family and community members.

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Supports and Services

Do you feel the services you use are respectful and support your needs? (can prompt if needed e.g. your health/community/aged care services).

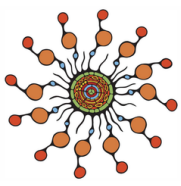
or

In residential care ask: Do you feel this place is respectful and supports your needs?

1. Adopt a family-centred approach to service provision. Support the person's family to continue to provide informal care where possible.
2. Support the person to maintain or improve their current level of independence through facilitating access to services and supports as required. This may involve attending exercise programs or social groups, accessing transport to go shopping, complete banking, attend appointments etc.
3. Support the person to remain in their own home. Provide support where needed e.g. personal care, cleaning and gardening services, meals on wheels, social support.
4. Enquire about the services the person uses - identify any problems and request feedback for improvements. Reach out to service providers to discuss problems and potential solutions.
5. support the person to navigate services such as My Aged Care, Centrelink, Medicare, Department of Housing. The older person may need assistance with reporting requirements or online activities.
5. Ensure staff have completed appropriate cultural awareness training to ensure the cultural safety of your service.
6. Have an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff member/liaison to identify improvement recommendations for the service.
7. If unable to meet the cultural needs of the person, assist them to transition to or additionally access a culturally appropriate service.
8. Form partnerships with other organisations in order to appropriately meet the needs of the older person.
9. Ensure cultural security in service access and service delivery at all times (employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, cultural training, follow local cultural protocols, build partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations).
10. If the older person is travelling from remote or regional areas for health or other appointments, coordinate transport, accommodation, meals and carer support as required.
11. In residential care, provide welcoming spaces for family and friends to spend time together with the older person. Facilitate outings with family and friends, and organise activities to enjoy with family and friends within your organisation. e.g. encourage school children to come in to sing, dance, listen to stories or participate in other activities.

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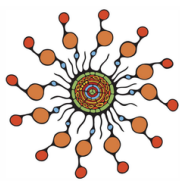
Safety and Security

Do you feel you have a safe place to live? (can prompt if needed e.g. in your home/aged care home/community).

1. Identify safety concerns and ensure timely response to urgent issues. Assist the older person to contact relevant organisations (e.g. Department of Housing) and advocate for their needs.
2. For health-related housing needs, a GP letter of support may be required.
3. Service providers can connect persons with culturally appropriate housing or advocacy services that meet their needs.
4. Assist the person to access services that enable them to resolve housing issues relating to rent troubles, overcrowding, eviction, safety or discrimination concerns.
5. Understand that the person's concerns may extend to the safety and security of family members. Determine if the older person would like counselling support.
6. Investigate (day or extended) respite options for the older person to support their wellbeing e.g. attending activities during the day at community organisations or arranging short term residential respite if experiencing housing or safety issues.
7. In the event that Elder abuse is suspected, contact a trusted family member or Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander support person to assist in providing appropriate action. It may be necessary to contact a culturally safe advocacy or counselling service to develop a support plan and assist in ensuring appropriate action is taken.
8. Provide support to access assistance with property maintenance. This may be related to general home maintenance such as cleaning, gardening or general repairs.
9. Provide support to ensure ongoing safety and independence at home. This may require a home assessment (including referral to an occupational therapist) to determine if additional aids or home modifications are required. For example, grab rails, security door, sensor lights etc.
10. Provide regular safety checks including tripping hazards (loose rugs, uneven flooring, overgrown gardens), leaking gas or water, broken light switches, broken windows etc.

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Spirituality

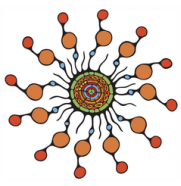
Do you feel safe and supported in your spiritual beliefs? (can prompt if needed e.g. yarnning about culture, going to church).

