

Shining a light on...

World
Elder Abuse
Awareness
Day

Guide
2013

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



BC Association of
Community Response
Networks

Stopping Adult Abuse and Neglect ... Together

www.bccrns.ca

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About BC CRN

The B.C. Association of Community Response Networks (BC CRN) was established to create an on-going, permanent provincial funding and support structure for the benefit of local Community Response Networks (CRNs) and adults in their communities experiencing abuse, neglect and self-neglect.

The Association provides small project funding for materials, training, and support; it also maintains a website <www.bccrns.ca> to assist Community Response Networks in their work. BC CRN also hosts provincial teleconferences with all CRN members as well as others who are interested in ending adult abuse, neglect and self-neglect on a monthly basis.

At the local level, CRNs facilitate prevention and education activities with local stakeholders to work toward ending abuse, neglect and self-neglect of adults in B.C. In liaising at the provincial level through their Regional Mentors and the Executive Director, CRNs assist in identifying common themes, barriers and issues that require work at the regional, provincial and sometimes national level.

CRNs hold true to the following principles:

Inclusion

Meaningful Participation

Power Sharing

Assumption of Capability/Building of Capacity

This Guide is dedicated to celebrating the wisdom and experience of seniors, and to help empower those who are, or who may be abused.

Introduction to BC CRN WEAAD Guide 2013

BC CRN designed the WEAAD Guide 2013 to help CRNs raise awareness and promote World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD). BC CRN has posted this Guide and related material on the WEAAD section of the website at <http://www.bccrns.ca/generated/resourcesweaad.php>.

The materials showcase the colour purple, the iris flower (adopted as the 'official' symbol for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day) and the tagline "*shining a light on seniors living in dignity*", each implying a positive message and a promise of hope.

According to Greek legend and mythology, the iris flower is named after the goddess 'Iris' because of its beauty. 'Iris' was the messenger who traveled on the rainbow between the lands of human beings and the Gods, and who guided souls to heaven.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

In 2006, the United Nations officially proclaimed June 15th as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD). It is well recognized that abuse of older adults is a multidimensional, complex problem, a family violence problem, an intergenerational concern, and a health, justice, and human rights issue.

According to the United Nations, “the world needs a global response to the problem, one that focuses on protecting the rights of older persons”. Accordingly, the focus of the BC CRN campaign is on the rights of the older person:

- The right to dignity, privacy, freedom and the pursuit of happiness in old age
- The right to keep one's individuality
- The right to live independently
- The right to express personal feelings and subjective thoughts without inhibition
- The right to seek help and receive services
- The right to be stimulated by new experiences and ideas
- The right to safety and security at home and in public
- The right to a bright future

Courtesy: [Joyce Schmaltz, Community Seniors Advocate](#)

WEAAD is an opportunity to join together to look at useful solutions and strategies from many areas of expertise. In compiling the 2013 Guide we acknowledge the considerable contributions made over many years by various leaders in the field of awareness and prevention of abuse.

BC CRN encourages individuals, organizations and communities to join in the recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and to plan and promote activities and events in their own jurisdictions, that:

- bring greater recognition of the mistreatment of older adults,
- highlight the need for prevention activities that would allow seniors in their community to live safely and with dignity, and
- celebrate older adults who are active and vibrant members of their community.

By continuing their efforts to shine a light on promising approaches related to Elder Abuse, CRNs around the province are creating momentum in a grassroots movement to reduce and/or eliminate the incidents of elder abuse.

Building Community Support for WEAAD

While WEAAD is meant to bring attention to elder abuse on June 15, communities are encouraged to continue the dialogue throughout the year. For that reason, BC CRN has posted a 'Calendar of Special Interest Dates' on its website <www.bccrn.ca>.

Public education campaigns for **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day** are vital for informing people about elder abuse, enhancing relationships and creating momentum for the CRN movement. A strong public relations program can have a profound, cumulative effect on how an organization is perceived by seniors, donors, local businesses, other agencies and the government.

