

Introduction

“The abuse and neglect of older adults is not a new problem. Although present for many years in our society, it has existed in relative silence, denial and isolation. Greater acknowledgement and interest has been generated over the past few years and now communities are faced with the task of responding to the issue.”¹

“Until issues are recognized and addressed by a comprehensive network of support services and protocols, there will not be a complete resolution of any individual case of abuse and neglect of seniors.”²

The Community Training Workshop, and this accompanying manual, have been developed to increase your knowledge of the issue of the abuse of older adults. The intent is to present you with a framework, or map, that will focus your thinking on how members of your community can come together to prevent the abuse of older adults. It should also help you, and your community, determine how to respond when abuse occurs.

Neither this manual, or the workshop’s content, will tell you specifically what you and your community should do to address these issues as there are no universal “right” answers of how to respond to abuse or how to prevent abuse. The manual and the workshop will provide you with information on the issue of abuse of older adults; what has been done in other communities to address the issues of abuse; and a listing of resources that are available to you to both further your knowledge and educate others on these issues. This manual and the workshop’s content are designed to assist you in creating an atmosphere of collective community problem solving regarding how best to respond to the abuse of older adults.

¹ *Community Awareness and Response: Abuse and Neglect of Older Adults*; Lukawiecki, Teresa Health and Welfare Canada; September 1992

² *Community-Based Intervention Strategies for Cases of Abuse and Neglect of Seniors: A Comparison of Models, Philosophies and Practice Issues*; McKenzie, Pearl; Linda Todd and Penny Yellen; - in *Abuse and Neglect of Older Canadians: Strategies for Change*; Canadian Association of Gerontology; MacClean, Michael J., Editor; Thompson Educational Publishing Inc.; 1995

History of the Abuse Education, Prevention, and Response Project - A Joint Project of the Haldimand-Norfolk Project on the Abuse of Older Adults and the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly

The Abuse Education, Prevention and Response Project

In July of 1999, the Steering Community of the Haldimand-Norfolk (H-N) Project on the Abuse of Older Adults and the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly collaborated in an application to the Ontario Trillium Foundation to ... "work together, and with groups in other communities in Ontario, to:

- raise awareness about the abuse of older adults
- help communities identify ways of actively preventing, and responding to, the abuse of older adults at a local level
- prepare educational materials to assist communities to understand the dynamics of abuse, abuse prevention, and response
- prepare materials that will act as a community development guide for groups interested in raising awareness about abuse and in developing a local response to abuse, and
- work with communities who request Connecting Module Workshops to develop Community Response Networks to improve the quality of life of seniors." (Trillium Application; 1999)

Specifically, they requested funding to:

- develop Community Training Workshops and an accompanying Community Training Manual and facilitate Community Training Workshops across the Province of Ontario; and
- facilitate Connecting Module Workshops in communities across the Province of Ontario who have been actively addressing the issue of the abuse and neglect of older adults in their community and now wish to develop their own Community Response Network.

They were successful in their request for funding and the Abuse Education, Prevention and Response Project began in January, 2000. It will continue until March 31, 2003.

The overall outcome of the Abuse Education, Prevention and Response Project was anticipated to be healthier communities whose members are trained to:

- assist older adults suspected of being abused and/or neglected, and
- co-ordinate their response(s) to such abuse when it occurs.

Over the course of the Project it was anticipated that there would be a minimum of 5 one day Community Training Workshops and a maximum of 7 of the four day Connecting Module Workshops facilitated in communities throughout the Province of Ontario.

The learnings gained by communities when the Community Training Workshops are facilitated in them will be supported and strengthened by the dissemination of the Community Training Manual. The Co-ordinator of the Project, and other Project participants, will also continue to provide information and support to communities, as requested, after the Community Training Workshop has been facilitated.

The Project Co-ordinator and other Project participants will work with communities requesting the facilitation of the Connecting Module Workshops prior to the Workshops' facilitation to determine whether or not their community is ready for these Workshops - for example, community representatives will be asked: Have they been actively addressing the issue of the abuse of older adults in some manner? What have they been doing? How broad is community participation on their committee or group?, etc.

If it is mutually determined that the community is ready for the facilitation of the Connecting Module Workshops, the Project Co-ordinator will work with community representatives to co-ordinate the facilitation of the Workshops. The Project Co-ordinator, and other Project participants, will continue to provide information and support to communities, as requested, after the Connecting Module Workshops have been facilitated.

