

# THE VULNERABLE ADULTS ACT

## Strengthening Our Ability To Protect

### WHAT IS THE VULNERABLE ADULTS ACT?

The Act complements existing care networks and laws that protect vulnerable adults (VAs) such as the Women's Charter and Mental Capacity Act. It:

1. Ensures the VA's best interests, when protecting him or her from harm;
2. Recognises that a VA with mental capacity can generally decide how to live and seek help;
3. Recognises that if the VA lacks mental capacity, his or her views and beliefs should be considered; and
4. Recognises that help given to the VA must, as far as possible, not restrict his or her rights or freedom.

### WHO IS A VA?

- a. A person aged 18 and older;
- b. Suffers from physical or mental infirmity, disability or incapacity; and
- c. Is incapable of protecting oneself from harm.



#### HOW THE COMMUNITY CAN PROTECT VAs

- Community and social service agencies can support families to care for and protect VAs



#### UNDER THE ACT

- VAs can be placed in appointed care facilities to ensure safety and welfare
- Appointed professionals in the community may apply for protection orders for VAs with mental capacity upon consent
- Professionals working with VAs will be protected from liability when performing duties in good faith



#### HOW FAMILY CAN PROTECT VAs

- Family members should take the first step to protect and seek help for VAs



#### UNDER THE ACT, FAMILY MEMBERS:

- Can apply for protection orders with the VA's consent (e.g. restrict access or restrain abuse)
- Can provide for the VA who has been placed in their care
- May be directed by the Court to attend mandatory programmes to ensure the safety of the VA



#### HOW THE STATE CAN PROTECT VAs

- The State will intervene as a last resort where family and community interventions are ineffective



#### UNDER THE ACT, THE STATE:

- Can enter homes of suspected VAs to assess well-being; obtain information for intervention; and relocate VAs to safe environments;
- Can apply for Court orders for alternative placement, counselling, de-cluttering and protection
- Can investigate offences under the Act such as breach of Court orders, non-compliance with State's directions and unlawful removal of VAs from care facilities
- Can press for heavier penalties for those charged with offences committed under the Penal Code, Protection from Harassment Act, and Women's Charter



If you know of a VA who needs protection, contact the **ComCare Hotline** at **1800-222-0000**.

Your identity will be kept anonymous.

Find out more: [www.msf.gov.sg/vulnerableadults](http://www.msf.gov.sg/vulnerableadults)