

THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE AGED
inspiring active aging.

**Association of South African Social
Work Education Institutions (ASASWEI)**
International Social Work Conference

National Initiative to Support Older
Persons Traumatized by Elder Abuse

Carmel Murugen
The Association for the Aged (Tafta)

September 2023: Durban, South Africa



tafta YOU ARE
**NOT
ALONE**

**CALL OUR TOLL FREE
NATIONAL ELDER ABUSE
HELPLINE NOW!**

tafta
**NATIONAL
ELDER ABUSE
HELPLINE**

0800 10 11 10
MAKE AN ANONYMOUS CALL TO THIS TOLL FREE NUMBER

WWW.TAFTA.ORG.ZA

The logo for Tafta, featuring the word "tafta" in a lowercase, red, sans-serif font, centered within a white circle. This circle is surrounded by a thick, multi-colored border consisting of concentric rings in shades of pink, orange, and red.

The *South African Older Persons Act 13 of 2006*, defines abuse of an older person in Sect 30 (2) as; “any conduct or lack of appropriate action occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, that causes harm or distress or is likely to cause harm or distress to an older person.”

Definition of Elder Abuse

A 2017 review of 52 studies in 28 countries from diverse regions estimated that

15.7% (1 in 6 persons) aged 60 and over, globally, have experienced some form of abuse.'

Yon Y et al (2017)

Approximately **'1 in 10 persons over the age of 65 have experienced some level of abuse.'**

University of Cape Town News – 20 July 2023

Only 4% of elder abuse cases are reported

WHO

Prevalence of Elder Abuse

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- Ageing Population
- Multicultural population
 - Widespread poverty
- High Unemployment rates
 - HIV / Aids epidemic

Unique categories of elder abuse

- Loss of respect for elders
 - Systemic abuse
- Particular violent forms of abuse
- Allegations of witchcraft (Kotze 2018)

Context in Developing Countries

Purpose of the National Helpline

- Provides a platform for family members, concerned citizens or older persons to report abuse and open pathways for the elder to receive help, support and treatment regarding the abuse.
- Create a channel for the collation and analysis of statistics on this human rights problem which will help to inform policy formulation and programme development to promote the safety, dignity and integrity of older persons.

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Feasibility Study

Fact-finding

Engagement with key role-players in the Helpline space

Technical Aspects

Toll-free number – levelled the playing fields

Golden Number

ICASA - easy to remember – **0800 10 11 10**

True log system

POPIA compliant

Client centred

Conducted a focus group with older persons – what would be most important?

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Operational Model

Launched – 23rd November 2023



Main aim is to provide a confidential telephone counselling service that offers:

crises management,
short term counselling
referrals to appropriate resources

Provides services to callers from all nine provinces in South Africa, **at no cost** to them **7 days** a week between **7am to 5pm**.

Provides an uncomplicated platform for reporting and addressing abuse which safeguards older persons from further trauma, cognitive decline, physical injury and financial stress caused by the abuse.

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Strengths of the Initiative

1. Creates a powerful space for older people who feel unsafe, afraid, disrespected and traumatized to express their concerns and reach out for help.
2. Many lived in silence with abuse as they lacked knowledge on how to report it or the means to travel to service points, especially in rural areas.

The Helpline brings the services to the door of the victim through a network of service providers.



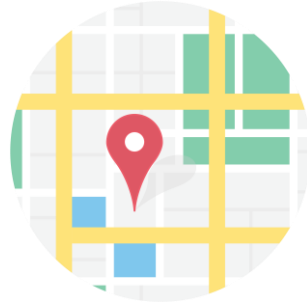
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Challenges



Difficulty accessing contact details



Geo - Map



Technical glitches



Language Barriers

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Stakeholder Partnerships

- SA Management of Elder Abuse Protocol
- Linked to appropriate service providers
- Utilised informal networks i.e. traditional healers, community indunas
- Strengthen partnership

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Key learnings from implementing the programme

- Disrespect for older person's right to self-determination
- Collaboration with state and civil society organisations
- Limited resources – vehicles, human resources

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Conclusion

ELDER ABUSE IS A GLOBAL HEALTH CARE CONCERN.

Comprehensive strategy needed to combat elder abuse and develop resilience in older persons.

The National Toll-free Helpline for Elder Abuse provides:

- A resource for older persons to report abuse
- Linkages to trained counsellors to support, counsel and inform elders traumatized by abuse.
- Linkages to safe houses or residential care centres where necessary.
- A platform for collating vital statistics to inform programme & policy development to address elder abuse at a macro level.

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WITH ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO: (*REFERENCES*)

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