



Press Release/News Advisory

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SHINING A LIGHT ON WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

Vancouver - The BC Community Association of Community Response Networks (BCACRN) is pleased to recognize June 15th as the 5th Anniversary of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and is 'Shining a Light to Promote Seniors Living in Dignity', Alison Leaney, Executive Director of the Association, announced today.

"We have a profound responsibility to create a supportive, abuse and neglect free environment where people are treated with dignity, and valued as an integral part of society," said Leanne Lange, Chair of the Board. "World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is a key platform on which to spread that message."

BCACRN is focused on creating communities where seniors live in dignity. Elsie Gerdes, Director of Community Liaison, says, "Our call to action: 'Shining a Light: Seniors Living in Dignity' is about respect, dignity and caring for people throughout their lives. Anything less becomes a health, justice and human rights issue."

Leaney noted that recent research suggests older adults have an increased conceptual ability to solving complex problems. "That being the case," said Leaney, "we need to harness the 'brain power' of older adults when it comes to solving a complex problem like abuse of vulnerable adults."

According to the Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, 'abuse of older adults who are vulnerable is a complex, multi-faceted social, health, and legal issue, recognized worldwide and crossing all cultural, economic, racial, and social boundaries.'

Throughout June, Community Response Networks (CRNs) across BC will host a variety of events such as purple ribbon campaigns, multi-cultural events, community forums and displays to bring attention to World Elder Abuse Awareness. Watch for upcoming events in your community. For a full listing of events taking place near you, please visit www.bccrns.ca.

Celebrate the unique gifts of older persons, and take a stand for human rights. Just one person can make a difference!

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For more information, or to arrange an interview, please contact:
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Fact Sheet— Attached for Reference

What is the British Columbia Association of Community Response Networks (BCACRN)?

BCACRN is a registered non-profit association with a diverse group of concerned community members across BC who respond to adult abuse, neglect and self-neglect.

Our Mission: *To work locally and provincially empowering communities and individuals through coordination and relationship building to stop adult abuse and neglect – together.*

Our Vision: *Safe communities where all adults are valued, respected and free from abuse and neglect.*

Throughout the world, abuse and neglect of older persons is largely under-recognized or treated as an unspoken problem.

- Ageism (age discrimination) is a major cause
- Ageism and disempowerment lead to abuse being hidden
- Empowering older persons is the most effective tool in the response to elder abuse.

Unfortunately, no community or country in the world is immune from this costly, public health and human rights crisis. Research indicates that public education campaigns like ***World Elder Abuse Awareness Day*** (WEAAD) are vital for informing people in a growing number of countries about elder abuse and active involvement of the media is central to its success.

It is estimated that 1 in 12 active seniors in BC experience some form of financial abuse (Spencer, 1997). 5% of older British Columbians living in private dwellings experience one or more forms of abuse at the hands of family members (Podnieks et al., 1990). It is also estimated that 70% of women with disabilities have experienced some form of abuse (Stimpson & Best, 1991).

Abuse is the mistreatment of an adult that causes them physical, mental or emotional harm; or loss of assets. Abuse ranges from the conspicuous (physical, sexual, psychological or emotional abuse such as verbal assault or intimidation or humiliation) to the subtle, such as isolating someone or treating someone like a child. Emotional abuse is anything that may diminish a person's sense of identity, dignity and self-worth. Seniors are particularly vulnerable to financial abuse. Neglect is the failure to provide basic care, assistance, guidance or attention to a person, resulting in serious mental, physical or emotional harm or damage or loss of assets. Self-neglect means that a vulnerable adult, through failure to take care of him or herself, causes his or her own physical, mental or emotional harm or danger to assets.

Adults who are at risk of abuse, neglect or self-neglect are often unable for various reasons to seek support and assistance and the least able to help themselves. Vulnerability is a social condition. This social condition may arise out of diverse social factors such as isolation, a lack of education, poverty, absence of citizenship, a language barrier, a mental health diagnosis, an illness, a developmental disability, an addiction, homelessness or housing instability, a history of abuse, gender or sex, gender identity, and/or sexual orientation.