The Indian Residential School System is a dark chapter in Canada’s history. A national poll from June 2017 conducted by the Angus Reid Institute and the Faith in Canada 150 project found a consensus among Canadians who view residential schools as a black mark on the country’s history of religion.¹ Residential schools were government-sponsored religious schools whose mandate was to assimilate Indigenous children into Euro-Canadian culture. The system was established after the passage of the Indian Act in 1816.

In the attempt to convert and integrate Indigenous people into “Canadian society”, children and youth were routinely and forcibly separated from their families, immersed in ill-prepared lessons conducted in languages they didn’t understand, and subject to isolation and wide-spread abuse and neglect. In total, an estimated 150,000 First Nation, Inuit, and Métis children attended residential schools.²

¹ Residential schools seen as ‘major black mark’ in Canadian religious history: poll, National Post, June 28, 2017.
² www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/residential-schools/
Ill-Effects Run Deep
The schools caused major disruptions in lives and communities, and caused deep set social and health issues in Aboriginal communities that can be still be felt today. Research indicates that some survivors experience “layers of trauma”, which could include complex post traumatic stress disorder, mental health issues, and chronic self-destructive behaviours. They may also experience repeat harm at the hands of others. For example, some sexual abuse victims are at greater risk for subsequent abuse and assaults than those who have not been victimized.³

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)
Since the last residential school closed in 1996, former students have pressed for recognition and restitution, resulting in the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement in 2007 and a formal public apology by Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2008.

The commission is a requirement of that settlement, and is mandated to inform all Canadians about what happened in Indian Residential Schools (IRS). TRC documented the truth of survivors, families, communities and anyone personally affected by the IRS experience.⁴ In its report released in 2015, TRC published 94 calls to action in an effort to right past wrongs, heal families and relationships between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities.

Taking Truth and Reconciliation to a Local Level
Over 50% of Prince Rupert’s population is First Nations. The city itself has a history with residential schools.

“Because of our demographics, everyone in Prince Rupert were affected by residential schools in some way,” says Louisa Sanchez, CRN Coordinator. “To say the legacy of that trauma is long term is an understatement. The impact is multi-generational. The potential for adult abuse, neglect, and self-neglect also becomes multi-generational.”

Prince Rupert has been doing truth and reconciliation in the community long before the TRC report was released. Some examples of this work include:

- Modifying training and education for foster parents to be more culturally appropriate and inclusive.

- Renewing a longstanding partnership agreement between the Aboriginal Education Council and the school district. This partnership has enabled the community to educate students on First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples in Canada, which includes the history of residential schools, and weekly language lessons in Sm’algyax.⁵

- Incorporating cultural competency training and deploying specialized resources to enable Northern Health to address the unique health concerns of Prince Rupert’s First Nations communities.

⁵ Sm’algyax is the language of the Tsimshian, who are the indigenous people of the Pacific North Coast.
• Administering the Prince Rupert Aboriginal Justice Program, which adheres to a restorative justice approach to crime.

From September 2016 to December 2017, the North Coast Immigrant and Multicultural Services Society and the BC CRN researched the history of residential schools in Prince Rupert and the after effects on the community. The team engaged in a lengthy survey process with the school district, Northern Health Authority, and service providers to gather information on how these groups support the community, and the truth and reconciliation calls to action developed by the TRC.

“We looked closely at the TRC report and pulled the recommendations most relevant to Prince Rupert to work on,” continues Louisa. “Child welfare, education, language and culture, and health, are the areas we chose to focus on. We want to publicly acknowledge the trauma, promote awareness and education of the role of First Nations in Prince Rupert, foster grassroots strategies to continue healing families and grow healthy, mutually respectful relationships between First Nations and non-aboriginal members of the community.”

Two additional suggestions presented to the Prince Rupert municipality recently:

1. The totem poles on the grounds of city hall are replica Haida totem poles. Prince Rupert sits on traditional Tsimshian, not Haida, territory. The team raised this observation as a concern that Council should have on their radar.

2. Rallying with other communities in BC to declare National Aboriginal Day on June 21 as a statutory holiday.

“First Nations history, which includes the chapter on residential schools, is complex just as the issue of adult abuse and neglect is complex,” says Louisa. “What we learned from the research and this project is that there is correlation between history, however far back it goes, and the social issues of today. If we address the wrong doings of the past, we can more effectively address the problems of today. But to do that, we need to unify and work together.”
Volunteers of the Month: Cari Taylor and Lycia Rodrigues, Victoria CRN

It’s Not Right! is one of BC CRN’s signature programs\(^6\). The overarching goal of the program is to educate and equip bystanders to understand the scope of adult abuse and neglect, identify the signs, and feel comfortable taking some form of action.

To ensure communities receive these programs, we count on local community presenters to promote the programs, and present the content. In this month’s E-Connector, we profile two of BC CRN’s community presenters: Cari Taylor and Lycia Rodrigues.

Interesting aside: Lycia was also the coordinator for the Victoria CRN...and Cari is now her successor!

