BC CRN Toolkit

2015

**BC Association of
Community Response
Networks**

Stopping Adult Abuse and Neglect...Together

www.bccrns.ca

CRN TOOLKIT – UPDATE 2015

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Welcome to the 2015 edition of the BC CRN Tool Kit

I would like to acknowledge the work done by Heather von Ilberg and Sandi McCreight in revising the Tool Kit to ensure that it is relevant for use today. Since the first Tool Kit was written, the BC Association of Community Response Networks (BC CRN) has grown into a truly provincial organization with mentors serving communities in 15 regions. They are supported by 2 seasoned Team Leaders Heather Archer and Kathy Doerksen.

In 2012, the BC CRN was awarded a three year grant from the Ministry of Health to provide Community Response Networks (CRNs) in over 100 communities and to do prevention and awareness work as part of their mandate. At the end of 2014, there were 52 CRNs supporting 116 BC communities. The Ministry has recognized the importance of this work and has approved further funding to March 31, 2018. The interest continues to grow as the CRNs mature into self-governing community-driven networks.

The provincial "Together to Reduce Elder Abuse – a BC Strategy" was passed in March 2013. In it the CRNs are given the responsibility to continue to address the abuse and neglect of vulnerable older adults in BC. In recognition of the pivotal role being expected of the CRNs, the BC CRN Executive Director has a dedicated position on the Council to Reduce Elder Abuse which is charged with the implementation of the Strategy

While the website www.bccrns.ca is available to everyone, it is especially useful for those working and networking in the front lines, helping to make the vulnerable adults in our communities safe from abuse, neglect and self-neglect.

Thank you to the Board of Directors, Team Leaders, Mentors, Coordinators and CRN members and affiliates who work so hard to keep the CRN movement alive and relevant.

We extend special acknowledgment and thanks for the countless hours of volunteer commitment of the individuals working in the communities. Their on-going dedication greatly impacts the CRN movement at all levels.

Sherry Baker, M.A.

Executive Director

INTRODUCTION

This Tool Kit is comprised of eight chapters; it can be read from beginning to end, and we hope you will read all of it at some point, but it can also be read in any way that meets your needs. The first 3 chapters, though, are very important and will lay the foundation for a healthy start.

This is an update of the original Community Response Network Toolkit published in the 1990s by the Public Guardian and Trustee of BC. Since that time, we have learned and developed a great deal of information that may be helpful to you in your CRN work. The original CRN Toolkit was a much lengthier document. We have reduced the content but have provided links throughout for people to seek further detail on a number of topics. If you want more information, click on the embedded links. Use them or explore the BC CRN website or other sources for what you need.

There is no standard CRN template for development but we have tried to provide information, ideas and resources that will make the journey easier. It is necessary for communities to find their own way and explore what works best for them. Sometimes that means heading down a path that does not lead where we wanted to go and that's part of the learning we do along the way. When we hit a snag, we go back to our Mission Statement, Values and Principles.

Our Mission

To help empower communities and individuals through coordination, collaboration and relationship building to stop adult abuse and neglect – together.

Our Vision

Safe communities where adults are valued, respected and free from abuse and neglect.

CRNs hold true the following Principles:

- Inclusion
- Meaningful Participation
- Power sharing
- Assumption of Capability

We have found that relationships are the key to our work. We build relationships within our CRN team, with the community at large and with each other as we create CRNs. We know that basing our work in strong relationships takes time and energy but they

are the fabric of CRN work and without those ties, CRNs are not sustainable and do not change community culture over time. So whether we are forming a CRN, seeking coordination, building a team, planning events, developing protocols, or taking the pulse of the community's response to abuse, neglect and self-neglect, the relationships we have built are critical to the process.

Chapters One to Three - What is a CRN?, Building Teams and What Communities Have Discovered, are based on the work done by Dr Tam Lundy, who was a consultant with the Guardianship Implementation Project at the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee of BC, and wrote Chapter One of the original Toolkit. It describes a helpful approach to all community building activities, not only CRN development. It reminds us to keep the 'big picture' in view, not just immediate goals or tasks. It outlines an approach to all CRN activities - education, awareness and prevention, advocacy, and community protocol development - that focuses on building relationships, building teams and building communities. These chapters describe a deliberate approach to working collaboratively together, no matter what you are doing.

Chapters Four through Eight - These chapters document activities that CRNs have engaged in over the years. We've collected information from CRNs at community and regional workshops, in conversation, and from materials submitted in reports. People from different communities have very different ways of doing things when it comes to what they are doing, but the *how* of CRN work is universal.

Chapter Four - **Outreach** to involve and Liaise with a broad cross section of the community suggests a number of effective ways of involving everyone in the community concerned about adult abuse and neglect, and how to keep them engaged.

Chapter Five - **Education, Awareness and Prevention** includes descriptions of a number of creative workshops, events and materials devised to raise awareness and prevent abuse, neglect and self-neglect over the long term.

Chapter Six - **Community Protocol Development** includes some strategies used in various communities. As well, it includes a description of some of the various steps involved in, and references types of protocols that comprise a Community Protocol.

Chapter Seven - **On going Community Development** includes descriptions of some of the process issues communities have identified as being important to pay attention to while engaging in CRN activities.

Chapter Eight - **Working and Learning Together** describes some of the strategies communities have used that can contribute to facilitating strong CRN relationships and teams. Strategies alone though, without attending to process will not be enough.

HISTORY OF THE CRN TOOLKIT

The original Toolkit was an attempt to capture the process and development of Community Response Networks (CRNs). The Toolkit was funded through the Public Guardian and Trustee of BC (PGT) and sponsored by the Abuse, Neglect and Self-Neglect Planning Group.

When the new Guardianship Legislation was passed in 1993 an advisory group called the Abuse, Neglect and Self-Neglect Planning Group was formed; it was comprised of PGT staff, staff from the Office for Seniors and various other provincial Ministries, volunteers from several advocacy organizations and others concerned with implementation of the Guardianship legislation, specifically the Adult Guardianship Act. The group created and funded a pilot project to determine how six communities across the province would develop a "network of support", called a Community Response Network, or CRN. Tam Lundy (now Dr Tam Lundy) was hired as the facilitator of the project under the supervision of the Adult Guardianship Implementation Office at the PGT.

The intent of the Toolkit was to provide an overview of the learning and resources produced by the CRN Pilot Project and by CRNs which had formed over the following couple of years. When the CRN Toolkit was created, the number of CRNs had grown from the original six to about sixty. At that time, the Toolkit was a physical book which contained duplications of materials produced by CRNs. CRN Coordinators and members mailed copies of their work to the Implementation Office and anything which could be reproduced was included in the binder.

In 2000, the same year the Guardianship Legislation package was proclaimed, the CRN website was launched (www.bccrns.ca) and the Toolkit was adapted for use online. Much of the material could not be converted so the online version was a smaller and less useful document than the original binder. This version of the Toolkit is intended to be a growing document, which we can update on a regular basis as we discover and create new ideas and materials. If your CRN has something which could be useful to other CRNs, send it to us and we will include it in the Toolkit (administration@bccrns.ca).

CHAPTER ONE

WHAT IS A CRN?

Community Response Networks (CRNs) help to facilitate the development of a coordinated community response to adult abuse and neglect in local communities. Please note that when we use the term "abuse and neglect" in this document, it includes self-neglect.

A collaborative approach to coordinate the community's response results in:

- Increased community and professional awareness of adult abuse and neglect
- Increased commitment to address abuse and neglect as:
    - an issue that affects individuals, and
    - an issue that affects communities
- Increased understanding of the dynamics of abuse and neglect
- Increased understanding of how to prevent, reduce and respond to abuse and neglect
- Increased understanding of the legislated mandate of designated agencies (DAS), new tools for intervening, and for offering support and assistance
- Stronger relationships between the people and organizations that can provide support
- Better coordination of supports and services, so that fewer people 'fall through the cracks'

CRNs: Values in Action

When the work of developing CRNs began in the early 1990s, the provincial Abuse, Neglect and Self-Neglect Planning Group, now called the Abuse and Neglect Collaborative, created a set of principles to guide the way. Today, the BC CRN remains committed to these principles:

Inclusion - How people are included on the team

Anyone who wishes to be involved with the CRN should be able to do so, regardless of barriers such as transportation, language or mobility. CRN members must be mindful of these realities and do whatever is reasonable to encourage and support people's participation in the CRN and CRN events.

Meaningful participation – How people find ways to contribute that are meaningful to themselves and to other team members

Sitting at the CRN table or attending an event does not mean that someone is participating in the CRN. Meaningful participation means that the person can participate to whatever degree they choose. And it means that their participation can change process and outcomes.

Power sharing – How power and influence is shared among members of the team

CRN members must be conscious and active in sharing power within the team. Certain members, because of their job, their community status, their influence on others etc. may be perceived as more powerful than others. Unless we examine the differences in power dynamics and acknowledge those differences, we cannot work to equalize the inequality.

Assume capability, and build capacity – How we foster new abilities – of ourselves, and others

When this principle is put into action, everyone makes a contribution, or has something to teach other team members. Everyone can learn and change. Everyone needs support. Everyone can offer support. 'Capacity building' gives us a way to think about building on our strengths, and learning together as individuals and as a team. Capacity building isn't just a set of specific strategies that a team can follow; it's more of a concept, or a 'big picture,' that helps to shape our thinking.

One of the biggest lessons we've learned is that, in order to put these principles into action, we must continue to pay attention to process as we go about our tasks. When we're paying attention to process, we're noticing how our values and beliefs, our relationships and interactions, actually organize our work and affect the results. We evaluate all of our actions, and the outcomes of our actions, according to these commonly agreed upon values.

Although we recognize the importance of values and process, we've discovered some tensions between "maintaining the process" and "getting things done", often described as the strain between task and relationship. We've noticed that our first tendency is often to look for practical solutions that produce tangible outcomes and results. We know that the work to create a CRN requires lots of practical steps. Outreach activities, for example, encourage new people to get involved. Education helps to raise community awareness that abuse and neglect exists, and that something can be done about it. Community protocol development helps to coordinate the community's response to adult abuse and neglect of individuals. Keeping track of the response helps to determine future policy and legislation through the CRN's relationship with the BC CRN and the Abuse and Neglect Collaborative.

But to make sure that CRN development is carried out in agreement with our values and principles, the practical aspects of CRN development need to be balanced with careful attention to process. It's not just what we accomplish, but *how* we do it. With this in mind, the following thoughts are intended to support CRN development by addressing the process of building relationships, teams and, in the long run, our communities. The ideas that are shared here can be applied in many settings. We particularly hope that CRN participants will find them helpful as they work to:

- include all of the people in the community who have something to contribute
- build and strengthen relationships among CRN team members
- create a working environment of sharing, trust and respect
- build capacity for active and equal participation among all team members
- work collaboratively with others in the community who can support our work
- maintain a healthy balance between goals and principled action

CRN Development: A Great Example of Community Building

Ideas about 'community building' have changed over time. In the past, we've tended to think about community building as the development of a service 'infrastructure' that provides services to people in need. And, when taking stock of our communities, we've had a tendency to measure our success by the number of organizations that exist, and the ways in which formal services are provided by government or community agencies.

