

25 YEARS OF HISTORY

1993 – 2019

MANY YEARS AGO, AN ORGANIZATION LIKE THE BC CRN
WAS THE DREAM OF PEOPLE WORKING TOWARD THE
ELIMINATION OF ABUSE, NEGLECT, AND SELF-NEGLECT.

NOW, IT IS A REALITY.



BC ASSOCIATION OF
Community Response Networks
Stopping Adult Abuse and Neglect ...Together.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BC CRN thanks **Heather Von Ilberg** for compiling the historical content of this document. Heather was also on the first Abuse and Neglect Advisory Committee in the 80's, and continues today as the Regional Mentor for Kootenay West.

BC CRN also acknowledges the generous financial support of the Province of BC, the Ministry of Health, and the BC Charitable Gaming Branch.



IN THE LATE 1980s & EARLY 1990s

Many in BC were unhappy with provisions in law for people who were in need of ongoing support, specifically those who were not capable of making decisions for themselves. Legal tools at that time - the *Patients Property Act* and the *Mental Health Act* - were outdated, heavy handed and left the person involved with little or no say in decisions made about them. Several grassroots groups got together and advocated for change in the options available.



1991: REVIEW OF BC'S GUARDIANSHIP LEGISLATION

A package of four new pieces of legislation were drafted - the *Adult Guardianship Act (AGA)*, the *Representation Agreement Act*, the *Health Care Consent and Facilities Admission Act*, and the *Public Guardian and Trustee Act*. These laws focused on providing the most effective, least intrusive support, while ensuring the adult in question had as much involvement as possible in any process which affected them.



1993: PILOTING CRNs IN FIVE COMMUNITIES

The *AGA*, the *Representation Agreement Act*, and the *Public Guardian and Trustee Act* were passed, but not proclaimed. The Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee of BC (PGT) created an Abuse and Neglect Advisory Committee to initiate a pilot project for five communities – Duncan, Penticton, Castlegar, Abbotsford, Vernon – to develop Community Response Networks (CRNs) in keeping with recommendations in Part Three of the *Adult Guardianship Act (AGA)*.

With **Dr. Tam Lundy** as lead, CRN coordinators formed community teams to look at the issues of adult abuse, neglect and self-neglect, and the Guardianship legislation. Monthly daylong meetings were held in Vancouver with the Pilot Project Coordinators meeting with PGT staff, community representatives, Advisory Committee members and various Ministry staff. Coordinators of the original communities worked to develop CRNs in other communities in their regions, and most moved from a coordinator role to mentoring a number of communities.



1994-1995: GUARDIANSHIP IMPLEMENTATION OFFICE ESTABLISHED

Linda Derkach and **Alison Leaney** joined the PGT. They worked with part-time administrative staff to bring CRNs to all of BC. Alison travelled the province bringing *CRN101* and *The Legislation 101* to communities. The office also worked with the Mentors Team and others to develop materials for Designated Agencies (DAs) – health authorities, Community Living BC, police, financial institutions, and others outlined by the *AGA*.

Rob Gordon from Simon Fraser University led a team of PGT staff, Mentors, and Advisory Committee members to co-create *A Guide for Communities* and legislative regulations.

CRN coordinators established CRNs in new communities and trained DA staff on their role in adult, neglect, and self-neglect cases, and the tools available to help.



2000: THE ADULT GUARDIANSHIP ACT, THE REPRESENTATION AGREEMENT ACT, & THE PUBLIC GUARDIAN AND TRUSTEE ACT PROCLAIMED

With Proclamation came the reality of decommissioning the Implementation Office. PGT staff, Mentors and Advisory members created a non-profit organization and started raising funds to continue supporting communities.



2002: BCACRN FOUNDATION, BOARD OF DIRECTORS ESTABLISHED

The Board of Directors raised funds and established the BC Association of Community Response Networks (BCACRN) Charitable Foundation. They planned a provincial conference in partnership with BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support (BCCEAS), now known as Seniors First BC. Coordinators and CRN members province-wide shared learnings, networked, and inspired one another.



