

## Wanderausstellung Stelen Beschreibung

### Station 0

#### Intro

Violence and abuse  
have many faces

Violence results in insult, injury  
and harm to others.

On hearing 'violence', we usually think of military conflicts, physical assault, personal injury or abuse. But violence has many faces and affects people of all ages. Older people are particularly vulnerable, especially when in need of help or suffering from dementia. Such persons are often unable to defend themselves or articulate their experiences.

This is why violence and abuse are more common in spaces where older people live or are accommodated. Sometimes older persons become aggressive or violent toward one another. And violence is often targeted at relatives or carers.

Violence and abuse have many faces. They may be expressed in the form of physical or emotional violence, neglect, disregard for an individual's wishes, sexual harassment or financial exploitation. Additionally, structures, norms and common values have restrictive and discriminatory effects on the older population.

### Beschreibung der einzelnen Stationen:

Intro | Prevention & help centres | Thoughts

- >> Violence has many faces
- >> Living without violence
- >> Give us your comments

#### Domestic violence

- >> I live at home but can't do as I please
- >> Emotional pain is invisible
- >> My family is more interested in my will than in me

#### Violence in public

- >> Streets can be dangerous
- >> Disrespectful behaviour can become habitual
- >> Not being tech-savvy means paying more

#### Violence at social and healthcare institutions

- >> Getting too little time and attention can harm people
- >> In a community yet alone
- >> Cost-cutting can cause suffering

#### Station 1

I live at home

but can't do as I please

Where violence is committed directly or personally in private homes, those responsible and those who suffer, i.e. perpetrators and victims, have a close relationship. Here spouses or partners, other family members, or caregivers or nurses commit violence actively or through neglect.

Impatiently jerking someone out of bed, gripping a person's hands, locking a person in a room and preventing them from entering specific rooms or leaving the house, are just as much violent acts as refusing someone certain foods or medicating them against their will (such as tranquillisers), or intentionally violating a person's privacy by touching their bodies without consent.

Refusing or failing to provide necessary help, including ensuring that an older adult is sufficiently hydrated, gets enough exercise or is properly washed and groomed, constitutes violence that leads to harm as well as physical and emotional suffering with lasting effect.

#### Station 2

Emotional pain

is invisible

Psychological or emotional violence is the most common form, yet the one least often recognised, and mostly committed unintentionally. This kind of violence expresses itself in disrespectful or demeaning behaviour toward older persons, especially vulnerable family members. Humiliations and threats cause fear and lead to loss of self-esteem.

People who are not taken seriously, or who are ignored or ridiculed, or whose wishes and needs are neglected, become mentally and physically ill and may strongly react emotionally.

Emotional violence often goes a long way back and some families have a 'tradition of violence', while other risk factors include unresolved conflicts and certain personality traits. For older people, mental violence occurs when other people take control over their lives. Such experiences are common among those requiring care or suffering from dementia.

### Station 3

My family is more interested  
in my will than in me

Any sort of inappropriate use of an older person's financial resources or property constitutes harm and exploitation. Some relatives take advantage of an older family member's willingness to help out financially.

They may demand inappropriate amounts of money from the person or take advantage of their forgetfulness about sums previously lent. They try to get control of the older person's assets by forcing them to gift or bequeath funds or property. Pressure is additionally exerted by threatening to institutionalise the individual or prevent visits from grandchildren.

Where relatives have access to the person's bank account for receiving pension payments, they often restrict withdrawals to cover personal wishes or hold back funds needed to pay for nursing care. The older relative's wishes are not respected and they may not receive the necessary care. Within families, irregularities in financial dealings often go unnoticed.

#### Texte auf Station 3

"Why does Granddad need a new phone, he doesn't even know how to use his old one."

"A newspaper subscription? - Too costly, and newspapers aren't worth reading anyway."

"A new coat? - The old one is still good enough to wear."

### Station 4

Streets can  
be dangerous

Regardless of age or degree of mobility, everyone has a right to move around safely in public, thereby ensuring their standard of living and health, and allowing them to take care of their personal needs.

Heavy, fast-moving traffic and urban planning that fails to consider the needs of individuals with limited mobility make for insurmountable barriers for older people, and are often an indirect cause of accidents.

The relocation of local shops from town centres to the outskirts of town makes daily shopping a challenge for many older people. A lack of consideration for people moving slower than others, for instance in traffic or in public transportation, is a source of conflict that can spark verbal or physical violence. Older people feel that they are easy targets for theft and therefore avoid public spaces, especially at night. This fear of falling prey to crime leads to a loss of self-confidence and to voluntary isolation.

#### Text auf Station 4

"Move on, I haven't got all day!"

## Station 5

Disrespectful behaviour can  
become habitual

It is not uncommon to encounter stereotypes in connection with advanced age, where older people are portrayed as being backward, helpless, slow or in the way, or costly for society.

The media focuses mainly on the negative aspects of the ageing process and references are often made in a condescending and polemical way: Older people are referred to as 'grandma' or 'grandpa', persons with support needs are called a 'nursing case'.

At the same time, 'over-ageing of society' or 'flood of retirees' are terms conjuring up images of a society swamped by 'oldies', standing in the way of progress and queueing up for undeserved benefits. Slighting expressions such as 'oldies discounts' for public transport fares or certain media channels being aimed at 'grey panthers' or 'wrinklies' because they are mostly used by 'elderly' consumers are perceived as demeaning.

