

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Ideas to Raise Awareness

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) provides a valuable opportunity to join together with various sectors, such as seniors' groups, community organizations, government and non-government bodies, to plan and work together on awareness-raising activities. It is essential that all of Alberta's communities, including Aboriginal and immigrant communities, are engaged to ensure awareness-raising tools and resources reflect and resonate with diverse populations.

Many types of events can make a difference to this issue. They can help build relationships, strengthen partnerships and bring recognition to various local and regional efforts to address elder abuse. For this reason, publicize your planned activities. Others may be able to help you with the event/activity, and avoid duplicating your efforts. Here are some ideas:

In the Community

Activity	Suggestions
Wear purple	Encourage people to wear purple clothing or a purple ribbon to honour WEAAD. Take a picture and post it to Twitter and Instagram, write about it on Facebook, or submit it to your local newspaper.
Plan a walk	Promote a "Raising Awareness Walk" and invite community members to participate. Use a registration form to help keep a record of who attended. [See Event Registration template]
Plant a tree	Have the mayor/councillor plant a tree to mark WEAAD and invite the community to attend the event. Hand out information about elder abuse at the tree planting and don't forget to involve the media.
Create posters	Use the themes of a current WEAAD campaign in your community or come up with something original. Keep your messaging consistent to capture people's attention and make sure to include your company or organization's name, the words "World Elder Abuse Awareness Day" and the date "June 15." If you are promoting an event, include the event title, time and location. [See Poster]
Present a WEAAD award	Organize an awards ceremony for June 15 and make it a tradition every year. Nominate people who have worked to raise awareness of elder abuse, who have bridged the gap between older adults and other generations, or who have worked with ethnic communities on issues affecting older adults. Provide them with an award for the great work they are doing. [See Certificate of Recognition template]
Host a lecture, debate, presentation, or training	Invite community members to learn about elder abuse through various approaches. How about a luncheon with a guest speaker? Speakers may include community leaders, or people from faith organizations, financial institutions or ethnic and multicultural groups. Highlight the different forms of elder abuse, how to prevent it and how to respond when someone is impacted by the issue.

Activity	Suggestions
Submit an article or letter to the Editor	Identify individuals who ensure others are treated with respect and dignity. Ask them to write a letter detailing the importance of respecting and caring for older adults. Or include scenarios of mistreatment towards older adults or an incident where the rights of an older adult were not protected. These examples can be used as powerful statements that help to illustrate elder abuse can happen to anyone and may help your community better understand and identify when someone is being abused. [Refer to Letters and Publications in Getting the Word Out section]
Collect stories	Collecting stories is a great way to incorporate different cultures and ages. Interview older adults to see how the world has changed over their life and what they have learned. You can also interview older adults, service providers and community members about how perceptions, beliefs and attitudes of older adults have changed over the years and how these attitudes and beliefs may impact the likelihood of abuse occurring in later life. Keep in mind that these kinds of questions can trigger very negative emotions. It is recommended that only individuals with experience in handling disclosures undertake this line of questioning. Interviewing people who were born outside of Canada or who grew up in a different cultural community can bring understanding to how older adults are, or are not, respected, cared about and protected in their culture and in the past. Document the stories (make sure you ask for permission) and use them when giving presentations to help illustrate your points around elder abuse. You can also publish the stories in your local newspaper, post them to a website, or create an oral record for your local library, museum, or archive.
Partner with community businesses	Businesses can make perfect partners for WEAAD activities. Choose businesses that share the same values as you in order to obtain the “best fit” for your initiative. Remember that businesses must feel they will benefit from your relationship so it is up to you to sell them on your idea. Talk to your local yoga studio about offering free classes or approach a bank and encourage staff to wear purple on June 15th and offer a coffee break for their customers.
Create awareness at work	Create an awareness display, bring in purple balloons and purple food, invite colleagues to wear purple the week of WEAAD, put up posters, or make purple ribbons people can wear on June 15th.
Purple lighting	Light up your community in purple! Use purple lighting in schools, shopping centres, or any building to bring attention to the issue of elder abuse.
Documentary night	Develop discussion guides for the movie that you choose and host a discussion after the screening in which you offer community members ways to engage with your cause.

