South Okanagan CRN Creates Caregiver Support Group Model to Share with the Province

According to the 2012 General Social Survey, at some point in their lives, nearly half of Canadians aged 15 years and older (46%) or 13 million Canadians had provided some type of care to a family member or friend with a long-term health condition, disability or aging needs. Over one-quarter (28%), or an estimated 8.1 million Canadians aged 15 years and older provided care to a chronically ill, disabled, or aging family member or friend. Providing care included, among other activities, driving someone to an appointment, preparing meals, helping with bathing and dressing, or administering medical treatments.¹

For some, caregiving is a large part of their life - equivalent to a full-time job. Approximately one in ten caregivers were spending 30 or more hours a week providing some form of assistance to their ill family member or friend.²

Sarah Henry is the CRN Coordinator for the South Okanagan, a program assistant for Better at Home, and a workshop facilitator for Healing and Building after Violence for Women at Desert Sun Counselling and Resource Centre in Osoyoos, BC. “Caregivers are naturally generous and helpful. However, I’ve observed the impact this type of work can have on caregivers, especially if they are providing support

² Ibid.
over long periods of time. The work can be physically and emotionally draining, and there are either few options for support, or there is very limited information available on how to get that support.”

**A Model to Creating Local Caregiver Support Groups**

“Although there are many types of support groups (formal and informal, in-person and online), there are few resources on how to create an effective support group that goes beyond talking to friends and other family members,” says Sarah.

From September to November 2016, and with the help of a BC CRN special projects grant, Sarah created the *Educational Caregiver Support Model*, an educational resource that outlines the steps to establishing an effective caregiver support group in the community, and recommendations on who should facilitate the group, the exercises to do in-session, how frequently to hold meetings, and how to promote the group.

“The information in the guide is grounded in the best available research on the topic of caregiving and caregiver support,” adds Sarah. “The [guide](#) provides a ready-made solution that can be implemented quickly and easily.”

**A Means to Prevent Adult Abuse and Neglect**

“If not careful, caregivers can burn out and become abusive towards the person they are caring for and not know it,” says Micki Materi, Regional Mentor – Okanagan. “Through Sarah’s hard work, we now have a resource that tells us how to establish groups that can provide structured support as means to encourage self-care, and prevent any kind of abuse before it starts. We believe this resource may be the first of its kind in the province.”

The [guide](#) provides:

- An approach consisting of 12-sessions covering specific topics related to caregiver self-care that can be readily adapted to whatever type of support group that is being established.
- The characteristics, qualifications, and recommended skills of the group facilitator(s).
- Supporting tools that could be used in session.
- Recommendations on how and when to promote your group, how to plan and organize your meetings, and how frequently to hold them.

**Implementing the Model Community, Province Wide**

The South Okanagan CRN is currently working on implementing in the community.

The *Educational Caregiver Support Model* is also available in full on the BC CRN website for implementation in CRNs across the province.

For more information, contact Desert Sun Counselling and Resource Centre at admin@desertsun.ca, or BC CRN Regional Mentor Micki Materi at micki.materi@bccrns.ca.
CRN Volunteer of the Month: Mark Rabnett
By Lindsay Jardine, Regional Mentor – North Eastern BC

Have you got a unique skill set that you doubt would ever be of value to a community response network (CRN), or help reduce adult abuse, neglect, or self-neglect? Mark Rabnett tapped into his skills as a medical librarian to further the Seniors Aging OUT project on Vancouver Island.

Mark was new to Nanaimo and retirement when he attended a presentation on the Seniors Aging OUT project in early 2017. As a member of the LGBTQ2+ community, the presentation resonated with him on a personal level. After the presentation, Mark decided to volunteer on the project.

Skills and Knowledge as Medical Librarian Advances the Project
A health or medical library is designed to assist physicians, health professionals, students, patients, consumers, medical researchers, and information specialists in finding health and scientific information to improve, update, assess, or evaluate health care.4

Medical librarians are an integral part of a healthcare team: they help physicians, health professionals, and researchers stay informed of new developments in their specialty areas, which then directly impact the quality of care a patient receives. 5.