Our ways of thinking about community building are evolving. We now measure our efforts by the degree to which people are able to choose and receive supports to meet their basic needs and wishes, and to become participating citizens in the community.

Being a community member is not just about receiving; it's also about making a contribution. So, community building is not about how we do things for people, but how we support each other to be full and active participants in the life of the community.

Community Response Networks are about community building. CRNs look at adult abuse and neglect as an issue that affects everyone in the community. To address this

community issue, CRNs actively facilitate the participation of everyone who is affected by the issue of adult abuse and neglect.

Abuse and Neglect: Affecting Individuals and the Community

One goal of CRNs is to improve the response to individuals experiencing abuse or neglect. Another goal is to involve the broader community in learning about, and preventing, the abuse and neglect of adults. In this way, the CRN responds to abuse and neglect as:

a) An issue that affects individuals, and
b) An issue that affects the community

For example, if a CRN member hears that an adult is experiencing financial abuse, they may either provide referral to appropriate supports and services or offer support and assistance *in their professional role*, if applicable. Also, the CRN may provide information and/or networking opportunities to responders in the community regarding Best Practices, the Continuum of Abuse, Knowledge Exchanges, etc. This is what we mean by responding to abuse and neglect as an issue that affects individuals.

When CRN members, as a group, become aware that several seniors in the community are experiencing financial abuse, they may decide that it's time to take the issue to the broader community. They might plan a campaign to raise general public awareness about financial abuse. And they may decide to offer training to staff at local financial institutions, and to educate seniors about their rights. This is what we mean by responding to abuse and neglect as an issue that affects the community.

Therefore, some CRN activities will enhance the response to adults in the community who are experiencing abuse or neglect. Other CRN activities will address the need to raise community awareness about abuse and neglect, and to find ways for the community to work together to address the issue.

> *"Legislation alone doesn't keep people safe. Communities keep people safe."*

Throughout the document we have provided "Community Voices". These are quotes from various CRN members who have been involved in CRN development and maintenance over the years

Being Conscious of Labels

In our work to support the creation of CRNs, we've attempted to avoid the use of labels and jargon. And yet, it's sometimes hard to find the words that adequately describe what we mean. It has been a challenge to describe the people in a community who have a role to play in the CRN without attaching labels to them. In some ways, we all wear labels. We are male or female. We are youth, and we are seniors. We are parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, daughters and sons. We are workers, students, service users, service providers and volunteers. These labels help to describe our experiences in the world, and the ways in which we are similar and different. We wear many labels at one time, each one filling in a little more detail about the multi-faceted and multi-experiential nature of ourselves as individuals, and in relation to others.

But there are some labels that are easier to wear than others. If I am labelled as a nurse, for example, people are likely to assume that I am caring and efficient. If I'm labelled as a teacher, people may assume that I am well educated and work well with people. But if I'm labelled as a senior, I may be assumed to be frail or easily confused. If I'm labelled as a mental health consumer, I may be assumed to exhibit unpredictable behaviour. If I'm labelled as a person living with a physical disability, people may fail to see my ability. If I'm labelled as a vulnerable adult, people may fail to see my strengths.

> *"Community Response Networks are more about citizenship than about systems and bureaucratic responsibilities."*

When we speak about the people who can play a role in local CRNs, we are mindful of the potential for labelling, and make every effort to avoid it. So, to be clear about the diversity of people who may have a role to play with the CRN, we have decided to use the phrase "people affected by the issue of adult abuse and neglect." We intend these words to include:

- The adults the CRN is intended to support
    - This could be any of us, depending on our circumstances at different times in our lives. But we know that the people who may be somewhat more at risk of experiencing abuse or neglect may include some seniors, or some people living with a developmental disability, a physical disability or a mental health diagnosis. Isolation, poverty, alcohol or drug issues may also contribute to our risk of experiencing abuse or neglect, and…
- The people who are able to provide supports to adults in these situations

- o While we tend to think of these individuals as 'helpers,' they may also have been, or may be in the future, someone who the CRN is intended to support.

Each of these individuals can contribute important knowledge, experience and wisdom to the planning and implementation of a coordinated community response to adult abuse and neglect.

The CRN Team

We have discovered that the word 'team' can have many different meanings. The experience of working together on a CRN team can be different from many of our previous experiences, as professionals and as community members, working in group settings.

When we use the word 'team' in the context of CRNs, we're not referring to a structure. Structures tend to stay the same, even over time, and even when the circumstances change. For example, if we were talking about a baseball team, we would be talking about a structure – baseball teams are made up of a certain number of players, each playing specific roles, in specific positions that don't change from game to game. Within the structure of a baseball team, certain individuals provide direction, and make final decisions about team strategy. While the individuals may come and go, the roles remain the same.

But, the unique thing about CRNs is that they cannot be described as structures – instead, they are sets of relationships. Some CRNs do become a structured organization with a formal membership, rules of order, and a leadership executive but most do not. And the CRN is not a 'service delivery team' – the CRN is not intended to become a new program or community organization.

> *"Process is a constant moving ahead, not a beginning and an end."*

The CRN is also not a 'case management team'; the CRN team does not discuss individual situations of abuse or neglect. Since confidentiality is such an important ethical concern, it would be inappropriate to discuss the specifics of an individual's situation in such a public setting. Even when care is taken to mask identifying details it doesn't take much guesswork, especially in a smaller community, to know exactly who

is being discussed. So, CRN members do not discuss 'cases,' or an individual's personal situation at meetings. However, there are often CRN members who, in their professional role, do respond to individuals. When trends or changes occur which impact the community's ability to respond to abuse and neglect, the CRN may discuss the issues and determine a course of action, whether that is community education, protocol development or the sharing of information at a regional and provincial level.

What then is a CRN team? The CRN team is a network – a loose connection of people and organizations who care about the issue of adult abuse and neglect, and who want to contribute to a coordinated community response. CRN members are community members who work together toward a common purpose. They work together as collegial and multidisciplinary partners from diverse community sectors. And, while the people or organizations involved may change from time to time, CRN members remain a team committed to the purpose of assisting the community to create an effective community response to adult abuse and neglect.

The People Who Participate in the CRN Team

There have always been people and organizations in communities, who, when they hear of a concern about abuse or neglect, look into the situation right away. Now, as members of the CRN, they will continue to do as they have always done, responding to the situation in the best way they can, and collaborating with others who can also offer assistance.

By bringing together people and organizations that may not have a history of working together or working well together, the CRN offers the opportunity to build increasingly collaborative relationships among individuals and organizations that can offer support to a person experiencing abuse or neglect. In doing so, the community's ability to respond to abuse and neglect is strengthened.

The strength of the CRN is enhanced when the team is diverse; bringing together the individuals and organizations that can offer support, and the people that the CRN is intended to support. In many communities, people we do not immediately think of have joined the CRN and brought a great wealth of knowledge and experience to the team. People such as retired bankers, Salvation Army personnel, business owners, young people and others are great additions to the group. Such diversity increases team knowledge, experience and wisdom, and leads to a more effective community response to adult abuse and neglect.

What makes a team a team?

What is it that turns a collection of individuals into a team? We believe that it's not what people do together, but *how* they do it. It says something about our deliberate and

intentional process of working together. To be a team member means to act in a team-like way – collaboratively, as colleagues – whether playing on a baseball team, participating on a CRN team or even planning an outing with family members. (The Latin root of the word colleague means to choose together.)

When we talk about CRN teams we're referring to the shared purpose that brings people together, and the process by which they carry out their activities. We never see CRN teams as a solid structure – it's a network, always in flux.

But whether we're using the word 'team' to describe a purpose or a process, it's always about *how* we work together. We always intend it to reflect relationships that are collaborative and collegial.

"It's a process – it's long, it takes patience, and you can't assume that you know anything until you've really worked at it."

Coordination of the CRN

Often the first step in creating a team is coordination. Most communities have an individual who volunteers to be the CRN Coordinator or primary contact person. This role can be shared, as decided and defined by the CRN. It is usually the role of the Coordinator or contact person to take the lead - organizing meetings, doing outreach to expand the CRN, providing vision and acting as a link between the local CRN, the region and the BC CRN. The Coordinator or contact person may also be the person who appears on the BC CRN website as a local contact person for information about supports and services to adults experiencing abuse, neglect and/or self-neglect. While the Coordinator or contact person will be the "face" of the CRN, he or she is still a team member with no more or less influence than other group members.

Sometimes a group of community members decide to form a CRN and subsequently look for a "champion" within the community who could be a coordinator. Other times it is the Regional Mentor who assists in recruiting someone to coordinate the CRN. No matter the process, it is important that the person coordinating the CRN is not the only one who holds the vision or has skills and abilities needed by the CRN. In those cases, when the person moves on, the CRN tends not to survive. The Coordinator is a facilitator for the group, fostering and supporting the growth of the CRN movement.

Some of the steps we have identified in finding and retaining Coordination of the CRN are:

- Identify community champions or cheerleaders
  - Have sign-up sheets at events for anyone interested in the CRN
  - Look for someone already involved in issues of abuse, neglect and self-neglect
  - Approach someone you know, who would be suitable, even if they are not an obvious choice
  - Put ads and articles in the paper with contact information to encourage interested people to become involved
  - Look at other groups such as Advisory or Task groups for someone with the enthusiasm and skills needed

- Entice your candidate
  - Phone or e-mail with invitations to learn more
  - Meet for a chat and provide materials about the CRN
  - Provide BC CRN materials and invitations to the Provincial Learning Events
  - Make sure the candidate knows that a slow start or diving in are both options – it needs to be their choice
  - Focus on several individuals – don't put all your eggs in one basket
  - Understand and accept that it takes time to find the right person or people

- Determine roles
  - Ensure you have a number of people to support your new Coordinator
  - Look at the person's skill set and decide together what areas are strong and what needs to be enhanced. Does the person have an understanding of:
    - The issue of abuse neglect and self-neglect?
    - Good communication?
    - Group dynamics?
    - Community resources?
    - The mandate of the BC CRN?
    - The role of the CRN Coordinator?

- Use Supports Provided by the BC CRN
  - Connect with the Regional Mentor
  - Become familiar with the resources available through monthly teleconferences, newsletters, the website, regional meetings and gatherings (as available)
  - Take advantage of the opportunities to foster and build widening circles of relationships over time

Take Advantage of On-going Support
  - Maintain relationships with the Mentor and BC CRN provincial body
  - Interconnect with other CRNs in your region

- o Make connections with other groups and individuals involved in similar work
- o Expand invitations and outreach re: activities and events

Building a Balanced CRN: Who needs to be involved?

When thinking about who needs to be involved, it's helpful to pay attention to the diversity of people who live in the community, the people or organizations that provide support to adults, and the skills and experiences that participants might bring.

