

# Engaging Faith Communities

## on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day



Dear Faith Leaders and Faith Communities,

**World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD)** is coming up on **June 15**.

The “day” is often observed throughout the month of June.

Elder abuse is not often discussed in congregations or communities, and that makes it hard to talk about. As a result, many older adults never get the help they need. WEAAD provides a great opportunity to break the silence, raise awareness, provide resources, and promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons.

We all deserve to lead happy and healthy lives free from abuse as we age, yet older people are mistreated more often than we think. According to the [U.S. Department of Justice](#), only 1 in every 20 cases of physical elder abuse is ever reported. And only 1 in 44 cases of financial abuse is reported. That means there are a whole lot of older adults in our congregations and communities who need services and support.

As a faith leader, you are already a trusted source of support, resilience, and connection for many in your community. You can play a vital role in helping to keep older adults who are experiencing abuse safer. In fact, these resources were compiled just for faith leaders. You can also [learn more about WEAAD here](#).

NCEA and Safe Havens invite you to join us in raising awareness and promoting a better understanding of elder abuse and how it affects not just individuals, but entire families, congregations and communities. It is important that older adults who are experiencing abuse hear from their faith communities that abuse of any kind is unacceptable. If they know that you don't condone abuse, they may be more likely to speak up and reach out for help.

In this short resource, you will find some additional information about WEAAD as well as ways that your community can participate in WEAAD.

Thank you for your support of older adults in your congregation and community.

**NCEA and Safe Havens**



## About World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD)

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is a call-to-action for individuals, congregations, and communities to raise awareness about the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older members of our communities. The International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations launched the first ever WEAAD on June 15, 2006 in an effort to unite communities around the world in raising awareness about elder abuse. WEAAD is in support of the United Nations' International Plan of Action acknowledging the significance of elder abuse as a public health and human rights issue.

Everyone deserves to feel safe, but there are a startling number of older adults who experience or are exposed to elder abuse. WEAAD is a great opportunity to enhance understanding about elder abuse and encourage communities to promote justice for all of us as we age.

## What Can We, as Clergy, Lay Leaders, and Faith Communities Do?

We can all take action! Learning more, speaking out, and sharing information will encourage an improved understanding about risk factors and helpful interventions. And remember, elder abuse is happening all year long—not just around WEAAD!

### Suggestions for Individual and Community Action

#### Learn More

- [Learn more about elder abuse](#), including possible red flags.
- Learn where to refer someone who could be experiencing abuse. Programs such as [Adult Protective Services \(APS\)](#) and the [Long-Term Care Ombudsman](#) for residents of facilities are here to help. You may also use a [Zip Code Search for Community Resources](#).

#### Talk About Elder Abuse and Ageism

- Break the silence and talk about elder abuse—with friends, colleagues, family, and within your congregation! The more people know about this public health and human rights issue, the more likely people will speak up.
- Host an elder abuse awareness training for your congregation. Invite local experts to describe their work and services that are available.
- [Talk about ageism](#) (negative attitudes and discrimination against older adults)! [Discover campaigns](#) to get a conversation going on social media!
- Shape a children's lesson around [respectful treatment of all people](#), regardless of their age. Help people understand that belonging to a community means that we all watch out for and care for each other.

#### Share World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Resources

- Include an article about WEAAD in your faith community's newsletters, blogs, website, and social media:
  - [NCEA WEAAD Tools & Tips](#)
  - [Safe Havens Sample Content](#)
- Print WEAAD posters and post them throughout your building or on your social media.
  - [Safe Havens WEAAD Flyer](#)
  - [NCEA WEAAD Social Media Tools](#)

#### Elder Abuse Resources

**National Center  
on Elder Abuse**  
855-500-3537  
[ncea.usc.edu](http://ncea.usc.edu)

**National Clearinghouse  
on Abuse in Later Life**  
608-255-0539  
[www.ncall.us](http://www.ncall.us)

**Safe Havens Interfaith  
Partnership Against Domestic  
Violence and Elder Abuse**  
[info@interfaithpartners.org](mailto:info@interfaithpartners.org)  
[www.interfaithpartners.org](http://www.interfaithpartners.org)

**NCEA**  
National Center on Elder Abuse

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