



Guidelines

How to use the Training Handbook & Online Course



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About the Project

Elderly people can often be exposed to neglect, physical, sexual, psychological, institutional, and financial abuse. All these forms of abuse can be perpetrated by spouse/partner, adult children, grandchildren, other relatives or care takers. Therefore, it is of great importance to directly and effectively communicate with eldercare centres as well as seniors themselves about identifying and supporting older victims of abuse.

The Erasmus+ TISOVA project was launched in 2017 to address this issue. TISOVA (or Training to Identify and Support Older Victims of Abuse) is intended to establish associated and strategic partnerships with senior centres from each of the partner countries (Estonia, Austria, Greece and Finland) in order to counteract any form of violence against elderly people, especially women. The project is aimed at disseminating adequate and appropriate information to identify elderly abuse, providing training and online education programs for professionals, volunteers and seniors at elderly care centers to provide assistance to elderly victims of abuse.

Within the framework of the project, a research was conducted to learn more about experiences of female elderly victims of abuse. Based on the findings we have developed a **Training Handbook** that targets professionals working in care homes with older people, volunteers working with older people, and older people themselves. The curriculum is designed for teachers and trainers to deliver a training on the prevention of, and response to, violence and abuse against older persons, or an intervention targeting the elderly people. Later the handbook was turned into a fully independent **Online Course**, which provides not only theoretical material on how to recognize older female victims but also gives practical knowledge and advice on supporting & empowering them.

You can see the stages of the project and its outputs as illustrated below. This structure shows how the outputs of the project were developed on the basis of each other:



In these guidelines you will learn how to use [Training Handbook](#) and [Online Course](#) or integrate one into another.

If you want to learn more about the project, it's objectives and partner consortium, please visit our [website](#).

What is elder abuse?

Violence against older persons is a global issue that is usually overlooked. Data on the prevalence of violence against the elderly is insufficient and underreported, as the issue is commonly perceived as a taboo. Existing prevalence studies on violence against older persons range globally between 1% and 35%. According to the World Health Organization, around 1 in 6 people who are 60 years and older have experienced some form of abuse in community settings during the past year. However, WHO assumes that these figures may reflect only a small number, and some experts believe elder abuse is underreported by as much as 80%.

Today, perhaps the most commonly used definition of elder abuse is from Action on Elder Abuse (1995):

“A single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person.”¹

Even though most research on elder abuse focuses on people who are over 65 years old, the concept of 'violence against older persons' can be applied to victims aged 50 years and older. For several reasons, we believe it is essential to consider "younger" older persons as well. The number of victims aged 50-65 who access domestic violence services is in general rather low. Moreover, this age group rarely uses social and health care services intended for the elderly. As they fall into the gap between younger victims of abuse and older people over 65 years old, it creates a lack of knowledge about victims of this age group. We intend to cover this gap and extend the framework of the concept 'violence against older persons'.

Violence against older people can be divided into the following categories:

Physical abuse – *infliction of pain or injuries on an older person, use of physical coercion and physical or drug-induced restraint*

Psychological or emotional abuse – *infliction of mental anguish on an older person*

Financial or material abuse – *illegal or improper exploitation or use of funds and/or resources of an older person*

Sexual abuse – *non-consensual sexual contact of any kind with an older person*

¹ Action on Elder Abuse (n.d.). What is elder abuse? Available at: <https://www.elderabuse.org.uk/Pages/Category/what-is-it>.

Institutional abuse – repeated or regular abuse performed in any institution environment where service users are engaged with professionals (outside their own home).

Neglect – refusal or failure to fulfil caregiving obligations.

Each type of elder abuse has its own signs and consequences. If you want to learn more, please read Chapters 1-3 of [TISOVA Training Handbook](#), which is available on the project website.

About the Online Course

Based on the Training Handbook mentioned above, the **Online Course** was developed. It follows the structure of the handbook and also targets the same 3 key groups. Online course is freely available online in English, German, Greek, Finnish & Estonian. You can take it any time and complete on your own pace on the [WAVE website](#).

