Community Conversations to Prevent Elder Abuse

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Tasmanian demographics

COTA TAS (2013)
“Facing the Future" A baseline profile of Older Tasmanians
Data on risk factors

The number of people by age group needing assistance with core activities who live alone in each Tasmanian LGA is included in Table 52 (Appendix B – Data tables).

Figure 58 Persons who live alone and need assistance with core activities (% of persons needing assistance), 2011

Data source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2011
Data on Social contact

Number of people spoken to yesterday, older Tasmanians (60+ years)

% of Tasmanians aged 60+ years

- none at all
- fewer than 5
- 5 to 9
- 10 or more

North, North West, South, Tasmania

Source: DHHS Tasmanian Population Health Survey, 2009

Notes with transparent shading indicate RSE > 25% and must be used with caution.
Rates of elder abuse

• It is estimated to be about 3-5% of the older population (65+)

• Roughly 2,000-4000 older Tasmanian based on ABS Census 2011 of 80,708 over 65 (16.3% of general population)

• Under reporting

• The projections are that in 2030 one in four Tasmanians will be over the age of 65 with 12% 75+
Policy Context
Tasmanian Elder Abuse Helpline
1800 441 169
9am-4.00pm
Mon – Fri
Not on Public Holidays
Peer Education

• Peers talking to groups with a focus on **prevention**.
• Varied experiences and backgrounds
• Some are mediators, some with financial backgrounds
• Encourages others to be active partners
Peer Education

• Peer education is the teaching or sharing of information, values and behaviour in educating others who may share similar social backgrounds or life experiences.
Why does this work?

• Using educator skills

• Offering a safe place to learn

• Pushing for change

• Reflecting on self
Broader approach aimed at prevention

- Dow and Joosten (2012) highlight the need to approach elder abuse at a societal level as well as individual case intervention and action.
- This program aims to build resilience by using peer delivery to build knowledge, skills and awareness.
Invisibility...

Prof Wendy Lacey (2014) speaks of “a lack of community awareness, ageism and the frequent invisibility of our elderly mean that elder abuse remains a hidden problem within our society”
Pilot project

- Pilot project began with research
- Recruitment of suitable peer educators
- Development and training in conjunction with The Guardianship Board and the Public Trustee
- Strong focus on;
  - raising awareness
  - Prevention, protection of assets
  - Warning signs
Other policy areas

• Supported in other policy areas such as work with Department of Premier and Cabinet on Age Friendly Communities (AFC)
• Working closely with local government areas
• WHO domains for AFC’s feature respect, inclusion, involvement and civic participation of older people
Peer delivery also supports six of the domains of Age friendly communities by allowing opportunities for older people to be involved in a program to benefit the wider community.
Results

- Audience members would take action based on the information provided
  - 68% said they would make sure they were fully aware of their financial situation
  - 67% said they would consider what they could do to protect their finances
  - 63% said they would take steps to organise their legal and financial affairs
Key to Success

- Working with communities, local settings, established networks
- Utilising Volunteers
- Supportive and friendly environments
- Providing an Accessible service response
Ability to work in partnership, to build our communities to respect and protect older persons.
References


