



# E-Connector

*The BC Association of Community Response Networks (BC CRN) Newsletter*

## Community Response Networks: Impact in Communities



*In this fourth article of the limited series on CRNs, we look at how CRNs have evolved over time, and the impact of they've had on the communities they serve.*

### **Annual Evaluation on CRN Development and Impact**

Measurement is an important part of community development. By measuring, tracking, and analyzing specific behaviours on an ongoing basis, we're able to see if a strategy was effective or not, if a plan of action achieved what it was originally intended or not, if we were able to shift behaviours in a community or not.

Since 2012, BC CRN has conducted yearly evaluations of CRNs to measure and track:

- The internal development of CRNs to determine the attributes of active, high-functioning CRNs.
- Their effectiveness in raising awareness and educating communities on the topic of abuse, neglect, and self-neglect.

The annual evaluation consists of an online survey distributed to members of CRN teams, regional mentors, and affiliate CRN members in urban centres, and suburban and rural areas.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> BC CRN's annual survey of community response networks (CRNs) is conducted by Ben Kadel of Emotus Operandi, and April Struthers, BC CRN Regional Mentor – Sunshine Coast.

## **Communities Still Feel Adult Abuse is a Problem that Requires a Coordinated Response**

Seniors and other vulnerable adult populations are easy targets for abuse, be it financial, physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual, and are more prone to neglect or self-neglect. Designated agencies, which include health authorities and [Community Living BC](#), are responsible for investigating these cases if reported. Communities have an important role in coordinating a response by working together to connect families to education, resources, and help before a formal investigation is required.

Adult abuse, neglect, and self-neglect are often *under* reported for several reasons. The most common are illnesses, like dementia, that hinder an individual's ability to self-report, not understanding what the signs are that would indicate abuse and neglect, or being unaware of how to appropriately help. Abused adults also feel a great deal of shame and that they are to blame, especially if family is responsible for the abuse.

Fifty-two percent of CRNs surveyed in 2018 indicated that adult abuse is a problem in their communities that requires a coordinated response. This trend has been consistent with results dating back to 2012 when BC CRN first started evaluating CRNs and community attitudes.

"In the early days of BC CRN, we worked hard to find all the resources we could on adult abuse, neglect, and self-neglect to support CRNs in spreading the word and educating communities," says BC CRN Executive Director **Sherry Baker**. "We have come a long way, and now, CRNs are sharing their self-developed resources with us province-wide. I'm really proud of our teams and what they've accomplished so far."

Despite the acknowledgement that adult abuse, neglect, and self-neglect is an issue in communities, there are still several communities – approximately 44% of respondents<sup>2</sup> - that feel it is an isolated problem that does not require a community coordinated response.

"This tells us that despite the great strides we've made so far in awareness building, we still have a lot of work to do," says Sherry.

### **Positive Impacts Observed**

Community efforts to educate the public on the issue of adult abuse, neglect, and self-neglect are working. People are more aware of the signs of adult abuse, neglect, and self-neglect; the resources they can tap into to learn more; how to appropriately and respectfully provide support and assistance; and who to contact to report or refer someone.

Fifty-five percent of respondents<sup>3</sup> indicated that the communities they live in were taking action to address the issue.

The keys to appropriate action are understanding the signs that would point to abuse and neglect, and partnering with the agencies and service providers to coordinate the process should an individual require help.

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<sup>2</sup> Survey results from 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Survey results from 2018.

Local CRN programs vary from community to community. CRNs focus on awareness campaigns like World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD), and also conduct smaller educational events throughout the year that may include [It's Not Right!](#) and [Gatekeeper](#) workshops, intergenerational activities, coffee meetings, dinners and luncheons, and information booths at conferences and health fairs.

### **CRN Numbers Continue to Grow, Individual CRNs Continue to Evolve**

CRNs operate in a fashion that works for the communities and addresses the unique needs of the population. No one CRN operates like another.

The majority of CRNs describe themselves as “cooperative”, “informal”, “transparent”, and “fair”. A few are more “formal”.