2003: FIRST NATIONS REFERENCE GROUP CREATED; CRN MOVEMENT CONTINUES

People from across BC dialogued to include Indigenous peoples in any approach and decision-making processes. The BCACRN Charitable Foundation was re-incorporated as the BCACRN, and registered as a charitable society.

Alison became Executive Director. The next few years were lean, but community members and CRN Coordinators worked with the Executive Director to support CRNs by providing materials and funds to continue their work. Everyone involved worked many volunteer hours.



2006: UNITED NATIONS PROCLAIMS WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY (WEAAD)

Alison spoke at the United Nation in New York. BCACRN received provincial funding for the first time in the form of project grants. In partnership with BCCEAS, *The Gathering Wheel- Best Practices in Prevention and Financial Abuse/Financial Crimes* workshops were presented in BC.

The first provincial CRN brochure was produced, and the BCACRN took a leadership role in both the Friesen Conference at Simon Fraser University and the COSCO Conference.



2007: THIRTY-FIVE CRNs PROVINCE-WIDE

While activity in communities waned somewhat this year, a great deal of work was being done on research. *Outlook 2007: Promising Approaches in Addressing Senior Abuse in Canada* was done with the Canadian Network to Prevent Elder Abuse and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). **April Struthers** and **Alison** were the authors.



2008-2009: FIVE REGIONAL GATHERINGS HELD PROVINCE-WIDE; RESEARCH PROJECTS AROUND

Alison and **April** led more national research projects including, *Seniors Learning and Knowledge Exchange*, Canadian Council on Learning with the RCMP; *Promising Approaches for Addressing/Preventing Abuse of Older Adults in First Nations Communities: A Critical Analysis and Environmental Scan of Tools and Approaches* with **Georgina Martin**, PHAC's Division of Aging and Seniors and Health Canada's First Nations and Inuit Home and Community Care Division; *CHNET-Works with PHAC – Bias and Diversity in Prevention of Abuse of Older Adults*.

April and **Lindsay Neufeld** created *Being Least Intrusive: An Orientation to Practice in Responding to Situations of Abuse Neglect and Self-Neglect of Vulnerable First Nations Adults* (commissioned under the Vanguard Project); and **April** and **Alison** did *Snapshot 2009: Promising Approaches in the Prevention of Abuse and Neglect of Older Adults in Community Setting in Canada (update of Outlook 2007)*.



2009-2010: BEING LEAST INTRUSIVE DISTRIBUTED NATIONALLY

The BCACRN was operating with an executive director and five Regional Mentors. The *Being Least Intrusive* research was developed into a tool by **April** and **Lindsay**. The tool was picked up by NICE – National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly – and distributed nationally. As an evidence-based tool, it was also approved by the University of Toronto.



2010: CHANGING LEADERSHIP; BCACRN BECOMES BC CRN

Alison resigned as Executive Director, and in July, was succeeded by **Sherry Baker**. CRN activity increased. Ten provincial Knowledge Exchanges took place thanks to funding from the *New Horizons for Seniors* program of the Federal government.

The first workshops on the topic of hoarding were conducted. A new website was launched. BCACRN became BC CRN to align with the web's new address (www.bccrns.ca). During this time, BC CRN was involved in NICE projects and received great support from Health Authority staff.



2012: \$1.4M MINISTRY OF HEALTH FUNDING OVER THREE YEARS

The funds allowed for the expansion of the Mentors Team and the hiring of two Team Leaders. Communities received more grant money and were able to become more active. New CRNs were established with start up grants. BC CRN participated in the *Shining a Spotlight on Financial Abuse* with SFU's Gerontology Research Centre, BCCEAS and NICE. At this time, **Ben Kadel** of Emotus Operandi was hired to evaluate CRNs on an ongoing basis. **April** created *A Staged Theory of Network Development*, a tool used to identify common threads in CRN development. The *First Nations ReAct Manual* was developed by Vancouver Coastal Health with input from the BC CRN.