If it is mutually determined that the community is not ready for the facilitation of the Connecting Module Workshops the Project Co-ordinator will offer suggestions to, and work with, community representatives to attempt to ready them for the Workshop facilitation. This may include the facilitation of the Community Training Workshop prior to the facilitation of the Connecting Module Workshops.

Project Activities to Date

During the winter and spring of 2000 the Community Education Manual was written, edited and produced. A Second Edition on the Manual was produced in August 2002. The Second and Third Edition (December, 2002) include revised and added material as a result of the feedback received in the workshops and on evaluation forms.

By the end of December 2002 Community Training Workshops will have been facilitated in:

- Oakville (Halton Region) (1 day)
- London (1 day)
- Brantford (Brant County) (1 day)
- Whitby (Durham Region) (1 day)
- Little Current (Manitoulin Island) (1 day)
- Fergus (Wellington & Dufferin Counties) (2 days)
- Elliot Lake (1 day)
- Red Lake (2 days)
- White Dog (Wabaseemong) (1 day)
- Kenora (2 days)
- Huntsville (Muskoka) (1 day)
- York Region (2 days)

By the end of December 2002 Connecting Module Workshops (4 days) will have been facilitated in:

- Belleville (Hastings and Prince Edward County)
- Peterborough (County and City)
- Thunder Bay and District
- Little Current (Manitoulin Island)
- Brantford (Brant County)
- Whitby (Durham Region)

Workshops will also be facilitated in Dryden, Sioux Lookout and Sudbury in 2003.

Why was it felt to be important to apply for funding to do this work?

To understand, it would be helpful to know the history of the Haldimand and Norfolk Community Response Network (addressing the issue of the abuse of

older adults) and how it expanded into the joint project with the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly. In particular it is important to understand why the members of the Steering Committee of the H-N Project decided to use the British Columbia *Developing Community Response Networks* community development model when building their Community Response Network to address the issue of the abuse of older adults in their community.

The Haldimand-Norfolk Project on the Abuse of Older Adults

In June 1996, as a result of a one-day workshop on issues affecting older persons facilitated by the Geriatric Psychiatry Program of H-N (Adult Mental Health Services of H -N), representatives of organizations and agencies that provide service to older adults in H & N recognized that the issue of the abuse of older adults needed to be addressed in their community. Learning about the issues surrounding, and addressing, the abuse of older adults was identified as the number one priority for service providers.

A small Steering Committee was formed to seek funding to do this work. In March of 1996, this group was successful in getting funding from Health Canada - The Partners in Aging Program, to operate a one year "Elder Abuse Project". That Project ran from April 1, 1996 to March 31, 1997.

Representatives of most of the organizations and agencies providing service to abused older adults, and some older adults themselves, made up the Steering Committee that guided the work of that Elder Abuse Project.

During the year, the people working on that Elder Abuse Project:

- gathered resources and created a resource library on the abuse of older adults (currently housed at the office of the Alzheimer Society of H-N)
- conducted public and professional education sessions on the issue of the abuse of older adults
- wrote and distributed the Education Manual, ***Toward an understanding...the abuse and neglect of older adults in H-N***, and
- wrote and distributed the Resource Guide, ***How to help...the abuse and neglect of older adults in H-N***
- conducted a survey to get a better understanding of how much, and what kinds, of abuse(s) of older adults was occurring in H-N
- developed an "Individual Case Data Collection Form" to get a better understanding of how much, and what kinds, of abuse(s) of older adults was occurring in H-N

Although the H-N Elder Abuse Project was successful in educating the community about the abuse of older adults and in building a resource base, there was still little or no co-ordination between the agencies and organizations providing service to older adults in responding to incidents of suspected abuse. For this reason, the Steering Committee decided that they wanted to develop a “community response” to abuse and inter-agency protocols.

While gathering resources for the Elder Abuse Project’s Resource Library, Steering Committee members had become aware of the Developing Community Response Networks ‘via’ the facilitation of Connecting Module Workshops community development model that had been created in British Columbia to address these issues.

