

Agency, Inter-agency and Community Protocols

Introduction:

There are three types of protocol agreements that CRN members will be concerned with:

- **Agency Protocol:** Most organizations that participate in the Community Response Network will create an 'agency protocol,' describing the ways it can support adults experiencing abuse and neglect. The protocol will describe what an agency can and cannot do in situations of abuse or neglect, and how they'll carry out their role.
- **Inter-agency Protocol:** An agency or other community support will also want to develop protocols with certain other agencies with which it works closely. Inter-agency protocols might help to clarify roles and relationships between two agencies when offering support to an individual.
- **Community Protocol:** This protocol will describe the community's coordinated response to situations of abuse or neglect. It puts in writing the agreements made by each CRN member. A community protocol describes how, in different situations, CRN members will connect with one another to support an adult experiencing abuse or neglect.

1. Agency Protocols

An *agency protocol* describes internal policies and procedures:

- Each agency/community support, whether 'designated' or not, decides:
- what it can contribute when it learns of an adult who is abused, neglected or self neglected, and
- what it will do if it cannot provide appropriate or adequate support
- To facilitate this information sharing each agency can document:
 - Agency name
 - Contact person or position
 - Phone/fax
 - Hours of operation
 - Eligibility criteria
 - How they make referrals
 - Services offered
 - Cost of service

2. Inter-agency protocols

An *inter-agency protocol* describes policies and procedures to guide the relationship between certain agencies.

- Agencies and community supports develop shared agreements on how to work together, based on relationships that are established over time.
- Agencies that will develop these shared agreements include:
 - ♦ Regional health authorities and Ministry for Children and Families (Community Living Services)
 - ♦ Regional health authorities, Ministry for Children and Families (Community Living Services) and the local police
 - ♦ Police and Victim Services
 - ♦ Police and other agencies/supports, especially if Victim Services is not available
 - ♦ Police and transition houses, or other safe places
 - ♦ Various community agencies/supports and financial institutions
 - ♦ Designated agencies and the Public Guardian and Trustee of B.C.
 - ♦ The various players who can assist 'capable, but vulnerable adults' – for example, seniors counsellors
 - ♦ Others
- Some of these inter-agency protocols are based on frameworks produced provincially, and adapted at the local community level:
 - ♦ *Policy Resource Guide for Designated Agencies* – this has been used by many designated agencies to integrate Part 3 of the Adult Guardianship Act into their practice, and to guide further relationship development with other agencies and supports.
 - ♦ *Financial Inquiries by a Designated Agency and Investigations by the Public Guardian and Trustee* (available soon)
 - ♦ *Court Orders Under Part 3: A Guide for Designated Agencies* (available soon) – provides information for designated agencies about working with the Provincial Court – Family Division

3. Community Protocol

A *community protocol* describes how a team is created to support the adult in each unique situation. It describes how this is initiated, coordinated and evaluated.

- Together, CRN groups can discuss what an 'ideal' response to individual situations of abuse or neglect might look like.
- The content of a community protocol will likely include:
 - ♦ Vision, values, philosophy and ethical framework

- ▶ Documentation and verbal sharing of each agency's role, how they will make referrals to other agencies, and/or involve other CRN members in providing support to the adult. Many groups create time at CRN meetings to share this type of information.
 - ▶ Agreements to ensure that, when a person/agency that hears about a situation of abuse or neglect, they ensure that the adult gets connected with someone who can assist.
 - ▶ Agreements about confidentiality.
 - ▶ Agreements about follow-up when referrals are made to another agency or community support.
 - ▶ When, and how, to make referrals to a designated agency
 - ▶ Identification of the strengths of the community's response, where there are gaps, and how these gaps can be addressed.
- Eventually, the community protocol will identify how to let the public know how to get assistance in situations of abuse, neglect or self-neglect. This will probably reflect the ways in which people presently seek help.

