



BC Association of Community Response Networks

Stopping Adult Abuse and Neglect - Together

BACKGROUNDER

Connecting with Aboriginal Communities Re: Adult Abuse/Neglect June 2009

Background

The BC Association of Community Response Networks (BCACRN and the Public Guardian and Trustee of BC (PGTBC) have been generating joint activities designed to further local awareness of BC's Adult Guardianship Act: Support and Assistance for Abused and Neglected Adults and the protection it can provide to adults who are in the most vulnerable circumstances, anywhere in BC.

The BCACRN which is a provincial non-profit organization, supports the development and maintenance of local networks called Community Response Networks in any community with an interest anywhere in BC. CRNs are local networks of concerned citizens, organizations and businesses that work together to create a coordinated response to abuse/neglect in terms of response and prevention.

Among other things, the PGTBC provides education about BC's Adult Guardianship laws and supports relationship building at all levels to work toward an ever increasingly more responsive and coordinated response to adult abuse and neglect.

A wish to provide information and develop dialogue with First Nations communities in BC has led to a six year process in which we continue to learn about how to respectfully and with sensitivity, connect with First Nations communities.

How We Work

- We utilize a community development and a relationship building approach – we recognize community strengths and share information about the legislation as a back up when local social service and traditional approaches aren't enough
- We focus on mutual concern for older adults and others who may be abused
- We work as a collaborative and collegial team and our projects always include an advisory group inclusive of aboriginal and non-aboriginal responders and community workers concerned about abuse of older adults

Initiatives to Support Relationship Building in the Abuse Response/Prevention Field

- First Nations Dialogue – First Nations House of Learning – June 9 and 10, 2005 – stories of relationship building between aboriginal communities and local Community Response Network contacts – what helped them develop trusting relationships?
- First Nations Dialogue – SFU Downtown - March 15 and 16, 2007 – focus on IRSS and gathering aboriginal community stories on financial abuse prevention as IRS Settlements were acting as a catalyst for raising awareness of possible further abuse of elders

- FN Service Provider Gathering 1 – September 10, 2007 – focus on the regional, provincial, national resources available to address/prevent adult abuse/neglect
- FN Service Provider Gathering 2 – June 27, 2008 – further focus on resources available and where do we go from here
- Inter-tribal Health Authority Videoconference Summary of FN Service Provider 2 – October 2, 2008

Outcomes Thus Far

- Increased numbers of reports from aboriginal communities to BC's regional health authorities which are designated agencies under BC legislation which means if they receive a report of adult abuse/neglect they must respond
 - Joint presentations in numerous aboriginal communities by health authority key contacts, the PGTBC and the BCACRN with requests from aboriginal communities growing daily
 - Presentations at aboriginal sponsored events such as regional aboriginal health conferences, conferences on family violence hosted by Indian and Northern Affairs and Health Canada (FNIHB)
 - Relationships with approximately 25-30 aboriginal communities and numerous aboriginal serving organizations, both government and non-profit
 - 2 print resources
 - "Stopping Abuse - Responses from First Nations Communities"
 - "Guide to Resources/Services for Indian Residential School Survivors and Their Supporters"
 - Collaboratively developed Vancouver Coastal Health/BC Association of Community Response Networks First Nations Re:Act training materials available at www.react/vch.ca
 - Broad interest in what we are doing at the National Residential School Survivors Conference attended by 1800 aboriginal people in Winnipeg in April 2007
 - BCACRN has expanded our contracted Mentors Team to include an aboriginal woman from northern BC to ensure our team is more reflective of the work we are now doing.
 - Ongoing learning about cultural competence and how to operationalize it
- The opportunity to undertake our current Project with the generous support of the Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Canada - **A National First Nations Abuse of Older Adults Response / Prevention Project – Gathering and Sharing Promising Approaches**

Current Project

The purpose of the **National First Nations Abuse of Older Adults Response / Prevention Project** is to collect examples of promising approaches to intervening and preventing abuse in older adults in FN communities on and off reserve and to share those approaches with responders across Canada to The BCACRN Project team whose members have experience with a number of other national projects consists of:

- Alison Leaney (Executive Director of the BCACRN and Adult Guardianship Community Developer for the Public Guardian and Trustee of BC;
- Georgina Martin, of Secwepemc ancestry; currently a member of Lake Babine Nation, is a Regional Mentor for the BCACRN and a PhD student;
- April Struthers, a Regional Mentor for BCACRN, and an independent community and organizational development consultant working in Canada and abroad; and
- Rosalyn Hansen, B.Ed (BCACRN Administrative Assistant and educator).