



BC CENTRE FOR ELDER
ADVOCACY
SUPPORT

BUILDING COMMUNITY BRIDGES: OUTREACH TO OLDER WOMEN

Your Presenters:

Grace Balbutin and Genevieve Smith

gbalbutin@bcceas.ca and gsmith@bcceas.ca

Website: www.bcceas.ca

This project was made possible through funding from the:

Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Justice
Crime Prevention and Victim Services Division
Domestic Violence Prevention Response Fund 2011



Project Overview

- **Strategic one-year project that reached out to older women age 50+ in an environment that was comfortable to them – their home in a seniors independent living housing complex**
- **Provided older women with an opportunity to enhance their existing support and resource networks**
- **Women experts from 22 community agencies provided interactive presentations and discussions**
- **A team of 12 older women, ranging from age 57 to 78, were recruited and trained as volunteers to co-facilitate the workshops**
- **A Manual was developed**
- **Evaluation was conducted externally**

Project Goals

- **To develop older women support groups;**
- **Empower these groups;**
- **Provide a series of 10 workshops for each group about violence against women, elder abuse, the justice system, victim services, safety and security and the community resources that offer help, support and advocacy; and**
- **Coordinate with community groups to deliver the workshops.**

Project Activities

- **Recruitment of the Project Coordinator**
- **Canvass and select 6 seniors independent living housing in Vancouver, Richmond and Surrey to host the workshops**
- **Recruitment and training of 12 older women volunteers**
- **Coordination with 22 community agencies to present workshops**
- **Delivery of 10 workshops at each of the 6 seniors independent living housing**
- **Development of a manual**
- **Project evaluation**

Project Coordinator and the Building Community Bridges Volunteer Team



Project Outputs



- **Six groups of older women participated in the project delivered in six independent living seniors housing in Vancouver, Surrey and Richmond.**
- **Four of the six groups are continuing on and expanding group membership beyond the duration of the project;**
- **A Coordinator for each of the four groups was chosen by participants to coordinate the group's development;**
- **A network for mutual support within the four support groups has been established;**

Project Outputs



- **Delivery of 57 workshops in collaboration with 22 community groups;**
- **12 older women completed the volunteer training and are continuing to volunteer with the Building Community Bridges Team;**
- **Development of a manual that provides step-by-step guide to developing future support groups; and**
- **External evaluation indicated success of the project.**

Evaluation Results

“This was an ambitious project with a concomitant small amount of funding and short set time frame, which presented several problems and issues for the BC CEAS Team in both the preparation and actual implementation phases of the project.

Notwithstanding, the project met its short term outcomes most robustly in terms of participants’ awareness of concepts and knowledge of resources as well as confidence in seeking help for themselves.”

**- Kamala Sproule
External Evaluator**

Evaluation Results

Feedback from Older Women Participants:

- **Increased knowledge and understanding of the issues and topics covered during the presentations;**
- **Acquired more trust and confidence in the justice system;**
- **Increased capability and strength to prevent and protect themselves from incidence of abuse;**
- **Greater courage to report and seek assistance in case of emergency or need;**
- **Learned skills for developing safety plans;**
- **Learned skills in adopting strategies to stay connected to combat vulnerability resulting from isolation; and**
- **Acquired skills in reaching out to those who need help within and outside their senior's residence.**


Evaluation Results

Volunteers' Feedback and Self-Evaluations:

- **Increased knowledge around violence against women and elder abuse;**
- **Increased learning about co-facilitation;**
- **Confidence in working with the Project Coordinator;**
- **Comfort in working with other volunteers; and**
- **Confidence in providing support to the Group Coordinator.**

Post Project Updates

Sunnyside Villas Support Group, Surrey

- **Poster that the group created and distributed** 
- **The group went door-to-door of the 134 units of their independent living seniors housing to invite residents to their first meeting**
- **The group decided to open their group to male residents**



Did you know that 1 in 12 seniors in British Columbia experience abuse?

Some of us have completed a 10-week workshop series on abuse and mistreatment of seniors. We are hoping to have a support group here at Sunnyside Villas to help our seniors who have concerns for themselves or others, to find the appropriate resources to assist them.

We would like to share with you what we have learned. We invite you to an information meeting on:

**Tuesday, November 13, 2012, 1:00pm-3:00pm
Sunnyside Villas Recreation Room**

We have also invited the **BC Centre for Elder Advocacy Support** (BC CEAS) to join us in the information meeting. Their Legal Advocate and Director of Public Education will facilitate a 1-hour workshop on the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords and the role of the Residential Tenancy Branch. BC CEAS is a non-profit organization that provides programs that support, educate and advocate on behalf of older adults.

