

Respect My Wishes

Guide for Health Care Professionals - Caring for Older Adults:

It is important to understand that many people we care for have experienced trauma.

A sensitive trauma informed approach to providing health care creates safer spaces, seeks to prevent further traumatisation, promotes recovery and ensures health care needs are met.

Common triggers for people that have experienced sexual trauma:

- Being alone in a room with someone
- Being asked to remove clothing or lift clothing
- Being asked to lie down
- Being touched, especially in intimate areas

- Having an instrument inserted in their mouth or body parts
- Having a procedure that involves some restriction on parts of the body
- Being told to relax
- Having gel or cream applied
- Focusing on the body or being viewed without clothing.

Common trauma reactions in Older Adults:

- Emotional distress
- Flashbacks
- Avoidance or refusal of care
- Hyper and Hypo arousal
- Dissociation
- Concern about exposure to body fluids
- Intense gag reflex
- Hypervigilance
- Recoil/Stiffen or startle at touch
- Sudden strong emotional reaction that seems out of context
- Anxious/Irritable