Community Diversity: Many different people make up a community. Our differences include age, ethnicity and culture, education, employment, gender, sexual orientation, ability, wellness, as well as our risk of experiencing adult abuse or neglect. CRNs will be most effective when participants mirror the diversity of the community at-large. They will also be most effective when they include all the people who are affected by the issue of adult abuse and neglect. This includes people that the CRN is intended to support, many of whom have historically been excluded from some parts of community life. We are trying to build a microcosm of the community.

> *"When we think about relationships, we need to think about whole systems – not just individuals."*

Diversity of Services and Supports: Communities have many different organizations that provide supports and services – some are formal, many are informal. When encouraging participation in the CRN, it helps to think about including:

1. People from each government or community agency that provides supports and services to adults, especially those at increased risk of experiencing abuse and neglect. These supports and services include:
   - Staff from regional health authorities such as those who work in Home and Community Care, Mental Health and Substance Use, and/or Community Care Facilities Licensing
   - Staff from Community Living BC and others designated to fulfil specific responsibilities under Part 3 of the Adult Guardianship Act.

2. People from organizations that can provide emergency support, including:
   - The police, ambulance and fire services

- Ministry of Social Development
- Crisis centres
- Transition houses
- Women's centres, and
- Victim assistance programs

3. People from other government or community agencies that can provide support, including:
   - Hospitals
   - Home support agencies
   - Alcohol and drug programs
   - Care facilities
   - Banks and credit unions
   - Legal and court services
   - Senior's resource centres

4. People who belong to formal and informal community organizations, including:

   - Self-help or advocacy groups
   - Wellness coordinators
   - Community centres
   - Churches
   - Educational and youth services.
   - Groups that support people living with:
     - Acquired brain injury
     - Developmental disabilities
     - Mental illness
     - Alzheimer's' disease
     - Physical disabilities
     - HIV/AIDS, etc.
     - And their families

5. Gatekeepers – individuals who, in the course of their daily lives, get a good sense of what's happening with people they see regularly. Examples include:
   - Senior citizen counsellors
   - Health and home support workers
   - Postal workers
   - Pharmacists
   - Bank tellers
   - Members of Neighbourhood Watch
   - Bus drivers
   - Retail clerks

The BC CRN provides a "Gatekeeper Training" package with can be found at: http://www.bccrns.ca/generated/resourcesgatekeeper.php   Training is done by experienced facilitators; contact a CRN Regional Mentor for details.

Diversity of Skills and Experience: You may want to take inventory of the skills and experiences on your CRN team. Ask people to identify the things they're good at, and what they're willing to offer. Make a list of the skills and experiences that would be helpful to the team. If some are missing, think about recruiting someone to fill the gaps. Or, plan to learn more about this skill as a team (using a consensus building process, for example).

Some of the skills and experiences that are important to the CRN team include:

- Knowledge about abuse and neglect: definitions and dynamics of abuse and neglect, appropriate and effective responses, the ethics and dilemmas of support and intervention
- Knowledge of the community: history, how people reach out for support, how people unite around a community issue, how things get done, how conflict is addressed, etc.
- Personal characteristics or life experiences that may increase the likelihood of experiencing abuse and neglect. For example, a senior will have a closer connection to some of the risks faced by other seniors. (Note: a participating senior doesn't need to have personally experienced abuse or neglect in order to provide an important perspective, nor do they need to disclose their personal situation if they have experienced abuse or neglect. They just need to be willing to participate on the team.)

> *"Working together on the CRN has brought attention to current trust levels and cooperation between agencies in our community – it's clarified how we need to build relationships."*

Other helpful skills or experiences include:

- Creative thinking
- Planning
- Consensus-oriented decision making
- Conflict resolution
- Group facilitation
- Organizing and coordinating

- Providing support to people who don't communicate in ways with which we're familiar
- Community education
- Cross-cultural communication
- Networking and alliance building
- Fund raising
- Administrative skills
- Advocacy
- Outreach and publicity
- Building and strengthening relationships with other organizations and decision makers
- Experience with making change from 'inside' systems (for example, policy makers or decision makers in government or formal community organizations)
- Experience with making change from 'outside' systems (for example, community advocates, community development workers, community volunteers)
- Leadership attitudes and skills that support team building, and meaningful participation by a diverse group of people based on a shared vision

Questions for CRN teams to discuss:

1. Are there people from population groups who may be more at risk of experiencing abuse or neglect? What attributes can contribute to making any of us more vulnerable to experiencing abuse, neglect or self-neglect?
2. Does your CRN team have participation from a wide range of the services and supports available in your community?
3. Do most participants represent an agency or formal organization? Are some folks participating as interested community volunteers?
4. Are family members or advocates involved?
5. Who is missing? What would it take to get them involved?
6. What skills and experiences are needed? What's missing? Who could provide them? Which skills can the team learn together?

"It's divisive to see people as either consumers or providers, instead of all community members."

CHAPTER TWO

BUILDING TEAM RELATIONSHIPS

CRN participants are people who have a variety of backgrounds, beliefs, attitudes, experiences, skills and knowledge. Each brings his or her own history and reasons for being involved. Some will have worked together before; others are meeting for the first time. Some are confident leaders; others are just beginning to find their voice. The challenge is to start with this diversity of experience and perspective, and take conscious steps to create a team.

We have learned that teams who spend the time and do the work to build a strong team have longevity and sustainability. Some CRNs have team members who have been part of the team for many, many years and bring their neighbours, friends and family to the group as part of succession planning.

The success of a team is not just in what they accomplish, but how they work together. To be effective, the team needs to build:

- Safety and trust
- Shared leadership
- Shared vision
- An environment for shared learning
- An environment in which change can occur
- An environment in which decisions are shared
- A commitment to a shared future; a commitment to the "long haul"
- Accountability to each other

Effective team members can be recognized by certain traits. They are willing to:

- Listen, without judgement
- Learn
- Be honest
- Trust
- Pay attention
- Discuss values
- Risk conflict
- Share power
- Share leadership
- Lead from the rear or the side (for example, nurture and support others to discover their own leadership skills)

- Show respect, and to expect respect from others
- "Hang in there"

Questions for CRN teams to discuss:

1. Can we agree that these will be the principles to which our team members aspire?
2. Can we acknowledge that we'll all slip up from time to time?
3. Can we agree that we'll support each other in our efforts to work together? Are we willing to support each other with gentle reminders when needed?

How do we support team building?

- Affirming and celebrating team diversity
- Focusing on what we have in common, rather than differences
- Sharing values and beliefs, hopes, vision, fears
- Finding common language
- Making complex issues understandable and accessible
- Having no preconceived solutions or outcomes
- Patience
- Discussing ethics
- Working together to build trust

What gets in the way of team building?

- Attitudes that keep people separate (for example, focussing on our differences rather than on the value of diversity – thinking in terms of "us" and "them")
- Working without a shared vision that's grounded in shared values
- Lack of a plan for dealing with disagreement or conflict
- Lack of planning and shared decision making
- Assumptions that some people have better knowledge or experience than others (for example, 'it's nice to hear from others, but professionals really have more understanding of the problems and solutions')
- Competition (between people, organizations, ideas)
- Focussing on the labelled difference rather than seeing one another as whole people

Building Relationships Amongst Team Members

When any group first comes together, we're a collection of individuals. We need to take some conscious steps to become a team. These are a few of the ways that we can strengthen and formalize our relationships:

- Understand and embrace the guiding principles
- Develop a vision or mission statement for the CRN
- Take time to get to know each other – as 'whole people', not just in certain roles
- Talk about leadership styles and power dynamics
- Talk about how ideas will be presented and explored
- Be clear about our purpose
- Set goals based on shared values
- Explore and affirm the capacities and strengths of each team member. (What can I do well? What do I need to fully participate? How do I like to receive that support?)
- Develop a plan for how the team will work together to accomplish goals: what does success look like?
- Plan how to be accountable to each other, and to the community
- Plan how to evaluate successes
- Plan for and follow through with celebration

Questions for CRN teams to discuss:

1. How are we building trust and respect – among all members of the CRN team?
2. Is there a transparent decision-making process?
3. Is all information shared, among all CRN members (except of course information of a confidential nature)?
4. Have we found a common language that everyone is comfortable with?
5. Are we honest about our feelings (for example, when things are going off track?)
6. How do we deal with differing perspectives or disagreement?
7. How do we share leadership within the CRN team?
8. Does our CRN team have a code of ethics?
9. Have we planned for accountability and evaluation?
10. Who else should be at the table?

"Forming real partnerships means sharing power."

INCREASING TEAM PARTICIPATION

A Basic Principle for Building Participation: Assume Capability, and Build Capacity

Sometimes the biggest barriers to meaningful and equal participation are the assumptions we hold -- about ourselves and others. We might assume that:

- Some people aren't willing to find ways to share power
- They're too focused on one problem to be able to see the big picture
- We don't know as much about adult abuse and neglect as other "experts" in the group so, withhold our own very valuable experiences
- Government agencies are always "bureaucratic"
- Only people with paid jobs can be "leaders"

If things are to move forward, we need to deal with our assumptions by naming them and by actively addressing them. We need to acknowledge our capacity for learning and for change. And, we need to acknowledge that we all need a little support in order to learn and to grow.

One of the presumptions of the adult guardianship legislation is that 'adults are presumed capable' – capable to make decisions about things that affect them, and of choosing appropriate support in making those decisions. That presumption is an important part of team building too, particularly in the context of CRNs. Working with the values of the legislation means:

1. Assume capability, and
2. Build capacity

When we assume that each team member has the capability to participate, we acknowledge the potential of all team members to learn and to grow in a supportive environment. When we build capacity for participation, we are taking action to learn and grow together, to maximize the contribution of each team member.

Questions for CRN teams to discuss:

1. What can I learn from other team members?
2. What am I able or willing to teach?
3. What am I willing to change about myself? How am I willing to foster change in my organization and my community?

Team building: Ingredients for Participation

Each team is a unique collection of people, who bring with them a great variety of backgrounds and abilities. We all have something to learn, and we all have something to teach. If every team member is to feel like a full and active participant, we need to acknowledge the areas in which participation can be supported or hindered. We must be willing to change our awareness, our abilities, our attitudes, our relationships, the ways we do things, and the systems in which we do them.

> *"We must be prepared to have the difficult discussions, to risk conflict. Trust is built when we find positive ways to address conflict or different experiences and perspectives."*

When we build capacity for participation, we agree to address our strengths and challenges in the following areas:

Knowledge about:

- The dynamics of abuse and neglect
- The legislation
- The vision for the CRN
- How to nurture shared participation in the CRN
- The community and how it currently works

Skills, including:

- Facilitation
- Leadership
- Group participation
- Planning
- Consensus decision making
- Administration
- Fundraising

Attitudes about:

- Abuse and neglect
- Difference
- Connectedness
- Leadership
- Power
- Balance of 'process' and 'task'

Relationships between:

- Individuals or organizations – CRN members, for example
- Other community partners
- Community institutions and government
- Service providers and those they serve

Processes to:

- 'Get things done'
- Create time and space for 'people needs' to be addressed
- Facilitate meaningful participation
- Build trust, safety and honour confidentiality
- Share power in decision-making

The 'systems' that we all belong to, including:

- Seeing our interconnectedness within our organizations, our communities, our province
- Seeing how our experiences in our families, our workplaces, and our communities shape our experiences and our behaviour
- Seeing how the policies and practices of others can affect us (e.g. The policies and practices of government or other organizations)
- Seeing how our policies and practices affect others
- Systems thinking means "seeing interrelationships rather than issues, patterns rather than snapshots, and underlying structures rather than symptoms" (from Bellefeuille, Garrioch and Ricks," Breaking the Rules: Transforming Governance in Social Services")

Questions for CRN teams to discuss:

Building team capacity requires that we look at our team from several perspectives, assessing our strengths and our challenges. By paying attention to our knowledge and skills, attitudes and relationships, processes and systems, we build the capacity of diverse team members to work together. The following questions will help your team to build capacity for full participation by all team members.