Building H & N's Community Response Network

The *Developing Community Response Networks: A Guide for Communities* training manual was written by Sylvia Holland, and published by North Shore Community Services, North Vancouver, B.C., in 1994. The manual was written to describe to others the Community Response Network community development model of addressing the issue of the abuse of older adults.³ Community Response Network, as defined in this work, is a term that is “...used to refer to any group of organizations and/or individuals working together, in an area defined by geography, to provide effective service to adults who have been (or are at risk of being) ... abused by others.”⁴

Connecting Module Workshops are four days of Workshops, offered over a period of time, that bring people together, and provide them with in-depth education on both abuse issues, and the strategies community representatives could utilize to develop their Community Response Network.

The H-N Steering Committee felt that this model, and these Workshops, if adapted to the Ontario service and system environment, would meet their community's need.

A small group of service providers and volunteers sent a proposal to the Ontario Trillium Foundation requesting funding to bring the Developing Community Response Networks model to Ontario from British Columbia.

³ *Developing Community Response Networks: A Guide for Communities:*
Holland, Sylvia; North Shore Community Services, British Columbia; April,
1994

⁴ *Developing Community Response Networks: A Guide for Communities:*
Holland, Sylvia; North Shore Community Services, British Columbia; April,
1994

The funding proposal was successful, and the H-N Abuse of Older Adults Project began its work in January of 1998. The Project was funded to operate until December, 2000, at which time the community took over its work.

The Purpose and Objectives of the Haldimand-Norfolk Abuse of Older Adults Project

The purpose and objectives of the Haldimand-Norfolk (H-N) Abuse of Older Adults Project were:

Purpose:

To develop a community based, and “senior driven”, inter-linking community response network to assist abused and neglected older adults living in H-N

Objectives:

- to create a sustainable, community based, response network to address the abuse and neglect of older adults
- to prevent the abuse and neglect of older adults
- to create an atmosphere of non-threatening accessibility to local services
- to increase community knowledge regarding the incidence of abuse and neglect in H-N

The Advocacy Centre for the Elderly, a legal clinic for seniors, was retained to revise the Connecting Module materials to make these materials applicable and appropriate to the Ontario context . This was done with permission of the B.C. Government's Ministry of Health, the owner of the copyright on the materials.

In September of 1998, Pearl McKenzie, one of the creators of BC programme, came from British Columbia to train, via a “train-the-trainer” process, members of the Steering Committee of the H-N Project, and Judith Wahl, of the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly, how to facilitate Connecting Module Workshops.

After this initial training, the accredited facilitators facilitated the Connecting Module workshops in Haldimand-Norfolk (June through November, 1999).

Since that time, the Steering Committee of the Haldimand-Norfolk Project on the Abuse of Older Adults, and the participants in the Connecting Module Workshops, have created Haldimand and Norfolk’s Community Response

Network. They have written, printed and distributed an education manual, developed a Web Site (which is located at www.hncrn.ca), and created two Committees to sustain the work of the Network - the Education Committee and the Advisory Committee. Also, a group of older adult residents from across H & N have created the "Choices" Committee. This committee is affiliated to the Community Response Network and its members are identifying and addressing the needs of older adults in H & N, as well as piloting an "*A Time for Me*" program for older adults in both Counties.

The Haldimand & Norfolk Community Response Network Addressing the Issues of the Abuse of Older Adults in our Community

Mission Statement

To increase awareness of, prevent, and respond to, the abuse of older adults through a co-ordinated response network.

Guiding Principles

Individuals whose lives have been affected by abuse will guide the nature and direction of the work of H & N's Community Response Network's participants

The participants in H & N's Community Response Network value our community linkages, partnerships, and the co-ordination of services, so that resources are used most effectively

The participants in H & N's Community Response Network presume that individuals are competent and capable

Participants in H & N's Community Response Network believe that co-ordinated efforts which are focused on advocating for the rights of older adults are integral to the prevention and/or cessation of abusive situations

The participants in H & N's Community Response Network believe that all individuals have the right to:

- live in a safe environment free of abuse
- confidentiality and privacy
- self-determination and to exercise their informed choices

- be treated with dignity, courtesy, consideration and respect
- non-judgmental, open-minded support that is provided to them in the least intrusive manner possible
- timely access to services
- services that are accessible to them
- services that are accountable to them

Due to the fact that the Haldimand-Norfolk Project on the Abuse of Older Adults had been successful - in terms of building a Community Response Network to address the issue of the abuse of older adults via the community development model developed in British Columbia - the members of the H & N CRN and the staff of the Advocacy for the Elderly applied for funding to conduct the provincial Abuse Education, Prevention and Response Project.