

June Newsletter

Caring for our Seniors

Special Dates

- **June 1**– Vol. mtg. 3:30— Zoom/In-person
- **June 15** WEAAD - World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
- **Oct. 2** - 5K— Shenandoah Co. Park

Current Needs

- Mouthwash
- Swiffer Wet Jet pads and liquid
- 13 gal trash bags

Most of us have an older person in our lives who we love a lot. Whether it is a parent or grandparent, great aunt or uncle, patient or client, or elderly neighbor, that person holds a special place in our hearts. Or maybe we ourselves are considered seniors. In the world of domestic and sexual violence, we recognize June 15 as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD), a time to bring awareness to the problem of elder abuse.



We know that seniors experience the same forms of abuse that the general population does, but there are additional elements present for elder members given their reliance on others for daily care. In addition to physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse, seniors may also experience neglect, abandonment, or self-neglect.

While research on elder abuse is relatively new and the topic is understudied, most experts agree that 1 in 10 Americans aged 60+ have experienced elder abuse, and yet only 1 in 24 cases of abuse are reported to authorities.

So why is this type of abuse so underreported? The reasons are many and stem from the complexity of elder abuse: Lots of seniors live a relatively insulated life, with few opportunities to reach out to others. Even if they do have the opportunity, often folks of this older generation believe in keeping family matters private, more so than younger folks do; so to admit to others that they are suffering is very difficult. We know that most elder abuse outside of nursing homes comes from caretakers, many of whom are family members or trusted loved ones; seniors frequently feel protective of their caretakers and are reluctant to get them in trouble. And then there are those who do not have the verbal or cognitive skills to reach out for help at all.

We can all agree that this most precious segment of our population needs and deserves extra protection, so what can we do to help?

- ◇ **Call or visit your elderly friends as often as possible to establish a trusting relationship. Don't be afraid to open a conversation about concerns you may have for their well-being.**
- ◇ **Take care of the senior's caregiver. Often this caretaking falls to family members who are already juggling their own lives, and may be struggling to provide good care to the senior. Offer to sit with the senior, cook dinner for the caregiver, encourage them to join a caregivers' support group, etc.**
- ◇ **Watch for unexplained bruises or injuries, changes in emotional state, unclean environment, noticeable changes in their financial situation, etc.**
- ◇ **Talk with the senior, their family members, or caregivers, and report unresolved concerns to your local DSS Adult Protective Services department.**

Let's all work together to keep our most treasured community members safe.

Survivor Story

“Melody”



“Melody” is a 63 year old woman living in the Seattle area, who sought services from a non-profit organization which provides comprehensive services for older adults. Melody experienced emotional abuse from her husband for decades; she recognized it as such and knew that she needed to leave the situation, and had, in fact, left him several times in past years. Unfortunately, she had to return to him each time as she could not afford to live on her own. Her sole income from Social Security of \$750 per month was not enough to allow her to live independently.

During the periods when Melody left her husband she was able to stay with her daughter sometimes, but the daughter’s own personal problems kept her from being able to be supportive of her mother; so Melody ended up living in shelters and her car in between returns to her husband’s home.

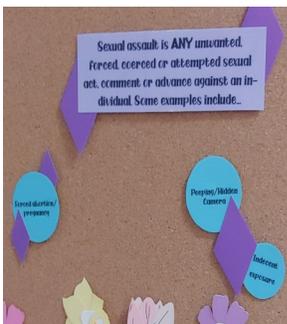
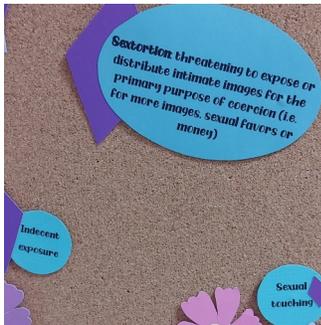
Due to multiple disabilities, Melody found it difficult to find shelters that could accommodate her needs; she also found it difficult to relate to most of the other women in the shelters, due to the age discrepancy and the fact that many shelter residents were in substance abuse recovery.

Melody was finally able to reach out for help and was connected to a case manager who specializes in assisting seniors in need. The case manager helped Melody apply for transitional and subsidized housing, and after a year of waiting, she was finally able to obtain her own affordable housing. She is making friends and finding support from other tenants in her building, and is able to focus on her own health needs.

The barriers that Melody faced in Seattle are no different than those found in our own community, which is why we are fortunate to partner with other local agencies to help our clients find their own independence.

Around the Shelter

Our May bulletin board



This month we recognize the inspiration behind our bulletin boards, Sally Bowers, one of our shelter supervisors. But it is also with sadness that we say goodbye to her, as she left Response in May to pursue another employment opportunity. Sally began at Response in 2017 as a volunteer, and was hired soon after as a shelter supervisor. She worked a combination of weekends and weekdays assisting our in-shelter clients, answering the hotline, doing a phenomenal job at organizing our supplies and donations, as well as creating these original and informative boards. We will miss Sally’s energy and innovation here at Response!



Recap of Events

Spring Fashion Show

What a wonderful time we all had at our 20th Annual Spring Fashion Show! It was good timing as Covid restrictions were just lifting and folks were ready to get out and have some fun! Our models were all good sports and knew how to play to the crowd, all while looking awesome in outfits of their choosing. Our guests enjoyed light refreshments, door prizes, raffle baskets and lots of laughter throughout the afternoon. Many thanks to all who helped to organize, promote, set up, and assist at the show—we really do have the best community of supporters!



Upcoming Events

Senior Bingo



One of our underserved populations here at Response is the 60+ community. This population is more difficult to reach for several reasons: a lot of our outreach efforts focus on social media/electronic means which are not always available to older folks, our older generation may not be as likely to recognize abuse or reach out when experiencing abuse, and many senior folks are isolated and controlled to the extent that they are unable to get help. In an effort to reach out to the elder community, during June Response is going to take a specialized bingo game to area long-term care facilities in an effort to educate seniors about different forms of abuse and the services available in our community. Staff will conduct the games at those facilities that are allowing visitors, and will supply games and prizes to those that are not. We hope that folks will learn more about DV and our services as they have fun with B-I-N-G-O!

Fall 5k

Plans are in the making for Response's first ever 5k run and we are excited! Details are still being worked out, but it looks like it will be held at Shenandoah Co. Park on **Sat., Oct 2**. So break out those running shoes and stay tuned to Facebook, Instagram and future newsletters for final details!

