

First Nations Elder Safety Resource Guide



www.hswc.ca

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Who are we?

The Howe Sound Women's Centre Society promotes women's equality and the empowerment of women and their children. We work from a feminist* perspective. By responding to and working for change, we honour the diversity of women's lives and meet the evolving needs of the women and children throughout the Sea to Sky Corridor. We know this work contributes to the well being of our communities and society at large.

**Women and men who believe in women's rights and equality throughout society.*

At the Howe Sound Women's Centre we provide advocacy, referrals, support, Children Who Witness Abuse Counseling, use of office equipment, Transition and Safe housing, wellness programs, such as yoga and meditation. We host an Access Pro Bono legal clinic as well as support groups. All of our programs and services are offered free of charge.

While the HSWC has been committed to addressing women's needs specifically for over thirty years, the rise of elder abuse has been identified as a key issue compatible with the mission of the HSWC to see all women live free of abuse. Currently, research on Elder Abuse in First Nations community is limited, however there is enough anecdotal evidence to suggest that it is a serious problem. This has been exacerbated by the Residential School Survivors payments now flowing into households. This problem is amplified yet again when taking into account the tight-knit nature of First Nations communities and the fact that offenders are often members of an elder's immediate family.

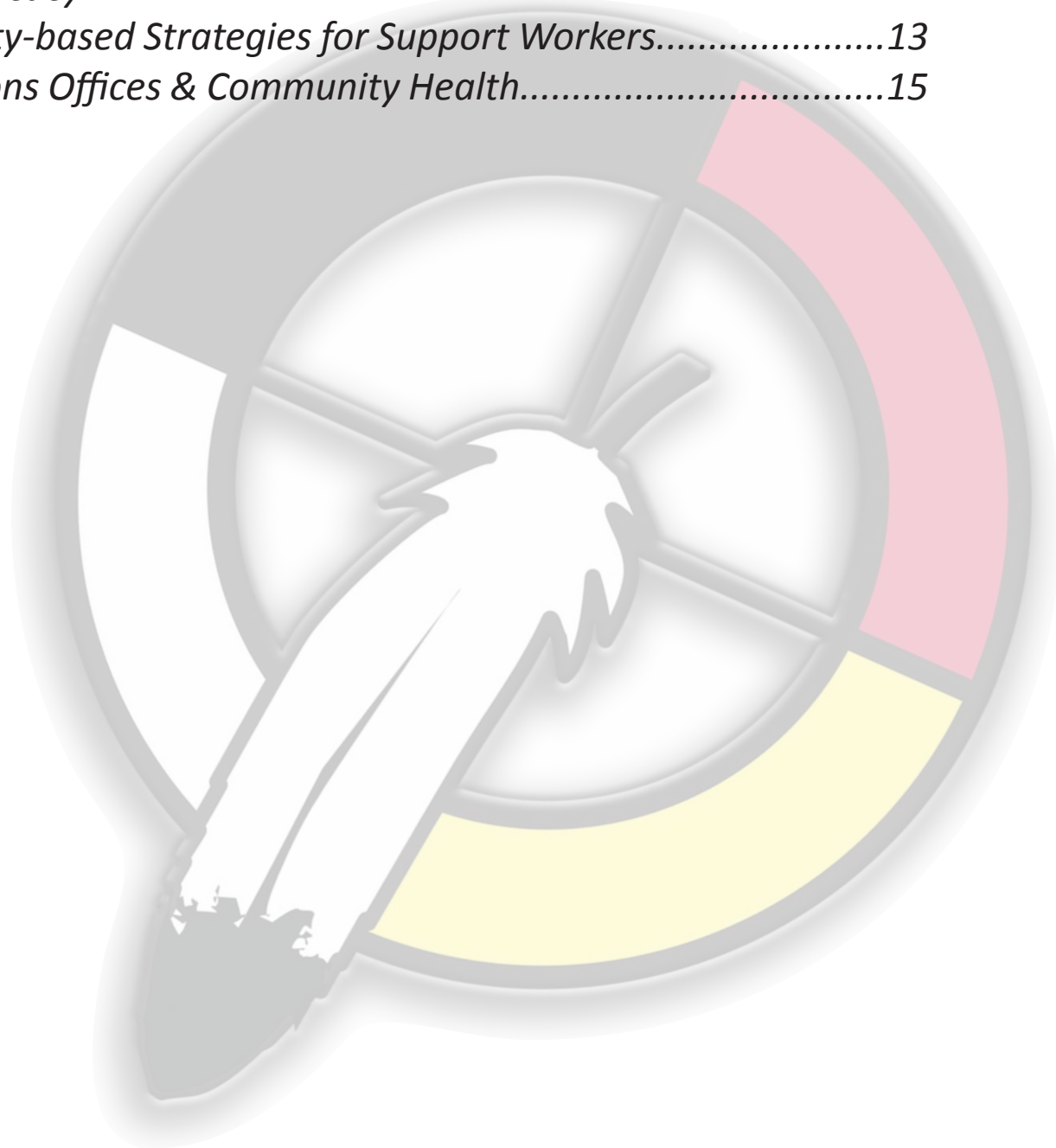
The first step in addressing this problem is community awareness and involvement. This document outlines the nature of elder abuse and outlines some community response possibilities.