As a retired medical librarian from the University of Manitoba, Mark was able to create a literature review compiling all recent research, and articles from professional journals on the topic of aging LGBTQ2+. This literature review is the most comprehensive in the country, and is referenced by health authorities in and outside BC.

Currently, Mark is doing outreach on the local LGBTQ2+ community, and helping build a Central Island LGBTQ2+ CRN. “I feel the discussions we have as a CRN are contributing to a neglected field that happens to be very relevant to my own life,” says Mark.

His literature review is also being constantly updated as new research emerges.

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3 LGBTQ2+ stands for individuals who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Two-spirited, and their allies.
4 Wikipedia.org
5 ExploreHealthCareers.org
Evidence-Based Approach Brings Legitimacy to the Unique Aging Issue of LGBTQ2S+
Mark believes an evidence-based approach brings legitimacy to the aging related issues unique to people who identify as LGBTQ2S+. This approach has also helped the team submit successful grant applications.

“Homophobia in long term care facilities, and caregiver insensitivity is emotionally harming LGBTQ2S+ seniors,” says Mark. “When LGBTQ2S+ seniors go back into the closet to hide who they truly are, and deny who their partner is in their life when they visit, it leads to unimaginable heartache at a time when they are most scared and lonely.

“It’s important for caregivers, facility managers, government, and families, friends, and allies to work together to create spaces where everyone is feels welcome, supported, and safe to be who they are.”

Why Mark is an Outstanding Volunteer
“When I first met Mark, he told me he was a librarian researcher, and I said: ‘That’s terrific! We now have a research component to the Seniors Aging OUT project,’” says Jane Osborne, Regional Mentor – Central Island. “When I next saw him, he was showing me the Google bibliography he had already started. A couple of weeks after that, Mark was talking about the mechanisms he was using to automatically update that library. And not long after that, we were talking about our gold standard repository. Mark is brilliant. We are so blessed to have access to his knowledge base, technical skills, and his willingness to put those skills to work as a volunteer. Plus, he is one of the nicest men I have ever met.”

For more information on Seniors Aging OUT or Mark’s literature review, contact Jane Osborne.

Newest CRN Strives to Assist Sexual, Gender Minorities
BC CRN welcomes the Central Island LGBTQ2+ Community Response Network (CRN) to the provincial team. Formally established in Summer 2017, this CRN is an outcome of the Seniors Aging OUT project in Nanaimo.

“Currently, there is a percentage of this community who are aging whose needs aren’t being met, or there are gaps in the support they receive,” says CRN Coordinator Horst Backé. “Isolation, consciously avoiding services, or delaying making use of services due to a lived history of homophobic judgements, discrimination and violence are some of the reasons why this is happening.

“A pre-existing sense of vulnerability is compounded by stigmas associated with ageism and sometimes end-of-life. What often happens is the person re-enters the closet to protect themselves, or stays closeted due to fear. Because they feel frightened, vulnerable, and unable to disclose to service providers, they eventually lose their support network over time, and end up getting inappropriate services. As a CRN, we want to break down these barriers and help communities create safe spaces where everyone feels welcome to be who they are, and seek out the assistance they need in a timely way.”
First order of business for the CRN is to complete a detailed literature review of Canadian and provincial content to develop a log of issues that are unique to LGBTQ2+. A resource directory of LGBTQ2+ organizations in the Centre Vancouver Island area will also be developed. What is learned from this review will inform specific projects the CRN will take on to affect service provided to LGBTQ2+ living in the region.

The CRN welcomes volunteers. If you live anywhere in the Central Vancouver Island area, and are interested in volunteering or seeking more information, please contact Horst Backé or Regional Mentor Jane Osborne.

Photo Recap: CRN Events Province-Wide

CRN Gathering, Terrace, BC (Oct. 5)

Mentors, coordinators and volunteers meet biennially in each of the five health regions to connect, share learnings, and dialogue on strategies to address adult abuse and neglect at the community level.

