World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
Getting the Word Out

Informing people about your activity/event is one of the most important things you can do to ensure positive community engagement. When individuals are engaged, they are more likely to attend activities/events and are more likely to spread the word to others who may be interested in participating. There are numerous methods to get information out to others. Spread the word by securing calendar listings, involving the media, through public service announcements, and/or publications. Using various approaches to publicize will increase your chances of making your activities successful.

Community Calendars
An event calendar provides a great way to share, organize, and communicate information about WEAAD events. The benefits of an event calendar are many:

► event communication
► saves time
► easy to use
► usually a free service

An online calendar can be accessed from anything that can connect to the internet. The benefit of an online calendar is it can be used to email or send text messages as reminders. Try to get calendar listings in your community’s weekly publication(s) and online. A community calendar is more than just a place to post activities your organization is hosting; it’s a starting point to improving your community’s communication. And if engaging community members is one of your goals, then your community calendars can play an important role to keep everyone informed.

Media
It is vital to involve the media when planning any WEAAD activities. The media can play an important role to raise awareness, to reach a wider audience, to encourage others to get involved, and to promote your activities. Here are some creative ways to get the media involved:

► Begin by developing elder abuse key messages you can share with media outlets. [See Key Messages below]

► Invite journalists to participate in the activity/event. Target them as soon as the activity/event is organized.

DID YOU KNOW?
If you have organized events with others, it is a good idea to get together and evaluate the success of the initiative. Explore and analyze any issues to improve on what is done in future events. Be sure to thank everyone involved and don’t forget to write thank you letters to every organization who supplied you with items for your event.
► Ensure journalists have photos to accompany their story. Get photographers on board, set up a photo opportunity for journalists or upload event photos onto a site that journalists can access. Make your images as high quality as possible for publication and find out what photo format your target prefers.

► Encourage local radio and TV stations to attend and cover activities. Local news programs may be particularly interested if you have local celebrities on board, local medical professionals, or case studies available for interviews.

► Issue a press release announcing your event/activity. Let journalists know what will be happening and who is involved. [See Media Advisory template]

► Do something newsworthy, announce new information or recruit local celebrities to come along to get the media’s attention.

► Ask a high profile individual to be an honorary chairperson or host for your activity/event.

► Have someone at your activity/event who is willing to share a story about elder abuse. Consider interviewing a service provider who has direct experience with victims. Putting a human face on the issue will increase your chances of coverage. [Refer to Personal Reflections section]

► Look for opportunities to get publicity prior to the activity/event, especially on the radio.

► Focus on reporters and journalists who write on topics related to your event. These people will be more likely to get excited about your activity/event and spread the word.

► Find a media sponsor for your activity/event.

**Public Service Announcements**

Public service announcement (PSA) campaigns are widely used to raise awareness on issues that impact the community as a whole. They are intended to modify public attitudes. Radio or television PSAs can deliver brief prevention messages via mainstream media, multicultural media or social media. Multicultural media can be particularly useful for reaching people who have limited fluency in English. In this context, PSAs provide timely messages about what you can do to protect yourself, your loved ones and your family from elder abuse.

**Letters and Publications**

You may want to consider writing an article for a professional newsletter, magazine, local newspaper, or scholarly journal describing some aspect of elder abuse. This can help increase awareness among your colleagues and those in other disciplines. Plan to submit these to be used for the June edition. Before submitting a letter or article:

► Take time to write your article or letter. Think it through. Make your point in the first paragraph and use the body of the letter to support your point.

► Check your spelling and grammar. Adhere to word limits and other conditions.

► Contact the publication. Verify the contact person, confirm contact information, and the format.

► Send your letters a few times per year. An editor will be more likely to publish it if they don’t see your name too often.
Declarations and proclamations are formal statements by municipal, provincial or federal governments or a national or international organization recognizing and identifying the significance of an issue. It’s a good idea to have a proclamation or declaration at your event or ceremony. Declarations and proclamations can be a good opportunity to engage with local media. [See Proclamation template]

DID YOU KNOW?

If you are planning to take pictures, distribute material, or publish personal stories and post them on social media, on a website, or in a publication, it is essential to obtain signed photography release forms that give you permission to publish the people in your photos. At your event, have release forms available for people to sign to protect yourself from possible legal action. [See Photo Release template]
Key Messages -- World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is held every year on June 15 to bring greater recognition to the mistreatment of older adults and highlight the need for appropriate action.

Elder Abuse in Alberta

1. As of June 2015, Alberta is home to approximately 500,000 people over the age of 65.
2. Every day around 104 Albertans turn 65.
3. This is one of the fastest growing population groups in Canada.
4. It is projected that Alberta’s senior population will reach approximately one million by 2032.
5. Studies indicate that between four and eight per cent of older adults in Canada are likely to experience abuse in one or more forms, which can jeopardize the health, well-being and independence of older adults.
6. Elder abuse is complex and needs a complex response to best address it.
7. Elder abuse is within the family violence umbrella, which includes several identified forms of abuse across one’s lifetime.
8. The Government of Alberta defines elder abuse as any action or inaction by self or others that jeopardizes the health or well-being of any older adult.
9. Elder Abuse is divided into six categories.
   - Financial – any misuse of an older adult’s funds or property through fraud, trickery, theft or force.
   - Emotional – any action or statement that causes emotional suffering, low self-esteem or feelings of worthlessness.
   - Physical – The use of physical force causing discomfort which may or may not result in bodily injury, physical pain, or impairment.
   - Sexual – any unwanted sexual contact.
   - Medication – the intentional or unintentional misuse of medication and prescriptions.
   - Neglect – the intentional (active) or unintentional (passive) failure to provide for the basic needs of someone.
10. Financial and emotional abuse are the most common forms of elder abuse in Alberta. It is common for multiple types of abuse to occur at the same time.
11. Elder abuse occurs when someone in a relationship with an older adult such as a family member, friend or caregiver uses abusive behaviour.
12. Elder abuse is a pattern of behaviour using power and control over an older adult which causes harm to the older adult.
13. Elder abuse can happen to anyone; it happens to men and women, the rich and the poor, across all cultures, and in urban and rural settings.
14. Prevention starts with education, visit [www.seniors.alberta.ca](http://www.seniors.alberta.ca) for more information.