“There is no one model for a CRN,” says Sherry. “We give the teams autonomy to make decisions they feel are best for the communities they serve. From a management perspective, it makes sense: the people who work in the CRNs are also community members. They will know what will and won’t work.”

Twenty-five years ago, before BC CRN was even an organization, there were five CRNs established as a pilot project to change the way vulnerable adults were supported.

Today, there are 78 Community Response Networks (CRNs) serving 224 communities in the province’s five regional health authorities – Northern, Interior, Vancouver Island, Vancouver Coastal, and Fraser. The latest CRN to join the BC CRN is Powell River (Welcome, Powell River CRN!).

If you would like to set up a CRN in your community, contact the [Regional Mentor in your area](#) or the BC CRN directly at [info@bccrns.ca](mailto:info@bccrns.ca).

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## **2019 Elders Gathering: Event Synopsis**

The 2019 Elders Gathering in July returned to Vancouver for the first time after 12 years...and BC CRN was at the Vancouver Convention Centre with an information booth managed by Regional Mentors **Fiona Lewis, Tim Rowe, and Susan Moore**.

Hosted by the [BC Elders Communication Centre Society](#), the annual event has brought elders, First Nations youth, and partners together to share, reconnect, form new relationships, and honour tradition, culture, and history for 43 years.

For two solid days – July 23 and 24 – the team connected with elders, and spoke with agencies and volunteers from all over the province. Over 1,800 people were in attendance.



*2019 King and Queen Allan (Olie) and Edwina Henderson with Premier John Horgan and other dignitaries.  
(Photo: Denise Titian; Source: [www.hashilthsa.com](http://www.hashilthsa.com))*

“The Elders Gathering was a very different experience compared to other tradeshow and conferences I’ve been to. The quantity and quality of conversations were profound and impactful,” says Susan. “Being at the BC CRN information booth, I had the opportunity to hear from seniors who went to residential schools as children. These stories were trauma and abuse based. I was overwhelmed by the generosity and willingness from the elders to have conversations about what happened and the steps they took in their healing. I didn’t have to ask any questions...I had to be a compassionate listener and understand First Nations traditions and practices so to not disrespect anyone by accident.”

The 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Elders Gathering is scheduled for July 7-8, 2020 in Vancouver. [View information on registration on next year’s event.](#)

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## Volunteer of the Month: Annie Danilko, Vancouver

*Annie Danilko is a self-described “A-type” personality who likes to “get things done.” She is a staunch advocate for the needs of First Nations people, a master networker, an advisor and activist, and a lifelong volunteer. In addition to contributing her time to the BC CRN, she holds several leadership volunteer roles, doing everything she can to support the needs of her family, friends, and community. We are very pleased to be profiling Annie as our volunteer of the month.*

### The Gift of the Gab

Annie’s childhood was spent in Haida Gwaii with her parents and five siblings. The family is of the Raven clan from Masset. “We lived off-reserve and I received a colonial education,” says Annie. “When you live off-reserve, you’re seen as outsiders by First Nations families who lived on-reserve. I didn’t learn my Haida language or how to weave cedar until later in life.”

The family also moved frequently. After Haida Gwaii, Annie went to residential school in Alberta for three years, returned to Haida Gwaii, moved to Prince George, then Prince Rupert and Williams Lake, then to Kamloops, and finally to Vancouver where she lives today.

With the frequent changes, Annie learned to connect with people by introducing herself and starting conversations with everyone she met. “I’ve grown up feeling like I was on the outside,” she says. “I managed this by talking to people and getting to know them. Conversation opens a lot of doors.”



(Photo: A. Danilko)

## **Important Life Lessons from Dad**

“I learn as much as I can and I do as much as I can,” she says. My dad taught me: ‘Do stuff you want to do and make sure you don’t regret it.’ and ‘If you believe in it, stand up for it...but you might also get punched in the nose for it too.’

“I learned that your word is who you are, and your word is all you have. If you give your word, always follow through. Listen. Learn. Keep your mind open.”

