

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

June 15, 2020

Elder Abuse is a big concern – not just in BC but in the whole world. Enough that in 2006 The United Nations General Assembly designated June 15th of every year as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

In its declaration, The United Nations stated that this important day “***represents the one day in the year when the whole world voices its opposition to the abuse and suffering inflicted on some of our older generations.***”

Your local Community Response Network, South Granville Fairview, along with its host agency, South Granville Seniors Centre, honour this day each year with a free community event to raise awareness. However, this year, due to the COVID-19 outbreak we are keeping people safe by *not* holding a public gathering.

However, that does not change the fact that “Older adults in our communities continue to find themselves in vulnerable situations and still experiencing various forms of abuse and neglect,” reports Sherry Baker, ED of the BC Association of Community Response Networks.

Social isolation has been identified as the leading contributing factor to an increase in risk. With this unprecedented time of social isolation and stresses in our world right now with COVID-19, abuse incidents are up, transition house and shelter usage are up, crisis line calls are up, domestic violence is up. Approximately 10 percent of all senior adults will experience some form of physical, emotional, financial or sexual abuse. It is also believed that abuse of seniors is significantly *under-reported*. Tragically many will suffer in silence, in fear or in shame.

Let’s raise awareness in our community about this public health and human rights issue.

The Community Response Network can host Educational workshops and seminars focused on keeping seniors safe in their communities. They are all free to attend, can be virtual and topics range from knowledge about abuse to the impacts of aging on driving. If you’d like more information about these, email Douglas Dunn at executivedirector@southgranvilleseniors.ca.

Additionally, if you or someone you know is faced with an abusive situation – help is available! With *complete confidentiality* you can.....

Call toll free: 1.800.563.0808

Email: VictimLinkBC@bc211.ca

Website: VictimLinkBC

24 hours day/7 days week.

Multilingual Service available in 150 languages

Or call the Vancouver Coastal Health at 604-736-2033 or toll free at 1-866-884-0888.

The international symbol for **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day** is the Iris with its beautiful purple colour. People are urged to wear purple on June 15 as a way of acknowledging their support to shine a light on this significant issue. **At this time, more than ever, we all need to help keep our elders and community members safe and treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.**

