

Margarita Solis, #SheToo Fellow of the Elder Leadership Academy

Title: #SheToo
Fellow: Margarita Solis
Date: 2016-2019

Context

In 2015, Margarita contacted Celebrate Ageing after she had been sexually assaulted by the acting manager of the Senior's Rental Service she was living in. After a year or more of supporting Margarita (her perpetrator was charged and convicted), she was invited to take up a Fellowship to help prevent sexual assault of older women.

Margarita wanted older women to understand the importance of reporting sexual assault and she wanted service providers to understand the importance of listening. The concept of #SheToo is a call to understanding that older women also experience sexual assault.

Margarita continued her Fellowship right up until her death in 2019 at the age of 97. It was such an honour to have known her and worked with her.

Aims and objectives

The aim of Margarita's Fellowship was to prevent the sexual assault of older women at home and in care. To achieve this Margarita documented and publicly shared her story and educated aged care service providers on strategies for listening to older women.

Activities

1. Produced a film in which Margarita shared her story
2. Took a series of portraits of Margarita, to help document her story
3. Documented a written version of Margarita's story
4. Circulated a media release to promote Margarita's film
5. Documented strategies to promote listening to older women
6. Presented at a number of national conferences.

Outputs

1. Film documenting Margarita's experiences [here](#)
2. Film launched in article in Australian Newspaper by journalist Susan Hocking [here](#)
3. Additional media coverage
 - ABC Radio National (14/4/19). The sexual abuse scandal nobody is talking about. Anne Connolly
 - Article: Aged care home carried on 'business as usual' and ignored sexual assault of resident, family says ([here](#))
 - Podcast: Sexual abuse in nursing homes on the rise ([here](#))
 - ABC The Drum (11/4/19): [here](#) and [here](#)
 - ABC News (11/4/19). Family launches legal action over Bupa nursing home sex attack ([link](#))
 - Searle. It's not your shame. [here](#)
 - HelloCare. 94-Year-Old Sexual Assault Victim Encourages Others To Speak Out. [here](#)
 - Starts at 60. Listen to older women': 96-year-old sexual assault victim's powerful plea: [here](#)
 - HelloCare. SheToo Campaign – 96 Year Old Margarita Launches Campaign Focusing On Listening To Older Women: [here](#)
4. Developed a list of strategies for listening to older women [here](#)
5. Implemented a #SheToo social media campaign [here](#)
6. Presented to the National Elder Abuse Conference in Brisbane 2019 [here](#)

Outcomes (by 2019)

1. Margarita's film has had over 2,200 views
2. Increased awareness of sexual assault of older women (100+ responses to article in Australian)
3. Sharing of The Australian article by Age Discrimination Commissioner Kay Patterson, who also launched the film at the 2018 Embolden Festival
4. Awarding journalist Susan Hocking an Older People Speak Out Award in the Category of Best Coverage of a Controversial Issue Affecting Older People [here](#)
5. Strategies for listening to older women have been included in the #ReadyToListen resources developed by OPAN [here](#)
6. Four years after Margarita launched her film – she is still the only older woman in Australia who has publicly shared her story of sexual assault as an older woman

Links: <https://www.opalinstitute.org/margarita.html>