Both of you either have been or are the coordinator for the Victoria CRN in addition to being a community presenter. Tell me a little bit about your background.

*Lycia:* I started as a psychologist working in public health in my home country of Brazil. I worked with adults who were dealing with chronic disease. I also facilitated health management educational workshops. I then earned a Masters Degree in Social Dimensions of Health with a focus on gerontology from the University of Victoria, and moved on to a project coordinator role with the Elder Project in Cowichan (EPIC) Research, as well as the role of coordinator for the Victoria CRN.

I left the role of CRN coordinator back in Spring 2017 to take on a full-time role as a caregiver support and engagement lead for the Family Caregivers of British Columbia.

*Cari:* I come from a background of education and public speaking in health and non-profits. My last role was with the Arthritis Society as their chief educator. I’ve also been involved with CRNs since 2015.

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\(^6\) Gatekeeper is the companion program to *It’s Not Right!* Community presenters can conduct workshops and presentations for both programs.
I’m in a different place in my career than Lycia, and am contemplating retirement. When Lycia decided to exit the CRN coordinator role, it opened a door to the perfect opportunity for me to continue working with the community, but without the full-time hours.

**Why did you decide to become community presenters?**

*C:* The community presenter role allows me to continue working in education and public speaking, which I absolutely love doing. When I volunteer, I want to give where my skillset is strongest.

*L:* Improving the quality of life for older adults and caregivers has been a big part of my vocational calling for the past ten years. I am especially passionate about community development, focusing on social supports for vulnerable adults. I feel that being a community presenter allows me to do this and stay connected to BC CRN.

**To become a community presenter, you had to go through the daylong training. What was your biggest takeaway?**

*L:* I really liked the structure of the training and the tools. The best thing I took away from the experience was an approach on how to engage with participants in a meaningful way.

*C:* For me, it was SNCit. During training, we see the videos that we get to present to the public. The first video shows how people typically respond to a specific scenario of possible abuse or neglect. This typical response revictimizes the victim without the helper being aware of it. The second video shows an alternative way to respond to the same scenario using SNCit. After viewing the first video, my hair was standing on end: I saw myself responding in the typical way...sometimes I think we believe we handled a situation from a position of empathy and compassion, but in reality, we didn’t.

**Both of you have presented separately and together to a number of community groups in the Greater Victoria area. What has been the most memorable or rewarding moment so far, and why?**

*L:* As SNCit was the biggest takeaway from training for Cari, I think this is also the part of the presentation or workshop that makes the most impact with participants. SNCit resonates with people. I see the “wow” in participants’ eyes every time when they realize there was a more ethical, humane, and empathetic way to talk about abuse and neglect with a loved one.

*C:* A couple of presentations for me stand out. The first one was a presentation I did for the Victoria Native Friendship Centre in early 2017. It was interesting because I learned that the issues First Nations communities have are very complex. There are issues within the issue of adult abuse and neglect. This was an eye opener for me. I learned a lot from that presentation.

The second one was the presentation that Lycia, (Regional Mentor) Bridey Morrison Morgan and I did together back in December 2016 where we engaged about 15 different community organizations from different

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7 SNCit = See it, Name it, Check it. This is an approach taught in Community Presenter Training as a way to identify possible adult abuse and neglect in individuals.
generations, cultures, and populations. This particular presentation gave us a glimpse of what organizations can do when they work together to prevent elder abuse from happening.

L: Yes, that presentation stands out for me too.

What has been the most challenging part of being a community presenter?

L: Attendance. I think the words “elder abuse” are frightening to many. I think this makes it challenging to get participants to sign up for presentations and workshops. The best way to overcome this hurdle, I have found, is to talk to people one-on-one to explain what this issue is, why it is important, and what it is we can do about it. Go to where the people are and talk to them.

C: The most challenging experiences I’ve had is about how to manage the room after a participant has a major disclosure of abuse or neglect in front of everyone. The goal is to keep the presentation moving, and have simple tools, like “parking lots” where questions and concerns can be “parked” for later. This helps keep the conversation focused on the material, and moving along despite the fact that this disclosure can really turn things in a different direction.

Have you seen any tangible impacts resulting from the presentations and workshops?

C: We’ve often presented It’s Not Right! as part of a larger outreach strategy. Sometimes we present an abridged version of the content with the goal of having groups book the full program with us later. Many do indeed come back and book a full workshop afterward. A true success!

L: The connections we make at the presentations are important. Many program participants also become volunteers for the CRN after they had first had experience with It’s Not Right!. They wanted a way to do more.

View more information on BC CRN’s It’s Not Right! and Gatekeeper programs and training.

To book a training session for your group, please contact your Regional Mentor.

To book an It’s Not Right! or Gatekeeper presentation or workshop for your group, contact your local community response network (CRN).
#WEAAD2018: Start Planning Now!

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) was officially recognized by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 66/127, December 2011, following a request by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA), who first established the commemoration in June 2006.