Theoretical part of the training is covered in the format of video lectures. They were professionally recorded with the help of experts in the fields of teaching and domestic violence. The course features **Pille Tsopp-Pagan**, a head of the Tartu Women’s Shelter and vice-president of “Women Against Violence Europe” network as one of the lecturers. Among the other lecturers involved in the training, are **Mari Tikerpuu** (Head of Victim Support Helpline service, Social Insurance Board of Estonia) and our special guest **Marina Kaljurand**, who is a well-known public figure in Estonia and beyond. She represents Estonia in European Parliament and has been a vocal supporter of women rights.

The training is designed to be interactive, which means that participants who take it, can engage in different exercises after watching the video lectures. It also contains **role-plays** to illustrate different types of abusive situations, which were recorded with the help of professional actors from [LendTeater](#). The role-plays help to introduce particular cases of elder abuse that sometimes remain to be unnoticed in the today’s society.

Contents of the Online Training:



Video lectures



Interactive exercises



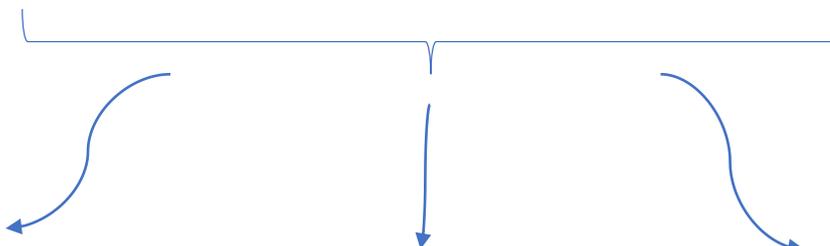
Role-plays

Different study paths

The course is divided into three independent study paths: for professionals, for volunteers and for the elderly. Each study path contains **video lectures and exercises** that are specifically tailored for each target group. However, all of them firstly cover **common theoretical framework** as a basis. It explains such topics as violence against older persons, including definitions, concepts and forms of violence against older persons. This section also demonstrates how violence against older people is a violation of human rights and outlines how prevalent elderly abuse is within Europe. Signs of elderly abuse and neglect, consequences of violence, characteristics and risk factors will also be explored to support professionals and volunteers in determining when/if abuse is taking place.

I. Theoretical framework

- definitions & concepts regarding elder abuse;
- prevalence of violence against older persons;
- forms (and signs) of violence against older persons;
- scenarios of elder abuse;
- risk & protective factors;
- consequences of violence;
- what are human rights on the international & European level.



II. Study Path for professionals

- types of victim's respond to elder abuse;
- supporting persons with memory disorders & dementia;
- developing empathy;
- techniques & methods of identification, screening tools;
- specific questions to determine the abuse;
- professional's roles & responsibilities;
- principles of intervention & empowerment, motivating for change;
- safety planning.

II. Study Path for volunteers

- volunteers' roles & responsibilities;
- principles of volunteer work;
- volunteers' rights;
- the Do's and Don'ts when an older person discloses abuse.

II. Study Path for seniors

- ageing in today's society;
- elder abuse as a human rights violation;
- how to protect oneself from abuse & mistreatment.

For professionals

Study path for professionals goes into depth with practical aspects. This part contains information relevant for health and social professionals working with older people. Professionals can learn techniques and methods of identification of elder abuse, principles of intervention and empowerment, safety planning and issues related to compassion fatigue and burnout.

For volunteers

This part supports volunteers in understanding the roles and responsibilities relevant for volunteering work with older people. Principles of volunteer work and the rights of volunteers are also outlined. Furthermore, communication skills, confidentiality, and other tools needed when supporting older people in situations of disclosure are also outlined.

For seniors

This study path explains the concept of ageism and sexism in simple words, and how these factors can impact the lives of older people. The main goal of this part is to empower older people and to inform them about their human rights, and therefore it explains how elder abuse a serious human rights violation is as well as outlines what to do to protect oneself from abuse and mistreatment.

Study path for seniors is the shortest one out of all three modules. It was done on purpose to make it more feasible for elderly people to follow the material. The language of this study path is also simple, we tried to avoid using complicated theoretical contractions. The study path contains one short video lecture (20 mins), which explains why elder abuse is a violation of human rights and how to protect oneself from abuse & mistreatment. Videos from the theoretical framework are optional for seniors, as their video lecture actually covers the theoretical aspects in simpler words. It is less detailed though, so after watching this lecture participants are offered to learn more about the subject by watching videos from theoretical framework block.

