BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY RESPONSE NETWORKS: KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGES

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Final Evaluation Report

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British Columbia Association of Community Response Networks: Knowledge Exchanges

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the process and outcome evaluation of the project, "Local, Regional, Provincial and National Knowledge Exchange and Community Response Network Enhancement in BC" (herein, the "Project") of the British Columbia Association of Community Response Networks (herein, the "Association").

The Project conducted "Knowledge Exchanges" (herein, the "Exchange") in 10 areas of British Columbia, with the following objectives:

- Network Enhancement
- Inform the Networks / Inform Communities
- Networking the Networks

The evaluation was conducted through surveys completed by Exchange participants and a focus group with the Project team. Participants completed a paper-based evaluation form at the conclusion of each Exchange, and, where permission was granted, were sent an invitation to participate in an online follow-up survey. The surveys were designed to measure participants' perspectives on the Exchanges, the Project, and their use of the information presented at the Exchanges. The focus group with the Project team explored the team's perspective on the implementation, successes and challenges of the Project.

Process evaluation

The process evaluation asked questions about the implementation, strengths and challenges of the Project. Overall, the project was implemented as planned. Key strengths of the Project included generating new interests in Community Response Networks (herein, "CRN") and the interdisciplinary nature of the Exchanges. Results from the Exchange-based surveys showed that participants found them a worthwhile venture with respect to the content, format and location of the Exchange. The Project faced some challenges typical of projects of this sort, including challenges related to logistical issues of event planning; prohibitive costs of travel; and participants' varying levels of familiarity with CRNs. The Exchange-based surveys asked for input on how Exchanges could be improved, and the Project team used this information through the Project to improve future events.

Outcome evaluation

Did the Project help *strengthen* the Community Response Networks?

Just over half of participants at the Exchanges were previously aware that CRNs existed, and about half of the participants knew what CRNs do. Only about one quarter of participants currently belonged to a CRN.

There was generally strong agreement among participants that the Exchanges improved their awareness of what CRNs are and what they do. There was also agreement among those involved in CRN governance that they had learned something new about governing their Network. There was less agreement among participants that they planned to become more active in their local CRN.

That being said, follow-up surveys showed that participants had considered contacting a CRN since attending the Exchange, and some had actually done so. There was also some indication that participants would consider establishing a CRN in their region, after having attended the Exchange. Few participants indicated they had become involved in the activities of their local or provincial CRNs. Follow-up surveys suggested that

the Exchanges had "some influence" on participants' consideration of contacting a CRN; actually contacting a CRN; becoming involved in their local CRN; and a slightly lesser influence on consideration of establishing a CRN. The Exchanges had less influence on contacting another CRN in the province or becoming involved with the activities of another CRN in the province.

Overall, these findings suggest that the Exchanges were successful in strengthening the Networks insofar as they helped increase awareness of CRNs, their purpose, and how they operate. Subsequently, participants in the Exchanges did report being in contact with their CRNs since attending the Exchange, and in some cases, becoming involved with their local CRNs.

Participants who were involved in the governance of a CRN also reported learning new things about how to improve the governance of their CRN which can help strengthen the existing CRNs.

Did the Project help *coordinate* the Networks? Did it help improve *collaboration* among the Networks?

Just over 40% of participants who responded to the follow-up survey indicated that they had made a connection with another CRN since attending the Exchange. Participants mentioned making connections with the CRN hosting the Exchange, and, as one participant put it, "reaffirming connections" with local CRNs. Only a small number of participants who responded to the follow-up surveys indicated they had started a new collaboration with a CRN since attending the Exchange.

Although a relatively small number of participants had indicated new connections and collaborations with other CRNs, the Exchanges nonetheless appear to have played a role in fostering these new connections and collaborations, which might not otherwise have happened without the networking opportunities offered through the Exchanges.

Did the Project help improve *responses* to abuse situations in the community?

The evaluation findings suggest that the Project was successful in helping to improve responses to abuse situations in the community. Results from the surveys show that the Exchanges played a role in raising awareness of CRNs as a resource for planning a response to abuse in the community.

The findings showed that participants planned to—and indeed did—share information they learned at the Exchanges with their colleagues, communities and fellow CRN members. Such peer-to-peer sharing of information may play a pivotal role in ensuring the continued dissemination and utilization of the content delivered at the Exchanges, helping to extend their reach to those who were unable to attend in person.

A majority of the participants who responded to the follow-up survey (64%) indicated that they were able to utilize the information they learned at the Exchanges. Almost 60% of participants likewise indicated that they used information learned at the Exchange to complement their current practices.

Summary and Discussion

The findings from this evaluation suggest that the Project was successful in meeting its goals. Overall, the Project helped to:

- Raise awareness about the existence and purpose of Community Response Networks;
- Create new (and renewed) interest in the creation of new Networks;
- Foster new connections and collaborations amongst existing Networks;
- Improve governance of existing Networks;

- Increase involvement in existing Networks;
- And improve responses to abuse in the community.

Some key strengths included:

Raising awareness about CRNs. Only about 50% of participants at the Exchanges reported knowing about CRNs and their purpose, and only about 26% were presently involved with a CRN. This suggests that the Project played a key role in disseminating knowledge about the Networks and their purposes to new audiences.

Invigorating new and renewed interest in CRNs. A key goal of the Project was to generate new interest in CRNs and expand current CRN membership. The findings suggested that some Exchange participants did indeed become involved in their local CRNs after attending the Exchanges. Open-ended responses often included reference to the desire to re-activate a lapsed local CRN or to implement a new one.

Networking and connecting diverse groups. A common theme in the open-ended responses was the important networking opportunities that the Exchanges offered to participants. In addition, many participants talked about the importance of bringing together diverse groups in an interdisciplinary setting to better facilitate responses to abuse situations. These forms of networking can be an important pre-cursor to the creation of new CRNs and/or the strengthening of current ones.

Improving responses to abuse in the community. One of the key goals of the Project was to help improve how community members could respond to situations of abuse they might encounter. The evaluation findings showed that some participants at the Exchanges had considered or had indeed contacted their CRN to help plan a response to abuse in the community. Further, many of the follow-up survey participants indicated that they had been able to put information they learned at the Exchanges into practice, and had shared information with their colleagues and communities, suggesting a wide dissemination of the content shared at the Exchanges.

A key challenge moving forward with CRN maintenance and development is the sustainability issue. As earlier, this Project has help re-invigorate interest in CRNs and an understanding of their role in the community, but the challenge will be to now capitalize on this new energy. A common theme in the open-ended responses was the lack of resources available to help establish and maintain CRNs, especially as most of the work is completed on a volunteer basis and, as such, could not always be a top priority with conflicting workloads and demands.

Unfortunately, an evaluation like the one presented here—of the implementation and short follow-up period—cannot begin to measure and capture the longer-term "trickle down" effects of this Project. Although in some cases the proportion of participants who reported changes in the "desired" direction (e.g., new involvement with a CRN; contact with a CRN; inter-CRN connections and collaborations; and so on) were not terribly high, one should not lose sight of the fact that this Project did appear to encourage participants in the desired direction. The Exchanges appeared to be well received; the information being used; and, importantly, the information appears to be shared amongst participants and their networks. Moreover, the Project has raised awareness of CRNs across the province, leading to indications of new and increased CRN interest and involvement, even in this short time period. Overall these findings suggest that these Exchanges and the larger Project are an important first step to strengthening the CRN movement in British Columbia and the successes seen here would not have been realized without this Project.

INTRODUCTION

The **mandate** of the BC Association of Community Response Networks (BCACRN, herein the "Association") is to promote safe communities, through the development of community networks where individuals and private and public sector organizations can participate in activities to prevent abuse, neglect and self-neglect of adults and to support communities in their response to adults who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing abuse, neglect or self-neglect.

This project, "Local, Regional, Provincial and National Knowledge Exchange and Community Response Network Enhancement in BC" (herein the "Project") was funded to conduct "Knowledge Exchanges" in 10 areas of British Columbia, with the following objectives:

- Network Enhancement
- Inform the Networks / Inform Communities
- Networking the Networks

This report details the results of a process and outcome evaluation of this Project and its regional knowledge exchanges (herein the "Exchanges").

METHODS

Research Design

This evaluation encompassed both a process evaluation of the implementation of the Project, as well as an outcome evaluation of its impacts. Anthony Lombardo, PhD, an external evaluation consultant to the Project, conducted the Project evaluation and wrote this evaluation report.

