



Queensland Focus

Edition 29—July 2012

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Dr Gloria Gutman and Bridget Penhale

Reflections on the UnitingCare Community Elder Abuse National Conference

The Uniting Care Community Elder Abuse Prevention Unit (EAPU) hosted the first National Conference on elder abuse over two days on June 7th and 8th. The Conference was held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre at Southbank, Brisbane.

Keynote speakers were Dr. Gloria Gutman, current INPEA President of Simon Fraser University, Canada and Bridget Penhale, Reader in Mental Health at the University of East Anglia, U.K.

Dr. Gutman discussed the approaches used in Canada and the U.S.A. and the INPEA initiatives for promoting awareness of elder abuse as a serious societal issue that will increase with an ageing population.

Ms Penhale discussed the approaches and strategies currently being implemented in Europe and the U.K., drawing comparison between the different approaches and their strengths and weaknesses.

Speakers included researchers from across Australia and project officers providing innovative approaches to service delivery in specific communities. A panel debate on the first day, provided a glimpse into the complexities of addressing elder abuse from legal perspectives, generated great enthusiasm and discussion from the audience.

Members of the Seniors Round Table, representatives of prominent older persons organisations, were available to discuss the impact of issues raised on older people in the community.

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QUICK TIPS:

- Always get independent legal advice before signing any legal document. Sometimes the best intentions may not work out.
- Your enduring attorney can't make you do anything you don't want if you are still of sound mind.

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Reflections on the UnitingCare Community— Elder Abuse National Conference (cont)

Evaluations collected from the delegates showed that the conference was overwhelmingly declared to be informative and eye-opening. Delegates were eager to provide suggestions on what to include in future conferences. Two common themes that emerged were the focus on financial and psychological forms of abuse.

The Conference was preceded by a summit for elder abuse services from around Australia. This meeting enabled key stakeholders to share input towards forming a National elder abuse strategy.

The prime needs identified at this meeting included a greater demonstration of unity among State services and the need for the federal Government to provide leadership on elder abuse.

We would like to thank the UnitingCare Community executive for their encouragement and assistance in promoting the conference. We would also like to thank the finance and marketing departments for their invaluable support and hard work.

We would like to wish Aged Rights Advocacy Service of South Australia every success in hosting the 2013 National Elder Abuse Conference of Australia.



Delegates at the UCC Elder Abuse National Confer-

WEAAD 2012 Updates from Western Australia

(by Mary Kepert)

12 June:

A Symposium entitled “Preventing Elder Exploitation and Abuse” was held in the Department of Health theatre. The Symposium was chaired by Mr Peter Kennedy and Ms Bridget Penhale spoke about the safeguards present in the UK. Ms Penhale’s talk was followed by a Panel discussion exploring the topic ‘Responding to elder abuse’. About 90 people attended the event, including many community police officers.

13 June

Policy officers and practitioners from government and non-government organisations were invited to hear Ms Bridget Penhale, UK Reader in Mental Health, speak about international perspectives on elder abuse and prevention and intervention on Wednesday 13 June at the Department for Communities. The event was well attended. The major part of the discussion focussed on a situation where service providers found it difficult to access an elderly lady whose family was restricting access, despite fears for her welfare. This discussion highlighted the complexities of addressing elder exploitation and abuse.

14 June

Following a network meeting at the City of Melville, attendees were invited to join City of Melville staff for a well catered WEAAD morning tea. Attendees were

briefly told about the history of WEAAD. It was encouraging that the City of Melville supported the cause of raising awareness of WEAAD in the community and will also host a Seniors’ Forum on elder abuse on 13 August 2012.

In the evening, a ‘Hypothetical’ event co-badged by Advocare and the Australian Association of Gerontology was held at the Mercy Hospital in Mt Lawley. Professor Mike Clare and Dr Barbara Black-Blundell presented their 2011 research. A panel of 8 people prominent in various aspects of aged care were led by State Administrative Tribunal Senior Member, Ms Debbie Taylor. Debbie proposed a scenario involving an older person and panel members were asked to comment on managing the case from their professional perspectives.



Editorial:

(by Domnica Sparkes)

It's been quite an eventful year for us here at the EAPU. We'd like to thank everyone who attended the conference. It was lovely to meet so many enthusiastic people, with such passion for making this world a better place to live in. It was quite overwhelming to receive so many lovely comments and suggestions from people. I landed back on ground zero with quite a thud after the conference, although it feels great to be back to some semblance of normal.