The following document contains resources for:

- 1. Elders who may be suffering from abuse.***
- 2. Friends and family members who may suspect abuse is occurring.***
- 3. Community Support Workers who may use these resources for programming and client referrals.***

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What is Elder Abuse?



Elder Abuse includes any action that endangers the health or well-being of an older adult. Elder abuse is carried out by someone or several people with a special relationship to the elder, such as a spouse, sibling, child, friend or caregiver.

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Psychological and emotional abuse come from words or actions that are hurtful and make elders feel unloved and ignored. Examples include isolation and disrespect, humiliation, intimidation and threats to harm pets property or loved ones.

NEGLECT

Neglect happens if a person is not being cared for properly by a caregiver, such as being provided proper food, clothing, medical supplies or supervision.

INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE

This refers to abuse at the hands of professional care-givers in hospitals and seniors' centres. It is against the law for elders to be mistreated by staff in these settings.

FINANCIAL ABUSE

Financial abuse includes being persuaded or bullied into loaning or giving money. Examples can include people moving into a home without a shared agreement of costs or financial decisions made on behalf of someone without prior knowledge or consent.

MEDICAL ABUSE

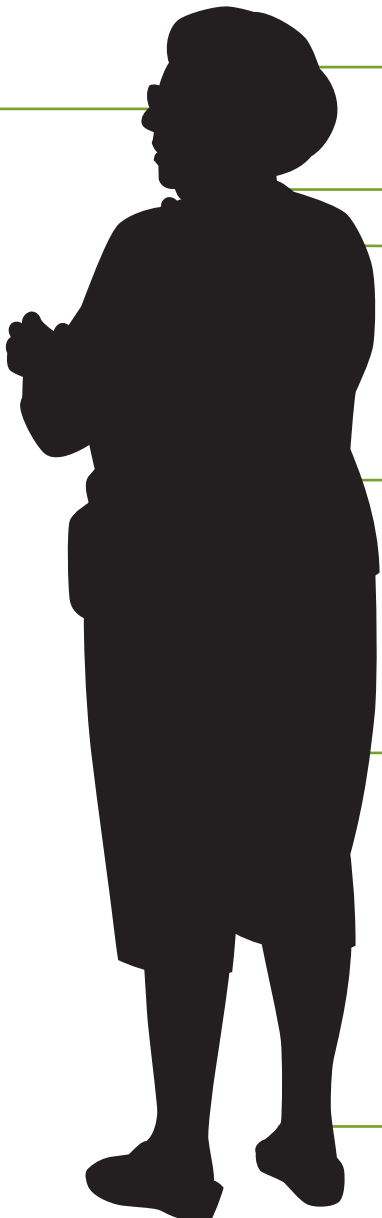
Medical abuse happens when an elder is not being provided with necessary medication, such as a caregiver misusing medication or prescriptions (overmedicating, substituting, withholding or stealing).

