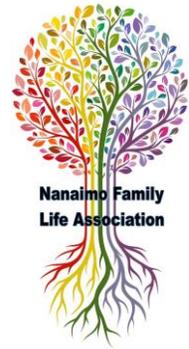




BC Association of
Community Response
Networks



United Way
Central and Northern
Vancouver Island



Nanaimo Community Response Network

For Immediate Release

Support World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Wear Purple June 15

Nanaimo, BC – June 10, 2014 – Nanaimo Family Life, United Way and a network of local agencies serving seniors—Nanaimo Community Response Network (CRN)—are asking people in our community to wear purple on June 15th to raise awareness about elder abuse and prevention. The Nanaimo CRN is also offering a free workshop on Thursday, June 12 at Oliver Woods Community Centre for non-profit and government care providers. This interactive workshop will outline a process for effective referrals for adults who are abused, neglected or self-neglecting.

Many elders suffer abuse and neglect—some by family members or trusted advisors, some in institutional settings and others by strangers. Ministry of Health research indicates that as many as 10 per cent of B.C. seniors experience one or more forms of abuse or neglect at some point in their later years, usually from someone they trust or on whom they rely. Underreporting and inconsistencies in collecting information on abuse suggest that these figures are “the tip of the iceberg.” It is estimated that between 168,000 and 421,000 seniors in Canada are experiencing or have experienced abuse or neglect in later life.

According to Deborah Hollins of Nanaimo Family Life Association, in our community we are seeing examples of physical, financial and emotional abuse in all cultural, economic and social groups. Women are coming forward to report physical abuse due to their spouse’s onset of dementia. Lack of affordable housing and poor finances forces some seniors to remain in unhealthy, and often dangerous, situations. Others find themselves still supporting adult children with addictions or mental health issues.

“It’s happening in private homes and in care facilities, and is a growing issue in our aging population,” explained Hollins. “The Community Response Network in Nanaimo is bringing together all the agencies—private and not-for-profit—that respond to vulnerable adults. Our goal is to coordinate and address services and gaps in services because we see the need of elders increasing all the time.”

CRNs across B.C. facilitate prevention and education activities with local organizations and other stakeholders toward an end to abuse, neglect and self-neglect of adults. In addition to Nanaimo Family Life Association, the Nanaimo CRN includes United Way Central and Northern Vancouver Island (UWCNVI), Island Health, Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Mid Island Abilities, Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society, Nanaimo RCMP, Haven Society and many others.

“United Way invests in programs to reduce the isolation of seniors, including the recently launched Better at Home program. Isolation plays a large role in elder abuse, so we know we are helping prevent some elder abuse, but more needs to be done and public awareness is essential,” said Signy Madden, Executive Director of UWCNVI. “We need to get over the taboo of talking about elder abuse. I know personally of a senior who lost money through the ‘grandson phone scam’ the RCMP are warning people about. Just as heartbreaking are the stories of abuse by loved ones.”

So what can you do if you think a senior is being abused or neglected or is not able to take care of himself or herself? Matt Scott, Island Health’s Clinical Specialist for Vulnerable or Incapable Adults, recommends either calling the provincial Seniors Abuse and Information Line (SAIL) at 1-866-437-1940 or Island Health’s Central Island intake for Home and Community Care at 250-739-5749 (toll free 1-877-734-4101). “The identity of the caller who reports elder abuse or neglect to Island Health’s intake line will be kept confidential,” said Scott, “The information is verified to determine whether abuse is taking place. We also make sure that the adult is able to seek support in the health system. In most cases, we find that people—either the seniors or their children or caregivers—are just needing extra support and we can usually help them.”

For additional information on how you can assist an elder who is abused, neglected or self-neglecting, visit the website for the BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support at www.bcceas.ca.

If you are a service provider interested in attending the free Nanaimo CRN workshop on June 12 from 9:30 a.m. to noon at Oliver Woods, call Nanaimo Family Life at 250-754-3331 to register and save your spot.

What can you do? Wear purple on June 15 to show your support for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

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Photo attached – caption:

Staff and volunteers at United Way Central and Northern Vancouver Island wear purple in support of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

BC Association of Community Response Networks

The British Columbia Association of Community Response Networks (BC CRN) grew out of the need to create an ongoing, permanent provincial funding and support structure to benefit local Community Response Networks (CRNs) and adults in their communities experiencing abuse, neglect and self-neglect. The Association provides small project funding, materials, training and support people, and maintains a website.

At the local level, CRNs facilitate prevention and education activities with local stakeholders toward an end to abuse, neglect and self-neglect of adults in British Columbia. CRNs also assist in identifying common themes, barriers and issues that require work at the regional, provincial and sometimes national level.

Nanaimo Family Life Association

Nanaimo Family Life Association is committed to promoting healthy individual and family relationships for a strong and resilient community. Nanaimo Family Life is a central resource that provides accessible, family-centered services, practically responding to current community needs and helping people to navigate the social service system in dealing with their challenges. Our skilled professionals and volunteers provide a range of holistic preventative and interventional services through fee-for-service and voluntary programs. We maintain effective partnerships with other community organizations and are respected as leaders in providing professional development, research, training and mentorship.

United Way Central and Northern Vancouver Island

Since 1958, United Way Central and Northern Vancouver Island (UWCNVI) has been mobilizing collective action to strengthen our community's social support network so that every person has access to the help they need during a crisis and for the long term. UWCNVI supports local programs for seniors in addition to its Better at Home program. Offered in seven communities, Better at Home helps seniors with simple, non-medical day-to-day tasks so that they can continue to live independently in their own homes and remain connected to their communities.

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