This evaluation used a post-test design at two post-event follow-up times. At the conclusion of each Exchange, participants were asked to complete a paper-based survey which measured items related to the information shared at the Exchange, as well as the format of the Exchange itself, as discussed further below. At the Exchange, participants signed an attendance list and indicated if he or she agreed to be contacted again in the future. All of those participants who provided permission to contact were sent a follow-up survey after the Exchange. This survey measured uptake and utilization of the information shared at the Exchange, as detailed further below.

The follow-up survey was administered online through the SurveyMonkey service. Participants were invited to complete the survey through a personalized letter of information about the study sent by e-mail. The survey invitations were distributed by SurveyMonkey, which ensured each participant received a unique link to complete the survey. The unique link prevented participants from returning to the survey after they had submitted it, and it also prevented duplicate submissions from the same participant.

After all Exchanges had been completed, a focus group was held with the Association mentors who facilitated the workshops, as well as the Executive Director of the Association. This focus group was held by teleconference. It explored the Mentors' and Executive Director's perspectives on the Project, including strengths, weaknesses, and the challenges of implementing the Project and how those challenges were overcome.

Measures

Exchange-based Survey

The Exchange-based, paper survey measured items across the following domains:

- Awareness of CRNs and their purpose
- Current membership in a CRN
- Knowledge about working with CRNs
- Plans to use knowledge gained at the Exchange
- Plans to share knowledge gained at the Exchange
- Strengths and weaknesses of the Exchange
- Future actions
- Satisfaction with the Exchange (content, format and location)

Items were measured through Yes/No questions as well as through Likert scales about agreement (strongly disagree – strongly agree) and satisfaction (very poor – excellent). Some questions were open-ended to allow participants to expand on their responses.

Responses from these surveys were manually entered into an online version of the survey (also hosted through SurveyMonkey) by the administrative assistant of the Association. Original versions of the survey were sent to the evaluator after data entry was completed.

The Exchange-based survey is included in Appendix 1.

Follow-Up Survey

The follow-up survey measured items related to participants' actions and use of knowledge since attending the Exchange, across the following domains:

- Current connection with a CRN, if any
- Contact or plans to contact a CRN, since the Exchange
- Involvement with a CRN, since the Exchange
- Use of information learned at the Exchange
- New connections and collaborations, since the Exchange
- Changes in practice, since the Exchange
- Sharing of information learned at the Exchange

Items were measured through Yes/No questions as well as through Likert scales about agreement (strongly disagree – strongly agree) and satisfaction (very poor – excellent). Some questions were open-ended to allow participants to expand on their responses. This survey was administered online, through the SurveyMonkey service.

The follow-up survey invitation (letter of information) is included in Appendix 2, and the survey is included in Appendix 3.

The measures in the surveys were designed to reflect the key evaluation questions of the Project, as discussed below. Some of the survey items were adapted from the work of Skinner and colleagues[1] on measuring knowledge exchange and uptake.

Data Analysis

The survey data were analyzed using the SurveyMonkey service and Microsoft Excel. Basic descriptive statistics were used. The qualitative data (responses to open-ended questions and focus group discussions) were analyzed for key themes in the responses.

Some limits to the data collection and analysis methods should be recognized here. First, participation in both the Exchange-based and follow-up surveys was, as is customary in human subjects research, voluntary. Thus the responses will not capture the extent of participants' perspectives on the Exchanges and the larger Project. Second, the survey items relied upon participants' self-report, which is subject to its own biases of mistakes in recall.

Ethics

The ethical standards of the Canadian Evaluation Society were adhered to in conducting this research. Both versions of the survey included a preamble outlining participants' rights and responsibilities in participating in the survey. Participants were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality. The surveys did not ask any questions which could be considered personally-identifiable, and participants were informed they did not have to answer any questions they did not wish.

The e-mail invitation to the online follow-up survey was a formal letter of invitation, outlining how and why the participants were being contacted, and their rights and responsibilities should they decide to respond to the survey. The online follow-up survey specifically asked participants to consent to completing the survey before proceeding. The online survey did not collect nor retain any personally-identifiable material such as Internet protocol (IP) addresses or e-mail addresses.

Evaluation Questions

The following evaluation questions were devised from the overarching goals of the Project:

Process Evaluation

1. Was the Project implemented as planned?
2. What were the strengths of the Project?
3. What challenges of implementation did the Project experience?
4. How could the Project have been improved?

Outcome Evaluation

1. Did the Project help *strengthen* the Networks?
2. Did the Project help co*ordinate* the Networks?
3. Did the Project improve *collaboration* amongst the Networks?
4. Did the Project help *improve* responses to abuse situations in the community?

[1] Kelly Skinner, "Developing a Tool to Measure Knowledge Exchange Outcomes," *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*, vol. 22, no. 1 (2007): 49-73.

Sample and Response Rates

Event-Based Survey

A total of 219 participants responded to the Event-based, paper survey, as follows:

Exchange Location	Response Count	Response Percent
Kootenays	29	13%
Okanagan	17	8%
Kamloops	19	9%
Vancouver	43	20%
Abbotsford	29	13%
Duncan	11	5%
Courtenay	8	4%
Quesnel	18	8%
Terrace	21	10%
Dawson Creek	24	11%
Total	219	100%

Follow-Up Surveys

A total of 84 participants responded to and completed the online follow-up surveys, as follows:

Location	Invitation[1]	Bounces[2]	Opt Outs[3]	Total Invited	Total Response	No Consent[4]	Revised Total Response	Response Rate
Kootenays	26	1	0	25	15	1	14	56%
Okanagan	23	3	2	18	12	1	11	61%
Kamloops	17	5	1	11	4	0	4	36%
Abbotsford	32	3	2	27	13	0	13	48%
Vancouver	48	3	2	43	21	1	20	47%
Courtenay	8	1	0	7	5	0	5	71%
Duncan	7	3	0	4	3	0	3	75%
Quesnel	5	0	0	5	2	0	2	40%
Terrace	22	0	3	19	10	0	10	53%
Dawson Creek	5	0	0	5	2	0	2	40%
Total	**193**	**19**	**10**	**164**	**87**	**3**	**84**	**51%**

[1] Refers to the number of participants who agreed to be contacted again by e-mail when signing the attendance register at the Exchange. This number does not reflect the total number of participants at the Exchange.

[2] Refers to e-mail addresses which were not functional at the time the survey invitations were distributed.

[3] Refers to participants who received the survey invitation and opted-out of future contact through the SurveyMonkey service.

[4] Refers who participants who did not give consent to completing the online survey.

Participant Involvement in Community Response Networks

Participants were asked to describe their current level of involvement with a CRN, at the time they attended the Exchange:

Current Connection with a Community Response Network	Response Percent	Response Count
I was not connected with a Community Response Network.	49%	41
I belonged to or worked with a Community Response Network.	39%	32
I was involved in the leadership of a Community Response Network.	12%	10
	100%	83

As the table above illustrates, 39% (n=32) of respondents belonged to or already worked with a CRN when they attended the Exchange. Twelve percent (n=10) were involved in the leadership of a CRN, and just about half of the respondents (n=41) were not connected with a CRN at the time they attended. Overall, 42 (51%) of the participants who responded to the survey were already involved in some capacity with a CRN at the time they attended the Exchange.

Follow-Up Survey Participant Demographics

Participants in the follow-up survey were asked to describe the number of years they have worked in their area; the percentage of their time they spent on managing abuse situations; their line of work; as well as their age and sex.

YEARS WORKING IN THEIR AREA

Years	Number	%
0-10	24	42%
11-20	15	26%
21-30	9	16%
30+	9	16%
Total	57	100%

PERCENTAGE OF TIME SPENT ON ABUSE SITUATIONS

Percentage of Time	Number	%
0-25	38	70%
26-50	7	13%
51-75	2	4%
76-100	7	13%
Total	54	100%

LINE OF WORK

Line of Work	Number	%
Front-line worker	24	21%
Consultant to others	26	23%
Educator	23	20%
Supervisor	22	19%
Other	19	17%
Total	114	100%

AGE

Age	Number	%
19 or younger	0	0%
20 - 29	1	2%
30 - 39	5	8%
40 - 49	17	28%
50 - 59	20	33%
60 - 69	13	21%
70 - 79	4	7%
80 or older	1	2%
Total	61	100%

SEX

Sex	Number	%
Male	6	10%
Female	54	87%
Prefer not to answer	2	3%
Total	62	100%

PROCESS EVALUATION

Was the Project implemented as planned?