If you or anyone you know has concerns about being abused or mistreated and need information or assistance, you can call:

211 - The Senior's Help Line or

**BC CEAS Seniors Advocacy and Information Line
Phone: 604-437-1940**

Monday to Friday, 9:00am-1:00pm (You may leave a message.)

Post Project Updates

**Sunnyside Villas
Support Group's
first meeting was
attended by 30
residents**



Post Project Updates

Royal Arch Masonic Apartment's Support Group Champlain Heights, Vancouver

Hosted a consultation for the *Older Women Dialogue*, a project of the Canadian Centre for Elder Law in partnership with the West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF). 25 older women from the six groups participated in the dialogue.

<http://www.bcli.org/ccel/projects/older-women%E2%80%99s-dialogue-project>

<http://www.westcoastleaf.org/index.php?pageID=230&parentid=29>

Post Project Updates

Building Community Bridges Volunteer Team

Completed training on their role as liaisons with the Support Group Coordinator on behalf of BC CEAS Victim Services Program.



Project Challenges

1. Securing space at seniors independent living housing to host the workshops
 - Concerns that existence of a support group will bring future problems
 - Belief that seniors are safe and would not experience abuse in a seniors housing
 - Liability concerns
2. Generating interest from older women residing in the seniors independent living housing to participate in the project
 - myths that domestic violence does not happen to older women
 - concerns about disclosures of experiences of abuse and violence– shame and fear
3. Language barriers - due to funding limitations the project was delivered in English only which consequently excluded older women who did not speak English
4. Continuing caregiving role of women prevented some older women from attending
5. Health issues and concerns

Appreciations

- **The older women whose enthusiastic participation made this project a success**
- **12 older women volunteers who dedicated their time to the project**
- **Carmencita Orquiola, Project Coordinator**
- **Lin Chen, University of Victoria School of Social Work practicum student**
- **Shelley McClenahan, Manual Developer**
- **Kamala Sproule, Project Evaluator**

Appreciations

- **Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Justice, Crime Prevention and Victim Services Division - Domestic Violence Prevention Response Fund 2011**
- **Amenida Surrey Seniors Community, Surrey, BC**
- **Bill Rigby Manor, Richmond, BC**
- **Cedarwood Place Seniors Residence, Richmond, BC**
- **Royal Arch Masonic Apartments, Vancouver, BC**
- **Sunnyside Villas Seniors Residence, Surrey, BC**
- **Twin Arms Seniors Residence, Vancouver, BC**

Appreciations

Atira Transition House
CHIMO Crisis Services
Legal Services Society
Minoru Seniors Activity Centre
Richmond Women's Centre
Surrey Women's Centre

Battered Women's Support Services
Chuck Bailey Community Centre
Nova Transition House
Public Guardian and Trustee of BC
RCMP – Richmond and Surrey
Come Share Seniors Society

BC Association of Community Response Networks
Coal Harbour Community Policing
Family Services of Greater Vancouver-Richmond
Surrey-White Rock Police-Based Victim Services
Vancouver and Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services
Vancouver Police Department
Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter
West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF)
West End Seniors Network

BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support

Provides :

- programs and services that support, educate, and advocate on behalf of older adults
- information about the legal rights of older adults
- legal information or representation for low income older adults in areas such as elder abuse, debt, residential tenancy, and government benefits



Legal Programs

Victim Services Program

Public Education Program

Contact: Seniors Advocacy and Information Line

Metro Vancouver: 604-437-1940

Toll Free: 1-866-437-1040

Email: info@bcceas.ca

Website: www.bcceas.ca



Public Education Workshops

Offered Free to Community Groups

Financial Abuse and Elder Abuse Prevention Workshops

- **Protect Yourself! Financial Literacy Workshops for Older Adults**
- **Building Community Connections to Help Stop Mistreatment & Neglect of Older Adults**

To request a workshop, contact:
Sue Tench
Educational Program Coordinator
Email: sue.tench@bcceas.ca

Residential Tenancy Workshops

- **Rights and Responsibilities of Landlords and Tenants**
- **Dispute Resolution Process at the Residential Tenancy Branch**

To request a workshop, contact:
Nighat Afsar
Legal Advocate
Email: nafsar@bcceas.ca

BC CEAS Vision

Older adults in BC can live with dignity, free from abuse of any kind.





BC CENTRE FOR ELDER

A D V O C A C Y

S U P P O R T

Thank You!