1. Have we had a discussion about the ways knowledge and skills, attitudes and relationships, processes and systems might affect our team's capacity for meaningful participation?
2. Which knowledge, skills, attitudes, relationships, processes and systems require our CRN team's attention?
3. How might our approaches to them support or prevent meaningful participation? For example, relationships based on the differences between service providers and those they serve rather than their similarities, might prevent meaningful participation. And processes that share power among participants, such as consensus decision making, can enhance meaningful participation.
4. How will we handle it if individual members behave in ways counter to our values or team building process?

"Remember that nobody's comfortable until everybody's comfortable."

The Team Building Wheel: A Framework for Building Capacity for Meaningful Participation

A team is much more than a group that shares an interest or a concern. Teams are made up of people who, in addition to their common vision and goals, share a commitment to work together in an inclusive and participatory manner. Teams don't just happen. They are created through our intentions and our actions – to include all of the people who are affected by the issue of abuse and neglect and to nurture everyone's capacity to participate.

"Challenge ourselves to change our attitudes about 'progress' – try not to see new members as impeding the work."

When we talk about building capacity for participation, we're talking about the capacity of the team as a whole, and of each individual team member. In particular, we're paying attention to the principles that ground CRN development work:

- Inclusion -- how people are included on the team
- Meaningful participation – how people find ways to contribute that are meaningful to themselves and to other team members
- Power sharing – how power and influence is shared among members of the team
- Assume capability and build capacity – how we foster new abilities – of ourselves and others. When this principle is put into action, everyone makes a contribution or has something to teach other team members. Everyone can learn and change. Everyone needs support. Everyone can offer support.
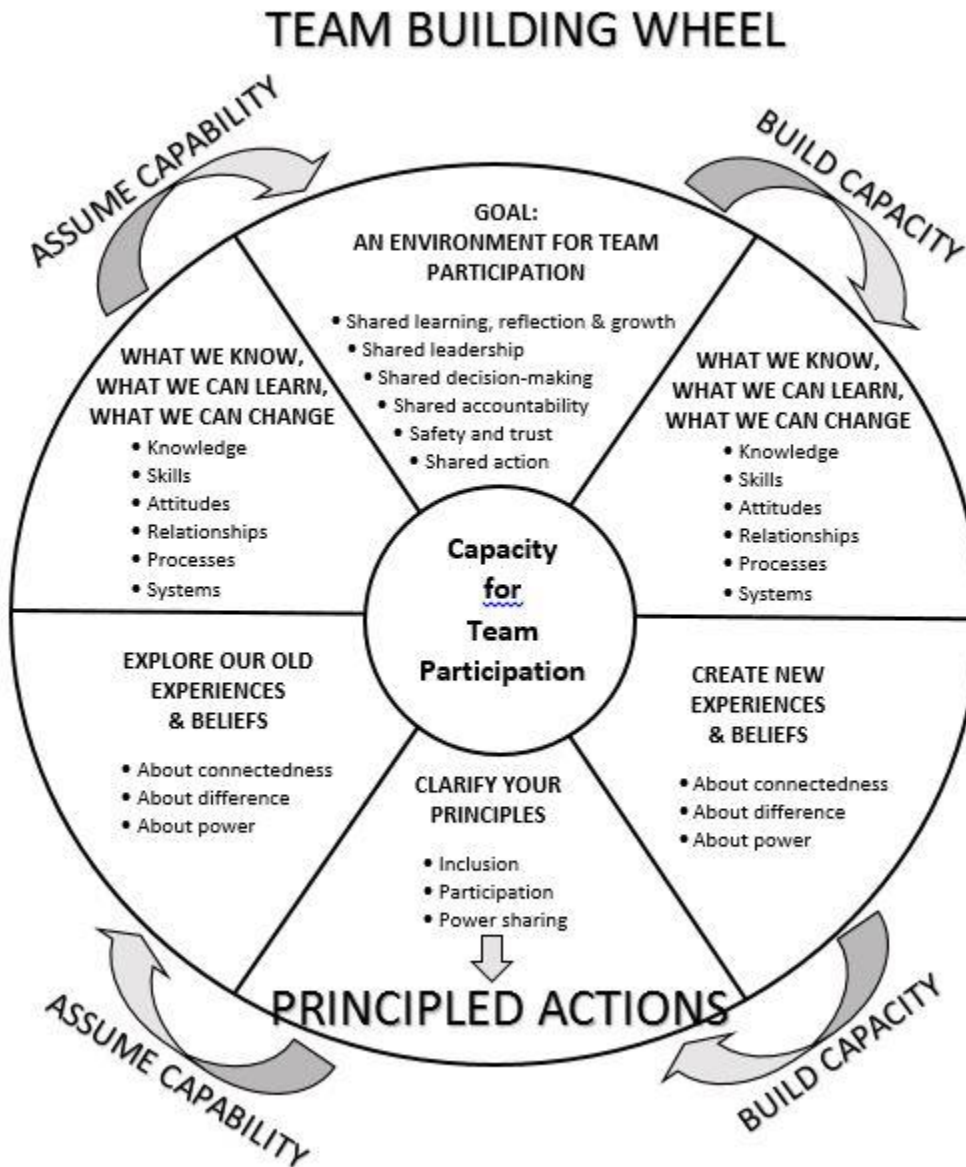
Capacity building gives us a way to think about building on our strengths, and learning together as individuals and as a team. Capacity building isn't just a set of specific strategies that a team can follow. It's more of a concept, or a 'big picture,' that helps to shape our thinking.

Pictures are often clearer and make more sense, once they are framed. The frame for a concept like capacity building should help to clarify the 'big picture' ideas, while illuminating some of the choices available to us as we work together. The following Team Building Wheel is an attempt to provide that frame, to clarify and shape the process of building capacity for *meaningful* participation.

"Diversity means different perspectives."

The Interconnectedness of the Team Building Wheel

The Team Building Wheel demonstrates the interconnectedness of our goals for team participation, the values we bring to the team, our beliefs and prior experiences, our strengths and challenges, and our willingness to learn and transform.

TEAM BUILDING WHEEL

ASSUME CAPABILITY

BUILD CAPACITY

GOAL:
AN ENVIRONMENT FOR TEAM
PARTICIPATION

- Shared learning, reflection & growth
- Shared leadership
- Shared decision-making
- Shared accountability
- Safety and trust
- Shared action

WHAT WE KNOW,
WHAT WE CAN LEARN,
WHAT WE CAN CHANGE
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Attitudes
- Relationships
- Processes
- Systems

WHAT WE KNOW,
WHAT WE CAN LEARN,
WHAT WE CAN CHANGE
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Attitudes
- Relationships
- Processes
- Systems

Capacity
for
Team
Participation

EXPLORE OUR OLD
EXPERIENCES
& BELIEFS

- About connectedness
- About difference
- About power

CREATE NEW
EXPERIENCES
& BELIEFS

- About connectedness
- About difference
- About power

CLARIFY YOUR
PRINCIPLES

- Inclusion
- Participation
- Power sharing

PRINCIPLED ACTIONS

ASSUME CAPABILITY

BUILD CAPACITY

The wheel also tells us that, to build team capacity for meaningful participation, we must pay attention to each part of the whole. True to the values embedded in the Adult Guardianship Legislation, we assume capability and build capacity by addressing each

sector within the wheel. Ideally, guiding principles become principled actions leading to principled outcomes.

The wheel provides a 'systems thinking' way of understanding the process of capacity building. It tells us that, to build capacity for team participation, we need to look beyond the goal of a functional team. We need to look to the roots of our beliefs and actions (the ways we've each experienced power and difference and connectedness). We need to be willing to change ourselves, our thinking and the way we do things

Working with the Wheel

Building capacity for team participation is not a linear process. There's no map to follow. We don't start in one place, and move from step to step to step until we're finished. It's more like a 'looping' process that lets us spend as much time as we need in any section of the wheel, returning when and where we need to re-focus our attention. But there are some places to start. In the work to create Community Response Networks, we always start with principles:

Starting with principles:

Our goal is team participation in an environment of:

- Shared learning, reflection and growth
- Shared leadership
- Shared decision making
- Shared accountability
- Safety and trust
- Shared action

To reach that goal, we start at the other side of the wheel, adopting principles of:

- Inclusion
- Participation
- Power sharing

And the overarching principle of:

- Assume capability, build capacity

Exploring experiences and beliefs about connectedness, difference and power

Agreeing on the principles is a good starting point. Putting these principles into action may be harder than we think. It gets easier when we take time to talk and reflect on our experiences with, and our beliefs about,

- Connectedness (dependence, independence, interdependence)
- Difference
- Power, and the process of empowerment

We begin by questioning how these experiences and beliefs affect our values, our viewpoints and our actions. Note: we're now moving clockwise, around the wheel. We acknowledge that each team participant has had personal experiences with connectedness, with difference and with power, and that these experiences inform their beliefs and their actions. We acknowledge that each participant has something to learn, and something to teach, about connectedness, difference, and power. And we assume that learning together will strengthen our capacity to build a participatory team.

> *"We need to be honest about why we're here. People sometimes don't recognize their own agendas – this gets in the way of being inclusive."*

Building capacity for team participation:

What we know, what we can learn, what we can change

Next, we work to build capacity for team participation, paying attention to each of the elements of capacity building: knowledge, skills, attitudes, relationships, processes and systems. In each of these areas we discover:

- What we know
- What we can learn
- What we can change

We assume that everyone can learn and evolve.

Creating an environment for team participation

When we take conscious, concrete steps to build our team's capacity, we help to foster an environment of:

- Shared learning, reflection and growth
- Shared leadership
- Shared decision making
- Shared accountability
- Safety and trust
- Shared action
- Shared accomplishments

Working as a team: Where are we now?

When we are working in an environment as described above, we can continue to build capacity for team participation in increasingly collaborative ways. We can imagine something new and different because being involved in a participatory team provides us with new experiences and beliefs about connectedness, difference and power.

"Sometimes honesty is a revolutionary, and a revelationary, act."