2012-2013: BC CRN'S FIRSTS

BC CRN participated in the Elders Gathering in Abbotsford for the first time. The first BC CRN Summit was held for Regional Mentors, Team Leaders, administration contractors and Board Members. The Summit continues to be an annual three-day in-person meeting for all involved. The first *Board Governance Policy Manual*, *WEAAD Guide*, and governance and operational policies were created. **April**, **Christine Spinder**, and **Phil Hall** from the Sto'lo Nation researched and wrote *In a Good Way*, a protocol for working with Indigenous communities. Two First Nations CRNs were established in Urban Vancouver and Secwepmc territory. The first BC CRN Strategic Plan was created. The website was updated once more.



2014: FORTY-FIVE CRNs SERVING 109 COMMUNITIES

BC CRN By Laws were rewritten and adopted. This year brought the *It's Not Right - Neighbours, Friends and Families (INR)* and *Gatekeeper* programs into BC CRN's community offerings, and the beginning of a relationship with the United Way's Better at Home program was established.



2015: FURTHER THREE-YEAR FUNDING GRANT RECEIVED

Larger special grants were made available to communities, allowing CRNs to engage in bigger projects, such as the development of Personal Records in Medical Emergency (PRIME) kits, workshops, and tools. BC CRN hired **Debbie Hultgren** of Links Communication Solutions as a Communications Consultant and engaged **Sharon Mackenzie** to produce a series of tools to assist CRNs in

intergenerational work. Another five Regional Gatherings were held, core CRN materials were updated, and a Francophone CRN was established.



2016: SIXTY-EIGHT CRNs SERVING 157 COMMUNITIES; 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF WEAAD

The tenth anniversary of WEAAD was celebrated with BC CRN distributing 2,500 commemorative buttons across the province, and the *Spreading the Word Awareness Guide Book* for CRNs. The BC CRN was involved in creating the Ministry of Health's *Together to Reduce Elder Abuse (CREA) Strategy Implementation* program. BC CRN began collective impact work in communities.

The BC CRN and the BC CRN Board helped remove an offensive TV ad from the air, demonstrating the organization's credibility and clout. Team Leaders **Heather Archer** and **Kathy Doerksen** retired and were succeeded by **Val Waymark** and **Bernie Woods**.



2017-2018: LGBTQ2S+, MULTI-CULTURAL CRNs ESTABLISHED

Six Regional Gatherings were held. The Living OUT Visibly and Engaged (LOVE) CRN supporting the LGBTQ2+ community and allies in central Vancouver Island was established. A Chinese CRN serving Lower Mainland seniors was formed. After several consultations, the BC CRN passed a Truth and Reconciliation resolution to inform CRN work. The Lower Mainland LGBTQ2S+ CRN is created. BC CRN secured funding from the Ministry of Health for 2018. The *E-Connector* newsletter started near monthly publication schedule. A WEAAD flag was designed and launched at events province-wide in 2018.



2019: 78 CRNs SERVING 224 COMMUNITIES (APRIL 2019)

As of April 2019, the BC CRN is operating with a management team consisting of an Executive Director, a director of Administrative Services, three part time administrative staff, 15 Regional Mentors, and two Team Leaders. Ministry of Health funding is secured until 2020 with the opportunity to apply for longer terms. Gaming grants continue to support mentor work with communities.

Provincial Learning Event teleconferences are held eight times a year. *E-Connector* is distributed to nearly 600 subscribers. BC CRN's social media are active. Information and tools are widely available on the website. *It's Not Right* and *Gatekeeper* workshops are available province-wide to communities at no charge.

Many thanks to our supporters: we're looking forward to continuing this journey with you.

The BC Association of Community Response Networks (BC CRN)

www.bccrns.ca

© 2019