

Building Community Bridges:

Outreach to Older Women Project

A guide to establishing support groups at seniors independently housing facilities

Seniors Advocacy and Information Line
Metro Vancouver: 604-437-1940
Toll-Free: 1-866-437-1940
Email: info@bcceas.ca
Website: www.bcceas.ca



Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Project Objectives & Benefits to Participants	6
Phase 1 – Preparation	8
Preparation Part 1: Volunteer Recruitment & Training.....	8
The role of the volunteer support group facilitator	8
Volunteer Recruitment	9
Sample Volunteer Recruitment Poster Template	11
Volunteer Training	12
Checklist: before the Training	14
Training Outline	16
Volunteer Training Curriculum	17
Day 1 Content	17
Day 2 Content	19
Public Speaking Tips Handout	23
Day 3 Content	25
Considering the Needs of Participants Handout	26
Suggested Facilitation Strategies Handout.....	27
Challenging Scenarios Handout	31
Strategies for Challenging Scenarios Handout.....	33
Facilitation Skill Activity Handout	40

Preparation Part 2: Establishing the host venue	45
Identifying possible venues	45
Establishing the venue.....	45
Preparation Part 3: Coordinating Guest Speakers.....	46
Identifying workshop topics	46
Identifying and booking guest speakers.....	50
Phase 2 – Implementation.....	51
Implementation Part 1: Promotion.....	51
Implementation Part 2: Ongoing Workshop Logistics.....	51
Role of the volunteers.....	51
Role of the Project Coordinator.....	52
Phase 3 – Planning for future sustainability.....	53
Additional Resources	55
SAMPLE Volunteer Training Evaluation	56
Volunteer Coordinator Tips.....	58
SAMPLE Introductory Script for contacting potential venues	63
SAMPLE Project proposal for host agencies	64
SAMPLE Memorandum of Agreement	67
List of suggested additional topics for workshop sessions	68

Introduction

This guidebook is the culmination of a twelve month project by the BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support (BCCEAS). The *“Building Community Bridges: Outreach to Older Women Project”* was funded by the 2011 Domestic Violence Prevention Response Fund of the Victim Service & Crime Prevention Division, Ministry of Justice, Province of British Columbia. The project was designed to address an unmet need by facilitating the development of support systems for older adult women who may be victims of domestic violence and other forms of abuse. Older adults who have experienced domestic violence and abuse are often isolated and unwilling to disclose abuse to professionals or their peers. The aim of the project was to connect older adult women with their peers in a comfortable and familiar environment in order to break down social isolation and increase the likelihood that that they would be able to access the justice system.

Through this project, BCCEAS was able to create and build support groups for older women aged 50+ who live in six different seniors housing complexes. The six support groups established by BCCEAS provided the participants the opportunity to interact and connect with each other to enhance personal and community safety, and increase awareness about the services available to them. Each of the six support groups had ten sessions that included presentations and discussions on elder abuse, domestic violence, safety and security, information about the law, and how to access the justice system. At the end of the 10 sessions, the groups made plans to insure the sustainability of their support group.

The purpose of this document is to provide a step by step guide for organizations interested in developing future support groups of this nature. Developing a support group is divided into three distinct phases: preparation, implementation, and planning for future sustainability.

Project Objectives & Benefits to Participants

Before discussing the steps necessary to establish a support group, it is worthwhile to review the goals and objectives of the *Building Community Bridges* project.

The support groups were established with a number of objectives in mind:

- Provide older women with education and information through a series of workshop sessions that covered issues such as domestic violence, the justice system, safety and security, victim services, community resources, and coordinated response networks;
- Build closer relationships and develop connections between older women residents of seniors housing complexes;
- Encourage older women to seek assistance regarding domestic violence and other forms of elder abuse;
- Connect older women to appropriate community resources;
- Teach older women how to develop strategies for helping a friend who is being abused, supporting each other in accessing the justice system, and getting their community involved in planning safety personally and collectively.

The support groups offer a number of benefits to participants:

- Increased knowledge and understanding of the nature, causes and types of elder abuse and its overall impact on older adults;
- Better understanding and appreciation of the roles of the police, health units, victim service workers, non-profit organizations and other service providers in the prevention and elimination of elder abuse;
- Increased knowledge and understanding of the justice system and laws addressing domestic violence and other types of elder abuse as criminal offenses;
- Connection to community and government resources through invited presenters whom participants can contact directly in time of need;

- Lowered risk of isolation;
- Increased social connections and community involvement; and
- Enhanced personal and community safety and security.

Phase 1 – Preparation

The preparation phase is made up of three components: volunteer recruitment and training, establishing the host venue and coordinating guest speakers.

Preparation Part 1: Volunteer Recruitment & Training

Allow 2-3 months for volunteer recruitment and the completion of training.

The role of the volunteer support group facilitator

Building a support group is dependent on finding volunteers who are willing to facilitate the support group meetings by providing administrative and logistical support. The role of the Volunteer Support Group Facilitator is to assist in the implementation of the support groups by providing access to information and education, not to provide counselling services.

Specifically, the roles of the volunteers are as follows:

- Co-facilitate the workshops;
- Assist in contacting workshop presenters;
- Coordinate workshop schedules;
- Assist in the preparation of handouts and other materials required for the workshops;
- Record workshop proceedings;
- Assist in the preparation and serving of refreshments;
- Other miscellaneous logistical issues.

In order for the support groups to be successful, volunteers should:

- Have prior experience working with older adults;
- Be 50+ (older adults are more comfortable with workshop facilitators of similar age);
- Be comfortable with public speaking or eager to learn.

Volunteer Recruitment

Finding the right volunteers is a key component in making a project of this nature successful. It may take time to find appropriate volunteers so recruitment should begin as early as possible in order to allow sufficient time for both interviewing and training.

There are a variety of recruitment strategies that may be used to find support group coordinator volunteers:

- use volunteer recruitment websites
 - www.govolunteer.ca
 - www.volunteerbc.ca
 - www.volweb.ca
 - www.charityvillage.ca
- contact seniors organizations in your local community
- post informational flyers in seniors' centres, public libraries, etc.

Sample advertisement wording is below:

[AGENCY NAME] is seeking volunteers to assist in the implementation of its project, "Building Community Bridges – Outreach to at Risk Older Women". Volunteers will be trained to organize and manage support groups in senior housing complexes who would advocate for prevention of elder abuse, provide senior women increased awareness of the justice system, enhance their personal and community safety and protection, and to facilitate access to community resources.

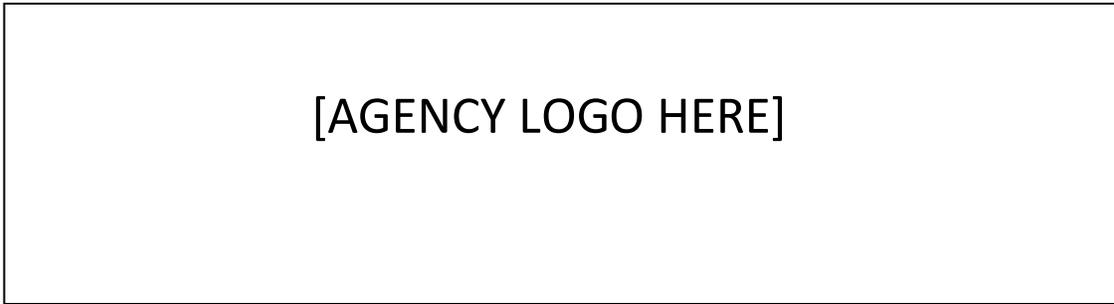
If you are:

- *female, 50 +*
- *a Canadian Citizen or Permanent Resident with at least 1 year experience working with seniors*
- *can commit volunteering at least 3 hours weekly to assist in facilitating workshops*

- *can commit to continue serving as contact person to liaise between support groups and the [AGENCY NAME] after the project ends; and*
- *can speak and write English, (a second language is an asset).*

Call us and join our Team. Contact [CONTACT PERSON] at [phone number]. For more information about [AGENCY], visit [WEBSITE].