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse is any physical action that causes bodily harm, such as pain, injury or discomfort. Examples could include hitting, physical restraint confinement or exposure to severe weather.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse is unwanted sexual behavior such as sexual comments, touching or rape



Examples of Abuse



Physical abuse is the most commonly understood type of abuse, but did you know spiritual, emotional and mental abuse are just as bad? Look through some of the examples below.

Financial Abuse: Common Payments to Elders

In general, many older people are vulnerable to financial abuse. Aboriginal Elders are particularly vulnerable since receiving compensation for their attendance at the residential schools and the abuses they suffered while at the schools.

Financial abuse is the misuse of someone's funds and assets or getting property and funds without the person's consent.

QUESTIONS: Do your family members come over when your cheque comes in to borrow money regularly and don't pay you back? Do they use guilt on you, or tell you that you don't need the money as much as they do? Do they insist you give or lend them money even if you can't pay your own bills?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions you may be a victim of financial abuse.

Examples of Abuse con't.



Neglect

QUESTIONS: Do your family members ever steal your medications? Do they take your groceries leaving you little or no food? Do they refuse to bring you into town to the community centre or other public places leaving you feeling isolated or alone?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions you may be a victim of neglect.

Physical and Sexual Abuse

QUESTIONS: Do your family members or care-takers ever push you? Do they grab you roughly or threaten you? Have they ever left you in a cold house with no heat? Have you been forced into unwanted sexual acts, such as inappropriate or unwanted touching?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions you may be a victim of physical or sexual abuse.

Emotional Abuse

QUESTIONS: Do your family members call you names like “worthless, old, loser” etc.? Do they tell you you’re too “old” or “stupid” to manage your own money and household? Do they make fun of your medical conditions or say you are too embarrassing to be seen with in public?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions you may be a victim of emotional abuse.



Why do some Elders not speak up?

It is not always possible to know the full extent of abuse of older adults. Those who are being abused are often unwilling or in some cases unable to report it for the following reasons:

FEAR:

- Of being punished for reporting
- Of institutionalization
- Of rejection or abandonment by other family members
- Of losing their caregiver or other family members including grandchildren
- That the disclosure will reflect poorly on their family

LOVE FOR THE ABUSER:

The senior often does not want to see the abuser criticized or face the consequences for the behavior.

LACK OF/OR IMPAIRED UNDERSTANDING:

This may be due to medical disability or mental impairment or inappropriate medication.

SHAME AND/OR GUILT:

The senior often blames him/herself for the behavior of the children even when the children are adults. The senior may also believe that it was something they did that brought on the abuse.

UNAWARE OF RESOURCE OPTIONS:

The senior who either believes abuse is a private family issue or who is unaware of the community supports and services available to them will be more hesitant to openly identify with this issue.

ACCEPTANCE OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT AS NORMAL:

The abuse may be seen as a typical pattern of behavior in the family; abusers may learn to be abusive by witnessing or experiencing it. Additionally, the abuse is a product of society's general tolerance and acceptance of violence.

What to do when the Elder is in Denial?



If you believe that a senior is being mistreated but reluctant to report it, you can still help them, the first point of action is to recognize abuse when it is happening. Below are some common signs and symptoms of unreported abuse.

Indicators of Physical Abuse

- Unexplained injuries such as bruising, burns, fractures, or lacerations.
- Medical attention sought from a variety of doctors or clinics.
- Injuries have not received proper medical attention.
- History of accidents/injuries.

Indicators of Emotional Abuse

- Changes to personality. More fearful, passive, withdrawn.
- Low self esteem.
- Reluctant to talk openly.
- Inconsistent statements (not from mental confusion)
- Waits for caregiver to respond.
- Insomnia, fatigue, listlessness.

