

Elder Abuse Prevention and Response e-Newsletter

Providing information for those who work with older people to prevent and respond to elder abuse

DV VIC ELDER ABUSE PROJECT UPDATE

Responding to the abuse of older women and men forums

The first of nine responding to the abuse of older women and men elder abuse forums was held on the 30th May at the Sandhurst Golf Club. The forum was hosted by the Outer South Peninsula Integrated Family Violence Partnership. The forum was attended by 94 participants from a broad range of agencies including Family Violence, Homelessness, Aged Care Assessment Services (ACAS), Home and Community Care (HACC), Victoria Police, Centrelink, Hospital social workers, Victims Assistance Program, Alcohol and Drug services, Indigenous services, Men's Behaviour Change Programs, Magistrates' Court registrars, community lawyers, State Trustees, Community Corrections, Child Protection, Commonwealth Carelink and Respite Care and Medicare Local.

The evaluations and feedback received from the participants were overwhelmingly positive and the forum identified challenges that will feed into the DV Vic final report of recommendations to the Department of Health.

Sergeant Joey Herrech from the Victoria Police Multicultural Liaison Unit performed the role of MC for the day. Joey definitely added a touch of lightness to the forum (given elder abuse can be a very heavy topic) and blended CALD issues relating to elder abuse throughout the day.

Kaz Mackay's facilitation of the panel was fabulous and she ensured many additional topics were discussed such as ageism, gender, elder abuse prevention, CALD, focusing on the client and using the empowerment model of response.

Overall the day was an outstanding success and DV Vic would like to acknowledge the Regional Integration Coordinator Linda Watson, Iresha Buthgamuwa, and their helpers from the Outer South Peninsula Integrated Family Violence Partnership for all their efforts in organising the day.

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Photos from the Outer South Peninsula Responding to the abuse of older women and men forum



MC Joey Herrech and facilitator
Kaz Mackay

Participants deep in discussion

The next forum will be held in Mildura on the 22nd August (see attachment) and will be hosted by the Mallee Region Integrated Family Violence Partnership Advisory Committee. Other dates for regional forums are below. More information on the regional forums will be presented in future e-newsletters.

Thursday August 22nd - Mallee sub-region, Mildura
Wednesday 4th September - Grampians
Monday 16th September - Northern Metro
Wednesday 9th October - Hume
Wednesday 30th October - Western Metro
Tuesday 12 November - Barwon South West, Warrnambool
Wednesday 27th November - Inner middle South Metro
Tuesday 3rd December - Barwon South West, Geelong

State wide on-line toolkit

DV Vic has been working in partnership with Senior Rights Victoria to develop an online State wide Elder Abuse toolkit for professionals working in the area of Elder Abuse. Information provided for the toolkit was provided by a small focus group of DV Vic member

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agencies. A big thankyou to those involved in the focus group. Stay tuned for news on the release of the toolkit.

National Elder Abuse Conference - Adelaide

Aged Rights Advocacy Service (ARAS) hosted the second national conference to observe World Elder Abuse Day on 17 & 18 June in Adelaide. The conference explored how to build a national approach to prevent elder abuse. Jeanine from DV Vic and Kaz Mackay from Eastern Community Legal Centre co-presented a session on "Practical Ideas for Building Regional Elder Abuse Prevention and Response Capacity" at the conference.

The presentation included practical strategies that can be implemented to build cross-sector capacity amongst agencies that come into contact with elder abuse. These initiatives include regional Responding to abuse of older persons forums, a web based case-conferencing facility, the benefits of coordinating a regional elder abuse network, developing regional elder abuse toolkits and the production of an elder abuse prevention DVD.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD)



Say 'NO' to Elder Abuse

June 15 is the annual day to raise awareness of elder abuse throughout the world. It is a day to say "NO" to elder abuse and let older people know they have the right to live without fear and abuse.

You may have noticed a purple hue over the city skyline as the Arts Centre Spire was lit

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up in purple to commemorate WEAAD. Senior Rights Victoria had a presence in Federation Square on the 14th June where they handed out free purple ribbons and had conversations with the public about elder abuse.

UPDATES OF OTHER ELDER ABUSE PROJECTS IN VICTORIA

Senior Rights Victoria was funded to run the referral pathways project from June 2012 to June 2013. The project aims were to identify and map referral pathways and to contribute to the development of a more coordinated response to elder abuse. The final report on this project will be available soon on the Seniors Rights Victoria website but here is an exclusive look at the findings.

Findings:

What works?

- Warm referrals (making personal contact with services to introduce a client to the service) are a successful way of combatting barriers and assist clients to navigate the complex service system.
- Care coordination - helping the client to navigate the service system, providing information and working together with other services - results in better outcomes for clients. This relies on having established relationships, protocols and rapport with a wide range of services.
- Home visits – particularly where there are language barriers
- Facilitating social connections - people who are socially active and have supports in the home are more likely to have a better qualitative outcome (even when the abuse situation does not change) with social isolation being a risk factor for abuse
- Networks, as an important place for information sharing, professional education and peer support

Service gaps

- Availability of capacity assessments, particularly in regional areas
- Different risk assessment processes, sometimes resulting in withdrawal of services from the home
- "Third party" inquiries,
- Services for older men,
- Identifying counsellors "expert" in elder abuse

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- Specific education for older people on adult children with mental illness or alcohol and drug problems

System gaps

- a lack of nationally consistent data collection
- a lack of networking infrastructure for ethnic communities working across regions to link with different sector based services.
- no means of communication between networks working on elder abuse procedures and protocols - work is often in isolation and at risk of being duplicated, with learning's or innovations difficult to share.
- a lack of centralised information on which networks exist, how active they are and key contacts. Cross-sector networking is not common.