The Knowledge Exchanges of the Project were held as planned, in the locations as follows, with total numbers of participants:

Exchange Location	Number of Participants
Kootenays	32
Okanagan	23
Kamloops	28
Vancouver	90
Abbotsford	40
Duncan	20
Courtenay	12
Quesnel	21
Terrace	31
Dawson Creek	30
Total	327

What were the strengths of the Project?

The BCACRN Executive Director and Mentors were asked during a focus group to reflect on what they saw as the strengths of the Project. Key themes of their responses included:

Strengths related to the CRNs

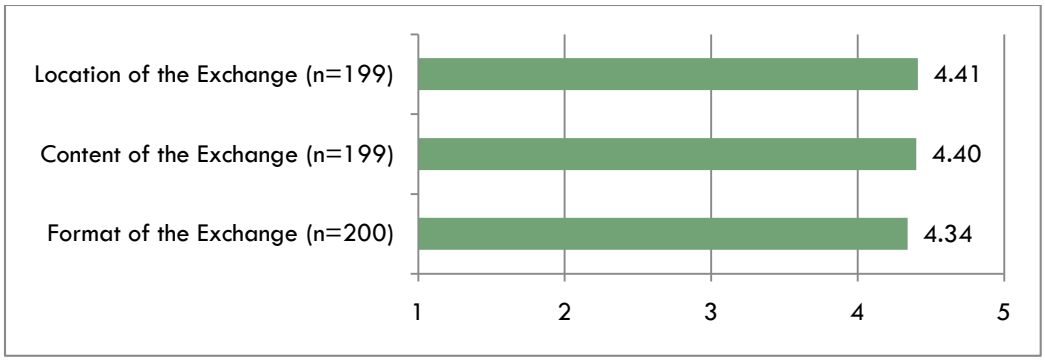
- Generating new interest in and creating "new energy" for CRNs
- The development of strong working relationships between CRNs, communities and community agencies
- The involvement of a broad range of participants at the Exchanges, from a range of interdisciplinary approaches, and the involvement of key stakeholders, including provincial health authorities and the Public Guardian and Trustee
- The involvement of different ethnic communities in the Exchanges

Strengths related to the internal operations of the Association

- The involvement of the strong Mentors, who were comfortable with engaging groups at the Exchanges and who had the ability to facilitate sophisticated activities at those Exchanges (such as the "Open Space" activity)
- The strengthening of internal relationships between the Executive Director (who joined the organization early into the Project) and the Mentors

One of the focus group participants remarked that this Project had helped "awaken the sleeping giant," but the concern was now turning to sustaining that energy and not allowing it to dissipate.

Results from the Exchange-based survey suggests that the participants at the events found them a worthwhile venture. The evaluation survey assessed participants' satisfaction with the Exchanges on three items: location, format and content:



1 = Very Poor; 2 = Poor; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Good; 5 = Excellent

The results show strong satisfaction across all three items.

Helpful Features of the Exchanges

One of the open-ended questions on the evaluation survey asked about what components of the Exchange participants found particularly useful:

- Learning about CRNs
- Learning about a substantive area that was largely unknown to them
- Networking and making connections with others working in the area
- Sharing stories and hearing different perspectives on issues of abuse
- Opening discussion on a "hidden" issue
- Breadth of the information presented
- Pamphlets and handouts
- "Open Space" time

What challenges did the Project face?

During the focus group, the Association Executive Director and Mentors were asked to reflect on the challenges they encountered in implementing this Project. Key themes were as follows:

- Typical logistical issues involved in event-planning, such as no-shows among registrants and issues with inclement weather
- Prohibitive costs of travel, particularly for remote regions; although this issue was overcome through communication technology, the face-to-face experience was seen to be most valuable
- The Exchange participants had varying levels of familiarity with CRNs, which sometimes made it difficult to target the material; it was suggested that the development of pre-learning materials might be helpful in this regard
- Preparation time for the volunteers involved with the Exchanges could sometimes be unexpectedly high

Despite these challenges, the Project was implemented without any major interruptions or obstacles to the workplan.

How could the Project have been improved?

One of the open-ended questions on the evaluation survey asked about how future Exchanges could be improved. Results suggested improvements in three key areas:

Area	Specific Recommendations
Accessibility	• Microphones should be provided for speakers • Microphones should be available for questions from the audience • Some room temperatures too cold • Provide documentation in other languages
Content	• "Open Space" activity seen as useful, but confusing and should not occur over the lunch break • Better facilitation; less interruptions to the speakers • Discussion on national initiatives seen as vague • Afternoon sessions lacked direction
Networking and Information Exchange	• Encourage more active audience participation • Provide participant contact information so that participants can network after the event • Provide lists of websites referred to throughout the presentations • Invite representatives from the "designated agencies" to answer questions from the audience • Ask participants for suggestions as to whom should be invited to the Exchanges • More representatives from financial services and municipalities

It is important to note that findings from the process evaluation were shared with the Project team throughout the evaluation and the team was able to use the information to make adjustments and refinements to future events during the Project, where possible.

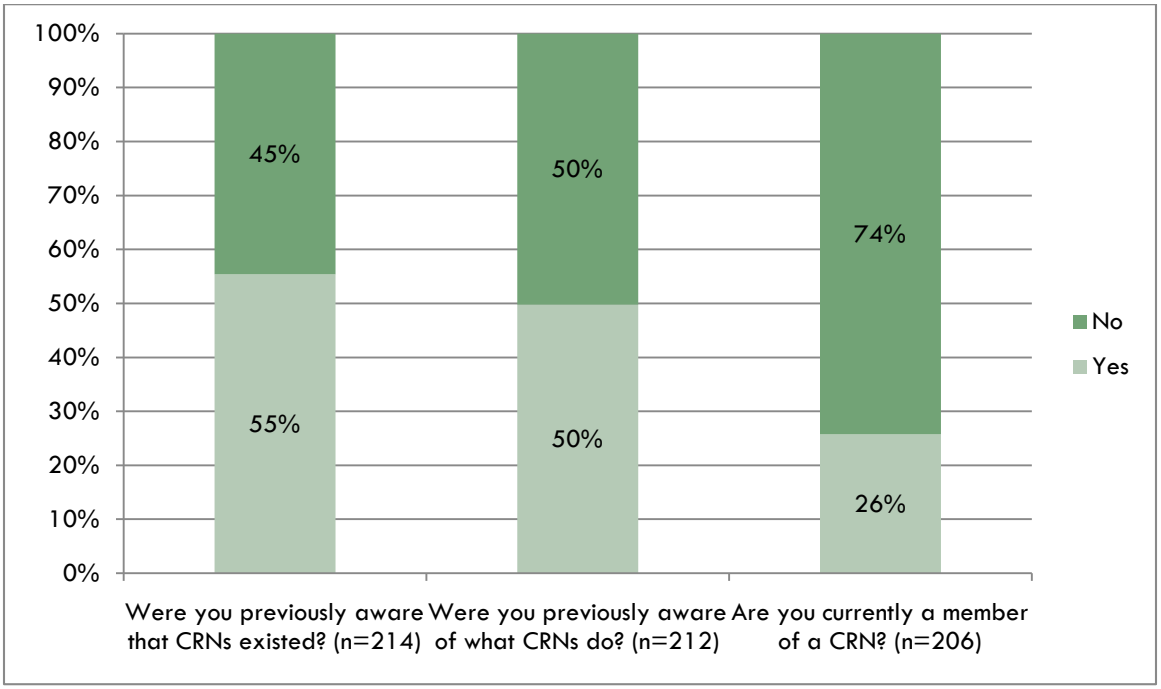
OUTCOME EVALUATION

Did the Project help *strengthen* the Community Response Networks?

One of the goals of the Project was to *strengthen* the Networks. "Strengthening" the network included issues such as raising awareness of the Networks; growing the membership of the Networks; and improving the governance of the Networks.