Indicators of Financial Abuse

- An older adult has signed a document like a property deed without full understanding.
- An older adult has a lack on financial choices or decisions.
- Family members move in without an agreement to share costs.
- Unexplained discrepancy between known income and standard of living.
- Possessions disappearing.

Indicators of Neglect

- Malnutrition, dehydration, weight loss.
- Medical treatment being withheld.
- Missing dentures, glasses, hearing aid.
- Necessities of life not being met.
- Lack of safety precautions or supervision if necessary.
- Clothing threadbare or inappropriate.

Indicators of Medication Abuse

- Reduced mental or physical activity.
- Depression.
- Heightened / reduced / or absent therapeutic response.
- Prescriptions not being filled or being filled too often.

Indicators of Sexual Abuse

- Unwanted sexual suggestions, comments, materials.
- Lack of personal privacy (being watched).
- Unnecessary help with dressing / hygiene.
- Unwanted sexual activity.

If you suspect adult abuse or neglect, the next step is the RE:ACT

**RECOGNIZE
REPORT
RESOURCES
REACT**

Services for Elders



"I have questions where do I start?"

Below is a listing of programs and services specifically for seniors. Programs are free of charge and open to everyone.

1) Police / RCMP

911

If you need immediate assistance, or if you suspect that a crime is being committed, please dial 911. To reach the RCMP Integrated First Nations Unit, call:

604-892-6100

2) Stl'atl'imx Tribal Police: If you need immediate assistance, or if you suspect that a crime is being committed, please dial 911

www.stlatlimxpolice.ca

604-894-5757

3) Howe Sound Women's Centre Drop-In: Squamish and Whistler. Counselling, support, wellness programs and resources.

Whistler Drop-In
Squamish Drop-In

604 962-8711

604-892-5748

4) Police Victims Services: Information and practical assistance. Court support and referrals to crisis intake programs.

www.policevictimservices.bc.ca

1-877-869-0720

5) Victims Link Helpline: VictimLink BC is a toll-free, confidential, multilingual telephone service available across BC and Yukon 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It provides information and referral services to all victims of crime and immediate crisis support to victims of family and sexual violence.

www.victimlinkbc.ca/

1-800-563-0808

6) RCMP Ageless Wisdom, Victims Services: Web resources on Elder Abuse, Residential School Survivors and more.

1-800-563-0808

7) BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support: Victims services, educational and outreach, legal support. Are you an older adult who has been abused or mistreated and wants to know how to get help?

Call the Seniors Information Line: 1-866-437-1940

8) The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres: BCAAFC has been piloting an Elder Abuse workshop and creating resources to enable the 23 Aboriginal Friendship Centres in BC to host workshops in their community. Keep watching our website, the Elder Abuse Awareness and Prevention resources will be posted here. Feel free to contact the Elders Coordinators if you would like more information on the Elder Abuse workshop.

250 388-5522

9) Vancouver Coastal Health Re:ACT: Resources and e-tools on how to create community strategies on dealing with Elder Abuse.

www.vchreact.ca

1.877.REACT.99

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

www.bccrns.ca

604-531-9498

Services Con't.



11) Sea-to-Sky Community Services: Support, Information, Advocacy, Education, Referrals to safe housing, transition houses.

www.sscs.ca

1-877-892-2022

12) Indian Residential School Survivors Support Line: The Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program provides mental health and emotional support services to former Indian Residential School students and their families before, during and after their participation in Settlement Agreement processes.

1-866-925-4419

13) Vancouver Aboriginal Child & Family Services: Provides service to urban Aboriginal children and families living in the Greater Vancouver area. We strive to culturally and spiritually strengthen Aboriginal families through holistic service delivery.

www.vacfss.com

604-310-1234

14) Healing our Spirit (HIV/AIDS): Providing support and counselling for those with HIV/AIDS or their family members.

www.healingourspirit.org

1-866-745-8884

15) Aboriginal Health Program, BC Women's Health Centre: Health care advocacy and information on a variety of issues related to women's health.

