



S.T.AGE

SOCIO-DRAMA TACKLING AGEISM, PREVENTING ABUSE



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S.T.AGE PROJECT: WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

OUTPUT 4 'LESSONS TO BE LEARNED – A PLATFORM FOR SHARING KNOWLEDGE' IS THE FINAL OUTPUT OF S.T.AGE: IT BRINGS TOGETHER THE EXPERIENCES, KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING GAINED THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT:

Drama is an effective medium to use in elder abuse prevention training

One of the core lessons we learnt is that socio-drama is a highly appropriate vehicle for opening up dialogue around a taboo topic such as elder abuse in order to address the individual, personal, familial, professional, systemic, social and cultural constituents of it. In the 'Respect to Prevent' training and education programme, socio-drama is used as a medium for facilitating professional and personal reflection on common behaviors and attitudes, especially within care settings, with the aim of preventing elder abuse. It Sociodramais intrinsically connected with social issues and social action Using socio-drama allows participants to explore a scenario from the perspective of those involved; put themselves 'in the shoes' of people of another age; develop empathic understanding and look at how to change behaviour and attitudes to support older people realise their human rights, thus preventing elder abuse.

Generational intelligence provides a useful theoretical framework for elder abuse prevention training approaches

As demonstrated in S.T.Age project's outputs, using a generational intelligence approach as the theoretical foundation to underpin elder abuse prevention education programmes, integrated within a socio-drama approach, has the potential to revolutionise current approaches to elder abuse prevention. Its focus on treating intergenerational empathy as an imperative, moves the focus of attention on the positive potential of being able to put ourselves 'in the shoes' of people of other ages to avoid negative intergenerational 'othering'. It enables positive interactions between generations and can reduce causal factors associated with elder abuse. This perspective and understanding allows staff and organisations view their roles as advancing residents' social identity, enhancing reciprocal relationships and challenge ageist assumptions. It allows for increased self-awareness,

self-care, and satisfaction on a personal and professional level. It is envisaged that the model will lay the groundwork for further research and educational training models.

Theory and practice of human rights are not the same thing

The human rights implications of elder abuse are now broadly recognised. To protect older people from poor treatment and practices, and empower older people to speak up, countries acknowledge social policy must move from a needs-based approach to a rights-based one. Increasingly, human rights are the foundation for practices including elder abuse prevention. A human rights approach to elder abuse allows for any act that denies a person any human right e.g. freedom, privacy, safety and dignity to be captured and addressed.

However, the implementation of a human rights based approach requires legislation but also awareness of human rights. At a society level, the lack of understanding of the relationship between human rights and elder abuse and, at an individual level, not knowing what human rights are and how they work in day to day life are barriers to using human rights to improve the situation of older people at risk of abuse.

KEY RECCOMENDATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

- Government campaign against ageism – the stereotyping of and discrimination against people because they are old results in prejudicial and stigmatising attitudes and behaviour that belittle, patronise and exclude people because of their age. This denies older people their autonomy and dignity and creates barriers to exercising their human rights on an equal basis. These negative social attitudes towards older adults are acknowledged as a permissive factor for elder abuse, so government campaigns to challenge ageist attitudes are needed to ensure older people's human rights are protected.
- Continuing human rights and elder abuse education and training for e care staff and management should be compulsory in all residential care settings
- Human rights and elder abuse education and training programmes should utilise ocio-drama and other creative training methods to assist professional carers gain an understanding of what it is like to walk in their clients' shoes, and for them and their clients/ residents to know what human rights look like in action in day to day life.
- Elder abuse and human rights training should be systematic part of nursing and social care students' curriculum.
- Human rights education and training for older people, particularly those in residential settings is essential if older people are to have the knowledge and be able to activate their human rights to safeguard their well-being.
- All nursing homes and other services for older people should have a compulsory elder abuse prevention policy. Such a policy would promote respect and dignity of older persons through creating a framework for the protection of older persons and for good practices in care.
- The elder abuse prevention policies should have a monitoring mechanism for regular assessment of human rights implementation, safety and risks.

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