



Methodist Homes

Providing affordable, secure and caring accommodation and services to the elderly

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Press Release

Methodist Homes has zero tolerance for elderly abuse

Our elderly persons are the people we often turn to for advice, comfort and reassurance that our lives are on the right track. So, it is only fitting to look after them in their golden years and most importantly, to make sure that they are cared for and to give them a well-deserved quality of life. The 15th of June 2021 is recognised as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and its focus is on exactly that, the plight of many elderly persons who sadly suffer abuse.

This day and its message align perfectly with Methodist Homes, a non-profit 21 organisation that has been providing affordable, secure and caring accommodation and services to the elderly for 50 years. The fifteen retirement villages provide a haven for retired citizens. The respective villages, twelve in Gauteng and three in the North-West province, provide both independent as well as assisted living accommodation facilities. Nine of the villages house Care Centres where professional mid and frail care is provided by qualified nurses. Some of the Care Centres are also equipped to care for residents living with Alzheimer's and other Dementias with one retirement village solely dedicated to offering this specialist care.

Gerda Labuschagne, newly appointed Nursing Services Manager at Methodist Homes, lists the most common causal factors of elderly abuse. "Alongside mental illness, alcohol abuse and / or inadequate coping skills of the caregivers, we are now also seeing rising levels of hostility towards elderly persons due to the current economic downturn as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated protracted lock down levels that haven been ongoing since 26th March 2020." Gerda also notes that there are several types of abuse including physical, psychological, financial, sexual, and neglect. She points out that the abuse is normally perpetuated by adult children, spouses and other family members."

"Methodist Homes' management and staff have zero tolerance for elderly abuse," affirms Gerda. "We wish to assure family members that we make every effort to protect our valued residents and have a number of policies in place so that they have complete peace of mind that their loved ones are safe."

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Firstly, high vigilance is maintained at all Methodist Homes' fifteen retirement villages; the residents' homes are fitted with CCTV cameras. Secondly, staff training on elderly care is ongoing and mandatory. Thirdly, the rules are strictly enforced. "Our policies and procedures are in place for anyone who feels threatened in any way without backlash," notes Gerda adding, "We have specially appointed 'charge nurses' who do regular rounds looking out for possible signs of abuse and interacting with our residents. The proverbial 'we leave no stone unturned' is highly applicable here."

All new residents who join the Methodist Homes' family as well as *their* family members are educated on their rights in the unfortunate event of an abusive situation. Not only is counselling offered through various channels that include FAMSA (Families South Africa), WOW (Waves of Women) and the Department of Social Development and the Department of Health, but Methodist Homes also conducts an in-depth investigation with the necessary disciplinary action taken, depending on the outcome of the complaint.

Methodist Homes encourages the public to please be vigilant and advises that any signs of suspected abuse, including malnourishment, poor hygiene, injuries, unexplained monetary transactions, etc., must be reported to the police immediately. Gerda adds, "The Department of Social Development also has a framework aimed at the empowerment and protection of elderly persons with information available on their website."

Methodist Homes' core commitment is to provide excellent, professional care to the elderly that at the very least, meets with the satisfaction of both the residents and their families. "Our key values - showing compassion, dignity and sincerity – guide us on a daily basis. We pledge to always ensure that all our residents at all times feel comfortable, respected, safe and protected at Methodist Homes."

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About Methodist Homes

Since 1970, Methodist Homes for the Aged has professionally managed twelve villages in Gauteng and three in the North West Province, providing comfortable and secure accommodation to some 2000 elderly in a safe and secure environment. In addition to the 9 Care Centres offering mid, frail and Alzheimer's care, the organisation also offers a wide selection of retirement accommodation options that range from life rights and rental units to full board and lodging.

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