It represents the one day in the year when the whole world voices its opposition to the abuse and suffering inflicted to some of our older generations.

It’s the perfect time to put #WEAAD2018 into your calendar and start planning your activities today!

View BC CRN’s Spread the Word Guide for activity ideas, or contact your local community response network (CRN) to get involved.

New to BC CRN

BC CRN welcomes Karen Clarke of Squamish. Karen is the Regional Mentor for North Shore and Sea to Sky replacing Kari Chambers. Kari is staying with BC CRN as the coordinator for the North Shore CRN.

BC CRN also welcomes Doug Newberry as the Regional Mentor for the East Kootenays. Doug will be in the role for up to six months while Bill Barger is on leave.

To contact Karen, Doug, or any of our Regional Mentors, please visit our website.

Provincial Learning Events

February 20, 2018: Helping Canadian Seniors Navigate their Digital World, a teleconference presented by TELUS WISE®.

If you’re a senior, a family member of a senior, or someone who supports seniors, this teleconference will help you:

- Understand simple Internet and smart phone tips for protecting your personal information.
- Understand what you should and should not do online.
- Learn simple safety tips for social networking, dating online, and playing online games.
- Learn how to protect yourself from identity theft.
About TELUS WISE®: TELUS WISE® (Wise Internet and Smartphone Education) is a free educational program on Internet and smartphone safety and security. The program offers interactive and informative workshops and content to help Canadians have a positive experience as digital citizens.

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.

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**Our Top 5: Resources of the Month**

1. **First Link® Dementia Helpline**: Established by the [Alzheimer Society of BC](https://www.alzheimer.ca), First Link® is a confidential, province-wide support and information service for anyone with questions about dementia, including people living with dementia, their caregivers, friends, family, health-care providers and the general public.

2. **Elder Abuse – Learn the Signs and Break the Silence (Video)**: Created by the Government of Alberta in June 2013, this six-minute video provides an overview of how to recognize the signs of senior abuse, and what you can do about it. **WARNING**: Content may be triggering.

3. **Monitoring Seniors’ Services 2017 (Report)**: The Office of the Seniors Advocate’s (OSA) third annual report looks at over 25 programs and services offered to seniors in B.C. and measures performance on a year over year basis.

4. **Seniors Abuse and Information Line (SAIL)**: SAIL is a toll-free line staffed seven days (excluding holidays) from 8 am to 8 pm. SAIL is a safe place for older adults, and those who care about them, to talk to someone about situations where they feel they are being abused or mistreated, or to receive information about elder abuse prevention.

5. **National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) Blog**: An American digital resource containing blogs on topics ranging from financial abuse, ageism, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD), diversity and inclusion, and much more.

“Like” Facebook or “follow” us on Twitter to receive the latest resources on adult abuse and neglect.
Our Top 8: Headlines of the Month

2. **Minister of loneliness appointed to continue Jo Cox’s work**, BBC.com, Jan. 17, 2018
6. **Sometimes it takes a ‘village’ to help seniors stay in their homes**, NPR.org, Dec. 15, 2017
8. **First time dealing with credit card fraud? You got this**, The Telegram, Dec. 12, 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.

Campaigns & Professional Development Events

- **Sexual Violence and Older Women: Working Towards Justice (Webinar), CNPEA**
  
  *February 6, 2018, 10 AM PST*
  
  Sexual violence against older women is increasingly being placed on the research agenda after decades of silence. While the growing body of research on this topic is welcome, it remains an under-researched and difficult to research field. View more and to register.

- **Collective Impact 3.0, Tamarack Institute**
  
  *February 28 – March 2, 2018, Edmonton, AB*
  
  A three-day intensive workshop for practitioners in early stage, mid stage and later stage community change work. The workshop will explore the latest in the practice of collective impact from experts, practitioners and early adopters of the work. View more.

- **Alzheimer Society of BC TeleWorkshop Series**
  
  *February – March, 2018*
  
  “Long Distance Caregiving” and “Driving and Dementia” are the topics for February and March. Workshops are offered at 2 pm and 7 pm, and are free of charge. View the schedule.

- **The Caregiver Network Webinar Series**
  
  *February 8 and 21, 2018*
  
  “Informed Decision Making for Caregivers” (Feb. 8), and “Insurance Plans for the Family Caregiver” (Feb. 21) are forthcoming. These webinars are free of charge.
- **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (#WEAAD2018)**
  *June 15, 2018, Worldwide*
  Start planning your event now! View BC CRN’s [Spread the Word Guide](#) for ideas on how to raise awareness of adult abuse, neglect, and self-neglect on this very important day!

- **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](#).

- **Canadian Association of Gerontology (CAG) 47th Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting: Making it Matter – Mobilizing Aging Research, Practice, and Policy**
  *October 18-20, 2018, Vancouver, BC*
  This annual conference is your opportunity to share your research and other work in the field of aging with your national and international colleagues from a diverse spectrum of disciplines. **Call for abstracts open until April 16, 2018.** [View more on how to submit an abstract](#). [View more on the conference](#).

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