## **A Woman of All Trades**

Annie was set to go to university when a family tragedy changed everything. “My dad passed away, and suddenly my mom had to take care of six kids on her own. It was a rough time for everyone. I had to start working. I’ve done a lot of jobs...a lot.”

Annie has a lengthy resume. She has done office management and administration, book keeping, and computerized accounting. She has her tickets to operate heavy duty automotive equipment and forklifts, as well as chef papers.

“I’ve spent three years working in an office, and 10 years as the first female member of the Williams Lake street crew (they didn’t have steel toe boots for women at that time, so I wore the smallest men’s boots!). I’ve worked as a cashier at big box grocery stores and little theatres, a server in local bars, and a traffic flag woman at construction sites.”

When she wasn’t working, Annie volunteered. “I’m always busy,” she says.

## **A Leader in her Community**

Annie’s volunteerism is equally impressive. In addition to supporting Vancouver-based community response network (CRNs) events, she is also very active with [Britannia Community Services Centre](#). “I wanted to help seniors, teens, First Nations people...anyone who is at risk,” she says. “[The Britannia Renewal Project](#) that started in 2018 didn’t have any place for youth and seniors, so I signed up to be on their Board of Directors to change this and get some programs in place.”

She recently stepped down from the Britannia Board, and recently joined a committee with the City of Vancouver to make an impact in indigenous communities. “I was only able to go so far working at the community level, I need to go up to the city/municipality level to change things,” says Annie. “My calendar is filled with meetings.”

Over the years, she has contributed her time to groups province wide. A few examples of groups she has worked with include:

- The Williams Lake Women’s Centre.
- [Big Brothers and Big Sisters](#) out of Williams Lake. (“I was a big sister until my little sister aged out. She became my roommate afterward in Kamloops!”)
- [Aboriginal Live in Vancouver Enhancement Society](#) (ALIVE) where she was president and past president.
- The urban Indigenous people’s advisory committee, the asset naming committee, and several others out of the City of Vancouver and Britannia Community Centre.

“I volunteer because I believe in helping each other and giving each other a step up, especially seniors. Helping seniors – our elders – is very much part of First Nations culture,” she adds. “I like putting people together. I find a need or a problem, and figure out a way to fix it.”

### **Why She is an Exceptional Volunteer**

“Annie is very active in CRN events and incredibly engaged in her community,” says **Susan Moore**, Regional Mentor – Vancouver. “She sits on several advisory boards with the City of Vancouver, she mentors young people, and has been on the Board of Britannia Services Society for a long time. She is the reason why BC CRN has been able to relaunch the Vancouver Indigenous CRN. She is an amazing example of someone who lives the belief of what happens to one happens to all. She’s just an incredible human being...and a huge friend.”

*If you know of an outstanding volunteer in your CRN we should profile in a future edition of E-Connector, please contact us at [admin@bccrns.ca](mailto:admin@bccrns.ca).*

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## **Provincial Learning Events**

**October 15, 2019:** [The Office of the Advocate for Service Quality](#) (OASQ) presented by Leanne Dospital, Advocate for Service Quality, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Province of BC.

Since 1992 the Office of the Advocate for Service Quality has acted as a neutral and objective third party to help solve problems and find solutions for youth transitioning and adults with a developmental disability experiencing issues with service.

Leanne will review the history and unique role of the OASQ, describe some scenarios where the office has been able to broker solutions to complex problems, and discuss the importance of fairness and the nuanced concept of “self-determination.” After the session, you will have a better understanding of the impact of aging on people with developmental disabilities, self-determination, and the importance of supports when encouraging self-determination.

**Leanne Dospital** has over 25 years of experience in social justice and disability-related work with expertise in adult guardianship, human rights, and communications. She has also managed the investigations and healthcare decisions programs for the Public Guardian and Trustee. She was a 20-year program and governance volunteer at the Canadian Red Cross for which she received the Queen’s Golden Jubilee Medal and now volunteers for the PAC at her son’s school.



