

DISCUSSION RESOURCE

together
making
change

PROJECT OF
5TH NATIONAL ELDER
ABUSE CONFERENCE

HOSTED BY SENIORS
RIGHTS SERVICE



DIVERSITY; COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

JOHN BISWAS





ABOUT THIS PROJECT

In February 2018, Seniors Rights Service hosted the 5th National Elder Abuse Conference, which brought together more than 500 delegates from a broad range of backgrounds. The conference culminated in an announcement by the Commonwealth Attorney-General, Hon Christian Porter MP, that a “National Plan” would be developed to ensure the protection of older people in Australian society.

To further the conversations generated by the conference, Seniors Rights Service engaged Ellen Fanning to conduct a series of interviews with experts who attended the conference. These videos, along with a discussion sheet for each video, are freely available to community members, professionals and students of all sectors, to enable engagement with the content using suggested discussion questions and to follow up with further reading.

IMPORTANT! READ THIS BEFORE HOLDING A DISCUSSION GROUP

Many people will share and benefit from participating in study and discussion on the topics.

Due to the sensitive nature of the topics, however, group leaders should ensure they are prepared to support individuals to find qualified assistance in a timely manner, should a topic generate personal concerns or issues for individuals.

As a minimum, group leaders should have available information sheets and phone numbers from the relevant seniors' legal rights service and/or elder abuse prevention service in your state or territory (on page 4 and current as of 2018).

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Mr Biswas discusses the activities of the Hunter Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Elder Abuse Prevention Network (NSW). He explains how seniors from CALD backgrounds can find it difficult to access supports and services. Mr Biswas describes how the network worked with seniors of CALD backgrounds to develop elder abuse awareness information sessions to “begin conversations” within communities. He highlights how the project resulted in a greater number of calls to the NSW Elder Abuse Prevention Helpline relating to CALD seniors.

FOCUS AREA

Elder abuse and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities

RELATED TOPICS

Elder abuse prevention, elder abuse intervention, cultural views of ageing, cultural views of aged care, CALD communities, community education

AUDIENCES

Community members, aged-care workers, health workers, researchers, students, advocates, policy officers, general practitioners, bi-lingual support workers, bi-lingual educators

MATERIALS FOR FURTHER READING

Biswas, J. (2018), Tackling The Issue Of Elder Abuse From Within CALD Communities, Presentation at the 5th National Elder Abuse Conference, Sydney, accessed from <http://togethertomakingchange.org.au/presentations/>

Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils (FECCA) Submission #292, Australian Law Reform Commission Elder Abuse Inquiry, accessed from www.alrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/subs/292_fecca_submission_-_elder_abuse_discussion_paper.pdf

SUGGESTED AGENCIES

Northern Settlement Services Ltd
<https://nssservices.com.au/>



JOHN BISWAS

SECTOR SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, NORTHERN SETTLEMENT SERVICES LTD

BIOGRAPHY

John Probhudan Biswas is currently the Sector Support and Development Officer, Multicultural Access Project for the Hunter area with the Northern Settlement Services Ltd and convenor of the Hunter CALD Elder Abuse Prevention Network (NSW). Since 2016, Mr Biswas has also chaired the Hunter CALD Disability Engagement Reference Group. Mr Biswas has more than a decade of work experience with diverse ethnic and cultural communities in the UK and Australia. He has a background in advocacy, university chaplaincy and grassroots student and community organising.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What does Mr Biswas describe as being the vulnerabilities and needs of older people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds?

Mr Biswas describes a “spectrum of ways” in which older people of CALD background have difficulty accessing services and supports. One barrier is language. He describes how, migrating in the 1960s or early '70s, they may have had little formal education and had to pick up English as best they could in functional ways (to function in society). As they enter older age, therefore, they may not have the vocabulary or knowledge to navigate the complexity of Australia's aged-care system. Mr Biswas also says older people of CALD backgrounds may refer to a model of ageing and aged care based on their country of origin at the time they migrated. Their country of origin may have moved on from these concepts, but they may still adhere to these cultural norms from many years ago. Their children, in contrast, may adhere to the cultural norms of “mainstream” Australia. This, Mr Biswas says, can lead to complications. In many complex ways, all these factors can result in older people of CALD backgrounds not having the supports that could help reduce the risk of elder abuse.

How did the Hunter CALD Elder Abuse Prevention Network go about raising the issue of elder abuse in CALD communities?

They started by drawing together key agencies – Ethnic Communities' Councils, Seniors Rights Service, the NSW Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit – and together they formed a working group to connect to CALD communities and begin working on materials to make them relevant to those communities. They found that, rather than focusing on elder abuse specifically, focusing on rights of senior citizens was more effective in engaging seniors. They started conversations about positive ageing, then talked about when someone's rights were not respected, and explained how that was elder abuse. Mr Biswas says that sometimes they could highlight that certain things were clearly against the law and legal intervention was an option. At other times, such as with psychological abuse, they began conversations about how this was everyone's business, and that we all must face up to what respecting the rights of older people meant in terms of our behaviour. Mr Biswas quotes another conference speaker (Professor Rebecca Morgan, Stetson University, USA) and agrees with the view that it is “a long-term socio-cultural change that we are effecting”.

What was the practical design of the model? Who delivered the content in local communities?

The model involved running a broad nine-month campaign to raise awareness that these sessions would be taking place. The working group arranged to train bi-lingual workers, educators, managers of CALD service providers, the CEO from Hunter Multicultural Communities Inc. and ethnic community leaders. The idea was to train the trainers, so the bilingual workers, aged-care coordinators and ethnic community leaders could take the conversation into their communities. A report on the project will be available.



STATE/TERRITORY	AGENCY CONTACT	CONTACT
AUSTRALIA-WIDE	Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)	1800 700 600 Connects you with aged-care advocacy services in your state or territory
NEW SOUTH WALES	Seniors Rights Service	1800 424 079
	NSW Elder Abuse Helpline	1800 628 221
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY	Older Persons Abuse Prevention Referral and Information Line (APRIL)	(02) 6205 3535
	A.C.T. Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service (ADACAS)	02 6242 5060
NORTHERN TERRITORY	Elder Abuse Information Line	1800 037 072
	Seniors and Disability Rights Service of Darwin Community Legal Service	1800 812 953
QUEENSLAND	Elder Abuse Prevention Unit	1300 651 192
	Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia (ADA Australia)	1800 818 338
	Caxton Legal Centre	(07) 3214 6333
SOUTH AUSTRALIA	Aged Rights Advocacy Service	(08) 8232 5377 (Adelaide)
	Alliance for the Prevention of Elder Abuse	1800 700 600 (rural)
	Legal Services Commission of South Australia	1300 366 424 (08) 8111 5555
TASMANIA	Tasmanian Elder Abuse Helpline	1800 441 169
	Advocacy Tasmania Inc. (ATI)	(03) 6224 2240
	Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania	1300 366 611 (03) 6236 3800
VICTORIA	Seniors Rights, Victoria	1300 368 821
	Elder Rights Advocacy (ERA)	(03) 9602 3066 1800 700 600 (rural)
WESTERN AUSTRALIA	Advocare Inc.	1300 724 679 (Perth) 1800 655 566 (rural)
	Older Persons Rights Service, Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre	(08) 9440 1663 (Mirrabooka) (08) 9301 4413 (Joondalup)

DISCLAIMER

This is information only, not legal advice. If you have a legal problem, call our service directly or see your lawyer. The views expressed in the video are the views of the individual making them, not those of Seniors Rights Service Inc.