As many of you may know we are a trainer down—Maya is on extended leave and we are all really looking forward to having her back. Rosey Marwick is heading Out West on August 20th and will be visiting Charleville, Cunnamulla and Roma, and hopefully Mitchell and Surat. If you are in that area and would like to catch up with her don't hesitate to drop her a line (eapu@uccommunity.org.au). She will be visiting Eidsvold, Mundubbera, Hervey Bay and Gympie in September. She'd love to hear from you.



We are now planning our next big event so keep an eye on our website as we put more information on any activities or resources up. If you have any ideas or suggestions on what resources would be helpful to you or your group please let us know so that we can try to include this in our list. I can't promise we'll get it done but we'll definitely raise it as a need.

Thank you to people who have recently called our help-line and explained some of the gaps they have noticed in services to older people and their families who are at risk of elder abuse.

Some examples of these are accommodation issues (especially around cost of rent and moving), vexatious reporting of attorneys to the Office of the Adult Guardian, major seminars, forums and conferences on elder abuse for community groups. Keep these issues and ideas coming as they are important and if we don't hear about them then no action can be taken.

Til next time

March against elder abuse—Townsville

(By Sonya Mitchel)

On June 15, 2012, around 150 Townsville seniors joined with the international community to mark World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. The seniors marched through the City streets to the Townsville City Council. They weren't alone either, the 1RAR band led the procession, with a sensational performance. The sound of their drums and brass instruments drew the City's attention to the senior marchers. Defence members from 3CER, intermittently lined the route, all of whom were wearing a purple ribbon (the international colour for elder abuse) to support the seniors. QLD Police provided escort vehicles and collaborated with the Department of Transport and Main Roads to stop traffic as the seniors marched along. Onlookers waved and cheered and cars tooted their horns to show their approval.

The marchers were met at the Townsville City Council forecourt by the fabulous sound of the Kirwan State High School Band. Mayor Jenny Hill formally received the marchers and made a declaration about the value and contribution of seniors in our Community. In her speech, Cr Hill stated, that "the elimination of elder abuse is everyone's responsibility"

Half way around the world, President Barack Obama, in his World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Proclamation echoed Cr Hill's sentiment and called on "all Americans to observe this day by learning the signs of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and by raising awareness about this public health issue."

Examples of other global events to mark the day included: a full day elder abuse forum in London; a photo ex-

hibition in Kyrgyzstan; a public debate in Serbia; programs featuring elder abuse on television in Peru and on community radio in Thailand.

The Townsville community came together on 15 June 2012 to act as one against elder abuse, but we can't stop there. Elder abuse is insidious and pervasive and it requires everyone to continue to act to eliminate it. We can do this on an individual level by showing respect to seniors, even just through simple common courtesies. We can also be on the alert for signs that may indicate that a senior is being harmed by someone they trust. A recent inability to pay bills, unexplained changes in behaviour or recognizing that a neighbour is socially isolated are all indicators of risk factors for elder abuse. If you are concerned that someone you know might be experiencing elder abuse please call the EAPU hotline or a Seniors Legal and Support Service near you to find out what help is available.



Seniors March for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Elder abuse in the media



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Elder abuse in the media



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Upcoming Events

2012 Queensland Violence Against Women Conference

7—9 August 2012
Brisbane, Queensland
W: www.dvrc.org.au

Elder Abuse Training and Community Education

20—24 August 2012
Charleville and surrounding regions, Queensland
E: eapu@uccommunity.org.au
P: 1300 651 192

Hot Lunch at the Dam—Seniors Week

22 August 2012
Mount Morgan Dam, Queensland
E: andrea.devries@uccommunity.org.au
P: 07 4930 7324

Elder Abuse Training and Community Education

17—20 September 2012
Eidsvold and surrounding regions, Queensland
E: eapu@uccommunity.org.au
P: 1300 651 192

45th Australian Association of Gerontology Conference:

Aging: Challenging the Boundaries

20-23 November 2012
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, Brisbane, Queensland
W: <http://www.aagconference.com/>

Aged Rights Advocacy Service National Elder Abuse Conference 2013

The Australian Elder Abuse Agenda: A multidisciplinary approach

17 & 18 June 2013
Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide
E: aras@agedrights.asn.au

Important Date

August—Seniors Week Queensland

1 October—United Nations International Day of Older Persons

Disclaimer:

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