[A volunteer recruitment poster template is on the following page.]



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!!

[AGENCY NAME] is **seeking volunteers for our *OUTREACH TO AT RISK OLDER WOMEN Project***. Volunteers will be trained to organize and manage support groups in senior housing complexes who would advocate for prevention of elder abuse, provide senior women increased awareness of the justice system, enhance their personal and community safety and protection, and to facilitate access to community resources.

We would like to hear from women age 50+ who have experience working with older adults, can commit to volunteering at least 3 hours each week for one year, and can communicate fluently in English.

The project's objective is to organize support groups for older women (aged 50+) living in seniors' housing complexes. The support groups will provide senior women increased awareness of the justice system, enhance their personal and community safety and connect them to coordinated community response networks on elder abuse and other community resources.

If you are interested, please contact [CONTACT NAME] at [PHONE NUMBER].

For more information about [AGENCY NAME] visit [WEBSITE].

Volunteer Training

The volunteer training sessions should take a minimum of three days to allow adequate time for volunteers to understand the goals of the project and the nature of their role, as well as give them the opportunity to develop the confidence needed to manage group dynamics.

General Guidelines for Volunteer Training

- Remember that you are a role model for the facilitation skills you want your volunteers to learn.
- Stay aware of group dynamics and deal with challenges and conflict respectfully but firmly:
 - Redirect dominant participants to another topic or task.
 - Change the format of participation so that everybody has a chance to speak in turn.
 - Remind participants of the agenda and timeline.
 - Make note of questions and concerns that you do not have time to address fully during the training and come back to them after the session or on another day.
- Learn a bit about each volunteer's skills and background before the training begins so that you can understand the range of experience in the group and plan accordingly.
- If there are differences in experience or ability among the volunteers, allow volunteers to share skills with one another in pairs or small groups.
- Remember that participation is voluntary for all activities. However, if a trainee refuses to participate, it may be a sign that this person is not a good match for the role of support group facilitator.

- Encourage trainees to help themselves to refreshments and use the washroom whenever needed. When possible, include stretching breaks to re-energize trainees.
- Encourage questions throughout the training.
- If a trainee asks you a question and you aren't sure of the answer, don't try to respond right away. Write down the question and answer later, once you have the information you need.
- Manage time carefully. If time is short, you may need to limit group discussion once the major points have been covered. To do this respectfully, summarize the key points trainees have made and encourage them to continue the conversation after the training or at an upcoming volunteer meeting.
- It can be challenging to set a training schedule that is convenient for all interested volunteers. However, make sure the entire schedule of training is set in advance and communicated clearly to volunteers so that they can set aside the necessary time and make a firm commitment to training.

Checklist: Before the Training

Communication and Logistics

- Have you printed an attendance list, including each registered volunteer's full name and contact information and any special needs?
- Have you learned a bit about each volunteer's skills and experience so that you can tailor the training to the group's needs?
- Have you spoken to all volunteers individually to make sure that they understand the volunteer role and are a good match for the program?
- Have you reminded volunteers of the training timing and details a few days in advance? (This can often be done by email.)
- Have you phoned any registered volunteers who did not confirm their attendance in response to your reminder?
- Have you made sure that all volunteers know how to contact you if they are going to be late or absent?
- If you are providing refreshments, have you checked whether volunteers have any dietary needs?
- If you need to cancel or reschedule the training, or if an emergency arises, can you contact each volunteer individually?
- Have you budgeted for the total cost of the training including room and equipment rental, transportation and supplies?
- Have you arranged for someone to assist you during the training if needed?
- Have you carefully reviewed and practiced the sequence of activities for the day?

Training Space

- Have you visited the space in person to make note of room size, location, table and chairs arrangement, power outlets, windows, and other details?
- Have you confirmed the room booking in writing?

- Have you confirmed directions by public transportation and by car, and checked parking availability? Have you communicated these details to your volunteers?
- Have you checked whether the building and training room are accessible to wheelchair users if necessary?
- Have you checked the location and accessibility of the washrooms?
- Is there somebody you can contact in case of problems with your training space?
- Have you ensured enough time to set up the room before the training and clean it up afterwards?

Materials

- Plenty of pens and pencils
- Extra paper
- Nametags
- Flip chart or board
- Markers (check that these are suitable for the surface that you need to write on and that they have plenty of ink)
- Any necessary audiovisual equipment
- Handouts
- Napkins
- Cups
- A pitcher of water
- Other beverages
- Snacks or lunch (when choosing foods, consider issues such as the need for refrigeration or heating and ease of serving)
- Plates
- Cutlery
- Have you laid out your materials so you can easily access them in the order you will need them

Training Outline

Suggested Day 1 Topics

- 1) Welcome & Introduction to the project: our organization, the role of Support Groups, and the role of volunteers
- 2) Getting to know each other
- 3) Elder Abuse
- 4) At-Risk Older Women

Suggested Day 2 Topics

- 1) Welcome Back & Review
- 2) Domestic Violence, Victim Services & Canada's Justice System
- 3) Community Response Networks
- 4) Support Group Facilitation Skills

Suggested Day 3 Topics

- 1) Welcome Back & Review
- 2) Considering Participant Needs
- 3) Challenging Scenarios
- 4) Facilitation Skills Role Play
- 5) Workshop Procedures

Volunteer Training Curriculum

A number of topics have been suggested in the Training Outline. The training should be designed to provide volunteers with an overview of the information that will be presented in more detail at the Support Group Workshop sessions.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the training sessions, participants will be able to:

- Have a general knowledge and understanding of the major topics that shall be presented and discussed during the Support Group workshops.
- Learn and understand key workshop facilitation skills that may be applied during the workshop sessions;
- Understand their role, duties and responsibilities in relation to overall achievement of Project objectives;
- Develop and strengthen commitment to provide continuing support to project beneficiaries.

Day 1 Content

1) Welcome & Introduction to the project:

Welcome - Welcome the volunteers and thank them for coming. Introduce yourself and explain your role. Write your name and contact information on the board or flip chart paper. Remind the volunteers of the timing of the training (e.g. 9 am to 4 pm, with a lunch break at 12:30 pm). Invite volunteers to create a nametag for themselves, help themselves to refreshments, and use the washroom when needed (be sure to explain where the washroom is).

The Project in Brief - Discuss the Project's rationale, its targeted beneficiaries, processes and delivery mechanisms involved, area coverage, immediate outputs and expected outcomes, and project evaluation and monitoring plans.

Role of Support Groups and Senior Volunteers - Highlight the need for organizing support groups in senior residences, how they will be organized, trained and nurtured, and how they will be empowered to perform their duties and responsibilities efficiently and effectively toward successful achievement of the Project's objectives. Discuss the role, duties and responsibilities of Senior Volunteers who will co-facilitate the Support Group workshop sessions.