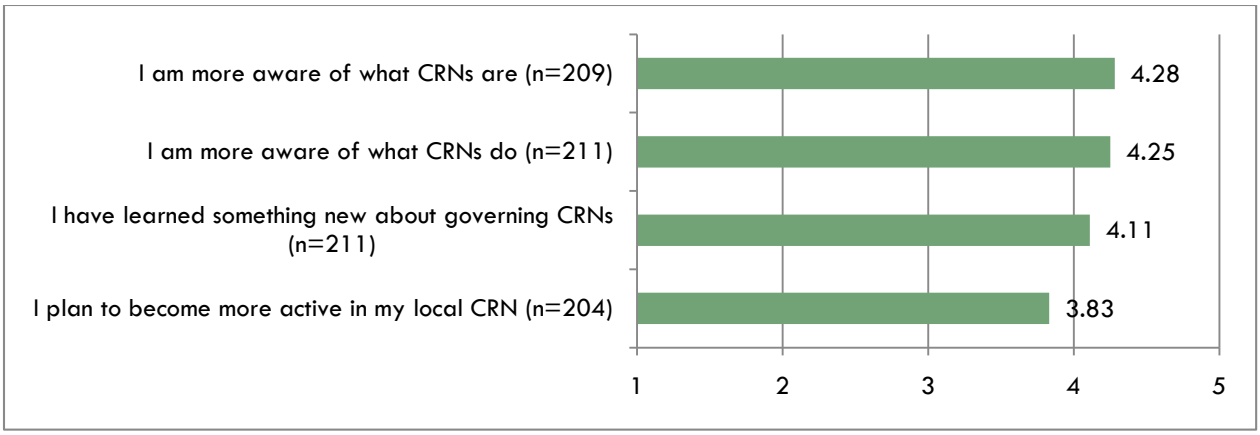
Raising Awareness of the Networks

In the Exchange-based surveys, participants were asked to indicate their current knowledge of CRNs, the function of CRNs, and if they were currently a member of a CRN, as follows:



As illustrated above, just over half (55%, n=118) of participants were previously aware that CRNs existed, and a slightly smaller number (50%, n=105) were previously aware of what CRNs do. However, only 26% (n=52) of participants belonged to a CRN at the time they attended the Exchange.

A key outcome of the Exchanges is to increase awareness about CRNs and their functions, as well as to grow CRN membership. Participants were asked to reflect on their levels of knowledge in these areas, after having attended the Exchange:

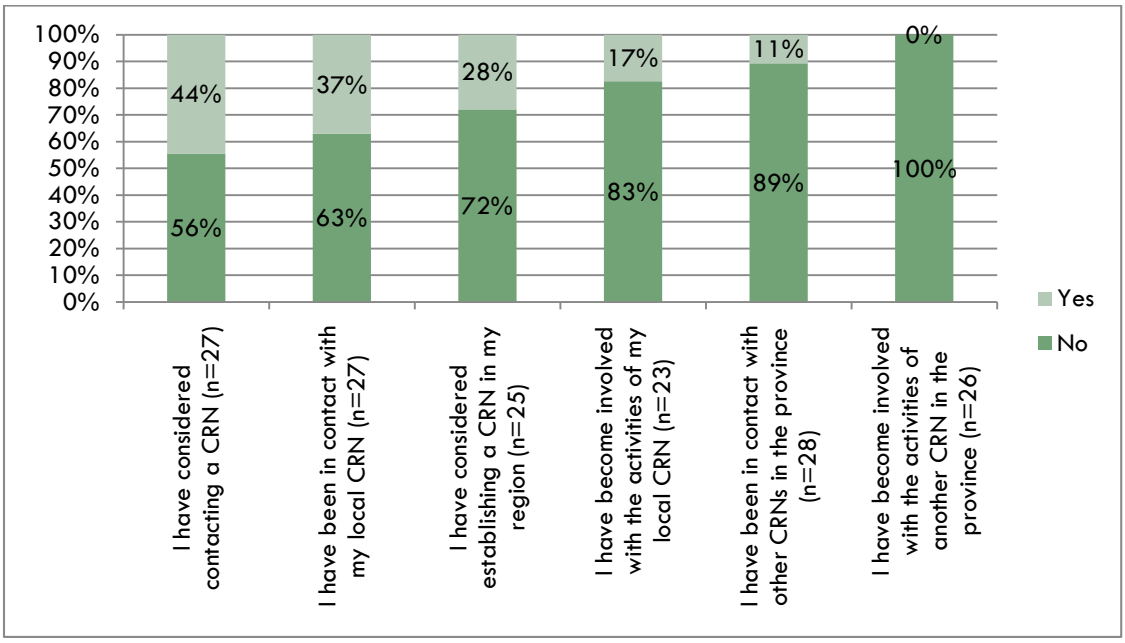


1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither Agree/Disagree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree

These results show agreement-to-strong agreement with the role of the Exchanges in increasing awareness of what CRNs are and what CRNs do. There is also general agreement that participants have learned something new about governing CRNs by attending the Exchanges. There is less agreement, however, about participants' plans to become more active in their local CRN.

Changes in Participant Involvement in Community Response Networks

A key concern of this Project is encouraging the growth of CRNs in British Columbia. Participants who indicated they were not connected with a CRN at the time they attended the Exchange (n=38) were asked if their involvement had changed since attending the Exchange:

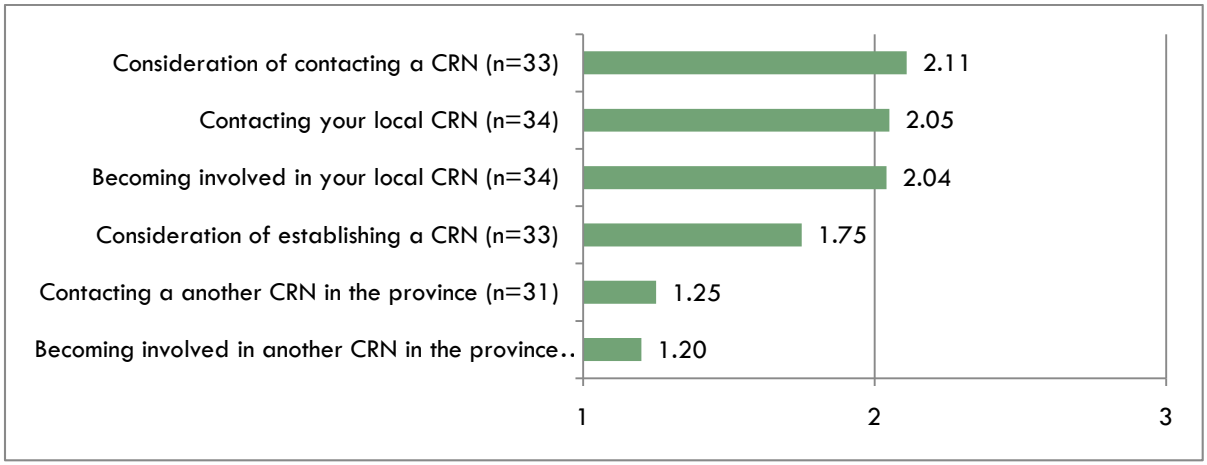


As the graph above shows, the Exchange had an impact on encouraging participants to consider contacting a CRN (n=12), or indeed having contacted a CRN (n=10). There is some indication of participants considering establishing a CRN in their region, having attending the Exchange (n=7). There is less support for participants becoming involved in the activities of their local CRN (n=4); having been in contact with other provincial CRNs (n=3); or becoming involved with the activities of another CRN in the province (n=0).

Participants noted they had become involved with CRNs by seeking info about responding to abuse situations; inquiring about how to become more involved in a CRN; and attending CRN sessions and meetings.

What influence did the Exchange have on these outcomes?

Participants were asked to rate the influence the Exchange had on the outcomes outlined above:



Scale: (1) No influence; (2) Some influence; (3) Great influence

As the graph indicates, participants reported that the Exchanges had some-to-great influence on their considerations of contacting their local CRN; their decisions to make contact with their local CRN; and becoming involved in a local CRN. There was less-to-no influence on the remaining items about CRNs in the province.

Overall, these findings suggest that the Exchanges are having success in encouraging local engagement with CRNs, but less so on establishing new CRNs and contacting other CRNs outside of one's local region.

Learning about Community Response Network Governance

Another key goal of the Project is to build leadership capacity in governing CRNs. Participants who indicated that they were involved in the governance of a CRN at the time they attended the Exchange (n=10) were asked questions about what they learned about CRN governance at the Exchanges.

Eight of the participants who indicated they were involved in the governance of a CRN at the time they attended the Exchange indicated that they had learned information at the Exchange about governing their CRN. Participants noted learning the following aspects to help govern their CRNs:

- Clarity regarding the BCACRN and the information and resources they have available
- Learning about CRN "Guiding Principles"
- Learning "best practices" from other networks regarding CRN involvement, leadership, and working with ethnocultural communities
- Skills in presenting difficult topics to wider audiences
- Inclusion of CRNs in health authorities
- Interactions with members of other CRNs was helpful

Two participants indicated that they had been able to implement what they had learned about CRN governance since attending the Exchange. Only one participant elaborated on his/her response, indicating they had used the information to expand their CRN membership; unfortunately, the participant did not provide further detail on this point.