From principles to principled action

When our teamwork is grounded in respectful and trusting relationships, we develop new understandings of connectedness, difference and power. These new understandings help us to choose actions that are grounded in the principles of inclusion, participation and power sharing. In the context of the CRN, what started out as a set of principles evolves into another goal -- principled action. It assumes that people have the capacity to participate in meaningful ways, and intentionally build capacity for full team participation.

Moving to the right hand side of the wheel, we see that when we choose actions to increase participation by all members of the team, we need to address:

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Attitudes

- Relationships
- Processes
- Systems

And around and around and around we go...

In each area, we're identifying what we know, what we can learn, and what we can change. When we're building team capacity, we assume that everyone has something to contribute to the team and that everyone has something to learn.

The wheel demonstrates that learning and working together is a circular and on-going process. By changing the way we think, we change the way we act. By changing the way we act, we change the way we think. By changing the way we think and act, we create inclusive and participatory teams.

Questions for CRN teams to discuss:

1. How are we currently putting into practice the values of inclusion, participation and power sharing?

2. Do we assume that each member has something to contribute to the team, and something to learn? How do we put that assumption into action?

3. How do our personal beliefs about, or experiences with, connectedness, difference and power, influence our capacity to participate as team members? Are there ways in which they might limit anyone's participation?

4. Have we examined the ways in which our knowledge, skills, attitudes, and relationships, as well as the processes and systems we're part of, affect our team's capacity for participation?

5. How can we address knowledge, skills, attitudes, relationships, processes and systems to increase our capacity to be a participatory team?

CHAPTER THREE

WHAT COMMUNITIES HAVE LEARNED

About inclusion:

- The principles of inclusion and meaningful participation are congruent with the principles and presumptions of the adult guardianship legislation. For example, each CRN participant:
  - o can choose how they wish to be involved
  - o can get the least intrusive, and most effective, form of support to be involved
  - o will be presumed to be capable of making a contribution, and making decisions
  - o will have access to a method of communication that suits the person's needs.
  - o will have physical access to meeting and event space

They also said that:

- Participation is a way of being, not a set of strategies.
- Inclusion is different than representation; when you participate, you don't represent anyone other than yourself and your own experiences.
- There's no distinction between 'them and us' – there's only 'us'
- …but, when we target people, wanting to make sure we include the people the CRN is intended to support, we may label them, focusing on our differences rather than our similarities.

About meaningful participation:

- What is meaningful participation for one participant will be different for another – the important thing is that everyone chooses for themselves.
- Each person's contribution is valued by everyone, but is evaluated only by themselves.
- Everyone has the ability to change and influence outcomes and decisions.
- Everyone can 'see themselves in the project.'

> *"In an inclusive group, we have a profound responsibility to each other to be fully participatory."*

About furthering broad inclusion and meaningful participation:

- We need to get beyond strategies.
- We need everyone to 'buy in' to the principles right at the beginning.
- We need participants to learn more about community development principles and practices.
- The ultimate goal is power sharing –creating opportunities for each participant to change and influence things along the way.
- It's about leading from the side, as well as from the front (facilitating others finding and using their own voices, their own leadership abilities, etc.).
- It's about learning together and teaching each other.
- It's about being willing to be aware, willing to reflect, and willing to change.

> *"We try to create an environment where power sharing and power equity for all members, is a reality, rather than an ideal."*

A CRN Checklist

The following checklist is a way to explore your CRN team's experience with team building and community building. It provides a way to reflect on inclusion, participation and power sharing within your CRN team. It may also help to reveal areas where the group needs to build capacity.

- Everyone who wants to participate is included and welcomed.
- The people who are involved reflect the diversity of the community.
- People who are affected by the issue are involved, and have opportunities to play a leadership role.
- We seek out people who aren't normally included in this type of team. If they don't get involved right away, we keep asking.
- Our team's vision, goals, and action priorities were determined by all participants, after significant outreach to include everyone affected by the issue. Our team values and welcomes difference – in beliefs, attitudes, abilities and experiences.
- We see our separate parts – individuals and organizations -- as interdependent and synergistic (i.e. we are intrinsically connected, creating a whole that is greater than the sum of our parts.)
- Team members work together to identify and address barriers to empowerment and power sharing.
- Everyone understands how decisions are made, and are able to participate in the decision making process.
- Everyone participates as a team member. In the context of the CRN, no one person or organization has extra power because of the 'hat' they wear, or the role they play in the community.

"We need to change our thinking about who can make changes happen – it's not just highly placed people."

Outcomes of our team building process include:

- Agreed-upon principles to guide the team's actions.
- Shared awareness about how our experiences and beliefs affect the ways we work together.
- Shared commitment to choosing how we want to learn together and to work together.

- Shared commitment to building our capacity to work together most effectively, i.e. becoming more aware of what we know, what we can learn, and what we can change.
- A team that values and draws on diverse experiences and perspectives.
- A team that maximizes the participation and contribution of all its members.
- A team in which all participants have equal opportunity to influence how the work gets done, and the outcomes.
- Individual and team actions that are accountable to principles.

> *"We need to reassure each other that we're all just learning – no one has to have all the answers. We need to remain teachable."*

And, as a result of our attention to team building:

- More people in the community know about the CRN.
- More people in the community are concerned about the community's response to adult abuse and neglect.
- More people will see the CRN as a community resource for addressing adult abuse and neglect.
- More people will know who to contact when they hear about a situation of adult abuse or neglect.

Notes: Talking About Connectedness, Difference, Power and Systems Thinking

A Few Words About Connectedness

'Connectedness' is a concept that describes how we view our relationships with one another. When we think about ourselves as separate from others (for example, as individuals, or as organizations,) we tend to describe our relationships in terms of dependence or independence. Our society tends to place more value on independence than on dependence.

But there is another way of being; one that acknowledges our interconnectedness. It's true that individuals and organizations are sometimes dependent on others, while at different times they are quite independent. At the same time, however, we are forever interdependent. This is because we're always connected to a larger 'whole' or a bigger 'system' – such as a family, a neighbourhood, a workplace, a community, or the world – relationships from which we're never completely separate. Therefore, when we look at the bigger picture, we realize how interconnected and interdependent we really are.

Our sense of connectedness influences how we interact in all of our relationships. It affects our notions of 'them' and 'us,' especially in situations where people have been labelled. It affects the ways we offer support to people, or include each other in community activities. It also affects how we view the potential of each participant to contribute to the team.

Our sense of connectedness is especially important when we try to imagine sharing decision making power. This is true of individuals, as well as organizations. When we view ourselves as **dependent** on others, for example, we often let others influence our decisions and actions. When we see ourselves as **independent**, we're more likely to choose our own actions, and to influence others through such means as organizational policy and protocol, or through our personal leadership style, or our vote. When we see ourselves as **interdependent** we acknowledge our interconnectedness, seeing the importance of diverse participation and shared agreement.

Earlier, we talked about the need for teams to share power among participants of diverse abilities, and diverse experiences with dependence and independence. Power sharing requires that we let go of the idea that some people are dependent and others are independent: it can really only happen when we acknowledge our interdependence.

> *"We have to listen harder, and pay attention differently. We need to see things as a series of circles, not boxes."*

When each CRN member is fully empowered as a decision making partner, we're acknowledging that we're not simply a collection of 'target groups' (for example, service providers, family members, people living with a disability), but are citizens who are interdependently connected within the same community 'system.' Working together as citizens, we:

- Acknowledge responsibility for ourselves, and to each other, knowing that everything we do affects everyone else in our environment
- Attempt to become more accepting, and welcoming, of difference
- Welcome everyone's contribution

- Build on the things we have in common, our collective interests, preferences, attributes and gifts
- Find ways to support everyone's participation, including a person who is perceived as "different". In other words, we build capacity for participation by each member of the team.

A Few Words about Difference

CRNs are made up of diverse people and organizations, many of whom may never have worked together before. Despite our good intentions, fostering the participation of such a diverse group of people may be outside our experience. We want our team to include all of the people in our community who can make a contribution to the CRN. We want to ensure that everyone feels like an equal participant.

We all have **experiences** with difference. Sometimes we've been the person with a 'difference.' At other times, we've encountered others who we see as different than ourselves. In either situation, our past experiences affect our current response when we encounter people who we view as different. Our responses to difference include:

- Our feelings (and how we deal with them)
- Our beliefs and attitudes
- Our decisions and actions

In the past, people have held beliefs about difference that can continue to creep in if we aren't paying attention. These beliefs prevent people who are perceived as different from participating in the actions or decisions that directly affect them. If we share these beliefs, we may be tempted to exclude some folks -- to assume, for example, that 'clients' will be much more comfortable meeting separately from the rest of the group. Or we may believe that 'empowering' people with 'differences' means teaching them skills to participate in 'the ways we've always done things.' We might, for example, imagine what people with 'differences' will need in order to join 'us' in meetings or other community initiatives.

But the work of creating CRNs challenges us all to think about **what we need to change about ourselves and the ways we do things.**

We need to pay attention to the ways in which some of us have been treated differently, and the ways in which we have lost power in many parts of our lives. If we are to include people with 'differences' in the work of the CRN, including planning and decision making, we need to examine our own perceptions and reactions.

> *"We need to be able to deal with ambiguity – process isn't a straight line. Not one way of doing it – just jump in."*

A Few Words about Power

Power means different things to different people. The word comes from a Latin root, **posse**, which means **to be able**. When we use the word power we think about an individual's ability to participate, to take action, and to influence outcomes. Power affects our ability to influence things in our lives and in our environment, both now and in the future.

Our 'difference' may be a personal characteristic, such as race or gender or physical ability. Or our difference may be more related to our paid work, our social position, or our education. Sometimes, when others notice our 'difference,' they make assumptions about our 'able-ness', our 'power.' Sometimes, when we notice our own difference, we make assumptions about our able-ness, our power.

Power can influence the ways in which each of us participates in community life. It determines who is included, and how they are invited to participate. Power also influences our understanding of people's capability to be full participants, and how we understand capacity building. And power sharing occurs only when we acknowledge that people can make a contribution even if they are different than we are. While we may have differences, we have many more similarities.

Here are a few things that we've learned about empowerment:

- Empowerment is about increasing our capacity to participate, to take action, and to influence outcomes
- Empowerment is a precondition for, and a product of, participation in community decision making processes
- Empowerment doesn't just happen – it's a process to be created and nurtured
- Empowerment takes place in an environment of power sharing; it's an integral part of meaningful participation
- Sharing power means being aware of, and addressing, all of the ways in which we use our own power
- Sharing power means being aware of, and addressing, the ways in which power relationships can become invisible – especially when someone is viewed as 'different'

In the context of the CRN, empowerment won't necessarily mean that everyone is involved in every decision. But everyone will have an equal opportunity to influence outcomes. And the decision making process will be transparent to all participants. We'll be clear about our own willingness to engage as equal participants in community planning and decision making processes. We will also work together to demystify and re-program our previous learning's about power, and support each participant to exercise their own power in collaboration with others.

