

Relationships Australia Tasmania calls for greater awareness of elder abuse

Today, on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, Relationships Australia Tasmania is encouraging Tasmanians to recognise the signs of elder abuse and help create safer, more connected and respectful communities for older people.

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, around one in six older Australians experienced elder abuse in the past year, with family members responsible for around half of reported cases.

Rising living costs and Tasmania's housing shortage are placing significant pressure on many families. Adult children may return to live with ageing parents or become financially dependent on them. While these arrangements are often entered into with goodwill, they can sometimes lead to conflict, pressure, a loss of independence and, in some cases, abuse.

Signs of elder abuse can vary, but may include injuries such as bruises, fractures or cuts, unexplained weight loss, poor personal hygiene, the sudden disappearance of personal belongings, social isolation, unusual bank withdrawals, pressure to sell property or unexpected changes to wills or power of attorney arrangements.

CEO of Relationships Australia Tasmania, Dr Michael Kelly, said elder abuse can be difficult to identify and even harder to talk about, particularly when it involves someone we know, trust or care about.

"Older Tasmanians deserve to feel safe, respected and valued in their relationships and communities," Dr Kelly said.

"World Elder Abuse Awareness Day provides an opportunity to start conversations, increase awareness of the signs of abuse and let people know that support is available"

"Increasing awareness of elder abuse is important. When we recognise the signs, we can respond and help protect the dignity, wellbeing and independence of older people. A connected and respectful Tasmania is one where older people can live safely, maintain meaningful relationships and feel a genuine sense of belonging."

Relationships Australia Tasmania's Elder Relationship Service supports older people and their families who are experiencing relationship difficulties and concerns relating to ageing and wellbeing through counselling and mediation.

Special note: Dr Michael Kelly, CEO of Relationships Australia Tasmania, is available for interview throughout World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

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About Relationships Australia Tasmania

RA Tas is a Tasmanian not-for-profit whose vision is to create a connected and respectful Tasmania. We believe in the power of connection, and support Tasmanians to build individual resilience, respectful relationships and connection to communities.

Alongside general counselling RA Tas offers support to Tasmanians through a range of specialist teams in Hobart, Launceston and Devonport

More information about the services and support we offer can be found on our website www.tas.relationships.com.au.