*(Photo: A. Dospital)*

Provincial Learning Events are toll-free teleconferences that take place the third Tuesday of the month from 10:30 am to 12 pm. Everyone is welcome.

Email [info@bccrns.ca](mailto:info@bccrns.ca) to receive notifications of upcoming teleconferences and to receive dial-in info.

## Our Top 5: Resources of the Month

1. [Ending Loneliness and Social Isolation – A Public Health Perspective](#) (Webinar Recording, 2019): Produced by [The Tamarak Institute](#), this video recording Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer, Dr. David C. Williams highlights the growing evidence that loneliness and social isolation have negative impacts on our health and wellbeing. He also recognizes the need to understand how community structures have shifted over time and why some Ontarians may not have a stronger sense of belonging. (Source: Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (CNPEA))
2. [A Connected Society – A Strategy for Tackling Loneliness](#) (2018): A summary of the strategy being undertaken by the UK’s Commission on Loneliness.
3. [BC Elders’ Guide](#) (2014): Published by The First Nations Health Authority and Province of BC, this first edition of the BC Elders’ Guide includes information on programs, services, and resources for elders, their families, and caregivers in the province.
4. [Save Our Northern Seniors \(SONS\) Facebook page](#): “Like” SONS for the latest events, workshops, and resources for seniors and their families living in Northern BC.
5. [Seniors Matter](#) (Video Series, 2019): An online access show highlighting topics of interest to seniors in the Kootenays. (Episode 3 touches on the topic of elder abuse.)



“Like” [Facebook](#) or “follow” us on [Twitter](#) to receive the latest resources on adult abuse and neglect.

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## Our Top 5: Headlines of the Month

1. [Your Money: How to make seniors smarter about financial scams](#), The Guardian, September 26, 2019.
2. [Increase in Bitcoin scammers, says Coquitlam RCMP](#), TriCity News, September 17, 2019.
3. [Prolific fraudster targeting seniors in Metro Vancouver, RCMP warn](#), CBC News, September 6, 2019.
4. [New residents settle into 'dementia village' in Langley](#), CBC News, September 2, 2019.
5. [Fraudsters preying on Telus customers impacted by major email outage](#), Global News, August 28, 2019.

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## Campaigns & Professional Development Events

- ***It's Not Right! Workshop***

*October 9, 2019, Sparwood Seniors' Drop-In Centre, Sparwood, BC*

The Sparwood Community Response Network (CRN) is hosting a free workshop for anyone who wants to learn more about how to spot the signs of abuse, neglect and self-neglect. The workshop will be facilitated by Sandy Zeznick and Laura Newberry of Cranbrook.

For more, contact Lois Halko (250-425-7256) or Rosa Rocca (250-421-2416). Refreshments will be served. [View more information on BC CRN's \*It's Not Right!\* program.](#)

- **2019 BC Crime Prevention Week**

*November 1-7, 2019, various location in BC*

This annual province-wide crime prevention campaign aims to educate British Columbians on creating safer and healthier communities. Awareness is the best protection against crime. Look for events in your community.

- **2019 Provincial Summit on Aging, Healthy Aging by the United Way**

*November 7-8, 2019, Executive Airport Hotel, Richmond, BC*

The summit brings together Community-Based Seniors Services (CBSS) organizations, older adults, family and friend caregivers, academia and government representatives to discuss and collaborate on current issues and innovations in healthy aging. [View more on the program and how to register.](#)

- **2019 National Elder Law Conference: Bridging the Gap – Elder Law for Everyone, Canadian Centre for Elder Law & the Continuing Legal Education Society of BC**

*November 14-15, 2019, Vancouver, BC*

The Canadian Elder Law Conference is a two-day forum on the law and policy issues impacting older clients, featuring practical skill-based sessions, updates on hot topics, and current research on law and aging-related issues. This conference is for lawyers practicing in the areas of elder law, family law, and wills, estates, and trusts, as well as healthcare professionals, social workers, advocacy groups, financial trustees, and anyone concerned with the rights of older people. [Program information](#) and [registration](#) are now open.

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