We're proud of the difference CRNs make as they find unique celebrations and ways to *shine a light on seniors living in dignity*. See Appendix A ('Mix n' Match WEAAD Planning') for a medley of tested ideas and topics, which CRNs can use as a springboard for future planning. The following tips expand on these ideas:

- **Press releases** – Write a succinct article with positive messaging to highlight CRN activities for local media outlets - see Appendix C ('Professional Tips for Writing Press Releases') and Appendix D (Sample Press Releases). The press releases are generic. Keep in mind that while statistical information is an important part of any press release, most media outlets will look to see if there is a human face to the story.
- **Stories** – Find opportunities to recognize individuals who have overcome social adversity such as abuse, and in the process of overcoming their own challenges, have inspired others. When we celebrate the wisdom and experience of seniors in our society, we acknowledge their value in society. Stories can be powerful statements that help to celebrate lives, and illustrate that elder abuse can happen to anyone; they are a fabulous way to connect our cause with the public.

Consider publishing these stories in the local paper to promote awareness during World Elder Abuse Awareness Week. They might also be used to add drama to presentations, or to create an oral record for your library, museum or archives.

Please Note: interviewers may document and distribute stories only where concerns of confidentiality, discretion and consent are fully addressed - see Appendix F ('*Consent for Use of Image and Story - Release Form*').

Since abuse is such a sensitive topic, it is extremely important that interviewers are qualified, empathetic, aware of various cultural differences and understand how to handle disclosures.

Building Community Support for WEAAD cont'd

- **Mall / Facility Display, information Fair** - Prepare a display of traditional materials (Brochures, Rack Cards, Posters) available from BC CRN to help raise awareness of elder abuse and local CRN activities, and demonstrate how financial support will enhance CRN initiatives. A display can easily be set up with the assistance of local volunteers who are knowledgeable on the issues of elder abuse.

Patrons stopping by the display can be encouraged to make a donation to the local CRN or purchase WEAAD items such as Fridge Magnets, Iris Cards and BC CRN Flashlights. See Appendix I (Sample Poster to Advertise a WEAAD Event). It is available as an electronic template so it can be customized for various events. Appendix J (Iris Greeting Card) is in electronic format. It can be printed and used for gifts or thank you cards. For a handout of helpful resources, refer to Appendix G (Help for BC Seniors).

- **Proclamations** - Establish and develop partnerships with the local government and media and engage them in being part of your events.

Consider asking whether a proclamation declaring June 15 as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day could be placed on your local City Council agenda. This is an excellent opportunity to promote awareness of elder abuse and explain how your CRN is taking steps to prevent abuse.

Invite the Mayor and/or members of Council to read the proclamation at WEAAD events you may be planning. Appendix E (Sample WEAAD Proclamations) can be used as is, or modified to serve the needs of your local community. Appendix J (WEAAD Stationery) can be used to add the official purple iris watermark when printing the proclamation.

- **Conferences, Special Events** - Reach out to businesses or connect through your local Business Association or Chamber of Commerce. See Appendix B (Tips on Making Dynamic Presentations).
- **Support** - Ask schools, businesses and community groups for donations for a WEAAD event (e.g., door prize, food, music, flowers, Safeway Gift Cards).
- **Thank You Notes, Award/Recognition Ceremony** - Acknowledge individual or business participation and contributions. Create friendly competitions between businesses to enhance WEAAD activities. See Appendix H (Sample Certificate of Recognition).
- **Posters** - Create posters representing *empowering themes* (e.g., 'It's My Life I Get To Make The Decision', or 'There's A Standard...don't overstep the boundaries...don't steal, criticize, or put someone down'). The illustration might reveal Grandson reaching his hand into Grandpa's wallet and Grandma giving him the LOOK—the message is saying 'Stop...this is wrong, don't do it').
- **Photo, Story or Poster Contest** – Ask for submissions that represent strong independent seniors in the community, to be published in the local paper.