2) Getting to know each other - Provide volunteers with the opportunity to get acquainted. Ask volunteers to do the following activity either alone or with a partner. Then have them share with the group using the suggested timeframe.

Icebreaker

Take **2 minutes** to plan your response. You don't need to answer every question.

- **ONE HOPE** Name something you're hoping for—it may or may not be connected to volunteering here.
- **ONE EXPERIENCE** Name one experience you've had that is related to this type of project. It could be almost anything you can think of!
- **ONE LIKE** Name something you really enjoy.
- **ONE QUESTION** Name one question about the *Building Community Bridges* program that you would like to see answered in your training.

Time management practice: **MAXIMUM OF 90 SECONDS TO SHARE!**

3) *Elder Abuse* - this will set the proper reference point during the entire training. Cover the general definition of elder abuse or mistreatment of older adults, the various types of abuse, causes of abuse, effects and the overall impact of abuse on the victims.

Suggested Resources:

- BC Centre for Elder Advocacy & Support – Fact Sheets on Elder Abuse <http://bcceas.ca/factsheets-on-elder-abuse/>
- Help Starts Here: Information on Abuse and Neglect of Older adults <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victimservices/publications/docs/help-starts-here-abuse-neglect-older-adult.pdf>

4) *At-Risk Older Women* – Lead a brainstorming session as to why older women are considered more vulnerable or at high risk for becoming victims of abuse. Are there any factors that might increase their vulnerability? Focus on the different types, nature and degree of abuse committed against various categories of women who are at high risk, such as women with disabilities, immigrants and refugees, lesbians, transgendered and aboriginals.

Day 2 Content

1) *Welcome Back, Check-In & Review* – Welcome back volunteers.

- Volunteers will each take a turn sharing something positive that has happened to them since the last training session.
- Volunteers will take 10 minutes to write down what they remember from the previous day's session and then share what they remember with the group. (Make sure to correct any misconceptions that may become apparent.)

2) *Domestic Violence, Victim Services & Canada's Justice System*- Provide definitions of domestic violence, spousal abuse, sexual assault and sexual harassment. Identify who are the abusers or perpetrators of domestic violence, the reasons and causes of abuse, when spousal abuse is considered a crime, and

the overall impact of domestic violence on spouses, partners, children, families and the community. Review laws governing anti-violence against women. Explain the role of Victim Services Unit of the Ministry of Justice and victim services organizations throughout the province, as well as the duties and responsibilities of Victim Service Workers. Familiarize volunteers with transition houses and safe homes, the need for a Safety Plan, the emotional and practical supports provided to victims of abuse, and collaborative community response between and among victim services providers. Discuss the federal and provincial justice system, the judicial process involved in handling criminal and civil cases, the courts and the roles of the police as the first responder, the Crown Counsel, probation officer, bail officer, judge and the jury, trials and hearing schedules, peace bonds and restraining orders, witness protection, and offender management system. The goal is to familiarize the volunteers with the way the Canadian Justice System works and the laws regarding domestic abuse.

Suggested Resources:

- Ending Violence Association of BC – Public Education Tools http://www.endingviolence.org/public_education_tools (**Download and customize the PowerPoint file called “Adult Community Presentation”**)
- WeCan BC Campaign <http://www.wecanbc.ca/resources/violence-against-women>
- Victim Services – Ministry of Justice – British Columbia <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victimservices/>
- Violence Against Women in Relationships: Victim Service Worker Handbook <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victimservices/service-provider/docs/victim-service-worker-vawir.pdf>

3) *Community Response Networks* - What is a CRN? Where do you find them and how can their services be accessed? Discuss the importance of collaborative and integrated efforts among members of CRNs, and their relationships with designated agencies specified under the Public Trustee and Guardianship Act.

Suggested Resource:

- BC Association of Community Response Networks <http://www.bccrns.ca/>

4) *Support Group Facilitation Skills* - A facilitator is one who helps participants learn from an activity (“one who make things easy”) – also called a trainer. The facilitator serves as a coordinator and organizer of small groups, and ensures everyone is participating and staying on task. In this situation, one of the facilitator’s goals is to develop mutual respect among the group in order to maximize learning.

Suggested Activity:

- Have a brainstorm session on what makes a good facilitator and what roles the facilitator has. Points that need to be covered are below.

What is the role of the facilitator?

Facilitators are the standard setters for the discussion.

Facilitators must stay focused and alert, interested in the discussion and the learning that is taking place. They create the standards of communications by listening closely and encouraging all participants to contribute to the group.

Facilitators make the workshop environment a priority.

Everything from how the chairs are set up, placement of snacks, quotes on the wall, location of restrooms, and many other logistical details. The facilitator is responsible for gauging the physical environment of the training and how the environment relates to the feeling of the workshop.

Facilitators are mindful of timing issues.

It is easy to over schedule activities and not incorporate enough down time for the participants. Avoid planning intensive activities directly before or after a meal. Always plan for activities taking longer than you think they will last. Facilitators need to constantly check-in with the group to gauge the energy level.

Facilitators are responsible for articulating the purpose of the discussion and its significance to the group.

It is important to clearly state the goal and purpose of each activity and section of the training. Also, let the group know the expected time that will be spent on each activity.

Facilitators make use of various techniques/tools to keep the discussion moving when tension arises or discussion comes to a halt.

The facilitator must be prepared with tools to keep the learning happening.

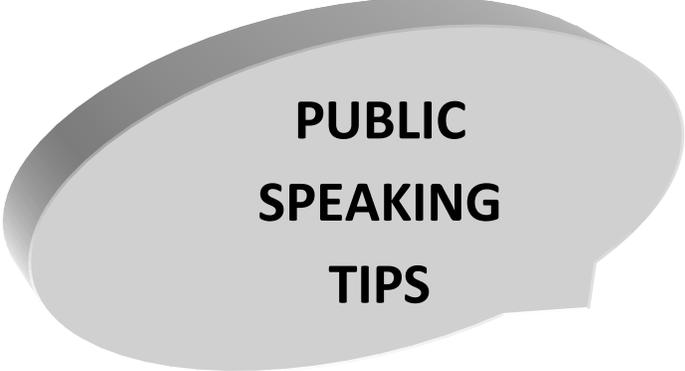
Facilitators are responsible for paying attention to group behavior.

Be observant of verbal and non-verbal queues from the group. You can encourage people to explain their behaviours during check-in periods.

Facilitators should be relaxed and have a sense of humour that makes sure discussions are enjoyable as well as educational.

Group discussions can often take a very serious turn and become intense. It is important to remember we do not have to be fired up or uptight in order to have effective discussion. Laughter and a relaxed environment can be the greatest methods for a good discussion.

[On the following pages is a “Public Speaking Tips” handout for volunteers.]



PUBLIC SPEAKING TIPS

- **Practice**, practice, practice! You will feel more confident.
- Present your information in a way that meets the **audience's needs**. Use simple English for speakers of English as an additional language. Provide visuals and project your voice for participants who are hard of hearing. Focus on points that connect to your participants' experiences.
- **Arrive early** and **chat with participants** before the initial group meeting. Forming a friendly connection with participants lets you avoid the stress of presenting to strangers.
- **Begin on a positive note**. Don't apologize or say anything negative about yourself or your presentation.
- **Use energy and enthusiasm** to create an engaging tone. If you seem interested in your subject matter, the support group members will probably become interested too.
- Remember that your **participants want you to succeed**. They are there to learn something new, not to criticize you.
- Remember that **your role is to facilitate group participation**, not to be the centre of attention all the time.