604-875-2348

16) First Nations Patient Advocate: Access information, care and support.

1-888-300-3088

17) The International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse: INPEA is an organization, founded in 1997, which is dedicated to the global dissemination of information as part of its commitment to the world-wide prevention of the abuse of older people.

www.inpea.net

778-782 5063

18) The Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse: dedicated to the prevention of the abuse of older people in Canada. Information on how to raise awareness of key issues around abuse and neglect in later life and to assure older adults are treated as full citizens in Canadian society.

www.cnpea.ca

19) Seniors Serving Seniors BC: Programs and Services promoting the well-being of seniors. Including a peer mentoring program that connects seniors to provide support and advice to each other.

www.seniorsservingseniors.bc.ca

250-382-4331

20) BC Elders Communications Centre Society: Promotes BC First Nations Elders issues. Organizes the annual BC Elders Gathering. Newsletters and additional information also available.

www.bcelders.com

1-877-738-7288

21) Integrated First Nations Policing Unit: An integrated policing unit established between the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the West Vancouver Police Department to provide enhanced policing services that are culturally sensitive and responsive to the Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

www.ifnu.ca
infu@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

Office: (604) 985-1311
or (604)-969-7330



Local Programs for Elders

1) Squamish Nation Yúustway Health Services:

Health services as well as advocacy and support to access government and community health programs and services. Department Divisions include: Community Health & Wellness; Health Benefits Advocacy & Promotion; and Home & Community Care.

www.squamish.net

604-892-5975

2) Ayas Men Men Child and Family Services:

Support services for elders including: advocacy, crisis intervention, assistance with medical care, home care supports, therapy, support groups, transportation and more.

North Vancouver
Squamish Valley

604-985-4111

604-892-5975

3) Squamish Nation Elder's Program: Weekly events for elders, from quilting to pot-luck dinners. Call for this week's information.

North Vancouver

604-832-5166

4) N'Quatqua Elders' Coordinator & Elders' Home

Support: Call for new listings. Activities include exercise clubs, luncheon's, home support and more.

elders@nquatqua.ca

(604) 452-3290 Ext: 225



Legal Advocacy



"I'm having legal problems with my family. I need the help of a lawyer"

Lawyers can be costly, however there are a number of services that offer free or drastically discounted legal advice and representation. Below are a number of resources open to all women.

1) HSWC Free Legal Clinic: We offer a free 1/2 hour consultation with a lawyer at the Howe Sound Women's Centre. To book an appointment call HSWC at 604 892-5748.

2) Legal Services Society (Legal Aid): If you have a legal problem and can't afford a lawyer, we can help. Join the thousands who use the self-help information on our Family Law in BC website or who read our free legal information publications. You may also qualify for some legal advice from a lawyer or even for a lawyer to take your case.

www.lss.bc.ca

1-866-577-2525

3) Public Guardian and Trustee of BC: Call to help and adult that you suspect is being abused but cannot get help on their own.