## Station 6

Not being tech-savvy  
means paying more

Many service-oriented businesses and companies have substituted online services and dispensers for personal customer contact. Phone enquiries are often outsourced to call centres, but it requires good hearing and quick reactions to respond to the information given.

Additional fees are charged to those doing their banking with a teller at a local branch. Cheaper rail tickets are only offered on the internet. To understand the steps needed to operate an ATM or ticket machine takes some practice. Unfamiliar users nervously punch buttons, while the presence of impatient people in the queue only makes matters worse. Older people, fearful of ridicule, tend to avoid such situations.

Digitalisation and the transformation of public space not only lead to fewer personal encounters but also have negative financial implications for many older persons.

### Texte auf Station 6

Surcharges for personal banking transactions

Internet purchases of goods or services, such as travel tickets, are much cheaper than in shops and stores.

Not everyone finds it easy to operate an ATM or dispenser.

## Station 7

Getting too little time and attention  
can harm people

While people can find support at social and healthcare institutions, these are places where they may also experience violence or abuse. Residents are highly dependent, and when caregivers expect them to 'behave', residents may be treated as children and even scolded and reprimanded. Daily stress at home or an emotionally unhealthy working environment contribute to violent behaviour on the part of caregivers.

Staff shortages mean constant pressure at work in residential homes and facilities, potentially leading to disrespectful speech habits and snippy responses. As result, caregivers may be rough when washing or bathing residents, impatient when handing out meals or neglect to accompany residents to the bathroom.

Care workers are put under pressure by having to unquestioningly stick to rules and daily routines, such as a rigid meal schedule. These situations are made worse when mentally impaired older people or relatives act aggressively against the staff.

## Station 8

In a community  
yet alone

House rules for social and healthcare facilities as well as guidelines for care and nursing staff are designed to allow a large number of people with varying backgrounds, habits and needs to share living space and interact while avoiding conflicts.

But giving too little thought to the individual habits of residents may lead staff members to act inconsiderately and disrespectfully toward them, in this way humiliating and hurting these older individuals.

To minimise costs, organisations responsible for residential facilities set out standardised processes that allow hardly any room for interpersonal contact. Meanwhile, applicable legislation lends indirectly to creating potentially violent situations. The management prohibit many activities out of unjustified fear of liability for damage or accidents that might ensue. This can seriously impair the ability of residents to lead an independent, self-determined life.

### Texte auf Station 8

"Peter W. would so like to visit the house where he grew up, but he can't alone."  
"I don't have the time to go with him."

## Station 9

Cost-cutting can  
cause suffering

Retirement and nursing homes are residences and living spaces for people consistently requiring support in their daily lives. Moving to a home means relocating one's centre of interest and attention. It is thus all the more important to strike a balance between the needs to provide proper and efficient care and an appropriate living environment.

Where homes are designed and organised along the lines of large-scale institutions and with economy in mind, this can negatively impact the normal daily lives of residents. Structural shortcomings such as inadequately soundproofed rooms allowing conversations to be heard outside, double or multi-bed rooms offering little privacy, or limited space in common areas ultimately result in stress and conflicts between facility residents.

Where caregivers and staff are little involved, having to follow a narrow working schedule that does not allow them to consider individual wishes and habits, residents' inactivity then leads to an even greater need for support. This in turn requires more staff and drives up costs.

### Texte auf Station 9

No privacy  
Limited space  
Cheap products

## Station 10

Living without violence –  
possible solutions

This exhibition shows in its many facets the everyday violence older people may experience. The images and descriptions are intended to help people be more perceptive and to recognise and respond to implicit violence, to make a difference and anticipate and prevent violence.

Violence is not simply a problem affecting victims, and involving those committing it. Rather, it is rooted in society as a whole.

It takes an effort on the part of each and every one of us to avoid violence.

If you observe signs of violence or violent behaviour, try to start a conversation with those involved. If you are directly affected by violence, confide in someone you trust or seek help

at a counselling centre. Qualified counsellors will take time to talk with you and provide advice.

Contact points throughout Austria:

24-h-Frauen-Helpline (24/7 support for women)

Phone: 0800/222 555

Gewaltschutzzentren (centres for violence prevention) in Austria

Phone: 0800/700 217

Männernotruf (emergency helpline for men)

Phone: 0800/246 247

Online counselling

[haltdergewalt.at](http://haltdergewalt.at)

Opfer-Notruf Weisser Ring (emergency helpline for victims)

Phone: 0800/112 112

Police assistance for people with hearing impairments

Phone: 0800/133 133

Police emergency number

Phone: 133

Pro Senectute (helpline for age-related issues)

Phone: 0699/112 000 99

Rat auf Draht (helpline for issues related to children and young people)

Phone: 147

Relay service for women with hearing impairments

[oegsbarrierefrei.at/frauenhelpline](http://oegsbarrierefrei.at/frauenhelpline)

Telefonseelsorge (religious counselling)

Phone: 142

Unabhängige Patientinnen- und

Patienteninformationsstelle (independent patient support)

Phone: 0043 1 544 22 66

## Station 11

Give us your  
comments

You have now reached the final station in our exhibition entitled 'Stand up against elder abuse'. Our images and descriptions are intended to raise awareness and call for action. We would very much like to know how effective the exhibition is.

Before you go, we kindly ask you to take a little time to write down on the post-its any ideas, thoughts or suggestions you might have after viewing this exhibition. We look forward to your comments or sketches and images.

Do you wish to respond in detail? Then complete our online survey using the tablet, or fill out the questionnaire available at this station.

Our thanks for visiting our travelling exhibition and for your interest in this topic that is so vital for society.