- Remember that **less can be more**. Emphasize the main ideas and set a relaxed pace. Your group will actually learn more than if you try to cover a lot of information in one session.
- **Concentrate on the message** rather than worrying about what you look or sound like.
- **Keep an eye on the time** so that you don't rush the last points in your presentation.
- **Organize your materials** so that you can quickly find them in the order in which you will need them.
- **Try deep breathing or stretching** to relieve stress before you begin.
- **Imagine your presentation going well.**

Day 3 Content

1) *Welcome Back, Check-In & Review* – Welcome back volunteers.

- Volunteers will each take a turn sharing something positive that has happened to them since the last training session.
- Volunteers will take 10 minutes to write down what they remember from the previous day's session and then share what they remember with the group. (Make sure to correct any misconceptions that may become apparent.)

2) *Considering Participant Needs* – Support group participants will have varying needs and backgrounds. Facilitators should be prepared to work with a diverse group of older adults.

Suggested Activity:

- Divide the groups into groups and assign each group one of the profiles on the following page. Give the volunteers 10-15 minutes to brainstorm strategies to improve accessibility for their assigned scenario. Report back to the full group and discuss. Show volunteers the suggested strategies on page 27.

Considering the Needs of Participants Handout

As a *Building Community Bridges* support group facilitator, you will work with diverse groups of older adults. For each of the group profiles below, brainstorm strategies you could use to make the group more accessible.

1) Some participants in the group are hard of hearing, while others have limited eyesight.

2) Some participants are very knowledgeable. Others have limited knowledge of the Canadian legal system or other topics that are being discussed in the sessions.

Suggested Facilitation Strategies Handout

1) Group with participants who have limited eyesight and/or hearing:

- **Ask your participants** what you can do to make it easier for them to follow the presentation.
- **Ensure that participants can sit close to you** if necessary.
- **Make sure you have everybody's attention** before you begin the workshop or shift to a new activity.
- Provide all important **information in both visual and auditory form.**
- **Limit background noise** by closing the door or windows.
- When participants offer ideas, **paraphrase** them clearly to ensure everybody knows what was said. **Jot down key words** on the board or flip chart paper in large, clear letters. This is helpful to participants who are hard of hearing AND for people who learn best by reading.
- **Be alert to participant fatigue or distraction.** This may be a sign that your presentation is hard to follow.

Participants with visual impairments:

- Provide **enlarged copies** of handouts if participants need them if possible.
- **Project any visual presentations as large as possible** by moving the projector away from the screen.

- **Identify yourself and others** by name. Do not assume that participants will recognize your voice.
- **Orally describe relevant visual aspects** of what is going on in the workshop.
- **Call the participant by name** if you want her attention.
- **Give notice orally** when you move on to a new activity, or if you need to leave the room or to end a conversation.
- Allow participants to provide **oral feedback on the workshop**, either to you or to a staff person at the host agency.

Participants who are hard of hearing:

- Avoid long, unstructured discussions. **Focus on a few key questions**, and provide printed copies of these questions.
- Be aware of the **pace, volume and clarity** of your speech. **Do not shout** or exaggerate your enunciation—this may actually make it harder to understand what you are saying.
- Have your co-facilitator stand in the back of the room and **signal to you** if it is hard to hear you.
- **Do not turn your back** to participants while you are talking.
- Ensure that your **face is constantly visible** to participants and **well-lit** (not backlit). Minimize visual distractions.
- **Try rephrasing** if participants indicate that they didn't understand something you said. Repeating the same words may not help.

- **If a participant asks you what you said, answer to the best of your ability.**
Do not say “Never mind” or “It’s not important.”
- **Use visual support**, including facial expressions and gestures.
- When going over the resource list, emphasize resources such as VictimLINK which have **TTY (teletypewriter) service**.

2) Group with varying knowledge levels:

- When possible, **ask about participants’ experience** with the subject matter before you begin. You may be able to tailor the session to the group’s knowledge level.
- Clearly **define the focus of the session and explain the agenda**.
- Remember that **you are not expected to be an expert**.
- **Do not speed through information** if some members of the group seem impatient. Remember that other participants, who may not be as vocal, are likely to need the background explanation.
- **Recognize the value of all questions and comments**. Remind the group that there are no stupid questions.
- **Present requests for clarification as positive**: “I’m glad you asked, because one of our goals today is to clearly explain...”
- **Invite participants to talk to you after the session** if they need clarification about any points discussed.

3) *Challenging Scenarios* – Volunteers may be faced with challenging scenarios from time to time in their role as support group facilitators. Facilitators should be given the tools to practice dealing with a variety of situations and personality types.

Suggested Activity:

- Divide the volunteers into groups and assign each group one of the scenarios on the following page. The groups will discuss how they would handle the situation described. Report back to the full group and discuss. Show volunteers the suggested strategies on page 33.

Challenging Scenarios Handout

1) A participant discloses that her son has been emotionally abusive to her.

2) One member of the group is very dominant. She answers most questions before others get a chance to respond. Sometimes she disagrees with others in a sarcastic tone.

3) A participant asks a question about something you do not know the answer to. When you try to redirect her, she insists that she needs this information.

4) The group is quiet. When you ask questions, nobody says anything.

5) Somebody makes a stereotyped statement or joke about a group of people.

Important: While discussing this question, please avoid using specific examples of stereotypes and of groups who face discrimination. Keeping the brainstorm general will help us avoid repeating hurtful stereotypes.

Strategies for Challenging Scenarios Handout

1) PERSONAL DISCLOSURE

Before the session:

You may want to have tissues handy in case a participant becomes emotional during the session. Express concern and care with your face and body language and invite the person to meet with you after the session to get connected with some resources for help.

If a person discloses that they are planning to harm themselves or somebody else:

Call the BC Crisis Line at 1-800-784-2433 and get the person onto the phone with a crisis worker.

Then, call your volunteer supervisor and report the situation. We can support you if you need to debrief.

2) DOMINANT PARTICIPANT

- Change the format of the discussion (e.g. have participants take turns giving their ideas, saying “pass” if they don’t want to add anything; go to small group or pair-based discussion; get participants to write down their ideas if writing ability is not an issue in this group).
- If the group and room are small, use an object that participants can pass around to show whose turn it is to speak.
- Politely say that you’d like to hear from members of the group who haven’t had a chance to speak yet.
- If a participant makes a negative remark about what somebody else says, say “We appreciate all of your ideas, and we don’t expect that everybody

will agree on everything. Could I ask that you give your ideas without commenting on others' opinions?"

- Invite a participant who is talking a lot to continue that thought at the break or after the session individually with you, or to write it down and hand it in to you.
- Use a piece of flip chart paper or section of the board as a “parking lot” for ideas that are raised. You can return to these at the end if time permits. This is a way of acknowledging participant input without losing track of the timeline.
- Remind the group of the agenda and timeline. You can refer back to the learning goals outlined at the beginning of the workshop.
- If you need to interrupt a participant, do so by summarizing what they have said or making some positive comment about their contribution, then moving to a new activity or topic.
- Sometimes, moving physically closer to a person who is disrupting the group (for example, having one co-facilitator stand behind the participant) will resolve the situation.

3) PERSISTENT QUESTIONING ABOUT A PERSONAL SITUATION

- Tell participants that their questions are important and that they can probably get some answers by calling the BC CEAS Seniors Advocacy & Information Line (604-437-1940 or toll free 1-866-437-1940). Alternatively, offer to help them find an appropriate resource after the workshop.
- Remind participants that you cannot give legal or personal advice in your role as support group facilitator. Explain that this guideline is meant to protect participants from possible misinformation or misunderstandings.

4) QUIET GROUP

- Make sure your questions are specific and easy to understand, and that you are speaking loudly, clearly and slowly enough.
- Some low-pressure ways to invite participation are by asking “yes/no” questions with a show of hands, or giving options to choose from.
- Use pair or small group discussion. Some find this more comfortable than full-group discussion.
- Encourage participants to write down their thoughts or approach you to talk individually after the workshop.
- If you are able to give a short break, chat with participants and find out how they feel the session is going. If they are happy, chances are that their silence is not a sign of discomfort or disengagement. If they seem less than satisfied, ask how you could make the session more useful.
- Don’t be afraid to end the session a bit early if necessary.
- Be sensitive to differences in communication style. Some people are more naturally quiet than others.

5) DISCRIMINATORY STATEMENT OR JOKE

- Immediately jump in. This requires mental preparation and commitment. If you wait to speak up, the hurtful talk may continue.
- Say, “We want to include and respect everybody by avoiding jokes [or general statements] about groups of people.”
- Point out that everybody is different regardless of the groups we all belong to. Human diversity exists in the world generally and within every social group.
- Remind the group that one of the goals of the workshop is respect.

4) *Facilitation Skills Role Play* – Volunteers can build confidence by being given the opportunity to practice scenarios that might arise during support group sessions.

Suggested Activity:

- **Facilitation Skills Role Play**

Goal: To practice strategies for managing challenging group dynamics during a workshop.

Suggested Timing: 30-45 minutes

Materials Needed: Roles (see page 38) printed on slips of paper, folded and placed inside a hat or bag

Instructions:

1) Explain the first step of the activity: two volunteers from each group will stand in front of their group and pretend to introduce a workshop.

2) Model this first step for the volunteers: “Hi, my name is _____ and I’m a volunteer from [your organization]. I’m here to help facilitate this support group and today we have a guest speaker from ABC to talk to us about DEF.” You can say anything that you would normally say at the beginning of a workshop—the specifics are not important.

3) Explain the next step of the activity: two of the volunteers who are watching the speaker introduce the workshop will draw out a role on a slip of paper. Without saying what their role is, they must pretend to be a workshop participant and act out their role.

4) To help clarify what it means to play a role, ask a volunteer to draw out one of the roles and read it aloud for the group. Ask the group what types of things this character might do or say during the workshop. (Discard the example role that you used for this explanation.)

6) Explain that the goal of this activity is for the presenters to facilitate the group dynamics respectfully and effectively. Everybody will take a turn facilitating and playing a role. When volunteers are not facilitating or playing a role, they should be making notes about the facilitation strategies they observe—what works, what doesn't, and how people seem to respond.

7) Let the volunteers try the activity. After about five minutes, stop and ask the volunteers who just played the roles to become the presenters and two new volunteers to play new roles drawn from the hat or bag.

8) Continue until everybody has had the chance to play a role, facilitate and observe.

9) After the activity, discuss the experience. Have each volunteer read their role and invite comments from both groups about how to work effectively with that type of workshop participant. Some suggested strategies for dealing with each scenario are included at the end of this activity description (page 40). Your volunteers may have other ideas, too.

Roles

[Photocopy and cut these up and put the strips of paper into a hat or bag for trainees to pull out at random]

You keep asking for advice about a personal situation.

You keep trying to share private information about a person who is not at the workshop.

You make fun of the presenters.

You raise off-topic questions.

You chat with your neighbour during the presentation (about an unrelated topic).

You react emotionally to something mentioned in the presentation.

You dominate the conversation.

You don't hear well and keep asking for information to be repeated.

You are engaged in some activity during the presentation and obviously not paying attention.

You keep trying to give advice during the presentation.

You keep trying to add information to the presentation.

You insist that some fact in the presentation is incorrect.

Facilitation Skills Activity Handout

Suggested Facilitation Strategies (Responses May Vary)

You keep asking for advice about a personal situation.

- Invite the person to use resources for advice.
- Remind the group that the workshop is for giving information only.
- Explain that you do not want to misinform or give improper advice.
- If all else fails, ask the person to approach you after the workshop. You will better be able to defuse the situation in a one-on-one conversation.

You keep trying to share private information about a person who is not at the workshop.

- Recognize that the participant seems concerned about her friend. Suggest that she encourage her friend to call the BC CEAS Seniors Advocacy & Information Line (604-437-1940 or toll free 1-866-437-1940) for information or assistance.
- Remind the group that other's personal stories cannot be shared during the support group session.
- Say, "I can tell that you are concerned about this situation, but I need to ask you not to share personal details about people who aren't here."

You make fun of the presenters.

- Ignore the jokes.
- Use gentle (not sarcastic) humour.
- Engage participants in a task so that this person doesn't have an opportunity to continue making fun.
- Have one of the facilitators approach the person individually while the other facilitator continues with the workshop.
- State, "I feel uncomfortable when you say that. Can you please hold those comments so that we can continue with the session?"

You raise off-topic questions.

- Say, “That’s a great question, but it isn’t part of the workshop topic today. Maybe you could research that later and let the group know what you find out.”
- Remind the group of the learning goals for the particular workshop and of the timeline of the session.

You chat with your neighbour during the presentation (about an unrelated topic).

- Make sure that this person can hear, see and understand the workshop. The person may be chatting because he or she is having problems following the workshop.
- If the chatting is quiet, ignore it.
- Have one of the facilitators approach the person individually while the other facilitator continues with the workshop. In a friendly way, let the person know that they are free to leave the workshop if the topic isn’t of interest.
- Engage the group in an activity so that the person has something to do and is more stimulated.

You react emotionally to something mentioned in the presentation.

- Have one of the presenters approach the person individually while the other presenter continues with the workshop. Offer tissues, and if possible, connect the person with a supportive staff member at the host organization.
- Remind the person that they are free to take a break or leave.
- Encourage the person to call VictimLINK.
- Follow up with the person after the workshop. Try to find a staff member at the host venue who can do long-term follow up and assist the person in calling a support service.

You dominate the conversation.

- Say, “I can tell you have a lot of ideas. Can you hold that thought and share it with me after the workshop?”
- Say, “I’d like to make sure everybody gets a chance to share ideas. Is there anybody who hasn’t had a chance to speak yet who’d like to add something?”
- Ask, “What do others think about that?”
- Change the format of participation so that everybody gets a chance to speak: for example, ask each person to share an idea with a neighbour, or if the group is small, offer each person the chance to share in turn.

You don’t hear well and keep asking for information to be repeated.

- Make sure the person is seated in the best possible location for hearing.
- Limit background noise by closing doors and windows.
- Project your voice, or better yet, use a microphone.
- Provide written information to this person. For example, offer to provide the full printed notes for the PowerPoint presentation after the session.

You are engaged in some activity during the presentation and obviously not paying attention.

- Make sure that this person can hear, see and understand the workshop. The person may be distracted because he or she is having problems following.
- If the activity is not distracting to others, ignore it.
- Have one of the facilitators approach the person individually while the other facilitator continues with the workshop. In a friendly way, let the person know that they are free to leave the workshop if the topic isn’t of interest.

You keep trying to give advice during the presentation.

- Remind the group that the purpose of the session is to provide information, and that advice for personal situations cannot be given.
- Say, “That sounds like it might work for some people. But situations can be complicated and really vary from person to person, so everybody needs to get professional advice to make sure their needs are met.”

You keep trying to add information to the presentation.

- Remind the group of the learning goals for the workshop and of the timeline of the session. Say that you want to make sure you have time to cover all of the information in the workshop.
- Say, “I can tell that you want to help. I just want to be clear that what you’re saying isn’t part of the workshop material and I’m not able to confirm it.”
- Invite the person to talk to you after the workshop to share additional information.

You insist that some fact in the presentation is incorrect.

- Say, “This is the information that I have here.”
- Invite the person to do some research to check the information.
- Suggest that the person phone the BC CEAS Seniors Advocacy and Information Line for more in-depth information.

5) *Workshop Procedures* – You will want to discuss any workshop procedures that the volunteers will need to follow before, during and after the support group sessions. When establishing policies and procedures, you may want to think about the following:

- What do the volunteers need to do in advance of each session?
 - Who will call the venue to confirm the time and other necessary details?
 - Is there photocopying or other handout preparation needed?
 - Are there materials that are needed? (markers & a flip chart, paper & pens, etc.)
 - Who will bring refreshments?

- What do the volunteers need to do during the workshop?
 - How early should the volunteer arrive at the host venue?
 - Will the volunteer have to look after any room setup/clean up?
 - Who will welcome participants and introduce any guest speakers?
 - Who will lead the activities?
 - Who will collect feedback and in what format? (verbal, forms, etc.)

- What do volunteers need to do after the workshop?
 - What information do you need from the volunteers after each workshop?
 - Do you want an email summary of how the session went or do you want to speak with the volunteers?

Preparation Part 2: Establishing the host venue

Allow at least 2 months to locate and establish an appropriate host venue for the support group workshops.

Identifying possible venues

One of the purposes of a project like this is build closer relationships and develop connections between older women residents of a seniors housing complex. You can find a list of potential venues by looking at the BC Housing website:

http://www.bchousing.org/Options/Subsidized_Housing/Listings

You can also use internet search engines such as Google.

Establishing the venue

Once you've identified a possible venue, there are a series of steps that need to be taken:

- Contact the Seniors Activity Coordinator or Building Manager. A phone call is more likely to elicit a positive response than an email.
- Request an in-person appointment to brief them on the details of the project and ask if they would be willing to be a host venue. You may have to speak to the building owner as managers sometimes do not have the authority to make the decision.
- Let the potential host venue know what will be required of them:
 - provide an appropriate space for the support group meetings
 - assist in promoting the project at the venue by allowing posters and flyers to be displayed on site
 - allow access to washroom facilities and a place to prepare refreshments during support group sessions
- Make the potential host venue aware of the benefits of participating in the project:

- Lowered risk of isolation for their older women residents
 - Increased social connections and community involvement
 - Enhanced personal and community safety and security
-
- Enter into an agreement with the host venue (see page 67 for sample format)
 - Establish a regular day and time for the support group workshop sessions
 - Promote the introductory session to the target population of older women. Seek an opportunity to attend an event (e.g. community lunch) at the facility where you can speak to residents about the project.
 - Sign-up participants. You will need the Building Manager’s help with this as they are on site. Ideally, you will want to sign up 8-12 participants for a group.

Preparation Part 3: Coordinating Guest Speakers

Allow 2-3 months to identify topics for each workshop session, and recruit and schedule guest speakers.

Identifying workshop topics

The goal of the support group is to empower older women with knowledge about their rights, teach them how to develop strategies for helping a friend who is being abused, and support each other in accessing the justice system. Keep this goal in mind when identifying possible topics for discussion.

On the next page is an outline of the learning objectives that BC CEAS used for organizing the 10 support group workshop sessions at each venue. You can use this to help set your own agenda.

Learning Objectives

Module 1

The Project - Building Community Bridges: Outreach to At Risk Older Women”

1. To understand the Project’s rationale
2. To understand how the objectives of the project can be achieved
3. To understand the importance of support group members’ participation in the project
4. To understand the role of your agency
5. To commit to developing this initiative into a permanent and on-going prevention and intervention mechanism for abused older women in the housing complex and the community in general.

Module 2

Elder Abuse

1. To know and understand the meaning of abuse and the different types of abuse.
2. To know and understand why and how older adults becomes the target of abuse.
3. To know and understand the types of abuses committed against older adults and by whom.
4. To know and understand the negative impact of abuse on older adult victims.
5. To be able to identify how older adults can fight against vulnerability and helplessness to protect themselves and prevent perpetuation of abuse.
6. To learn about the role of different community agencies in the prevention of elder abuse and support of older adults who have experienced abuse.

Modules 3 & 4

At Risk Older Women – Who are they?

1. To understand why women are more often victims of abuse than men

2. To identify the categories of women who are often the subjects of abuse and why
3. To understand the types of abuse commonly experienced by these women
4. To understand how women can protect themselves from further abuse
5. To understand what community resources are available to enhance their personal/community safety and protection, and how they can access them.

Module 5 & 6

Domestic Violence

1. To understand the nature and causes of domestic violence
2. To understand the different forms of sexual abuse
3. To understand the impact of domestic violence on older women and how they can prevent and protect themselves from further abuse
4. To understand the laws against domestic violence - e.g. Adult Guardianship Act, Violence Against Women in Intimate Relationships (VAWIR)
5. To know the various service providers and community resources that older women can access to enhance their personal/community safety and protection.

Modules 7 & 8

Victim Safety and Security

1. To know and understand the meaning and importance of a Safety Plan
2. To understand the content of a Safety Plan and who should do the planning
3. To know and understand the role of each service provider in the community responsible for creating safety plans:
 - A. Law Enforcement – Police as the First Responder
 - B. Health Care providers – Doctors, Nurses, Paramedics
 - C. Social Service Workers - Social Worker, Case Manager, Victim Service Worker
 - D. Non-profit and Charitable organizations – Transition Houses/Safe Homes

E. Other Support Groups - Faith groups

4. To understand the role of victim services providers, who they are and what services they provide

Module 9

The Criminal justice System

1. To know when abuse is considered a crime
2. To know the difference between the federal justice system and the provincial justice system and what civil or criminal cases would fall under each jurisdiction
3. To understand the role of judicial boards and tribunals
4. To understand the importance of being registered with the Victims Service Unit of the Ministry of Public Safety
5. To understand the protocol involved in handling criminal cases observed by the Police, the Crown Counsel, Bail Officer, Probation Officer, the Judge or the Jury
6. To understand how victims are protected from their abusers through the Offender management program.

Module 10

Integrated Community Response Network

1. To understand what an integrated community response network is
2. To understand the role of the community response network
3. To understand what happens if there is conflict between and among designated agencies
4. To understand how the Support Group can access this network

Identifying and Booking Guest Speakers

Significant lead time for booking guest speakers is necessary as you will have to factor in time for scheduling around their often busy schedules. A lead time of at least two months is considered ideal for beginning this process.

The first step is to identify speakers with experience in the appropriate areas. There are many different organizations and agencies you can contact in your search for relevant speakers. When contacting an agency, make sure to ask if they have any suggestions for guest speakers for your group.

Where to start:

- local police force
- Victim Services Coordinator in your community
- crisis centres
- women's shelters
- transition houses
- local Community Response Network (www.bccrns.ca)
- seniors support services
- Public Guardian & Trustee
- Family Services
- BC Centre for Elder Advocacy & Support (www.bcceas.ca)

Remember the importance of networking! Let people know about the project. You may get a referral for a possible speaker from an unlikely source.

Phase 2 – Implementation

The implementation phase of the support group workshops consists of on-site promotion at the host venue and ongoing workshop logistics.

Implementation Part 1: Promotion

The promotion that began with recruiting support group participants needs to continue throughout the implementation phase. You will need to continue to “advertise” the sessions at the host venue by posting information about each session on the community bulletin board, in the elevators, lobby or other high traffic areas at the housing complex.

Implementation Part 2: Ongoing Workshop Logistics

Role of the Volunteers

The support group volunteer facilitators will be responsible for assuring that everything goes smoothly on the day of the workshop.

Volunteers will:

- Co-facilitate the workshops (introduce guest speakers)
- Confirm that all the guest speaker’s needs have been addressed (i.e. room set up, audiovisual equipment, printing of handout materials, etc.)
- Assists in the preparation of handouts/materials for workshops
- Confirm and records attendance of participants
- Records workshop proceedings
- Assists in the preparation and serving of refreshments
- Assists in cleaning up the room at the end of the support group session
- Distribute and collect feedback forms and return to volunteer coordinator

Role of the Project Coordinator

The Project Coordinator will continue to liaise with guest speakers and the host venue's building manager, as well as provide any support that the volunteers may need. It is important to ensure that all is going smoothly at the venue as a positive relationship with the host venue building manager is a key factor in the success of the support group.

Phase 3 – Planning for future sustainability

The goal is for the support group to become self-sustaining with the volunteers continuing to manage the ongoing logistics of the sessions. After the initial 10 week run of sessions, the participants should see the value in continuing the group and be committed to participating on an ongoing basis. In order for this to happen, you need to make sure that both the participants and volunteers are fully engaged in the project.

Suggestions for participant engagement:

- always get continual feedback from support group participants about how the sessions are going
- make sure to incorporate their suggestions into future sessions as best you can
- ask them what they want to learn about and try to arrange for appropriate guest speakers
- have the support group select a member who is willing to act as group coordinator and liaison with your volunteers and organization

Suggestions for volunteer engagement:

- Communicate frequently with your volunteers and ask what you can do to support them. Do not assume that your volunteers will approach you if they have concerns.
- Create opportunities for your volunteers to get together and talk about their experiences. Volunteers can learn a lot from one another and usually appreciate the social contact.
- If possible, arrange volunteer development opportunities such as guest speakers or film screenings.
- Recognize your volunteers' contributions with cards, certificates, and celebrations—and of course, with your words!
- Be aware that different people learn differently and at different paces. Allow volunteers to ease into facilitating by starting with short workshop segments and choosing the parts they feel most comfortable with.

- When volunteers ask questions or make requests, respond as quickly as possible.
- Wherever possible, seek the input of volunteers and incorporate it into the management of your program.
- When you see news items relating to elder abuse or other relevant topics, share them with your volunteers. They will appreciate being kept up to date.

Additional Resources

SAMPLE Volunteer Training Evaluation

**Building Community Bridges: Outreach to At Risk Older Adults
Volunteer Orientation and Training**

Volunteer Training Evaluation:

(Support Group Workshop Co-facilitators)

Date _____ Location _____

1. What worked well in today's training?

2. What didn't work well?

3. What could be improved? Specific suggestions are very useful.

4. The purpose of the training is to provide you with knowledge about elder abuse and domestic violence and the laws regarding these issues, including resources. It is hoped that with this training, you will be able to co-facilitate the workshops for the project *“Building Community Bridges: Outreach to At Risk Older Adults”*. If you feel that you would need more training to co-facilitate the workshops, please indicate which areas you would need further training on.

5. On-going support will be provided to volunteers during the project. What kinds of support would you need from us?

THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING AND MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

Tips on Volunteer Management & Workshop Coordination

1. Recruiting, Screening and Supporting Volunteers

Recruiting Volunteers

- When creating a volunteer posting, use plain language and include key information:
 - *What are the key tasks?*
 - *What is the overall goal of the program?* (Remember that volunteers will be more motivated if they know that they are contributing to an important cause.)
 - *How can volunteers get involved?* (Who should they contact and how? Is there a deadline? Do they need to send a resume, fill out an application, or attend an interview? What are the training details?)
 - *Who is needed?* (Is there an age requirement? Do you need volunteers with specific experience or skills?)
 - *How much time is needed?* (How many hours per week or month? How many months' commitment is expected? What is the general schedule for volunteer tasks?)
 - *What can you offer volunteers?* (Will you provide bus tickets or reimburse volunteers for mileage? Are meals or refreshments included? Are you willing to write reference letters?)

- Consider asking for volunteers with experience in adult education, public speaking or facilitation. When your volunteers bring a strong set of relevant skills, your training will go more smoothly. Also, experienced volunteers are likely to thrive in the role of workshop facilitator and stay committed to the program longer.
- Here are some ideas for advertising your volunteer position:
 - Create a poster and put it up in areas where potential volunteers are likely to be: grocery stores, libraries, or cafés, for example. Use just a few key words in a large, clear font. Consider adding an image or printing on colourful, eye-catching paper.
 - Visit your local neighbourhood houses, seniors' centres, community centres and cultural associations. Many of these organizations have community bulletin boards and occasional volunteer fairs. Some may even allow you to make a special presentation to their members.
 - Post on volunteer-specific websites, like Charity Village, Go Volunteer! and VolWeb.
 - Place an online classified ad on Craigslist or Kijiji (but beware of the scam emails and other spam that may follow).
 - Place an advertisement in your local community newspaper or in a magazine for local seniors.
 - Ask community radio or TV stations to run a public service announcement or even a news story or interview about your program. Issue a press release that emphasizes the timeliness of your story and its relevance to your community.

- Network with associations of retired professionals, volunteer groups, Community Response Networks, and social clubs for older adults. Some may agree to advertise your volunteer opportunity in a newsletter or email listserv or on their website.
- Contact other local non-profit organizations that serve seniors or offer community workshops. Some may agree to spread the word about your opportunity to their staff, volunteers and clients.
- Contact career centres. Many job seekers volunteer as a way of gaining experience and work skills.
- Remember that face-to-face contact is the most effective way to network. Engage people in conversation in your community. Explain exactly what you need and why the project is important. People are often willing to step forward when you create a personal connection with them.
- Carry posters, brochures, lists of specific volunteer roles and sign-up sheets everywhere you go. You might meet a possible volunteer anytime!
- If you make a presentation about the volunteer opportunity, invite a current volunteer to present with you or help answer questions. People love to hear first-hand stories about volunteering.
- When people contact you to ask about volunteering, get back to them quickly. Be friendly and professional—first impressions count.

Screening Volunteers

- Meet with each volunteer in person or over the phone, if necessary, before the training. Create a list of interview questions to ask each volunteer such as:
 - Why do you want to volunteer in this program?
 - What would your ideal volunteer experience be like?
 - What experience or skills can you offer?
 - How much time can you commit per month, and for how long?
 - What would you do if...? (Create a scenario to see how the volunteer is likely to deal with challenges that might arise in the position.)
- Make sure volunteers understand the roles and responsibilities of the position. Give them a printed description of the position.
- Allow plenty of time for volunteers to ask questions. Provide your contact information so that volunteers can ask any questions that come up later.
- Do not pressure anybody to volunteer. Tell all potential volunteers that it is fine if they decide that the position is not a good match for their interests, availability or skills.
- Create a trial period in which both volunteers and your organization can decide whether the fit is good.
- You may choose to tell volunteers that the final decision about their involvement will be made by a team. This reduces the perception that you as program coordinator are personally responsible for accepting or rejecting volunteers.

- Emphasize that *both* your organization and the volunteer need to decide whether the fit is good. This can help reduce the perception that you are judging or “auditioning” volunteers.
- Some volunteer programs require volunteers to obtain criminal record checks. However, in many areas, there is a fee associated with this. Having to pay for a criminal record check may be a barrier for participation for some volunteers.
- Create a system for ongoing supervision of your volunteers. Even after your volunteers have become experienced presenters, you should occasionally attend workshops to see how they are doing.

SAMPLE Introductory script for contacting potential venues

Hi,

My name is [NAME] and I'm the [TITLE] AT [ORGANIZATION]. I am wondering if I could set up an appointment with you to discuss our new project called "*Building Community Bridges: Outreach to at Risk Older Women*". The main objective of this project is to reach out to seniors, particularly women seniors. Our goal is to organize these women residing in senior housing complexes into a support group that will advocate for the prevention of elder abuse, enhance access to the police, the justice system and other community resources, and engage the community in planning safety personally and collectively.

I am looking into the possibility of engaging your organization's participation either as host agency in terms of recruiting senior women residents in your housing complex to form or organize themselves into a support group.

I can discuss the project in more detail if you'd agree to meet me. Just let me know the date and time most convenient for you.

SAMPLE Project proposal for host agencies

For: [Name of Senior Residence/Housing Complex] and/or [Host Agency]
Contact: [Administrator/Building Manager]
From: [Your organization]
Subject: Participation in the Project “Building Community Bridges: Outreach to At Risk Older Women”

1. Project Description

- The project reaches out to high risk older women , especially those who have experienced abuse and those who can become potential victims of abuse
- It aims to provide women residents in the senior housing complex, through series of workshops, information about various kinds of elder abuse, the justice system, and available community resources they can access to ensure their personal safety and security.

2. Project Requirements:

- Establish a support groups for older women age 50 + in a senior housing or assisted living residences
- Conduct of 10 workshop sessions for the support group that will cover discussions and presentations on elder abuse, domestic violence, safety and security, information about the law, and the resources available.
- Recruit older adult women volunteers to assist in facilitating the workshops and to act as liaison between [your organization] and support groups after project completion
- Establish agreements with agency chosen to host the support groups

3. Role of Participants:

- Each group, consisting of 8 or more participants, must be able to commit to the program by attending and participating in the 10 workshop sessions that will be facilitated by [your organization] with the assistance of the volunteers
- The support group will provide the senior women with an opportunity to know other women in their housing complex, interact, and connect with each other, enhance personal and community safety, increase awareness of the justice system and will offer the opportunity to introduce participants to existing coordinated community response to elder abuse and to enhance existing networks.
- Develop a plan to continue the group beyond the duration of the project.
- A Group Coordinator will be chosen within each group to continue coordinating the group beyond the duration of the project.

4. Role of [Host Agency]

- Provide a venue within the senior housing complex for the 10 workshop sessions
- Share the use of facilities such as sound systems, photocopying machines, lighting and ventilation, etc.
- Provide refreshments after each workshop session

5. Role of Senior Volunteers

- Co-facilitates the workshops
- Assist in contacting workshop presenters, arrange schedules including presentation needs of guest speakers
- Assist in the preparation of handouts/materials for workshops
- Confirm and records attendance of participants
- Records workshop proceedings
- Assist in the preparation and serving of refreshments

6. Workshop Topics: (approximately 2.5 hours per session)

- Overview of the Project Study (1 session)
- Elder Abuse (1 session)
- At Risk Older Women (2 sessions)
- Domestic Violence Among Women in Intimate Relationships (1 session)
- Laws Against Domestic Violence i.e Adult Guardianship Act, VAWIR (1 session)
- Criminal Justice System in Canada (2 sessions)
- Safety Planning with Emergency Responders and Service Providers (1 session)
- Coordinated Community Response Network (1 Session (1 session))

7. Schedule of Workshops (tentative)

Start date :

End date:

SAMPLE Memorandum of Agreement

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

BETWEEN [Host Venue] AND [Your Organization]

This MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT is entered into this [date] day of [month], [year], by and between [Host Venue] and [Your Organization] WHEREAS, the parties desire to collaborate for the purpose of achieving the objectives of the Project: *BUILDING COMMUNITY BRIDGES: OUTREACH TO AT RISK OLDER WOMEN*;

WHEREAS, the parties mutually desire to enhance services to women senior residents of [Host Venue] by reaching out to those who may need assistance and support relative to personal safety and security issues as well as enabling them to access community resources as may be necessary to achieve this goal;

NOW, THEREFORE, the parties agree as follows:

1. [Host Venue] , with the assistance of the BC CEAS Support Group Facilitator, will organize a support group within the senior residence, to be composed of women residents 50+ who will participate in the 10-week workshop sessions;
2. [Your Organization] will deliver, free of charge, 10 workshops that will cover presentations and discussion on elder abuse, domestic violence, safety and security, information about the law, coordinated community response network, and other community and government resources for older adults;
3. As the host agency, [Host Venue] shall provide the venue or space for the workshops, share the use of equipment such as photocopier, computer, projector, and other facilities, if available, assist in advertising the workshops and encourage its women residents to participate in the support group, and provide refreshments during the workshops;
4. At the end of the project, [Host venue] shall encourage their support group to continue their group meetings and be of support to each other and possibly network with other support groups in other areas with the assistance of trained volunteers from [Your Organization].

This MOA will remain in effect for a period of one (1) year. Either party may terminate this MOA upon ninety (90) days' notice to the other party.

SIGNED:

[Name & Title, Host Venue]

[Name & Title, Your Agency]

List of suggested additional topics for support group workshop sessions

The following were suggested as potential topics for additional sessions following the initial 10 weeks of workshops:

1. Session on “What the Law Says”
 - a) Adult Guardianship Act / Public Guardian and Trustee Act
 - b) Violence Against Women in Relationships Policy (VAWIR)
 - c) Family Relations Act
2. Residential Tenancy Act
3. Financial Literacy: Protecting Seniors’ Finances, Financial Abuse
4. Power of Attorney/Representation Agreement/Last Will & Testament
5. Seniors Peer Counselling (SPR): empowering seniors to find solutions for their problems, tools that can be utilized by Support Groups who would like to help abused/being abused seniors, learn skills e.g. active/reflective listening and empathizing
6. Age friendly communities for seniors: motivate them to navigate/explore community resources in a warm, friendly atmosphere as against cold and indifferent - issues of ageism, marginalization and neglect
7. Health Care for seniors: particularly mental health issues, coping skills when confronted by abuse, building up resiliency, what to do when no longer mentally capable to make decisions