Six participants indicated they had not been able to implement the governance information they had learned at the Exchange for various reasons: workload; competing constraints on time, given that CRN involvement is volunteer; and inactive Networks at the time of the Exchange.

Summary

Just over half of participants at the Exchanges were previously aware that CRNs existed, and about half of the participants knew what CRNs do. Only about one quarter of participants currently belonged to a CRN.

There was generally strong agreement among participants that the Exchanges improved their awareness of what CRNs are and what they do. There was also agreement among those involved in CRN governance that they had learned something new about governing their Network. There was less agreement among participants that they planned to become more active in their local CRN.

That being said, follow-up surveys showed that participants had considered contacting a CRN since attending the Exchange, and some had actually done so. There was also some indication that participants would consider establishing a CRN in their region, after having attended the Exchange. A few participants indicated they had become involved in the activities of their local or provincial CRNs. Follow-up surveys suggested that the Exchanges had "some influence" on participants' consideration of contacting a CRN; actually contacting a CRN; becoming involved in their local CRN; and a slightly lesser influence on consideration of establishing a CRN. The Exchanges had less influence on contacting another CRN in the province or becoming involved with the activities of another CRN in the province.

Overall, these findings suggest that the Exchanges were successful in strengthening the Networks insofar as they helped increase awareness of CRNs, their purpose, and how they operate. Subsequently, participants in the Exchanges did report being in contact with their CRNs since attending the Exchange, and in some cases, becoming involved with their local CRNs.

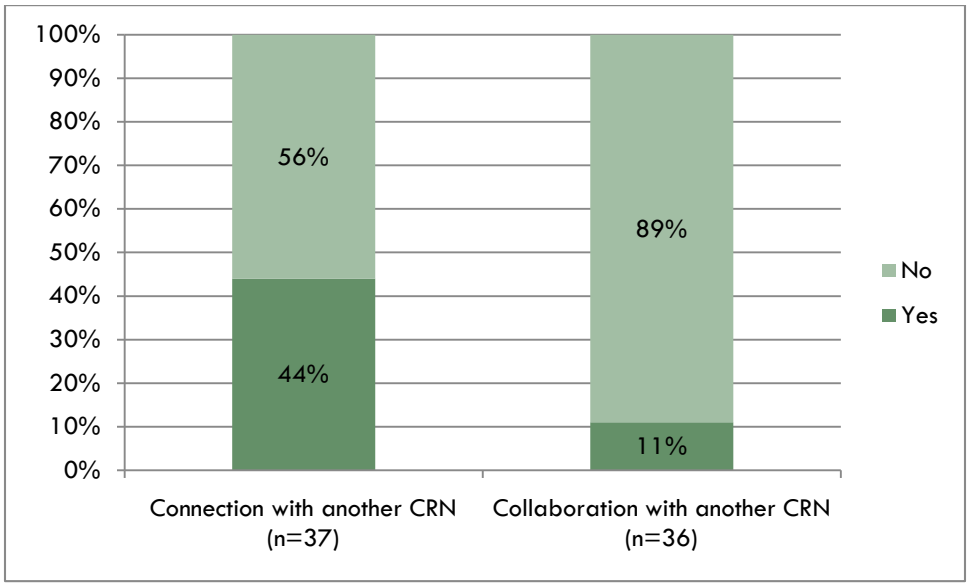
Participants who were involved in the governance of a CRN also reported learning new things about how to improve the governance of their CRN which can help strengthen the existing CRNs.

Did the Project help *coordinate* the Networks?

Did it help improve *collaboration* among the Networks?

Two related goals of the Project were to, first, help *coordinate* the Networks and, second, to help improve *collaboration* amongst the Networks. These goals were measured through items which investigated new connections and collaborations amongst members of CRNs.

A priority of the Project was to facilitate new connections and collaborations between CRNs in British Columbia. Participants who indicated they were involved with a CRN at the time they attended the Exchange were asked about new CRN connections and collaborations they had made since the Exchange.



Of these respondents, 17 (44%) said that they had made connections with another CRN since the Exchange; 22 (56%)said they had not. Respondents who had made connections mentioned the following:

- Connections with BCACRN
- New connection with CRN hosting Exchange
- "Reaffirming connections" with CRNs in the area
- Making connections with new community agencies

Participants were also asked about facilitating new collaborations between CRNs. Of those who responded to the question (n=38), 4 (11%) had indicated they had started a new collaboration with a CRN since attending the Exchange, and 34 (89%) indicated they had not.

Summary

Just over 40% of participants who responded to the follow-up survey indicated that they had made a connection with another CRN since attending the Exchange. Participants mentioned making connections with the CRN hosting the Exchange, and, as one participant put it, "reaffirming connections" with local CRNs. Only a small number of participants who responded to the follow-up surveys indicated they had started a new collaboration with a CRN since attending the Exchange.

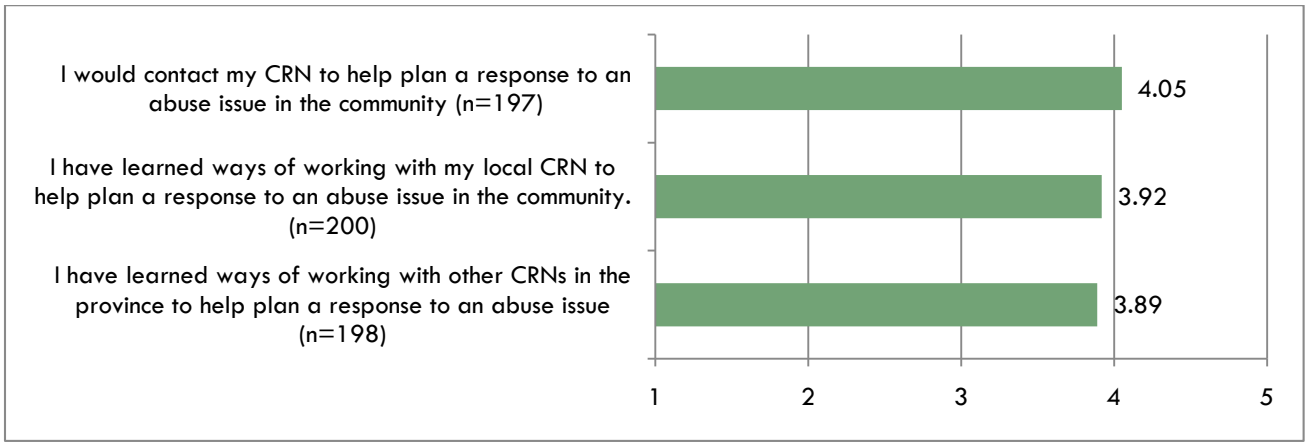
Although a relatively small number of participants had indicated new connections and collaborations with other CRNs, the Exchanges nonetheless appear to have played a role in fostering these new connections and collaborations, which might not otherwise have happened without the networking opportunities offered through the Exchanges.

Did the Project help improve *responses* to abuse situations in the community?

An overarching goal of the Networks themselves is to improve community response to abuse situations, and a primary goal of this Project was to help support community members in drawing upon CRN resources to improve responses to abuse situations. This goal was measured through items related to participants' uptake and utilization of the information learned at the Exchanges.

Action Impacts

The Exchange-based survey assessed the impacts of the information presented at the Exchange on participants' actions in responding to an abuse issue in their community:



1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither Agree/Disagree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree

Average responses are strong again, although lower than the scores on the awareness items. Most encouraging is the strongest item, with general agreement that participants would contact their local CRN to help plan a response to an abuse issue in their community.

Using Information & Making Connections

Participants were asked if they felt they would be able to use the information they learned at the Exchange, and if they had made new connections at the Exchange. Of those who responded to the question (n=201), 99% indicated they would be able to use the information they learned at the Exchange.