www.trustee.bc.ca

1-800-563-0808

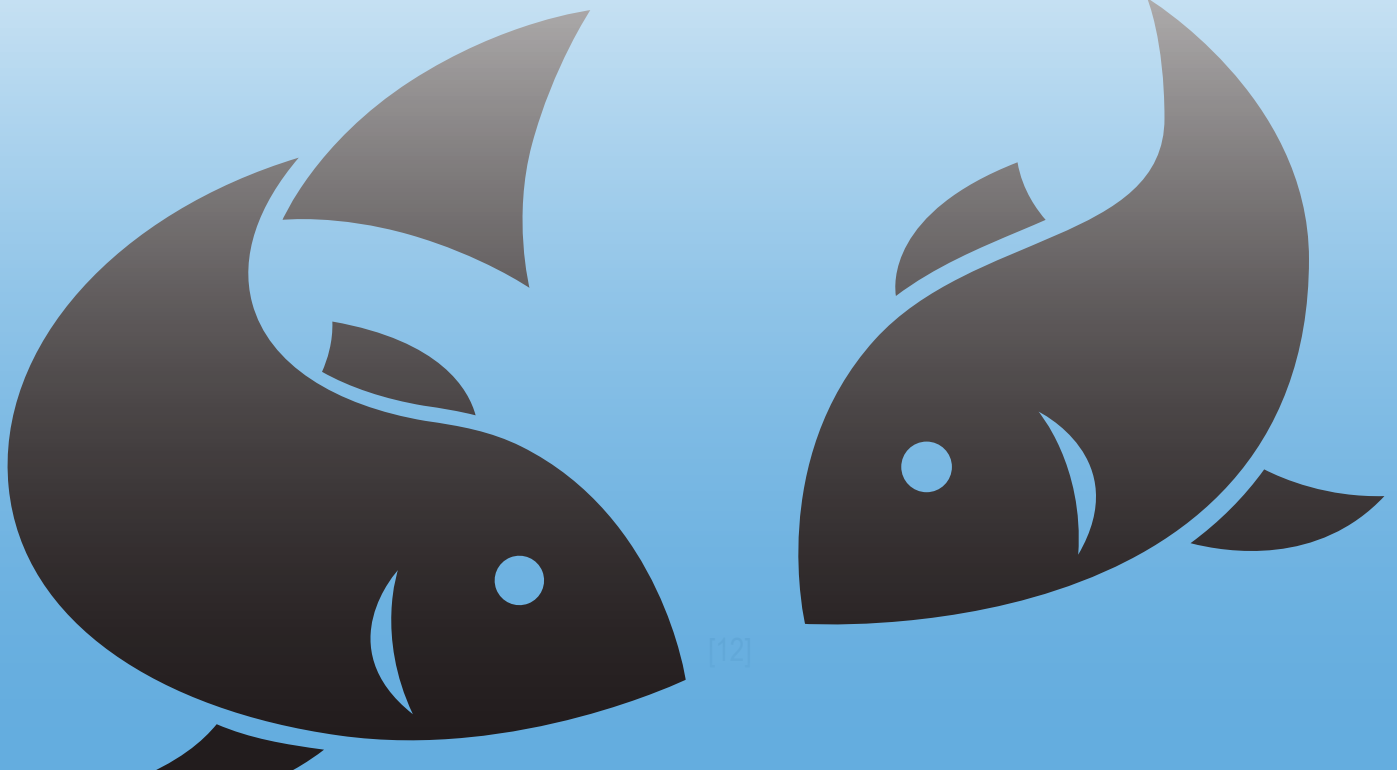
4) Native Court Workers: Counselling and referral services to clients with substance abuse and detox support issues; advocacy services for aboriginal family and youth; facilitating and enhancing access to justice by assisting clients involved in the criminal justice system; provides services to Vancouver community court; providing community outreach; networking and partnerships; advocacy services; and providing training and workshops.

www.nccabc.ca

1-877-811-1190

5) Squamish Nation Peacekeeper: If you need immediate assistance, or if you suspect that a crime is being committed, please dial 911.

604-892-9411



Community-based Strategies to Prevent Elder Abuse for Support Workers



There are two key ways to prevent elder abuse and neglect in your community:

- 1) Awareness
- 2) Community Involvement

Awareness

The first step to preventing elder abuse is educating elders on their rights. Elders are entitled to a respected place in our communities and should be treated with respect. Elders need to know and understand that they deserve to be treated with respect and that it's not acceptable to be mistreated by family members or care-givers.

Secondly, younger generations need to be taught that our elders deserve respect and have much wisdom to impart. A communities Elders are the key to our history as a people. Often they are the only members of our community that still speak the native language or remember many important traditions and rituals.

It is of vital importance that the younger generation connect with elders to learn these things for the cultural survival of the First Nations.