1. Assist the person in finding opportunities to engage in traditional practices. For example, opportunities to safely gather around a fire to share stories and spend time together, visiting or talking about Country/Islands, visiting sacred sites.
2. Provide culturally safe and supportive opportunities for the person to share traditional stories and teach others through yarnning, art, song, music and dance. This includes formal (e.g. at schools) and informal (e.g. with family) opportunities.
3. Support the person to engage in spiritual practices such as smoking ceremonies and traditional healers, and involve family and community as indicated by the person.
4. Assist the person in attending preferred religious events and services and spending time with their religious community.
5. Assist the person to engage in their preferred religious practices e.g. saying grace at meals, prayer/reflection times.
6. Link into relevant pastoral care services (visiting religious personnel).
7. Provide equipment required and opportunities to listen to and play music to enhance spiritual connection.
8. Provide materials to engage in art related activities that promote spiritual wellbeing. Support the person to attend art centres or community groups that provide opportunities for expression through art.
9. Assist the person to pay respects and participate in Sorry Business or attend to Sad News.
10. Support the older person to participate in cultural events and ceremonies where they can express their spirituality through song, dance, music, art and crafts, connecting with Country/Island and community.

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Be aware that some activities such as playing religious songs may bring back painful memories of mission life. This response will differ between people, and it is necessary to have a yarn with the older person to identify their preferred spiritual practices.

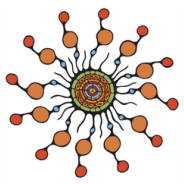


Future Planning

Do you feel you have things in place as you grow older? (e.g. your future health and care, funeral wishes, family looked after).

1. This is a sensitive topic for some older people who may find it difficult to talk about future plans, particularly if related to end of life needs (be aware that this is only one area of future planning). The older person may be more comfortable discussing issues relating to health, housing, future care or family needs.
2. Be guided by the wishes and priorities of the older person. Involve family and friends and use a gentle and non-intrusive approach.
3. Support the person in accessing the most up to date information and linking them to the right services e.g. advocacy services.
4. Liaise with culturally appropriate services when the older person has indicated a specific area requiring support. This could include:
 - Funeral services or assistance with developing a funeral plan.
 - Financial services for assistance (e.g. funeral fund, inheritance, debt/mortgage payments).
 - Legal services for assistance with wills, power of attorney, guardianship for dependent family members and appointing a public trustee to avoid family conflicts.
 - Medical support and end-of-life care services for assistance with location of palliative care, DNR decisions and returning to Country to die.
5. Assist the person and their loved ones in preparing emotionally for future events. Putting the person and their family in contact with culturally appropriate support groups or counsellors.
6. Support the person to connect with family members/loved ones to make peace or resolve conflicts where appropriate.
7. Respite options which may be a consideration for the older person to manage their ongoing health and care needs.
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Basic Needs

Do you feel you have enough money to get by? (can prompt if needed e.g. for food, bills, transport and medication).

1. Demonstrate sensitivity and empathy when raising issues of hardship with the person you are working with.
2. Determine the person's most pressing needs and refer to appropriate local community services or supports for food, financial support and clothing, such as Centrelink, Foodbank, Salvos.
3. Consider referring to a social worker to discuss support options.
4. If the person has debts, overdue bills, trouble making ends meet, legal troubles relating to finances, support the person to access financial counselling. This should be a free service involving information, support and advocacy. For example, explaining rights and options, advocating by phone or through letters of support.
5. Support the person to access emergency food relief e.g. Foodbank, OzHarvest.
6. If you suspect or if the person reports signs of Elder abuse, approach this with sensitivity and with the person's informed consent. Contact culturally appropriate support and advocacy services that understand Aboriginal culture and family dynamics e.g. Advocare. Determine the urgency of the matter, and consider following the Advocare Elder Abuse Protocol when consent is given.
7. The older person may need transport assistance and company/support to complete banking, buy food, pay bills, attend appointments or visit loved ones.
8. The older person may require support to secure basic white goods such as a washer, dryer or fridge; or support the older person to complete basic care needs (mobile laundry or laundromat services).
9. Explore the need for aids, equipment or subsidies that support the older person with their basic needs (e.g. continence pads, meals on wheels, shower chair etc.)

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____