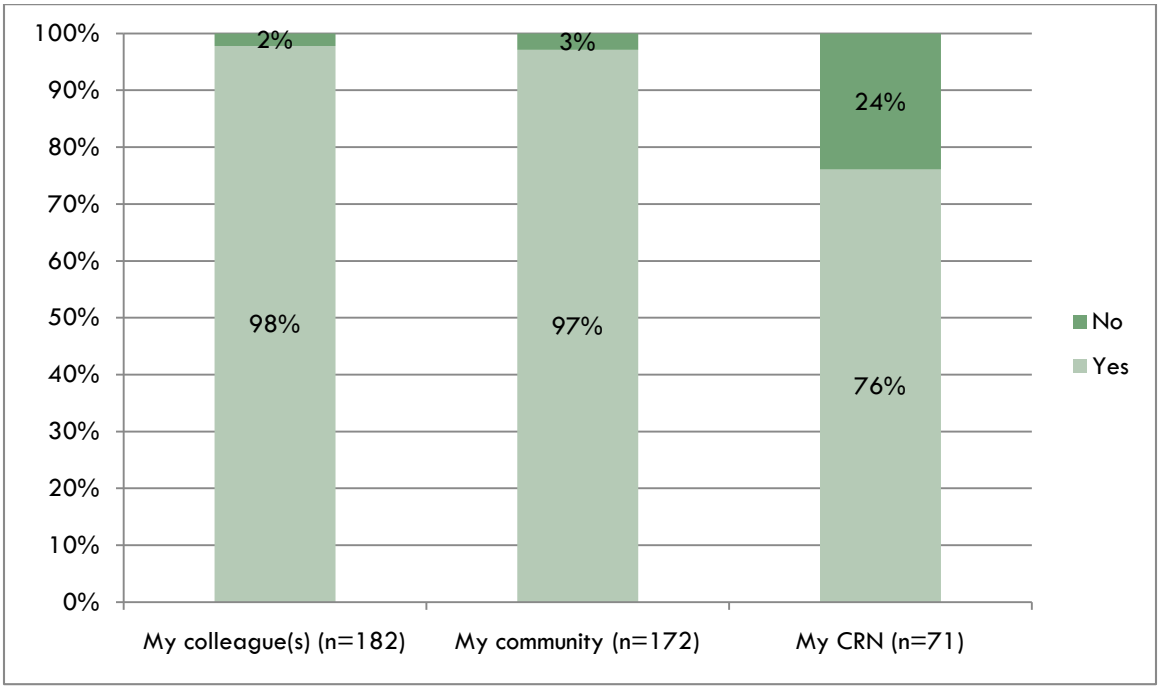
Participants indicated they would use the knowledge learned at the *Exchange* in a number of ways:

- Increased awareness of CRNs and their purpose
- Increased awareness of the roles/responsibilities of community agencies
- Better understanding of the process of responding to abuse
- Encouraging new involvement in CRNs
- Encouraging new ideas about community involvement
- Improving interdisciplinary collaboration

Similarly, of those who responded to the question about making connections (n=196), 97% (n=191) indicated they had made new connections at the Exchange.

Sharing Information

The Exchange-based survey assessed the extent to which participants planned to share the information they learned at the Exchange with their communities, colleagues and their own CRNs:

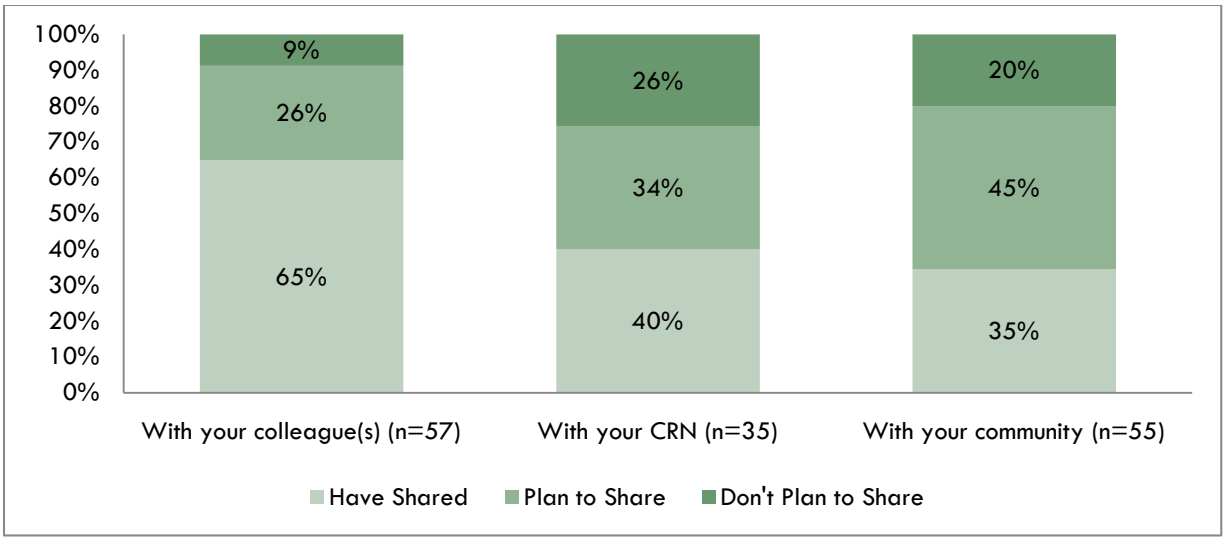


Nearly all respondents indicated that they would share the information they have learned with their communities and/or colleagues. Fewer indicated they would share the information with their CRN, but this may be a reflection of the fact that many participants do not currently belong to a CRN. Overall the findings suggest that the information at the Exchanges is relevant and of interest to the participants.

The open-ended data for this particular question suggests respondents intended to share the information with:

- CRN meetings
- Employees / staff meetings
- Non-profit organizations
- Community groups
- Social services and agencies
- Religious institutions
- Peer support meetings
- Public presentations

In the follow-up surveys, participants were asked to reflect on if and how they shared information they learned at the Exchange, as follows:



Most participants indicated they have shared or plan to share information they learned at the Exchange with their colleagues (n=52), with their CRN members (n=26), and with their communities (n=44). Participants reported sharing information as follows:

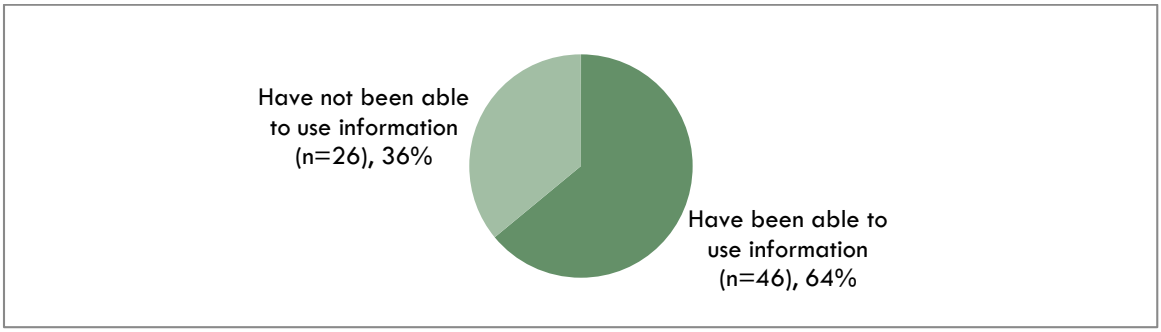
- Discussing at meetings and public events
- Peer leaders disseminating knowledge
- Public presentations about CRNs and their resources
- Newsletter submissions about CRNs and their resources

Action Moving Forward

An open-ended question on the Exchange-based survey asked about how participants plan to utilize information learned at the Exchange:

- Becoming involved in a CRN
- Dissemination to colleagues and organizations
- Becoming more involved in the community in a volunteer capacity
- Raise their awareness about potential abuse situations
- Encourage others to talk about abuse issues more

In the follow-up survey, participants were asked to reflect on if they have been able to use information and resources they learned at the Exchange, and a majority indicated that they were able to do so:



Participants were asked to reflect on how they used the information they learned at the Exchange, and these participants (n=35) noted the following themes:

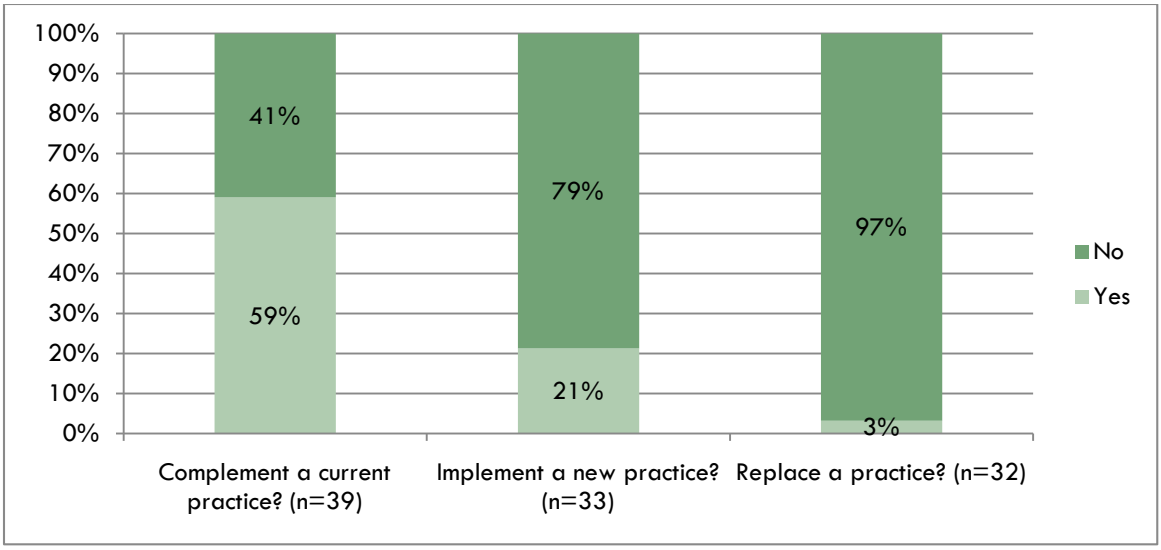
- Ability to make better/proper referrals to community agencies
- Learned about new resources available
- Increased awareness of CRNs
- Better understandings of CRNs
- Encouraged to join and/or form CRNs
- Reactivating lapsed CRNs, or considering establishing one
- Formed ideas for new programs/workshops, making appropriate links
- Exchanging knowledge with others

Participants were also asked to reflect on what they thought were the short- and long-term effects of implementing the knowledge learned at the Exchange:

Short-Term Effects (n=36)	Longer-Term Effects (n=34)
• Safer communities • New CRN involvement • Expansion of CRN membership • Awareness-raising • Increased knowledge • More effective responses • Capacity-building	• Safer communities • Establish new CRNs • Establish new programs • Awareness raising • Capacity building

How was the information used?

In the follow-up surveys, participants were asked to reflect on how information learned at the Exchange may have impacted their usual practices, as follows:



As above, a majority of respondents (59%, n=23) who answered this question indicated they used information learned at the Exchange to complement a current practice and 21% (n=7) indicated they used it to implement a new practice; however, only one participant said they used the information to replace a currently used practice.

In the follow-up survey, participants were asked to rank their agreement with the statement, "Overall, attending the Exchange has helped me understand issues about responding to abuse in my community," on a scale of "disagree" to "strongly agree". The average response was a 4, or "agreement" with the statement.

Challenges of putting the information into practice

Participants were asked to describe what, if any, challenges they experienced in putting the knowledge they learned at the *Exchange* into practice. Participants talked about a lack of local contacts and CRNs to help them put the information into practice; a lack of funding to do so; as well as "volunteer fatigue" and many competing demands on time.

Why was the information not used?

Participants who indicated they had not used information they learned at the *Exchange* were asked to describe the reasons. Participants indicated they were not working at the time in areas where the information could be used; they were already involved with a CRN and some information was not new to them; the need had not yet arisen to utilize the information; and, again, time and workload conflicts were an issue, particularly for those working for non-profit organizations.

Summary

The evaluation findings suggest that the Project was successful in helping to improve responses to abuse situations in the community. Results from the surveys show that the Exchanges played a role in raising awareness of CRNs as a resource for planning a response to abuse in the community.

The findings showed that participants planned to—and indeed did—share information they learned at the Exchanges with their colleagues, communities and fellow CRN members. Such peer-to-peer sharing of information may play a pivotal role in ensuring the continued dissemination and utilization of the content delivered at the Exchanges, helping to extend their reach to those who were unable to attend in person.

A majority of the participants who responded to the follow-up survey (64%) indicated that they were able to utilize the information they learned at the Exchanges. Almost 60% of participants likewise indicated that they used information learned at the Exchange to complement their current practices.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The findings from this evaluation suggest that the Project was successful in meeting its goals. Overall, the Project helped to:

- Raise awareness about the existence and purpose of Community Response Networks;
- Create new (and renewed) interest in the creation of new Networks;
- Foster new connections and collaborations amongst existing Networks;
- Improve governance of existing Networks;
- Increase involvement in existing Networks;
- And improve responses to abuse in the community.

Some key strengths included:

Raising awareness about CRNs. Only about 50% of participants at the Exchanges reported knowing about CRNs and their purpose, and only about 26% were presently involved with a CRN. This suggests that the Project played a key role in disseminating knowledge about the Networks and their purposes to new audiences.

Invigorating new and renewed interest in CRNs. A key goal of the Project was to generate new interest in CRNs and expand current CRN membership. The findings suggested that some Exchange participants did indeed become involved in their local CRNs after attending the Exchanges. Open-ended responses often included reference to the desire to re-activate a lapsed local CRN or to implement a new one.

Networking and connecting diverse groups. A common theme in the open-ended responses was the important networking opportunities that the Exchanges offered to participants. In addition, many participants talked about the importance of bringing together diverse groups in an interdisciplinary setting to better facilitate responses to abuse situations. These forms of networking can be an important pre-cursor to the creation of new CRNs and/or the strengthening of current ones.

Improving responses to abuse in the community. One of the key goals of the Project was to help improve how community members could respond to situations of abuse they might encounter. The evaluation findings showed that some participants at the Exchanges had considered or had indeed contacted their CRN to help plan a response to abuse in the community. Further, many of the follow-up survey participants indicated that they had been able to put information they learned at the Exchanges into practice, and had shared information with their colleagues and communities, suggesting a wide dissemination of the content shared at the Exchanges.

A key challenge moving forward with CRN maintenance and development is the sustainability issue. As earlier, this Project has help re-invigorate interest in CRNs and an understanding of their role in the community, but the challenge will be to now capitalize on this new energy. A common theme in the open-ended responses was the lack of resources available to help establish and maintain CRNs, especially as most of the work is completed on a volunteer basis and, as such, could not always be a top priority with conflicting workloads and demands.

Unfortunately, an evaluation like the one presented here—of the implementation and short follow-up period—cannot begin to measure and capture the longer-term "trickle down" effects of this Project. Although in some cases the proportion of participants who reported changes in the "desired" direction (e.g., new involvement with a CRN; contact with a CRN; inter-CRN connections and collaborations; and so on) were not terribly high, one should not lose sight of the fact that this Project did appear to encourage participants in the

desired direction. The Exchanges appeared to be well received; the information being used; and, importantly, the information appears to be shared amongst participants and their networks. Moreover, the Project has raised awareness of CRNs across the province, leading to indications of new and increased CRN interest and involvement, even in this short time period. Overall these findings suggest that these Exchanges and the larger Project are an important first step to strengthening the CRN movement in British Columbia and the successes seen here would not have been realized without this Project.

BC Association of Community Response Networks
Stopping Adult Abuse and Neglect...Together

Regional Exchange Evaluation

Thank you for attending this Regional Exchange, part of the BCACRN project to support its Community Response Networks. The project is funded by the Government of Canada's "New Horizons for Seniors Program" (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada).

Please help us evaluate this event by completing this short survey. Please note that completing this survey is completely voluntary, and you will not be asked to provide any personally-identifying material. You are not required to answer any questions you do not want to. Your responses will be used to prepare an evaluation of this project, and to help improve future events.

If you have any questions about this survey, please speak to the facilitator of the *Exchange*, or contact: Anthony Lombardo, PhD, Project Evaluator: evaluation@bccrns.ca or Sherry Baker, Executive Director, BCACRN: 604-513-9758 / ed@bccrns.ca.

When complete, please return your survey to the Facilitator. Completing this survey implies your consent to participate in this research.

We are most grateful for your time!

Please answer the following questions by placing a checkmark or "X" in the box of your response:

	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Were you previously aware that CRNs existed?			
Were you previously aware of what CRNs do?			
Are you currently a member of a CRN?			

Having attended this *Exchange*, please rank your agreement with the following statements about Community Response Networks (CRNs):

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
I am more aware of what CRNs are.						
I am more aware of what CRNs do.						
I plan to become more active in my local CRN.						
I have learned something new about governing CRNs.						

Having attended this *Exchange*, please rank your agreement with the following statements about responding to abuse in your community:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
I have learned ways of working with my local CRN to help plan a response to an abuse issue in the community.						
I have learned ways of working with other CRNs in the province to help plan a response to an abuse issue.						
I would contact my CRN to help plan a response to an abuse issue in the community.						