Examples of Ways to Raise Awareness in your Community

1. Subscribe to the [BC Association of Community Response Networks](#) (BCACRN). BCACRN has tools and resources to help you build community awareness on Elder Abuse and programing in your area.
 - A website so you can share your work with others.
 - Monthly teleconferences to discuss ideas on how to create awareness in your community.
 - Newsletters about news from the BCACRN.
 - A Mentors' Team whose members can be available by phone and email to offer help and support.
 - Local and regional workshops.
 - Contact Info: email: info@bccrns.ca or <http://www.bccrns.ca/index.php>
2. [The BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support](#) - Also offers programing support as well as local and regional workshops to help create awareness.
Contact Info: www.bcceas.ca or 1-866-437-1940

Program ideas for support workers con't.



Isolation is a big factor contributing to elder abuse. Elders need to be active and part of the community, not only for the benefit of their own mental health, but also so they can contribute to the community. Talk to your council representative or band Chief about starting a program in your community.

Don't know where to start? [The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres](#) has some great ideas to get you started.

Option 1: Create a Community Action Group on Elder Abuse

- [Coordinate a Friendship Centre Elder Abuse advisory group](#)
 - > Designate one Friendship Centre employee as the main Elder contact.
 - > Host a planning session with Elder support workers, Elders, and Youth leaders to build a working group for your Friendship Centres project.
- [Develop a local directory of Elder Abuse Resources Supports and Services](#)
 - > Host a mapping exercise to identify existing and potential Elder supports for the community and surrounding area for a coordinated approach to Elder services.
 - > Contact the community agencies serving Aboriginal Elders to meet together.
 - > This community Elder Abuse action group on Elder abuse can prioritize and work on projects.
 - > Strengthen social supports by coordinating Elders home-based services and Elders community programming.

Option 2: Host Elder Abuse Workshops

- [Peer Training for Elders](#)
 - > Contact the [BCAAFC Elder Coordinator](#) to have one of the BCAAFC Elder Council founding members empower a local Friendship Centre Elder to host a workshop at your Centre.
 - > BCAAFC can support the designated employee and Elder to plan and host a workshop for Elders and Elder support workers in your community.
- [Elder Abuse Workshops for Elder Support Workers](#)
 - > Use the BCAAFC Elder Abuse workshop resources as a first step in engaging other agencies serving Elders in your community.

Option 3: Coordinate an Elder Abuse Awareness and Prevention Event

- > The Friendship Centre may wish to initially host an event which raises awareness of Elder abuse in the community.
- > Community organizations will understand what services they each provide for Elders and identify ways to work together in building safer communities for Elders.

First Nations Offices & Community Health



1) Southern Stl'atl'imx Health Society

Tel: 604-894-0151

Email: quall@telus.net

2) Squamish Nation

320 Seymour Blvd.

North Vancouver, BC

Tel: 604-980-4553 or Toll Free 1-877-628-2288

www.squamish.net

3) Mount Currie (Lil'wat First Nation)

Address: PO BOX 602, Mount Currie, BC, V0N 2K0

Tel: 604-894-6115

Lil'wat Health Centre

Tel: 604-894-6656 or Toll Free 1-888-268-2900

4) N'Quatqua Nation

Address: PO BOX 88, D'Arcy, BC, V0N 1L0

Tel: 604-452-3221 or Toll Free 1-800-933-0323

N'Quatqua Health Station

Tel: 604-452-3290

5) Samahquam (In-SHUCK-ch Nation)

Address: PO BOX 610, Mount Currie, BC, V0N 2K0

Tel: 604-894-3355 or Toll Free 1-800-894-3366

6) Skatin (In-SHUCK-ch Nation)

Address: PO BOX 190, Pemberton, BC, V0N 2L0

Tel: 604-894-0151

7) Douglas First Nation

Address: Box 606, Mount Currie, BC, V0N 2K0

Tel: 604-894-0020

Douglas First Nation Health Centre

Tel: 1-600-700-3271

