

Raising Awareness in Victoria's Culturally Diverse Communities: Collaborative Approach to Education in the Greek Community

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Greek Community Profile

- ▶ There are 49,991 Greece-born Greeks residing in Victoria with majority of people residing in metropolitan Melbourne (2011 Census)
- ▶ Post war migrants with primary level education
- ▶ Many are illiterate in their native language
- ▶ Lacked the opportunity for English language tuition
- ▶ Priority was to work and make a better life for themselves and their family
- ▶ Low level of English proficiency
- ▶ Lack knowledge of systems and access to these

Statistics and client profile

- ▶ 2014-2015 financial year there were 66 reported cases of family violence
- ▶ 26 of those were related to elder abuse
- ▶ Last 8 months 30 reported cases, mainly self referrals
- ▶ Clients are aged 70+ years of age
- ▶ Older person is incapable of stopping the abuse fear of punishment, increase violence or abandonment
- ▶ Feel shame and guilt
- ▶ Problem has arisen from language difficulties on part of the parent, reliant on children

Case study

Case study

An 84 year old woman was living with her grandson. She raised the grandson due to absent father and her daughter was in care due to mental illness. The grandson was dealing drugs from the family home, was physically abusive bashing her daily and taking her money. The intervention orders were not effective with the grandson often returning to the house and the police were unable to remove him from the home. For her own safety she was admitted to a nursing home, having to leave her friends, church and local aged services. Solicitors were able to remove the grandson from the house to sell the house for the bond. The woman died within three years of entering the facility.

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Bilingual community educator attended Greek planned activity group to present community education session to elderly participants. The educator used the Greek language resources developed from the project which included narratives on different scenarios and behaviours that constitute abuse. In that instance one participant realised that his communication to his partner and carer was considered verbal abuse. It was not his intention to be abusive, it was considered normal in his family. He modified his behaviour to be more respectful.

Collaborative approach

- ▶ Community engagement and maintaining contact
- ▶ Tailored approach to addressing needs of CALD communities
- ▶ Community education using bilingual educators and expertise of relevant service organisations such as SRV
- ▶ Partnership with ethnic media, print and radio, to deliver messages
- ▶ Use of Greek language materials
- ▶ Development of training resources for community educators to support work in the community
- ▶ Consultation and referral pathways