Please briefly explain your answers above:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Please respond to the following questions about your experience at this *Exchange*:

	Yes	No	Not Applicable
I will be able to use the knowledge I have learned at this *Exchange*.			
I have made new connections at this *Exchange*.			

Please briefly explain your answers above:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

I plan to share the information I learned at this *Exchange* with…

	Yes	No	Not Applicable
My colleague(s)			
My CRN			
My community			

If you plan to share this information, what are your next steps? If you do not plan to share this information, please explain why:

What did you find helpful about this *Exchange*?

How could the *Exchange* have been improved?

What topics or issues would you like to know more about?

What, if any, action do you intend to take with what you have learned at this *Exchange*?

Please rank your level of satisfaction with the following items:

	Very Poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Excellent	Not Applicable
Content of the *Exchange*						
Format of the *Exchange*						
Location of the *Exchange*						

Please provide any additional feedback:

Thank you again for your time and your participation in this *Exchange*.

Please return this survey to the Facilitator.

Dear [FirstName] [LastName],

On [Date], you attended the [Location] Regional Exchange, hosted by the British Columbia Association of Community Response Networks.

As part of the evaluation of these Exchanges, we are contacting you to kindly request your continued feedback on the resources you received at the gathering, through an online survey. You are being contacted because when you attended the Exchange, you indicated on the attendance sheet that it was OK for us to contact you again.

The survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Your participation in this online survey is completely voluntary and anonymous. You are not required to provide any personal information, and you can refuse to answer any questions you don't want to. Your IP (Internet protocol) address will not be recorded by completing this online survey. You will not be compensated for completing this survey. Please note that you must complete the survey in one sitting (in other words, you cannot save your survey responses and return to complete them later).

Your feedback is very important to us and it will be used to prepare a report on the impacts of the BCACRN project. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact the project evaluator, Anthony Lombardo, PhD, by e-mail at evaluation@bccrns.ca or contact Sherry Baker, Executive Director, BCACRN: 604-513-9758 / ed@bccrns.ca.

The survey can be accessed at:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

If you do not wish to be contacted by us again, please click the link below:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx

Again, we are very grateful for your consideration and continued feedback.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Lombardo, PhD
Project Evaluator

Regional Exchange -- Followup

Thank you for attending a Regional Exchange, hosted by the British Columbia Association of Community Response Networks, as part its project to support its Community Response Networks.

As part of the evaluation of this Project, we are contacting you to kindly request your continued feedback on the resources you received at the Exchange, through an online survey. The survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Please note that you must complete the survey in one sitting (in other words, you cannot save your survey responses and return to complete them later).

You are being contacted because when you attended the Exchange, you indicated on the attendance sheet that it was OK for us to contact you again. Your participation in this online survey is **completely voluntary**. You are not required to provide any personal information, and you can refuse to answer any questions you don't want to. Your IP (Internet protocol) address will not be recorded by completing this online survey. You will not be compensated for completing this survey.

Your feedback is very important to us and it will be used to prepare a report on the impacts of the Project. If you have any questions about this research, please contact the project evaluator, Anthony Lombardo, PhD, by e-mail at evaluation@bccrns.ca or contact Sherry Baker, Executive Director, BCACRN: 604-513-9758 / ed@bccrns.ca.

***1. Before completing the survey, we ask if you consent to participation. By answering "Yes," you will be taken to the first question. By answering "No," you will exit the survey.**

I understand the purpose of this survey and my rights in participating. I consent to participate in this survey.

- Yes
- No

You have indicated that you do not consent to participate in this survey. If this is not correct, please click the "Previous" button to return to the previous page to change your answer.

Otherwise, we thank you for your consideration.

Please exit your browser or click "Exit this survey" in the top right corner.

You have indicated that you do not consent to participate in this survey. If this is not correct, please click the "Previous" button to return to the previous page to change your answer.

Otherwise, we thank you for your consideration.

Please exit your browser or click "Exit this survey" in the top right corner.

Regional Exchange -- Followup

*2. Please identify which Regional Exchange you attended:

- ◯ Kootenays (October 28, 2010, in Castlegar)
- ◯ Okanagan (November 9, 2010)
- ◯ Kamloops (November 23, 2010)
- ◯ Vancouver (February 8, 2011)
- ◯ Abbotsford (February 11, 2011)
- ◯ Duncan (March 28, 2011)
- ◯ Courtenay (April 4, 2011)
- ◯ Quesnel (April 29, 2011)
- ◯ Terrace (June 13, 2011)
- ◯ Dawson Creek (June 28, 2011)

*3. Please choose the category the best describes you *when you attended the Exchange*:

- ◯ I was not connected with a Community Response Network.
- ◯ I belonged to or worked with a Community Response Network.
- ◯ I was involved in the leadership of a Community Response Network.

4. Since attending the Exchange,

	Yes	No	Not applicable
I have been in contact with my local CRN.	◯	◯	◯
I have been in contact with other CRNs in the province.	◯	◯	◯
I have become involved with the activities of my local CRN.	◯	◯	◯
I have become involved with the activities of another CRN in the province.	◯	◯	◯
I have considered contacting a CRN.	◯	◯	◯
I have considered establishing a CRN in my region.	◯	◯	◯

Regional Exchange -- Followup

5. If you contacted and/or became involved in a CRN since attending the Exchange, please describe why/how:

6. Please rate the influence of the Exchange on...

	No influence	Some influence	Great influence	Not applicable
Consideration of contacting a CRN.	◯	◯	◯	◯
Contacting your local CRN.	◯	◯	◯	◯
Contacting a another CRN in the province.	◯	◯	◯	◯
Becoming involved in your local CRN.	◯	◯	◯	◯
Becoming involved in another CRN in the province.	◯	◯	◯	◯
Consideration of establishing a CRN.	◯	◯	◯	◯

7. Did you learn information at the Exchange to help you govern your CRN?

◯ Yes

◯ No

8. Please describe what you learned to help you govern your CRN.

9. Have you been able to implement what you learned about CRN governance?

◯ Yes

◯ No

10. Please describe what governance changes you have made as a result of attending the Exchange.

11. What impact have these changes had / will these changes have?

Regional Exchange -- Followup

12. Why have you not been able to implement what you learned about CRN governance?

13. As a result of attending the Exchange, have you made connections with another CRN? (For example, have you contacted a member of another CRN to talk about a partnership or to share information?)

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

If yes, please explain the nature of the connection(s):

14. As a result of attending the Exchange, have you started a new collaboration with another CRN? (For example, have you started a new joint project between your CRN and another CRN?)

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

If yes, please explain the nature of the collaboration(s):

15. Have you been able to use the information you learned at the Exchange? (CRN Leadership: This question refers to information learned *other than about CRN governance*.)

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

16. Please describe how you have used information learned at the Exchange.

17. What are the short-term effects of the use of this knowledge?

Regional Exchange -- Followup

18. What do you think will be the long-term effects?

19. What facilitated the use of this information?

20. What, if any, challenges did you face in using this information?

21. Did you use the information learned at the Exchange to...

	Yes	No
Implement a new practice?	◯	◯
Replace a practice?	◯	◯
Complement a current practice?	◯	◯

Please explain your answer:

22. Please tell us why you have not used information learned at the Exchange.

23. What are your intentions for sharing information that you learned at the Exchange...

	Have Shared	Plan to Share	Don't Plan to Share	Not applicable
With your colleague(s)	◯	◯	◯	◯
With your CRN	◯	◯	◯	◯
With your community	◯	◯	◯	◯

Please explain your answer

Regional Exchange -- Followup

24. Please rate your agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Overall, attending the Exchange has helped me understand issues about responding to abuse in my community.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I would considering collaborating in an initiative across Community Response Networks.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

25. Please provide any final comments on the Exchange and/or Community Response Networks:

Please tell us a little more about you.

26. What line of work are you in?

27. How long have you worked in this area?

28. What percentage of time do you spent dealing with situations of abuse? Please enter a numeric value.

29. What is your role at work? Please check all that apply.

- ☐ Front-line worker
- ☐ Consultant to others
- ☐ Educator
- ☐ Supervisor
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Regional Exchange -- Followup

30. Please specify your age range.

- ◯ 19 or younger
- ◯ 20 - 29
- ◯ 30 - 39
- ◯ 40 - 49
- ◯ 50 - 59
- ◯ 60 - 69
- ◯ 70 - 79
- ◯ 80 or older

31. Please specify your sex.

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to answer