A Few Words about Systems

Everyone who is connected to others -- through a family, a friendship, an organization or a community -- is part of a system, or a larger whole. 'Systems thinking' is a holistic approach. When we think systems, it becomes impossible to separate ourselves as individuals from the ways in which we are connected with others. When we think systems, we look at the big picture. It helps us to see inter-relationships, not just issues. It guides us to look at patterns, rather than events. And it helps us focus our attention on the structures underlying the concern, not just the symptoms.

'Systems thinking' occurs when we understand how systems (which can include government, service agencies, community organizations, volunteer groups, self-help groups and families) affect us, and how we affect the systems we're part of. The CRN team becomes a 'system' that affects, and is affected by, each member. In turn, each CRN member is connected to, and affected by, many other systems (our workplace, for example, or a government policy).

By understanding how the CRN team is affected by each member, and by other, seemingly separate, community systems, 'systems thinking' helps us to plan for team participation in a community setting.

CHAPTER FOUR

OUTREACH TO INVOLVE AND LIAISE WITH A BROAD CROSS-SECTION OF THE COMMUNITY

The focus of outreach is to give everyone with an interest the opportunity to become involved in developing a coordinated response, to inform people about the vision for CRNs and to educate the community about issues of abuse, neglect and self-neglect. This promotes the idea that addressing adult abuse and neglect is a concern of the wider community.

Outreach is by no means a one-time activity. As time passes CRNs change and develop, communities change and develop and people come and go. As a result, it is necessary to keep doing outreach to ensure the CRN is a good representation of the community.

CRNs are doing outreach by:

1. Extending Personal Invitations

- Meet personally with people and invite their participation; network at events and in the course of your day to make people aware of the opportunity to be involved in the CRN.
- Send an invitation to attend a meeting, a workshop or a community event. People respond very well to personal invitations to attend, especially if an RSVP is included. Follow up phone calls work too because people feel more valued if there is a personal touch.
- Put a note about the CRN with Pay Cheques – Arrange to include invitations to participate in the CRN with the pay slips of those working in Home Support, Community Living, Community Services, etc. The CRN "Backgrounder" is a great introduction to CRNs. http://www.bccrns.ca/WebLibrary/General/Resources/Documents/Public2013042 5095932.pdf

- Involve organizations that support a diverse cross-section of the community such as multicultural organizations, Friendship Centres, Clubhouses, etc. Diverse communities find that these organizations are a great way to connect with a wide range of people who may want to be involved.
- Target Financial Institutions - Because financial abuse is so prevalent, financial institutions are an integral part of CRNs. They can play a unique role in education, prevention and intervention.
- Link with Educational Institutions - Look at who, in your community, is interested in learning and might be interested in co-sponsoring events or becoming involved in other ways. They often have an established connection to the community and can be a vehicle for involving people in the CRN process.
- Involve Youth - Many communities have found that involving youth groups or individual young people in the process is very rewarding. Their boundless energy and creativity is a great asset to CRN development. It is a great opportunity for them to learn about community issues and become a part of the solution at an early age. Young people invariably report that involvement has been an important learning and growing experience for them.
- Offer to do a 'CRNs 101' presentation for groups such as the fire department, service clubs, Ministry personnel, financial institutions etc. http://www.bccrns.ca
- Grass Roots Involvement - Many communities have begun their process with lots of people who do not work in the health or social services system, (i.e.: retired people, people from crafts and artist's groups, the Legion, service clubs) and people potentially more personally affected by the issues.
- Invitations to Involve Police - Meet with the person in charge of the detachment or the Community Policing Officer and inform them about the CRN. Community policing initiatives fit well with the values guiding CRN development. Discussing how the two augment each other is a great way to approach the RCMP or City Police.
- Agency Staff and Volunteers can help spread the word; they can let people they support know about the CRN and encouraged their membership.
- Target retired people with years of experience in banking, social work and in agencies or Ministries. They are a great asset to any CRN.
- Create a Buddy System re: Rides and Information - People are often reluctant to participate when they do not know others or have missed a meeting or two. Having a "partner" who offers rides and/or information or updates helps to alleviate feelings of not belonging.
- Create e-mail lists of people who are involved at different levels and keep them informed and updated about local, regional and provincial issues and resources.

2. Building on Networks that Already Exist

- Go to Where People Are - Making the effort to go to people on their "turf" often works better than expecting them to attend meetings.
- Partner with Groups Which Already Exist - In some communities a number of groups meet to discuss similar issues. For example, VAWIR (Violence Against Women in Relationships) committees, Elder Abuse Committees, Social Planning Councils and Age Friendly Committees are often made up of those who would be a great asset to the CRN. The groups can work together, with a few representatives attending both meetings, giving reports and coordinating shared activities and initiatives.
- Put together a CRN Steering Committee or Advisory Committee from groups in the community. Look at Community Action Networks, Seniors Advisory Committees, Social Planning groups etc.
- Ask CRN members with membership in other groups to do outreach and education. Members of CRNs invariably have connections with other organizations and can use those ties to do outreach and education.
- Booths at Health Fairs - Setting up a booth at a health fair, the BC Seniors Games, or other appropriate events is a great way of getting the CRN word out to a lot of people.

3. Using Print Media

- Flood the community with brochures about the CRN – Many communities have developed brochures about their CRN. As well, a generic CRN brochure is available through the BC CRN. Many communities have purchased a stamp with local CRN contact information with which they personalize the generic brochure.
  - o http://www.bccrns.ca/WebLibrary/General/Resources/Brochures/Public20130426101426.pdf
- Articles or Information about the CRN in the Newspaper - Many communities have developed relationships with their local newspapers and submit articles, media releases etc. about their CRNs.
  - o http://www.bccrns.ca/WebLibrary/General/Resources/News%20Articles/Public20130602123312.pdf
- Some CRNs do a newsletter or bulletin to keep members and other interested people informed. http://www.bccrns.ca
- Pass along BC CRN generated information and information from other sources.
- Use local print media and local TV to advertise meetings, events, etc.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF EDUCATION, AWARENESS AND PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

Throughout the province, CRN groups are involved in providing information and education, raising community awareness about abuse, neglect and self-neglect and talking about prevention.

For more information on prevention see: the Gathering Wheel Project – Best Practices in Prevention - http://www.bccrns.ca/generated/projectsmain.php.

Some topics which may be covered by CRNs include:

- Community Development and the approach to creating a CRN
  - http://www.bccrns.ca/generated/resourcesdevelopment.php
- How CRN development is proceeding in different places around the province
- The definitions of abuse, neglect and self-neglect – where there is agreement and different points of view
- The dynamics of abuse
- Sensitizing people to the personal circumstances of others; for example, what is it like to live with an acquired brain injury, mental illness, etc.?
- Information about rights; for example, how adults deserve to be treated
- What constitutes financial abuse or fraud
- Keeping track of the response – what it is, what is needed
- Understanding the adult guardianship legislation
  - http://www.bccrns.ca/
- How the criminal justice system works in relation to the abuse and neglect provisions of the adult guardianship legislation
- Hoarding http://www.bccrns.ca
- Gatekeeper Training
  - http://www.bccrns.ca/generated/resourcesgatekeeper.php
- Age Friendly Communities
  - http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/topic.page?id=89CBC67AB21B4EB995A4A94246BD6D8A
- How to recognize abuse or neglect and what to do
- Money Matters for Seniors – BC CEAS
  - http://bcceas.ca/programs/education-outreach/workshops-presentations/

- Financial Literacy – BC CEAS
    - http://bcceas.ca/programs/education-outreach/workshops-presentations/
- The Police and/or Crown Council's role
- Role of the Public Guardian and Trustee – http://www.trustee.bc.ca
- Updates on Adult Guardianship Legislation, including Powers of Attorney
    - www.nidus.ca
- World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (June 15) events and information sessions
    - http://www.bccrns.ca/generated/resourcesweaad.php

Communities have found the following strategies useful:

- Holding workshops and educational events or meeting with groups upon request
- Using video and print resources; for example, Money Matters for Seniors, The ABCs of Fraud
- Producing and airing radio ads or television segments http://www.bccrns.ca/generated/crndetaileddisplay.php
- Submitting articles to local newspapers and newsletters and writing and distributing a short CRN newsletter
- Using and promoting the CRN website www.bccrns.ca
- Sharing meeting space with other groups
- Providing refreshments or lunch at a meeting or event
- Targeting specific groups or individuals for specific sessions
- Holding World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD – June 15th) events in local businesses or prominent meeting spaces
- Partnering with other groups or organizations to provide information or hold events
- Offering to support other groups or organizations in holding their event and including a CRN presence
- Inviting well respected guest speakers
- Doing surveys or questionnaires to find out what people want to learn about next

Some specific examples of the work done by communities follow.

Workshops and Educational Events

- Speaker's Bureau - Members of the CRN who are well versed in issues of abuse and neglect, familiar with the legislation, and/or familiar with community services and supports volunteer to speak at clubs, agencies, groups etc.
- Education re: Abuse, Neglect and Self-Neglect for CRN Members. Many communities have talked about abuse and neglect, the escalation of abuse over time and the factors that put people at risk. Some have used the Gatekeeper program (http://www.bccrns.ca/generated/resourcesgatekeeper.php) ,
- BC CEAS's "Making Community Connections" program www.bcceas.ca
- BC CEAS's SAIL line
- COSCO workshops www.coscobc.ca
- The Unique Journey workshop with members of the CRN to ensure they are well versed in the topics. http://www.bccrns.ca/generated/resourcesdevelopment.php
- Community Workshops - Workshops are a great way to present information to a lot of people at once. Some CRNs have chosen to bring in an "outside" facilitator for certain events, while others have used their local mentor, coordinator or other members to lead. Workshops can be done on a wide variety of subjects and can be designed to suit any group or time frame. See the Workshops section of the website for specific ideas.
  - o http://www.bccrns.ca/generated/resourcesworkshops.php
- Neighbours, Friends and Families - It's Not Right! Changing Social Norms of Bystanders on Abuse of Older Adults. BC CRN Regional Mentors and many Coordinators are trained to deliver this program.
- Theatre - Theatre attracts a wide audience and allows people who might not usually have exposure to issues of abuse and neglect to become aware of them in a non-threatening way. In one community, members of the Youth Theatre assisted with a production and a huge cross-section of the community attended plays aimed at raising awareness about issues and options for assisting people. (for a copy of the script: http://www.bccrns.ca/WebLibrary/General/Resources/Workshops/Public20130516162548.pdf)
- Speak at College and University Classes – A number of university and college programs welcome information about abuse, neglect and self-neglect and about the legislation. Building relationships is the key to being invited to speak.
- Regional Meetings - Many people feel that the education, connecting and on-going relationship development that takes place at a Regional Meeting is invaluable. There is a teleconferencing line available; arrange for use through our Team Leaders
- Community Forums - Open invitation educational and discussion sessions can be an excellent way to inform a large number of people and to invite broad participation in the CRN. Some communities do "Lunch and Learn" sessions, for example.
- Call Your Mentor - Many coordinators and groups have taken advantage of the information, support, and "cheerleading" available from the people contracted to

act as mentors. The BC CRN has a mentor in each region. To find the mentor for your region go to: http://www.bccrns.ca/generated/whowearefield.php

- In-Services for Staff of Different Agencies - Be available to do short educational sessions with the staff of agencies and groups that would benefit from information about abuse, neglect and self-neglect and the legislation. Work to have information on the dynamics of abuse, neglect and self-neglect integrated into appropriate training programs, for example Home Support or Mental Health Volunteers.