Barriers

- Cost of services
- Eligibility criteria for services
- Waitlists
- Knowledge of local services available (for both individuals and for service providers)
- Inconsistent police responses
- barriers to accessing services specific to ethnic communities (which can include a lack of advance care planning, informal arrangements taking place outside "official" channels and a reliance on family)

Outcomes:

Referral pathways

- Inclusion of SRV in family violence referral pathways SMR region
- "standard" referral pathways for each type of abuse
- State-wide agency database of services "well placed" to respond to elder abuse

Interagency protocols:

- Yarra interagency protocols completed
- Discussion with DV Vic on protocols scheduled
- Draft protocols between SRV and Federation of Chinese Services

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Toolkit

- Contribution to the development of an online toolkit for service providers including common call topics by service providers, survey distribution through networks
- "Testing" process via contacts with networks

The Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV) project

The Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria farewellled Kate Ling as the elder abuse project worker in May this year, and Fiona York (formerly of Seniors Rights Victoria) has replaced her in the role. The first year of the project is nearing completion, and the final advisory groups for the Greek and Chinese speaking community have been held. Community Education kits for both communities are available at <http://eccv.org.au/community/news/community-education-resource-kits-on-elder-abuse-prevention/> and include case studies and key messages appropriate to those communities. Fifteen bilingual workers have been trained to deliver community education, using these kits, and sessions for older Greek and Chinese people have begun, including spots on Greek and Chinese radio. Bilingual brochures are nearing completion and will be available soon. Work with two new communities in the second year of the project is about to commence. For more information contact fyork@eccv.org.au

Norma's Project – Preventing the sexual assault of older women

Norma's Project was established in 2011 to help prevent the sexual assault of older women. They are gathering women's stories and collecting evidence about the factors that make older women vulnerable to sexual assault. This information will be used to develop prevention strategies.

They would like to talk to women who were 65 years or older when they experienced sexual assault. They would also like to talk with trusted family members because some women, like Norma, are no longer able to or prefer not to talk about their experience directly. They would also value the participation of service providers involved in the care and support of older women. More information on the project is attached.

If you would like to participate by filling in a survey or talking directly with the project workers in an interview, please contact:

Dr Catherine Barrett - Project Coordinator, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society, La Trobe University Phone: (03) 9479 8702

Email: c.barrett@latrobe.edu.au Web: normasproject.org.au Twitter: [@normasproject](https://twitter.com/normasproject)

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Senior Rights Care "*For Your Assets: Money, Ageing and Family*" booklet



Care For Your Assets: Money, Ageing and Family is a new booklet from Seniors Rights Victoria. It is now available free of charge and contains vital information to help older people plan and secure their future interests.

Seniors Rights Victoria is regularly contacted by older people who have sold their home or other assets and given the money to a family member who has agreed to provide them with ongoing care. Usually these arrangements work well for everyone involved, but when things go wrong it is often the older person who suffers the consequences and often these could have been avoided. The booklet covers topics such as making a family agreement, how your pension will be affected, taxation implications and where to go for more information and advice. It is available free from Seniors Rights Victoria: phone: (03) 9655 2129, email info@seniorsrights.org.au or visit www.seniorsrights.org.au

Department of Health Elder Abuse Prevention and Response Community Education Resources

The Department of Health Elder Abuse Prevention and Response community education resources have recently been updated. These include:

- Fact sheet: What is elder abuse?
- Fact sheet: Financial abuse
- Postcard

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- Wallet "help" card

All resources are available for download on the **Seniorsonline** website:

<http://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/Home.aspx>

The Financial abuse fact sheet can be downloaded from the **Protecting your rights** section, <http://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/Home/Healthy-and-Active-Ageing/Your-Rights/Protecting-your-assets.aspx>

The other resources can be downloaded from the **rights, rights respect trust** section: <http://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/Home/Healthy-and-Active-Ageing/Your-Rights/rights-respect-trust.aspx>

Free Legal Assistance for Seniors

The Seniors Rights Legal Clinics provide free legal advice to older people on issues relating to ageing including elder abuse, family arrangements and financial matters. The clinics can assist clients who are over 60 or identify as being an older person who have limited assets and income. There is no cost for the service as the lawyers provide their services on a pro bono basis.

The clinics are run by the Public Interest Law Clearing House in partnership with Seniors Rights Victoria. There are currently four clinics operating across metropolitan Melbourne located in Bundoora, Niddrie, Caulfield and Footscray. The clinics are co-located with existing health services such as hospitals and community health centres to ensure accessibility for clients. Each clinic runs fortnightly or monthly with three 45 minute appointments available each clinic day.

The clinics are able to assist clients with a range of legal issues including:

- Making arrangements to live with family
- Elder abuse
- Guardianship and administration
- Centrelink
- Credit and debt
- Maintenance in public housing
- Grandparenting issues

For further information regarding the legal clinics please call 8636 4408.