

Earning Trust in Senior Care by Reducing Elder Abuse

By Keeley Keenehan

Elder abuse is a significant concern for anyone who genuinely cares about the well-being of others, particularly aging seniors. Unfortunately, elder abuse is much more prevalent than most people are currently aware of.

Home Helpers is an organization that recognizes the need to make this fact known among the general public and in effort to raise awareness has recently partnered with the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA).

According to Susan Susskind, Manager of Community Relations for Home Helpers, "Only about 1 in 5 cases of abuse are reported due to the fact that elders are often afraid to report, or they have dementia and do not even realize abuse is happening so they can't report." Elders also have a fear of reporting, as they desire not to be removed from their current surroundings and wish to age in place.

Due to the disconcerting fact that elder abuse is most often perpetrated by someone close to the victim there exists a lack of its reporting. Susskind states, "Only about 1% of abuse is committed by someone unknown to the victim. Home Helpers feels that it is our responsibility to educate our staff, and the public as well, to stop the abuse." By holding trainings at regional meetings and their national conference as well as providing regularly scheduled "webinars" on the topic, Home Helpers makes an earnest effort to educate others about this ongoing serious issue.

Recently aligned with INPEA, Home Helpers has subsequently been able to provide their offices with tools such as press releases, banners, and power point presentations that help to educate the communities they serve. Home Helpers will also be featured in an upcoming video project presented by INPEA at the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatric conference. The video will show what Home Helpers is doing to raise awareness and is due to premier July 5, 2009 in Paris, France.

When asked how Home Helpers' recent partnership with INPEA has benefited both parties, Susskind said, "Together we can reach more people and communities and help to raise awareness of this abuse that is effecting our elder population. By working together, we can promote education and training of professionals and paraprofessionals in identification, treatment and prevention of elder abuse and advocate on behalf of abused and neglected elders.

To find out more about Home Helpers, visit www.HomeHelpers.CC.

To find out more about INPEA, visit www.inpea.net/home.html.

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