How it can be used?

There are multiple ways how you can benefit from our online training. You can find more detailed information about each of them below. All course components (video lectures, role plays, questionnaires and feedback forms, quizzes and exercises, reading materials as well as the Training Manual) are freely available for download/use on [TISOVA website](#).

As an independent learning program

If you as a professional would like to fill some gaps in your knowledge of elder abuse, our online training is a perfect fit for this purpose. You can take the training at any time and move

at your own pace. There are neither deadlines to keep in mind, nor any fixed dates when the training is available. You can start it already now, take as much time as you need, and finish as soon as you like.

Our platform is specifically adopted for the needs of self-learning. For example, all interactive exercises are automatically assessed by the platform and do not require you to wait for the feedback.

You can share and recommend it to your colleagues, volunteers at your organization or to elderly clients. The link to the course is the same for all three target groups. User-friendly navigation of the course helps you to proceed with the study path that fits your preferences. If you have initially chosen one study path out of three, you can later come back to the beginning and also study the materials designed for other two target groups, if you are interested. There is no restriction to number of attempts to complete the course.

In individual parts

It's not necessary to take the whole course, you can use only some specific elements of it instead. For example, you can download our [video lecture for seniors](#) and show it to the elderly clients of your organization. The video is short, easily accessible and empowering. You can show it to your parents, relatives or elderly friends. If you know any elderly person that might potentially benefit from this knowledge, please show this video to them.

If there are volunteers in your organization, they would most certainly benefit from a separate training on the topic of elder abuse. [Video for volunteers](#) from our online training can also be used as an individual component. You can show this video for the volunteers and explain specific rules relevant for your organization.

Or you can use our [role-plays](#) to demonstrate the cases of elder abuse to your colleagues and initiate a discussion about how such cases can be tackled down. Feel free to share any particular video lectures as well. All video lectures as well as role-plays are available with subtitles on our [website](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

As a part of in-person training

If you find the topic of elder abuse under addressed and especially relevant for the staff of your organization, we suggest you carry out a training, using all materials developed within TISOVA project. Our [Training Handbook](#) is a professional tool that contains teaching recommendations for all three target groups, theoretical material and different exercises. It offers exercises and various training methods that could be used in study groups or individually. The exercises included in the curriculum were piloted in the partner countries of TISOVA project (Finland, Estonia and Greece).

We suggest you use our online training as part of your in-person training. For example, you can recommend your training participants to start with video lectures that cover theoretical aspects and complete them at home in their free time. It would allow to free up some time

for practical exercises and a group work during your in-person training. In the same manner, you might choose to complete the pre-training evaluation online, using the questionnaires which would allow you to obtain some valuable information about your target group’s pre-existing knowledge and help you to tailor the training to their specific needs.

The table below illustrates the correlation between video lectures of the Online Course and Chapters from the [Training Handbook](#). You can use the chapters as additional reading material after each video lecture. The table also refers to particular exercises that can also be found in the Manual.

<i>Lectures in Online Course</i>	<i>Chapters of the Handbook</i>	<i>Exercises</i>
Theoretical framework		
I. Definitions & Types of Abuse	1, 2	1.1, 1.2
II. Risks & Consequences	3, 4	1.4, 1.5
III. International Instruments	5, 6, 9	1.3
Study path for professionals		
IV. Identification of Violence	7	2.2
V. Working with Older Victims	8	2.3 – 2.7
VI. Professional Challenges	11	2.8
Study path for volunteers		
IV. Volunteers’ role	12, 13	3.1, 3.2
Study path for seniors		
IV. Ageing in today’s society	14 – 16	4.1 – 4.7

Below you can find more detailed instructions and advises on implementation of the training depending on your target group.

How to conduct a training?

This part of the guidelines contains some practical advises and recommendations for the teachers. You can find more detailed information in the foreword section of our [Training Handbook](#).

