



The International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day “My World...Your World... Our World – Free of Elder Abuse”

Core Campaign Message

Purpose and Aspiration of Core Message

The key objective of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) is to raise awareness of elder abuse (which encompasses neglect and mal- or mistreatment) throughout the world. To do this effectively, and in a co-ordinated fashion for maximum international impact and solidarity, the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA), together with the international members of the WEAAD Steering Committee, are suggesting participants adopt a core message, and set of sub-messages. These develop the generic aim of ‘raising awareness’ and help enable a development of awareness into action.

The core message should be used in conjunction with the WEAAD theme:

“My World...Your World... Our World – Free of Elder Abuse”

The proffered core message will narrow down and focus the objective of raising awareness, whilst remaining sufficiently broad to encompass national priorities, diversity and culture without exclusion. It may be used in a variety of contexts to motivate and inspire; and it will facilitate the illustration of a compelling aspect of elder abuse common to all nations, and all victims. It will appeal to and have meaning for audiences of professionals, older people, and the general public.

The core message is easily adaptable for use in media communications, publications, presentations and interviews.

Core Message: **Never ignore elder abuse.**

Sub-messages:

- Most elder abuse is hidden.
- Ageism (age discrimination) is a major cause of elder abuse.
- Ageism and disempowerment lead to elder abuse being hidden.
- Empowering older persons is the most effective tool in the response to elder abuse.

Context of Core Message

The nature of abuse as a hidden problem is now universally accepted. INPEA, as coauthor of the report *Missing Voices* (2002) with the World Health Organization, states that “abuse, neglect and financial exploitation of elders are much more common than societies admit”. *Missing Voices* demonstrates clear links between elder abuse, and disempowerment and discrimination.

Awareness into Action

INPEA agrees with the statement in *Missing Voices* that, “Ultimately the challenge for us all is not only to listen to what has been said, but to believe and act upon it”. The following are paraphrased proposed strategies from the report. INPEA will support the development of action to bring about achievement of these strategies as a result of WEAAD:

- Empowerment of Elders:
 - o To enable older adults to act for themselves and on their own behalf. To enable older adults to exercise their rights and advocate for their own interests.
- Awareness:
 - o To ensure that the general population is aware that elder abuse happens and is a problem. Older adults need to be aware of the problem and of their rights, as well as available services and resources.
- Education:
 - o To educate people to perceive older people more favourably as positive contributors to society. To educate and train people, including professionals involved in the care of older people, to recognise and act on abuse or suspicions of abuse.
- Intergenerational Relationships:
 - o This is linked to awareness and education, and places an emphasis on the need to encourage closer and positive contact between generations and to foster positive attitudes among youth. The social isolation and neglect of older adults needs to be broken, through intergenerational relationships, among others.

Ryan Sampson
Age Concern England
WEAAD Steering Committee
INPEA

www.inpea.net/weaad.html