Activity	Suggestions
PowerPoint presentation	Create a presentation or check out the financial abuse PowerPoint available on the Alberta Seniors website and deliver it to different groups in your community. Include information about elder abuse, isolation, ageism and issues of aging. If you want to obtain participant feedback, provide a short survey or evaluation to find out if your presentation made a difference. [See Pre and Post-event Evaluation templates]
Videos	Produce a video that brings light to the issue of elder abuse or that encourages everyone to treat older adults with respect. Inform people about the benefit of having a community where everyone is respected and safe from abuse. Use music as an effective way to capture your audience. You can also use the Break the Silence videos developed by the Government of Alberta and the Alberta Elder Abuse Awareness Network to educate your audience.

Schools and Youth

Activity	Suggestions
Organize a flash mob	Recruit individuals from local children's groups, youth groups, drama groups or choirs and have them rehearse a song and show up to a selected location wearing purple to perform it. Record the event and post it on YouTube.
Pledge to get involved	Students, parents, teachers and staff members can make a pledge to join in on WEAAD activities, to treat older adults with respect, to volunteer at a care facility, or to help with any elder abuse prevention initiatives throughout the year. Have a ceremony where participants make their pledge in front of the entire school or have participants make pledges before their families. [See Pledge Form template]
Barbeque lunch	Bring together students and teachers to enjoy a barbecue lunch. Distribute information about elder abuse and ask people questions about their level of awareness on the issue. Involve everyone in the discussions including the cooks and servers. [Refer to questions in Personal Reflections section]
Badge project	Get a group of people together to make badges/buttons with creative key messages about WEAAD. Distribute and wear the badges the week prior to June 15th and watch how they create a great conversation piece to engage individuals.
T-shirt design	Gather a group of students to design and create T-shirts with statements, questions, and facts about elder abuse. Wear the T-shirts on June 15th and involve local media to publicize the various creations.
Create a play	Produce a play which depicts the different forms of elder abuse or one that motivates the prevention of elder abuse. Invite the general public to watch it or record it and show it in and around your community.
Make cup-holders	Have participants design hot beverage cup-holders which contain pictures and information about elder abuse. Set up a station in the cafeteria and hand out the cup-holders with some hot chocolate and coffee.

Activity	Suggestions
Use social media	Start a Facebook page about WEAAD or sign up on Twitter and tweet information about WEAAD events taking place. Challenge other schools in your community to do the same.
Create story books, bookmarks, puzzle, and flyers	Designing and distributing items to give away is a great way for individuals to have something that will remind them of WEAAD all year round. Display your designs in high-traffic areas, distribute items at any WEAAD events, or add them to a website for everyone to enjoy! Help endorse the importance of this day.
Design a logo	Have students create various pictures depicting the issue of elder abuse and then vote on which one to use as a WEAAD logo. Place the chosen logo on all promotional material or post the logo throughout the school to create awareness.
Art show/exhibit	Students can raise awareness by creating artwork. Consider recruiting several students to create artwork and then host a “gallery night” in a school gym where the art is displayed. Be sure to have resources and a contact sheet available at the event.
Table in a high-traffic area	Get permission to set up an information table and have display posters with brochures available to hand out. Feature a specific type of abuse and include material that explains that type of abuse and what people can do about it. Be sure to have a sign-up sheet to get names and e-mail addresses from interested individuals. [Refer to www.seniors.alberta.ca for printable resources]
Create an awareness display	Invite community members and schools to participate in developing posters and displaying them in your local community.

Intergenerational

Activity	Suggestions
Intergenerational Day	Bring youth, families and older adults together to participate in collaborative activities or do a presentation to educate people about the importance of intergenerational interactions.
Poster and photo contest	Organize a contest and display the posters and photographs in schools or in your local mall. Have a seniors’ group select the winner.
Purple yarn bomb	Wrap benches, tree trunks, fences or lamp posts in purple yarn to give your community an unexpected WEAAD flare! To make it more fun, have older adults and youth work on this project together.
Host a “Fun Day”	Encourage intergenerational involvement by enjoying a local park with older adults, youth/children and families. Plan a contest, three-legged race, karaoke, and other fun events. If weather is an issue, reserve a local gym or community center and order sandwiches.
Organize a service project	Unite groups (i.e. 55+ clubs, employees at a company, children’s sports team) to volunteer together in some way. This could include mowing lawns for low-income older adults or spending time with those who live in care facilities. Have the project last one day, a week or a month.
Morning tea for WEAAD	Invite a guest speaker to a morning tea gathering to speak about elder abuse. This is a perfect opportunity to make this an intergenerational event.