

Always respected. Never abused.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Week 15 – 22 June

Elder abuse is a serious issue in New Zealand and around the world. Age Concern New Zealand receives more than 2,000 referrals of elder abuse every year with the most common types being financial, psychological and physical.

Elder Abuse is when an older person suffers harm or injury at the hands of someone with whom they have a relationship of trust, someone who they may also be relying upon for their care.

In the Waikato there were 150 cases of proven elder abuse in 2015 with another 52 people asking for help.

A typical case Age Concern worked on involved an older man, we'll call him Frank, who lived in his own home with a small sleep-out at the back. Frank was doing nicely until his adult son, his wife and children returned from overseas and moved in with him without any prior agreement or discussion. Over the next few months the family needed more space and so Frank was moved out to live in the sleep-out. There was power but no hot water, heating or cooking facilities. The family put in a single electric plate and a kettle and told Frank that was all he needed at his age. Frank was still paying all the bills for the main house and was finding it very hard to look after himself.

When Age Concern became involved Frank was living in squalor, was undernourished, dehydrated and, as a result, was beginning to lose his mental capacity.

This is just one example of the many types of elder abuse older people are living with. Age Concern offers free, confidential, specialist Elder Abuse Prevention Services as well as providing education about elder abuse for those working with older people.

We believe that by working together we can create a society where we can all grow old with dignity and respect.

Age Concern Hamilton is part of the Age Concern New Zealand network of 34 councils throughout New Zealand. You can find them based in the Celebrating Age Centre, 30 Victoria Street, Hamilton.