- Take a Rights Approach – Be aware of people's sensitivity to certain words and labels like abuse and neglect. In talking about rights instead, it is easier to establish when those rights have not been respected. People are sometimes more open to hearing the information when it is presented in a subtle way.

- Involve people personally affected - People more personally affected by abuse or neglect freely deciding to tell their stories and educating the community has a huge and powerful impact on those present.

- Sensitivity and Consciousness Raising Workshop – Put on workshops for the community and service providers geared at helping people to understand what it might be like to be a whole person who happens to be living with a mental health diagnosis or a developmental disability.

- Take advantage of related training and networking opportunities. - Opportunities for networking and training abound at various events across the province. Taking advantage of local conferences, workshops etc. can be an excellent way to learn, share ideas and get connected.

- Piggyback on Other Initiatives - Some CRNs have joined forces with others in their community to get something accomplished; World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD – June 15th) provides a perfect opportunity for this every year.

"I've been a CRN Coordinator for over a decade.
One of the main reasons I've stayed involved for so long is the inspiration I get from meeting as a regional group of CRNs several times a year."

Video and Print Resources – A Place to Start Looking

- Many, many resources are available to CRNs though the BC CRN website. Go to the Resources section to browse.
  http://www.bccrns.ca/generated/resourcesmain.php
- Money Matters for Seniors - BC CEAS - This excellent video, available through the British Columbia Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support, has been named

widely as a great tool to educate financial institutions, seniors, their families, and the community at large.

- Accessibility of Information - It cannot be assumed that some of the people we are trying to reach read or speak English. Some communities have worked to ensure that information is available in a variety of languages, and in Braille, pictograms or on tape.
- Resources Developed and Distributed by the Public Guardian and Trustee of BC. Many resources are regularly developed and updated and are readily available to any CRN.

Television and Radio

- Radio & TV Spots - Some communities have used radio and television to bring awareness to the issues of abuse, neglect and self-neglect. Building relationships with local cable providers in an excellent way to spread the word.
- Submissions to Newspapers and Newsletters and writing short CRN newsletters
- Newspaper Articles about the CRN, abuse and neglect and/or the legislation - Articles have appeared in several BC newspapers about the legislation. For more detail see: http://www.bccrns.ca/generated/resourcesnews.php
- Newsletter – write a newsletter with your CRN to provide the community with updates and information. As well, the BC CRN produces a newsletter several times a year. See: http://www.bccrns.ca/WebLibrary/General/Newsletters/Public20130806142818.pdf
- Websites – The BC CRN has an excellent website at www.bccrns.ca As well, there are links to numerous other sites with a wealth of information and ideas.

CHAPTER SIX

COMMUNITY PROTOCOL DEVELOPMENT

Summary of Community Protocol Development Activities

Community protocols describe how any given team of people come together, and work together to support adults in situations of abuse, neglect and self-neglect. The effectiveness of community protocols is directly related to the strength of the relationships they describe between team members; these relationships have, in part, been built as people work together on CRN related activities.

When clear protocols exist between those providing support to abuse, neglected or self-neglecting adults, the quality of that support is enhanced.

The protocol development process is really about relationship and team building. The following activities have emerged as being important contributors to this inclusive and participatory process:

- Learning about the dynamics of abuse, neglect and self-neglect
- Discussing what factors might make any of us more vulnerable to experiencing abuse, neglect or self-neglect
- Envisioning what an ideal response could look like
- Becoming familiar with the three types of protocols and how they fit together to become a community protocol – this conceptualization has been compiled by the Public Guardian and Trustee based on conversations with people from all over BC, and is used in the community protocol development workshop. Http://www.bccrns.ca/weblibrary/general/resources/protocol/public201304251312 37.pdf
- Discussing and/or developing internal, or agency protocols – documenting, collecting and discussing what every agency or support program, including designated agencies, can do to respond to situations of abuse and neglect
- Identifying inter-agency protocols already in place, assessing whether they can be incorporated or built upon for the purposes of part 3 of the adult guardianship act, and developing others where needed
- Combining agency and inter-agency protocols into the development of a community protocol that describes the community's overall response, how

members of the public will know how to get help, and the community's process for preventing individuals from "falling through the cracks" some examples of what communities have identified as useful follow.

1. Discussing Factors That May Make any of us More Vulnerable to Abuse, Neglect or Self-Neglect.

- Discuss the Kinds of Situations that Put Adults at Greater Risk – Identify a number of situations that may put any of us at greater risk of experiencing abuse or neglect as a way of understanding some important content for community protocol development (for more information see: http://www.bccrns.ca/WebLibrary/General/Resources/Protocol/Public20130425130942.pdf

- People's Stories – In some communities, gathering stories about people's experience of abuse neglect or self-neglect has been a way of informing what a coordinated community response could look like, and seeing the kinds of situations where protocols might be needed. CRN members and interested community members often hear stories in the course of their work or daily activities. Some people may choose to tell their stories themselves; storytelling can be empowering for the teller. It should be noted that someone skilled in counselling should be available for debriefing at meetings or events where people are likely to share difficult stories. Sharing difficult information can make issues of abuse, neglect and self-neglect, as well as "gaps in the system" very real and personal.

- It's Not Right! Changing Social Norms of Bystanders on Abuse of Older Adults BC CRN Regional Mentors and many coordinators are being trained to deliver this program.

2. Envision What an Ideal Response Could Look Like.

- Hold Discussions with the CRN to Brainstorm the Components of an Ideal Response – Some communities have had these discussions or had educational events on this topic. It is important to keep informed about changes to legislation and policy in order to work toward the best options. http://www.bccrns.ca/WebLibrary/General/Resources/Documents/Public20130930091506.pdf

3. Become Familiar With the Various Types of Protocols.

- Review the BC CRNs Guide for Developing Protocols.
  http://www.bccrns.ca/WebLibrary/General/Resources/Protocol/Public201304251
  30942.pdf. This conceptualization of agency, interagency and community
  protocols and their likely content, will assist you in helping the community to
  create and document appropriate protocols.

4. Document, Collect and Discuss Each Agency's Response.

- **Use Realistic but Unrecognizable Scenarios** – In a workshop setting,
  brainstorming how to support abused or neglected adults, based on written
  scenarios, can be a very effective and thought provoking exercise. For example,
  participants are given scenarios and asked to discuss how and who could
  respond. When they are finished, the facilitator asks, "If it were 5 p.m. on Friday,
  would your ideas still be effective?" The exercise emphasizes the importance of
  informal supports; agency personnel have time constraints that some others may
  not.
- **Know Who Does What** - Ensuring that we have accurate information about who
  does what is critical. Useful, effective referrals may depend upon knowing such
  things as: what an agency does, how to make a referral, when they are open,
  how they respond to situations of abuse, neglect and self-neglect, what their
  eligibility criteria are, who to speak with if you have a difficulty accessing
  assistance and who to contact if the usual person is unavailable.
- **Presentations by Agencies** – Invite someone from an agency, support
  program, community group etc. to speak and answer questions at a CRN
  meeting or gathering. Two way learning takes place as the CRN members learn
  from the presenter and the presenter learns about the CRN.
- **Document Current Response** – In some communities finding out exactly what
  happens for people when they seek assistance has been a way for the CRN to
  get information. Surveys have been one way to collect information.
- Some CRNs have developed a **questionnaire for agency personnel** to
  complete about their response to abuse, neglect and self-neglect, information
  about the agency, or both.
- **Gathering Brochures** from all Community Agencies - Some CRNs have
  gathered brochures from agencies that respond to abuse, neglect and self-
  neglect to familiarize themselves with services.
  http://www.bccrns.ca/generated/resourcesbrochures.php
- Agencies Without Abuse, Neglect and Self-Neglect Protocols use the CRN as a
  Resource to **Develop Protocols** - Some members of the CRN work for agencies
  or organizations which have not historically had documented protocols. Their
  involvement in the CRN process has encouraged them to create their own
  agency protocols.

5. Inter-Agency Protocol Identification and Development

- **Who Are We and What Do We Do?** – In one community CRN members and local agency personnel participated in a two day workshop, modelled loosely on The Mountain and Beyond, a film in which members of a multi-disciplinary team candidly talk about the challenges of working together to support people. Participants then engaged in exercises geared toward building partnerships, links and networks. Formal and informal service providers attended. A one-day workshop with a similar agenda was also held in two other communities.
- **Protocols Based on Other Work** - Instead of "starting from scratch", some CRNs are looking at the protocols developed by other groups who have established ways of working with many of those with whom the CRN needs to work.

6. Let People Know How to Get Help as Part of the Development of Community Protocols.

- **Coordination of Existing 24hr Services** – Where there are a limited number of 24-hour services, it is important that everyone has the same information and are coordinated in some way to respond to requests for assistance, even if those requests are outside of their particular area of expertise. Some communities have liaised with and made connections between a number of 24-hour phone services.
- **Establishment of a Gatekeepers Program** – Some communities offer Gatekeeper Training. People not normally thought of as being on the front lines, such as pharmacists, bus drivers and letter carriers, are educated about what to do in a situation where they think someone may need help. Find the Gatekeeper Program at: http://www.bccrns.ca/generated/resourcesgatekeeper.php
- **Establishment of the Neighbours, Friends and Families 'It's Not Right' Program** - geared at people who have a close relationship with someone who may be abused or neglected.

ONGOING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Over many years of CRN development, we have learned a lot about putting the principles of inclusion, meaningful participation, power sharing, and assuming capability/building capacity into action. The following are some ideas and approaches:

- **Community Development is a Process** - Community Development is not something to be done and crossed off a checklist. It is a way of working together requiring patience, commitment and vision. Only when the groundwork has been laid and the community is truly involved does "ownership" begin to occur. http://www.bccrns.ca/generated/resourcesdevelopment.php

- **Always Talk about Values** - It is easy to fall into historical ways of operating. Unless we constantly and consciously revisit the values and principles by which we are guided in this process, we may create something which is not based on those values.

- **Approach to Learn, not to Teach** - Approaching the process with the idea that you are all there to learn together works very well.

- **Do not Expect People to "Represent" their Entire Peer Group** - No one person can represent an entire group of people. For example, a senior cannot represent the perspectives and experiences of all seniors, but only her own. When we include everyone who has an interest in participating, we bring in a variety of experiences and perspectives. That way the diversity within the CRN more accurately reflects the diversity of the community.

- **Importance of Support** for the process coming from the agency and the participating staff person - Participation in the CRN has, in many organizations, been the "responsibility" of one person. When a number of people leave their jobs at the same time, and there is not an agency-based understanding of the process or commitment to the CRN, it can suffer.