It is important for the teachers and trainers to remember that **some of the participants may be victims of violence themselves** – or **perpetrators**. Therefore, the language used at the training, should be respectful and non-judgmental; however, a clear stance against violence must be taken. Participants of the training may wish to share their own experiences with the

group or after the training to the teacher/trainer. So, teacher should always leave some time available for these discussions.

Since different people have different learning styles, **it is good to combine a variety of methods** such as using presentations, showing videos and providing printed materials. However, any effective training also enables learning by doing. That means adding to the session some exercises and activities, such as group work, role-plays and socio-drama. You may select any exercises provided in the Training Manual.

In the beginning of the session, it is good to give an overview of the content. It helps participants to get the whole picture of the issues to be discussed at the training. To draw the attention and sparkle some interest among the audience, it may be useful to start the session with a quiz (such as Exercise 1.1 or 1.2) or a video related to the topic.

For creating a safe environment, **it is important to establish some rules at the beginning of the training.** Those rules should be respected by all participants of the training. Rules help to create a comfortable space for discussion, as some of the participants may share personal things. You can ask the group to think about what rules they want to follow that everybody feels comfortable with. These might include:

- confidentiality: anything said or noticed in the room will not be repeated or discussed anywhere else ("what you say in the room, stays in the room");
- respect: group members are expected to listen to each other without interrupting, take turns speaking, and speak without judgment or giving advice;
- everyone chooses what they want to share in the group - choosing not to speak should also be respected;
- language: group members are expected to avoid offensive language; no name-calling;
- promptness: meetings should begin and end on time.²

At the end of the session it is important to get feedback to improve future training sessions. Evaluation forms can be designed based on the goals of the session, set in the beginning of the training, to measure the learning results of the audience. Collected anonymous feedback with multiple choice and/or open questions can also give important information for future training sessions.

Conducting a training begins by understanding the needs of the target group. **For training of professionals,** the need is to know their professional background and experience in the area. This can be explored for instance through a pre-survey filled out by the professionals. An important starting point is to understand the goals of the organization that wants to have its staff trained as it would give you a clear focus of the training.

For volunteers' training it is important to know what kind of voluntary work they do, who are the people they support in their roles and what kind of needs they have. These can be explored through a pre-survey filled out by the volunteers.

² J. Hightower and M. Smith (2005). Developing Support Groups for Older Abused Women. A Resource Manual. Vancouver Foundation.

For the training of elderly people, it is important to keep in mind that many older people work as family caregivers and have special needs related to their work. Older people may also have other special needs related to their health condition such as memory disorders, vision/hearing issues. The number of participants in a group should be appropriate to the space and the specific requirements of the group. Older people, especially in smaller groups, may benefit more from group discussions and activities rather than lecture-type presentations. It is also good practice to provide them handouts to take home. Try to invite decision makers to the sessions - it shows that the training is taken seriously by the authorities.

When planning a training for seniors, take into account:

- Accessibility: some older people may have challenges with mobility or may be frail so choose venues that are accessible for people with special needs;
- Venue: venues need to be physically and emotionally safe and comfortable. Suitable places are local and community venues often already familiar to older people, such as service centres, halls, pubs and cafes and are possibly equipped with important tools such as hearing loops;
- Timing: daytime activities may be more suitable for older people and those who use public transport;
- Hospitality: it is more enjoyable if you can offer coffee, tea and other refreshments.

Good practices for small group sessions of older persons:

- Themes should be personally touching and not too general – e.g. ‘exploring human rights’ may not be personal enough; a good idea could be to choose only one or two rights for exploration;
- If the participants have dementia symptoms, keep all content practical – consider what kind of verbal questions you can use or avoid; verbal questions may cause confusion and humiliation if they do not remember or understand the words – it is good to use e.g. pictures with questions to help them express themselves;
- Use one theme per one session and do not hurry with the theme – this helps them to explore themes based on their rich knowledge, life experience and expertise;
- Two hours is a suitable time for one session; however, if participants have dementia symptoms, one hour may be the best amount of time, considering their concentration abilities.

In the [Training Handbook](#) you can find more insights on how to carry out a training about elder abuse for each target group.