

"If I'm lucky I'll get old"

One interpretation of being Respectful: Genuine listening, acknowledgement, validation and accepting difference.

"To be seventy years young is sometimes far more cheerful and hopeful than to be forty years old." Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.

**"Grow old with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life,
For which the first was made."** Robert Browning

Respect for Seniors

- will recognise and value the lived experience, the story and the identity of the older person
- will value and honour the chosen values of the older person
- will value and acknowledge the competence and contribution of lived life (not just present performance)
- will recognise and honour the diminishing number of intimate relationships of the older person
- will be alert to the shifts in power and autonomy that happen through physical and mental incapacity
- will be patient and participatory in negotiated proxy decision making with older persons
- and will honour the vulnerable shifts that happen between independence interdependence and dependence for older persons.



Respect for Seniors Sunday 14 June 2009

Our Vision is to promote greater respect and quality of life for seniors through a *National Respect for Seniors Campaign* as a way of preventing elder abuse.

This service will launch the Campaign with a Purple Ribbon Day "positive celebration of ageing" as an acknowledgement of World Elder Abuse Day 15 June.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it's the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead



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**“One rude word to an old man is stronger than
stabbing him with a knife”**

**“People talk down to us-call us ‘sweetie’ or ‘dearie’ –
tell us what to do”**

Community Conversations – A respectful experience which encourages discussion and acceptance of different perspectives.

“Respect is better than food and drink” (“Missing
Voices” WHO, 2002)

As long as 10 years ago a panel of Ku-ring-gai officers raised concerns about domestic violence within the local community. St Ives uniting church took an interest and found a significant area of concern related to the abuse of seniors and took up the challenge and obtained funding from Uniting Care Ageing to identify how a *Respect for Seniors* project could contribute to the positive prevention of Elder Abuse.

Research has identified **Ageism** as a major factor in the mistreatment of older adults. However, negative attitudes toward older people can be partly addressed by highlighting older adults’ individual, collective, and lifelong contributions to our society.

Our *Respect for Seniors* campaign aims to help prevent domestic or family violence through promoting a more positive and respectful attitude towards older people. Initially this will be through “*Community Conversations*” based on the topic of mutual respect.

We can begin today by having a respectful conversation about these questions:

What does respect mean to you?

How do you show respect for someone?

I feel respected by others when they....

Why do I respect seniors? How do I show that respect?

Where is respect in this story?

Gwen’s husband died two years ago. Her family were worried about her living alone and wanted to care for her. She appreciated their concern and felt obliged to agree. So Gwen sold her house and now lives with her daughter Susan, and her son-in-law Chris in another suburb. Susan and Chris are very kind to Gwen and take care of all the household tasks, washing, ironing, shopping and cooking even though Gwen would like to feel useful by contributing in some way in the home. Gwen rarely sees her friends or goes out much because they are a couple of suburbs away and it is difficult to travel.