(All photos on this page: Lindsay Jardine)

Photo top: Regional Mentor Tim Rowe (centre) facilitates a world café discussion on intergenerational projects.

Photo left: RCMP Cst C. Evelyn explains the police's role in responding to and investigating adult abuse, neglect, and self neglect.

Photo right: Elder Sharon Bryant (left) opens the gathering and receives recognition from Regional Mentor Belinda LaCombe (right).

→“Like” or “follow” BC CRN on Facebook and Twitter for more photos!

⁶ Read more about this directory in our volunteer profile of Mark Rabnett on page 3.
Photo right: Social Worker Melinda Allison explains the role of Northern Health as a designated agency in cases of suspected abuse and neglect.

Photo far right: BC CRN Team Leader Bernie Woods (left) and Allison Leaney (right) of the Public Guardian and Trustee.

Seniors Fair, National Seniors Day, Nelson, BC (Oct. 2)

Photo left: Thank you, Nelson community, for celebrating seniors and spreading the word on adult abuse and neglect prevention! Left to right: Christie, Yvonne, and Regional Mentor Heather von Ilberg. (Photo: Heather von Ilberg)

For the Health of It!, White Rock/South Surrey, BC, (Oct. 20)

Photo right: Regional Mentor Louise Tremblay exhibits BC CRN at the For the Health of It! seniors fair at the White Rock Community Centre. Thank you, Seniors Health Network and the White Rock/South Surrey Seniors Planning Table, bringing seniors together! Look for a follow up article on this program in a future E-Connector! (Photo: Louise Tremblay)

→“Like” or “follow” BC CRN on Facebook and Twitter for more photos!
Improved It’s Not Right! and Gatekeeper Resources

BC CRN has been editing It’s Not Right! and Gatekeeper program materials based on your feedback. Thank you, community presenters, mentors, and community response networks (CRNs) for your ongoing input and continued support of the program.

BC CRN Web: The Hub for Program Information

Bookmark our Resources page to access anything related to our programs!

Community presenters and trainers: nearly all materials, including updated facilitator manuals and forms, are on the BC CRN website. The BC CRN web is your authoritative source for program materials. Download the job aid to learn how to access these materials. All forms can also be completed and submitted electronically. View the job aid. For program specific questions, please email itsnotright@bccrns.ca or gatekeeper@bccrns.ca.

Community members: Visit the It’s Not Right! page to learn more about the program and when community presenter training is taking place in your area. To learn more about when the next public It’s Not Right! or Gatekeeper workshop takes place in your community, contact your local CRN.

Book a Presentation or Workshop.

It’s Not Right! teaches bystanders to recognize the signs of abuse and neglect, and the simple steps to support the person impacted.

Gatekeeper workshops are best suited for people who have regular contact and routine interactions with adults. These workshops teach you how to correctly spot the signs of abuse and neglect, and make the appropriate referrals.

A minimum groups size of 10 is required. Both workshops are free of charge, and we will work with you to organize and promote your session.

Email itsnotright@bccrns.ca to book an It’s Not Right! presentation, and gatekeeper@bccrns.ca to book a Gatekeeper workshop. View BC CRN’s program brochure.

“There is a great need to continue with ‘It’s Not Right!’ workshops and presentations so the warning signs of senior abuse are recognized, and help given to adults at risk.”

New to BC CRN

Arlene Johnston, Coordinator - Data, Grants and Agreements, joins BC CRN in this new role. Arlene is responsible for managing BC CRN’s databases, records, and project grants. She can be reached at grants@bccrns.ca.

Shirley Gust, Coordinator – Materials and Events, is responsible for distributing all BC CRN promotional and program materials and supplies, and assisting with events.

Provincial Learning Events

November 21, 2017: Saving for a Secure Future: The Registered Disability Savings Plan, Prospera Credit Union.

Learn more about:

- What the Registered Disability Savings Plan is, and the benefits of the program.
- Who is eligible.
- What is needed to apply.

Building on more than 70 years as a BC credit union, Prospera serves a membership of 63,000. As a values-based financial institution, their number one priority is the financial well-being of families and businesses in our local communities.

