

SURVIVING ELDER ABUSE



June marks World Elder Abuse Awareness Month, a time to shine a light on the often-hidden scourge of elder abuse. In the United States, an estimated 1 in 10 older adults living at home experienced abuse in the past year alone. However, only 1 in 24 cases of elder abuse are reported or receive the necessary assistance. The following stories* of Josefina and Emilia, two courageous women who overcame abuse with the help of

NYC Aging's elder justice programs, highlight the impact of these vital resources.

Josefina, 78, had her identity stolen by a home health aide. While she was convalescing and knitting blankets for her grandchildren, Josefina's aide seized the opportunity to steal personal documents from her file cabinet, including her birth certificate and social security number. Josefina realized the

theft when Amazon contacted her about a suspicious \$2,000 computer purchase. She immediately sought help from her local NYC Aging elder justice program. The program provided legal support, protecting her identity, and resolving the issue within weeks.

Emilia, 64, faced similar abuse from a trusted friend. She allowed him into her home because he was down on his luck. He installed cameras, stole items, and failed to honor multiple agreements to reimburse Emilia for purchases made on his behalf. When she confronted him, he was aggressive and threatening.

Emilia suffered for a year before deciding to come forward. Her local elder justice program helped Emilia remove the abuser and provided financial assistance to file a court complaint. Her counselor also offered emotional support, therapy, and ongoing communication to ensure her wellbeing. Emilia now thinks of

her counselor as a sister. The abuse lasted about a year, but once Emilia sought help, her situation was resolved within a few short months.

Both Josefina and Emilia were able to stop the abuse and rebuild their lives with support from NYC Aging, which offers elder justice programs and services that prevent abuse, supports those who have exNYC Aging's 6/10 WEAAD rally raised awareness about elder abuse. Experienced abuse to help them recover, and empower survivors by promoting independence, choice, and financial security.

By sharing their stories, we hope to encourage more people to seek help. Elder abuse can make victims feel ashamed, afraid, and helpless, but there is always a path forward. Our elder justice programs are available with support and resources to help victims regain control and ensure their safety. We help hundreds of

older adults go from victims to survivors every year, and we can help you or someone you care about too. If you or someone you know is experiencing elder abuse, do not hesitate to reach out for support. Call Aging Connect at 212-AGING-NYC (212-2446469) to speak with someone who can help. This month and every month, we must all use our voices to speak out against elder abuse and support survivors, until we stamp it out of our communities.

*Names have been changed to protect the identities of the victims.



*NYC Department for the Aging
Commissioner
Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez*