

TRAINING VOLUNTEERS IN SLOVENIA

THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR VIOLENCE AGAINST OLDER PEOPLE,
whether it is caused by ageism or unintentional mistreatment or
anything else!

WHY?

- In a rapidly evolving society, the increase in the population of older persons and the ups and downs of society, different forms of violence are emerging.
- At ZDUS, we have identified a need among older people who are alone or lonely and living at home. We encountered sad stories of abuse of older people.
- The programme was developed by our retired professionals in collaboration with university staff and the Ministry of health.
- Many volunteers have experienced violence against older persons.
- We started 2004.

TRAINING

Every year 2500 to 2800 volunteers undergo this training.

Education is provided at three levels.

1. After the mandatory annual theme has been defined, the first training is for our **adult educators**. They acquire knowledge directly from lecturers from the university or other organisations - younger people of course (1 day, 10-20 people depending on the topic).
2. The second phase is the training of all **volunteer coordinators** from all over the country (243) - this takes 2 days.
3. At last there are trainings **for all volunteers** in the field. These trainings are provided by our adult educators.

Volunteer's tasks according to the protocol:

1. Continue to visit the older people and maintain a trusting relationship
2. Informing the victim of his/her rights and possible forms of assistance – empowerment!
3. Encouraging the victim to be more active in seeking help
4. Helping to establish a support network
5. Involving a social coordinator - i.e. helping a volunteer in the association
6. Reporting obligations of the volunteer - the victim is at such risk that immediate protection is needed. Reporting - to the social services or the police, regardless of whether the victim agrees. Notify the victim.
7. Accompanying the older person in procedures to deal with violence - if the victim so wishes
8. If necessary, participation of the volunteer/coordinator in the interdisciplinary team of the social work centre.

TRAINING in small group – solving a real case from the field!



Photo credit Irena Vidmar

Like many things, violence is a never-ending story.

- Our programme is geared towards empowering victims and other older people on the one hand, and awareness-raising on the other.
- In the future we need to keep an eye on new forms of violence - related to new technologies for example.
- Empowering both older people and abusers is a long process. It requires ongoing training ad empowering both.

It is important to raise community awareness of violence.

Don't be silent!

We ourselves need to break down prejudices and challenge stigma.

Last but not least, empowered older people will have to share their knowledge with their grandchildren and make them aware.