Presenter Ward Bertram is a Certified Financial Planner, Certified Professional Consultant on Aging, Wealth Management Specialist, and the co-chair of the BC CRN Board of Directors. He has worked in the financial services industry since 2000, and currently leads the financial planning and wealth management team for Prospera’s Fleetwood Branch in Surrey.

Provincial Learning Events are toll-free teleconferences that take place the third Tuesday of the month from 10:30 am to 12 pm. Everyone is welcome.

Email info@bccrns.ca to receive notifications of upcoming teleconferences and to receive dial-in info.

Access recordings and materials for previous events.
Our Top 6: Resources of the Month

1. **Decision Tree: Assisting an Adult Who is Abused, Neglected, or Self-Neglecting**: A tool created by the Public Guardian and Trustee of BC, learn how to make effective referrals for adults in BC who may be vulnerable and/or incapable.

2. **Engaging Older Women in Your Community: A Promising Practices Guide for Women’s and Senior Serving Organizations, Canadian Centre for Elder Law (2017)**: The publication is intended to support your agency to anticipate and address structural barriers to the participation of older women in community initiatives aimed at legal and policy change.

3. **Lessons in Collaborating with the Enemy: Part 2 (Webinar) (2017)**: Collaboration is an expectation in today’s world of community development. It can also be very challenging, as you may need to work with people who disagree with you or you distrust. View this free webinar by the Tamarack Institute to learn about a new approach to working with people that embraces discord and experimentation.

4. **Embracing Culturally Competent Care for LGBTQ Older Adults (2017)**: This video focuses on the importance of person-centered, culturally competent care for LGBTQ older adults in all settings where they receive medical care and other health-related services. Presented by the Diverse Elders Coalition.

5. **Talks to Make You Feel Good about Getting Older (Videos) (2017)**: A video playlist of seven Ted-Talks that offer a different perspective on aging and what it means.

6. **Seniors Social Isolation: Risks, Impact and Strategies (Webinar) (2017)**: Presented by The Caregiver Network, this previously recorded webinar presents examples of socially innovative initiatives to increase seniors’ social inclusion.

“Like” [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com) or “follow” us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com) to receive the latest resources on adult abuse and neglect.

Our Top 7: Headlines of the Month


7. **Local group’s training can help stop abuse**, Revelstoke Review, Sept. 27, 2017.*

“Like” Facebook or “follow” us on Twitter to receive the latest news on adult abuse and neglect.

*Denotes local BC CRN story or article.

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### Campaigns & Professional Development Events

- **When Caregiving Becomes Too Much: Seniors in Transition, The Caregiver Network**  
  *November 2, 2017, Webinar*  
  Most Canadians will want to live at their home for as long as possible. This webinar is free of charge after subscribing (for free) to The Caregiver Network. [View more information](#).

- **RISE Sunday**  
  *November 5, 2017*  
  A pan-Canadian initiative to reduce senior social isolation. It’s as easy as paying a visit, a walk, or a phone call. [View ideas and to learn more](#). Share your stories: [info@rise-cisa.ca](mailto:info@rise-cisa.ca).

- **Evaluating Community Impact: Capturing and Making Sense of Community Outcomes, Tamarack Institute**  
  *November 14-16, 2017, Saskatoon, SK*  
  The workshop provides those who are funding, planning and implementing community change initiatives with an opportunity to learn the latest evaluation ideas and practices. [View more](#).

- **BC’s Affordable Housing Conference, BC Non-Profit Housing Association in Partnership with CHFBC and PHRN**  
  *November 19-21, 2017, Richmond, BC*  
  Western Canada’s largest affordable housing conference offering 100+ education sessions, several keynote and guest speakers, exhibitors, an Art Expo, and social events. [View more](#).

- **14th Global Conference on Ageing, International Federation on Ageing (IFA)**  
  *August 8-10, 2018, Toronto, ON*  
  Application for exhibitors and abstracts is now open. Abstract submission deadline: December 1, 2017. [View more on the abstract submission process](#). [View more on exhibition opportunities](#). [View more on the conference](#).

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