

CASE STUDY

FINANCIAL ABUSE OF OLDER PEOPLE

Case study seventeen: The boomerang child – using up a parent's assets

Source: Senior Rights Victoria

Mrs Ng lives alone in her own home, which has a separate unit. Her husband died a few years ago. She has four children. She does not speak English very well and her husband used to manage the finances. Since he died, she has relied on her children to pay the bills and manage money matters.

One of Mrs Ng's sons, Anh, moved into the unit some months ago after he separated from his wife, promising to be a support to his mother. A few weeks ago Anh's friend, Ray moved into the unit. Anh and Ray are both unemployed and have been spending their time drinking, going to the local TAB and having noisy parties. Mrs Ng has been paying all the utility bills, which have increased markedly since Anh's arrival. Anh begrudgingly helps with the shopping and other small chores when asked. He teases his mother about her forgetfulness and threatens to put her in a home.

Mrs Ng's friends have stopped visiting her. Anh has run up gambling debts on the credit card Mrs Ng gave him to make some purchases for the unit and to pay some bills. When Mrs Ng confronted her son about the debt, he was apologetic and agreed to make repayments. Mrs Ng agreed to keep the matter a secret between them and not involve other family members. A small amount was repaid. Some months later the gambling debt had grown. when Mrs Ng approached her son, he became abusive. Mrs Ng is frightened.

- Mrs Ng's daughter brought her to you for advice.
- What difficulties do you foresee?
- How would you address them?