- **Acknowledgement of Power and Power Sharing** - Whether we are comfortable with it or not, power is an element of any group dynamic. It may have to do with jobs, economic security, accessibility, understanding of language, understanding of concepts etc. It does not have to be overt and obvious to interfere with the development of a strong, cohesive team. Power, whether real or imagined, must be acknowledged to create a level playing field.

- **Focus on Commonalities**, not Differences - A key strategy to success is focussing on common ground. As soon as you identify shared vision and goals, everyone is part of the same team. While we may be more accustomed to seeing differences, it is more effective to focus on similarities.

- **Get Rid of "Us and Them"** - Sometimes, when we describe people or organizations, we tend to put them into categories. We talk about "service providers", for example, or 'clients' and 'consumers.' Or we talk about government agencies, non-governmental agencies and volunteer groups. When we categorize people and organizations, it's easy to get focused on their differences, rather than what they might have in common. Sometimes we can assume that we have more in common with the people or organizations that are 'like us'. In communities, this can sometimes lead to a sense of 'us' and ''them'. Within the CRN team, it's important that there is no 'us' and 'them', but only an 'us.

- **Keep it Informal** - Informal approaches to meetings and information sharing help to get new people involved and keep them involved. For example, formal meeting rules may seem very complicated to someone who is not accustomed to speaking in groups. But an informal round of discussion, where everyone gets a turn to speak, can encourage idea sharing among a broader group of people.

- **Redefine Participation** - We may tend to define participation as the act of attending meetings. However, there are many other ways that people can be involved and participate in this process, whether it is telling their story, acting as an advisor to the process, hosting or facilitating an event, phoning, organizing refreshments, word processing, etc.

- **Create Options for Meaningful Participation** - Ensure that everyone can choose how they'll be involved, and what kind of participation will be meaningful for them. This can mean providing a range of options for participation, so people can decide which activities they'll participate in, and how often. Meaningful participation also means that every member has equal opportunity to influence both the process and outcome.

- **Listen** - In order to ensure that each person is heard, we must be willing to really listen to each other.

- **Respect People's Limits and Boundaries** - If someone is saying they are unable to do something we want done, we must respect that. If a person cannot do as much as others, it does not make them a less valuable team member.

- **Build a Sense of "Community"** - Even if your CRN members are from different geographic locations, it is still possible to form one community of people.

- **Opportunities to Learn** about the WHOLE Community - The CRN development process is intended to encompass the whole community, not just the parts with which we may already be familiar. It creates the chance to become familiar with the community in its entirety.

- **Engage in On-going Outreach** as the team changes

- **Ensure there is Support for New Members** - A well-established team can be daunting for a new person to join.

CHAPTER EIGHT

WORKING AND LEARNING TOGETHER

CRN teams have found the following strategies helpful for working efficiently and effectively to create a local Community Response Network:

- Strategies for effective, efficient meetings
- Strategies for getting and keeping people involved
- Other successful supportive strategies

Strategies for Effective, Efficient Meetings

- **Regularly Scheduled Gatherings** - People are more likely to attend if they can plan ahead. Meetings which are scheduled well ahead, or on a specific day of the month, are popular with participants.
- **Schedule with Lots of Notice** and Give Reminders - With people as busy as they are, giving plenty of notice and then calling, faxing or e-mailing reminders is one way to ensure maximum participation.
- **Chair Rotation** - Rotating chairing duties takes the pressure off one individual and gives a different flavour to each meeting. Some groups prefer this way of operating.
- **One Meeting for Business, the Next for Education** - When the CRN needs to both conduct its business and become better educated, divide the two needs evenly and let people know what to expect. It is a way to accomplish both tasks and not lose sight of one in pursuit of the other. This supports the relationship and team building approach, but does not replace the need to attend to the principles of inclusion, meaningful participation, power-sharing and assuming capability/ building capacity.
- **Different Meetings for Different Groups** - Sometimes it makes sense to divide the group into sub-committees or working groups for the purpose of getting more done in less time.
- **Redefine "meeting"** – there are lots of options for getting together. Although face-to-face meetings are important, especially in the beginning phases of CRN development, there are other ways of doing planning – by phone, e-mail, Skype etc.

Strategies for Getting and Keeping People Involved

- **No One Recipe for Success** - What may not work in one community can be a brilliant idea in another. There is no set way of doing this.
- **If You Feed Them, They Will Come** - Everyone from Dawson Creek to Kaslo to Port McNeil has realized that sharing even the simplest refreshments makes people feel valued and part of things. In some communities, members rotate bringing refreshments. In others the coordinator arranges for donations or purchases refreshments from money acquired through fundraising, for example.
- **Develop and Share a Vision** - It is important to have a shared and articulated idea of what you are trying to accomplish as a team.
- **What Does Success Look Like?** - It can be important to identify very clearly what success means to the group. It can save a lot of time spent "wandering in the dark" and can be a way to clearly define roles and activities.
- **Clearly Defined Roles** - In many communities, members of the CRN have very clear roles within the CRN, whether it be chairing, minute-taking, providing rides, doing personal outreach. These roles will differ from community to community but it is important that people understand and appreciate what everyone can contribute.
- **Opportunity to Change Roles** – sometimes people need a change. It is a good idea, especially in, well-established groups, to check with people about their preferred role.
- **Buddy System for People Joining at Different Stages** in the Process - People coming into the process part way along can be linked with a "buddy" who could bring them up-to-date, answer questions and introduce them to the group. This buddy system may be on going for some participants – providing on-going discussion, updates, etc.
- **Action Plan and Follow up** - Some communities have found it useful to draw up an action plan, with follow-up as part of the process.
- **Balance re: Task and Process** - For people to remain involved, interested and keen, there must be a balance between task and process. "Task" people often find it difficult to "not be doing anything". For them this may mean that there is no concrete, tangible product to show for their time. For "process, or relationship" people, moving ahead with work before there are clear guidelines for *how* the group will function can be very uncomfortable. Finding a balance between the two can keep people of both persuasions involved.
- **Moving Sensitively Through Conflict Builds Trust** – It is human nature to avoid conflict, but it does not disappear if left unacknowledged. Differences of opinion need not lead to conflict but can be an opportunity to embrace the diversity in a group. Moving through conflict, with respect and maturity, leads to a safer, healthier working environment.
- **Personal Connection of Members** – In small communities, people often work without peer support, which is especially difficult, given the emotionally charged nature of the work. Some groups create a "peer support" aspect of the CRN, whereby members trade phone numbers and make agreements about contact with each other. For some that means a scheduled check in time, for others it

means a commitment to be available, day or night, for consultation. Members are very clear that the purpose is to discuss their own feelings and/or issues, not the individual needing services.

- **Acknowledge Important Contribution to CRN Activities of Those Who Provide Informal Supports** - The group must recognize the importance and necessity of informal support if there is to be a good working relationship between all partners. The Salvation Army providing a meal or a bed, communities of faith offering assistance, volunteer advocates accompanying an individual to an appointment can all be things which keep people out of crisis and take some of the burden off people working in the more 'formal' system.
- **Minutes and other information to Interested Non-Attendees** - Sometimes people who are interested in the process cannot attend meetings. Sending them copies of minutes and other CRN related information is one way to keep them "in the loop"

Other Successful Supportive Strategies

- **Paid Event Coordination** Many groups feel that having a paid coordinator for an event is important. Coordinators play different roles in different communities, but most carry out administrative duties. Funding for coordination comes from various funding sources including using small BC CRN grants.
- **Host Agency or Not Host Agency?** CRNs may choose to have an agency in their community which may provide administrative assistance, office space, bookkeeping services etc. Others may decide they don't need a Host Agency and may proceed independently of any other organization. If you decide to have a Host Agency, it is important to use an agency that is seen in the community as being "neutral". If an organization has historical issues with other agencies or members of the community or supports an unpopular cause, it may be a challenge to attract the broadest participation possible. Conversely, if the Host Agency has an excellent reputation in the community, it can provide the CRN with credibility and legitimacy.
- **Fundraising** Many CRNs supplement BC CRN support by doing local or regional fundraising. This can be anything from having a donation jar at an event, to applying, through funding applications, for additional program money for the CRN. It is very important, when applying for funds, to remember that CRNs do not provide direct services. It is also important to keep our Regional Mentors apprised of our fundraising activities.
- **Regional Networking** - In areas that are dependent upon regional services, it has been helpful to connect with other communities and to develop ways of working together to deal with common issues. Inviting other CRN members to participate in educational sessions, staying in contact about activities and just getting to know what is happening regionally has been of great benefit.
- **Cheerleading by Members, Mentors and the BC CRN** - Sometimes members of the CRN, and coordinators in particular, have felt like they are getting

nowhere, heading in the wrong direction or should be doing something different. Very often, all they need is to hear that they are doing exactly what they need to be doing. There is no template for this work; we are creating it as we go and that can be very frustrating. For people used to task oriented work, the message that "Process is a valid deliverable" is important. So, when you feel lost, pick up the phone or send an e-mail!

Keeping Track of the Response

Once networks of support are established, it is important to monitor changes and improvements in the community's response. We are working toward zero-tolerance of abuse, neglect and self-neglect of adults but community development work is slow and steady. Community Response Networks have taken on the role of keeping track of the community's response to abuse, neglect and self-neglect in partnership with first responders, community members and organizations.

Summary of Related Activities:

- Identify issues of concern and discuss them; e.g. safer housing for adults who may be vulnerable to abuse
- Educate the community on the role of CRNs in keeping track. For more information see: http://www.bccrns.ca/WebLibrary/General/Resources/Documents/Public2013060 5171413.pdf
- Provide training and support for CRN members and the community about the ideal response (see Elements of an Ideal Response (to be posted on website))
- Discuss how to develop support networks for particularly isolated adults
- Identify community agencies and businesses who will assist adults beyond what is normally expected and provide them with information and support
- Build relationships with those such as police, fire dept., hospital workers, crown council etc.
- Ensure that information and ideas for change are presented in a non-threatening, non-judgemental atmosphere
- Work with your CRN to develop an "annual report" on the response of the community
- Work with your CRN and CRNs in your region to ensure that information and ideas are shared – don't recreate the wheel
- Work with your CRN and regional CRNs to ensure that shared concerns that must be dealt with at a different level (i.e.: provincial, national) are brought forward to the BC CRN.
- Work with partners to leverage funders to sponsor research, projects, services etc. which address issues of abuse, neglect and self-neglect of adults.

Acknowledgements:

The BC Association of Community Response Networks would like to recognize and thank all those who have been involved in believing in its vision and being committed to its development in the last 20 years. Because of them, vulnerable adults in our communities are leading safer and more fulfilling lives. We look forward to many more years of targeted service building safe communities for all.

- Ministry of Health
- Public Guardian and Trustee of BC
- Ministry of Justice
- BC Gaming
- RCMP
- New Horizons for Seniors – Government of Canada
- Vancouver Foundation
- Peace Arch Hospital Foundation
- Many local municipalities, foundations, businesses and a host of volunteers
- The local CRNs who are growing and maturing as they find their place in their communities

And **Alison Leaney** who provided leadership and held the vision through all the formative years

Thank you!

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