

The Calgary Elder Abuse Response Team

Grey Matters
2013 Seniors Services Conference

Luanne Whitmarsh, *CEO, Kerby Centre*
Anne McIlwaine, *Social Worker, Calgary Family Services*
Graeme Smiley, *A/Sgt., Calgary Police Service*

Elder Abuse Resource Line: (403)705-3250

Calgary
Family
Services



CALGARY
POLICE
SERVICE

History

The Elder Abuse Community Response Model in Calgary had been in development since 2004.

The **Action Group on Elder Abuse** (AGEA), a part of the Alliance to End Violence, was funded by the Solicitor General to:

- Engage stakeholders in identifying service gaps.
- Raise public awareness.
- Build support for a community response model.

In 2007, a sub-committee of AGEA was formed to establish an elder abuse response team in Calgary:

- Looked at other response teams that were already established.
- Reviewed best practices.
- Hosted workshops “Pulling Back the Curtain”.
- Made recommendations that became the Elder Abuse Response Team (EART).

Elder Abuse Resource Line: (403)705-3250

Calgary
Family
Services



CALGARY
POLICE
SERVICE

Members of the Team

- Police officers
- Social workers
- Nurses
- Community development worker
- Project coordinator

Elder Abuse Resource Line: (403)705-3250

Calgary
Family
Services



CALGARY
POLICE
SERVICE

Coordination

The Kerby Centre provides the overall coordination of the community response model:

- Works with CFS and CPS to develop procedures for multi-disciplinary team.
- Develops working agreements with other agencies.
- The Elder Abuse Resource Line is often first point of contact for community members to connect with EART.
- Ensures funder's reports are completed.
- Works to ensure that the project's goals and objectives are completed.

Elder Abuse Resource Line: (403)705-3250

Calgary
Family
Services



CALGARY
POLICE
SERVICE

Referral Information

Older adult is aged 65 or over.

Older adult is a resident of the city of Calgary.

The alleged abuser is in a trusting relationship with the victim.

It is suspected that physical/sexual abuse; neglect; verbal or emotional abuse; financial abuse/fraud has or may be perpetrated against the adult by the abuser.

Elder Abuse Resource Line: (403)705-3250

Calgary
Family
Services



CALGARY
POLICE
SERVICE

Important Elements

- Investigative response.
- Different intervention options.
 - Criminal justice, civil law, social services, etc.
- Continuity of service and support for client.
- Resource to other Professionals, offers increased community capacity to respond.
- Coordination of elder abuse resources within Calgary.
- Increased awareness of Elder Abuse as an important issue.

Elder Abuse Resource Line: (403)705-3250

Calgary
Family
Services



CALGARY
POLICE
SERVICE

Successes

- EART opened 157 cases of elder abuse in 2012 (153 investigated). In 10 cases, charges were laid.
- Types of abuse investigated include neglect, physical violence, financial abuse, verbal/emotional abuse, sexual abuse.
- Criminal charges include assault, threats, extortion, criminal harassment, fraud, theft and breaches of court ordered conditions.

Elder Abuse Resource Line: (403)705-3250

Calgary
Family
Services



CALGARY
POLICE
SERVICE

Legal Hurdles

- Victim's Mental Capacity – Current, and at the time of the offense.
 - Signing of Documents, Statements and Testimony
- Consent
- Recanting/Reconsidering – The “Open Door”
- Family Affair - Lack of independent witnesses
- Civil or Criminal?
- Lack of Case Law

Elder Abuse Resource Line: (403)705-3250

Calgary
Family
Services



CALGARY
POLICE
SERVICE

Social Work Role

A) Resource, supportive and adjustment counseling

B) Referrals to community partners and agencies

C) Court orientation, accompaniment to court, updates

E) Follow up

F) Family Education

G) Risk assessment

H) Offender Management

Elder Abuse Resource Line: (403)705-3250

Calgary
Family
Services



CALGARY
POLICE
SERVICE

Case Example & Intervention

Nancy (72 years), resides with husband, son Dan (51 years), and daughter in law.

Referral from health clinic with concern of physical assault and financial abuse by Dan.

Nancy disclosed several years of abuse by her son:

- Dan would hit her with the phone receiver on a daily basis.
- Dan would threaten to push her down the stairs.
- Dan “banned” Nancy to live in the basement, and threatened to lock her there with no food or water.
- Dan took Nancy’s car keys and refused to give them back until she paid him several thousand dollars

Elder Abuse Resource Line: (403)705-3250

Calgary
Family
Services



CALGARY
POLICE
SERVICE

Case Example & Intervention

Dan was arrested:

- *Assault x 4*
- *Uttering Threats*
- *Extortion*

Nancy was transitioned to the Kerby Shelter, and was there for two months until she found subsidized housing.

EART supported Nancy through the court process.

Larry plead guilty (plea arrangement) and received 2-Years Probation.

Elder Abuse Resource Line: (403)705-3250

Calgary
Family
Services



CALGARY
POLICE
SERVICE

Challenges of Collaborating

- Necessity to learn and appreciate the other professions.
- Sometimes analogous “treatment plans”.
- Sometimes unequal and/or inconsistent division of labor in partnerships.
- Different employers, organizational cultures.

Elder Abuse Resource Line: (403)705-3250

Calgary
Family
Services



CALGARY
POLICE
SERVICE

Strengths of Collaborating

- 360 Degree Perspective on both victim and offender.
- Continuity of follow up in longer term investigations.
- Different professions provides multiple options to build rapport.
- Policing, Social Work and Nursing all with wide scopes by definition.

Elder Abuse Resource Line: (403)705-3250

Calgary
Family
Services



CALGARY
POLICE
SERVICE

How to contact the EART

Elder Abuse Resource Line:

403-705-3250

24 hour access

Phone interpretation services available

Police: 911 or 403-266-1234

Elder Abuse Resource Line: (403)705-3250

Calgary
Family
Services



Kerby Centre



CALGARY
POLICE
SERVICE

Questions?

Elder Abuse Resource Line: (403)705-3250

Calgary
Family
Services



CALGARY
POLICE
SERVICE