More Ways to Bring Awareness to WEAAD

- **Random Acts of Kindness** - Challenge your community to designate a day, week or month for Random Acts of Kindness...concerned citizens commit one small act of kindness per day. Research and advertise the benefits...small and frequent acts of kindness lead to the highest levels of well-being.
- **Purple Dinner Party** – Determine a time, date and location...ask people to wear purple and bring a photo of someone older in their lives they want to protect, or a sign (e.g., 'I'm Here Because I Care About Seniors', 'I'm Here For My Mother', Or 'I'm Here To Make My Community Strong'). Participants can bring their own table and chair, if appropriate.
- **Massive Flash Mob Event** – Enlist the help of local churches, choirs, children's groups, etc. to practice a song (e.g. Shine a Light) and show up wearing something purple at a designated time and location (e.g. in a park on Saturday at noon). Organize to have it videotaped and published on YouTube (NB: secrecy is important; do not alert media for this event.)

Think **BIG**...it has the potential to spread your message like wildfire across the country!
For more tips on how to organize a Flash Mob check out
<http://www.caw.ca/assets/images/8_tips_for_running_a_flash_mob.pdf>.
- **PPT, DVD, Promotional Materials** - Buy stock photos or get permission to use donated photos to illustrate concepts you are trying to portray (e.g., a helping hand, hug, intergenerational, etc.) in a poster or a presentation. Celebrate amazing lives with a series of still shots choreographed to an uplifting song.
- **YouTube Video Clips** - Post an educational presentation or a fun skit involving seniors with an explanatory paragraph – For a sample, see “Call Me Maybe” <www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qf0k8sACrTU>.
- **Agency Video Facebook, Pintrest or Google Online Doc Bulletin Boards** - Harness the power of social media. Ask for ideas, promote activities or share your thoughts with others using various technologies. See RCMP Tweetathon <<http://storify.com/HPSActionTeam4>>.
- **Webinars - Web conferencing** - Consider virtual meetings, and sharing information using online workshops if your meetings involve people living in remote locations.
- **Website** - Consider using a user-friendly application such as Word Press to create your own website. See <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55LIRANuaRE>>.
- **Create an App** - If you're technically inclined, and want to make a small investment, you might consider building an app. Instructions can be found online.
<<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/develop-simple-iphone-app-submit-itunes/>> or
<http://news.cnet.com/8301-1035_3-57336404-94/how-to-build-your-own-app-for-free/>

Intergenerational Activities

Have you explored the huge impact that youth can have on elder abuse? Encourage projects that bridge the generation gap between older adults and youth so they can get to know each other, and develop rich and sustainable connections. Starting early is important so teachers and community educators can fit this work by youth into their schedules between June 1st and June 15th.

Access and download the WEAAD TEEN KIT (Fr. or En.) developed by i2i intergenerational society, at <www.intergenerational.ca>. Click on the picture of the dark haired teen girl and senior female that rotates by on the home page, then scan to the back of the document to see the templates of all the great ideas for teens/pre-teens/college. Some of the ideas for activities include:

- Instead of a standard presentation format, presenters use a **reverse presentation style** and ask students questions about the topic (e.g. elder abuse) first. This method of presentation will determine the level of awareness and understanding of the various aspects of elder abuse.
- After consulting with the instructor, presenters ask students to create **art work, songs or plays** about their perception of elder abuse. If appropriate, CRNs can offer prizes for the best art work, promote the selected work as part of the WEAAD event, and/ or arrange for students to perform at a residential facility.
- High school students reach out to home-bound seniors, or seniors in care, to provide **companionship** (face-to-face or through email, phone conversations or letters). Seniors and youth play **board games** on a regular basis.
- Students **volunteer** weekly at a seniors' care home. Children are assigned a **senior buddy** whom they visit every month. Seniors and youth **share stories** and skills with one another each week.
- Teachers invite a war veteran to **speak at a Remembrance Day ceremony**.
- A seniors' group hosts a **special event** at the local community centre. A community group schedules senior and youth **cooking class**.
- High school students **study selected curriculum** at a seniors' home or centre. College or high school students are partnered with **senior new Canadians** to help them learn English and prepare to become Canadian citizens.
- A day-care or elementary school class is partnered with "**grand buddies**" and takes part in specific scheduled activities linked to intergenerational learning.
- Seniors are given the opportunity to partner with a community agency as **mentors** for youth in need of guidance and encouragement.
- Students or youth work towards **publishing a book** of senior life stories. Students interview seniors, write stories, vet their work with the senior, and compile a publication for sale to raise funds that both generations can benefit from in a meaningful way.