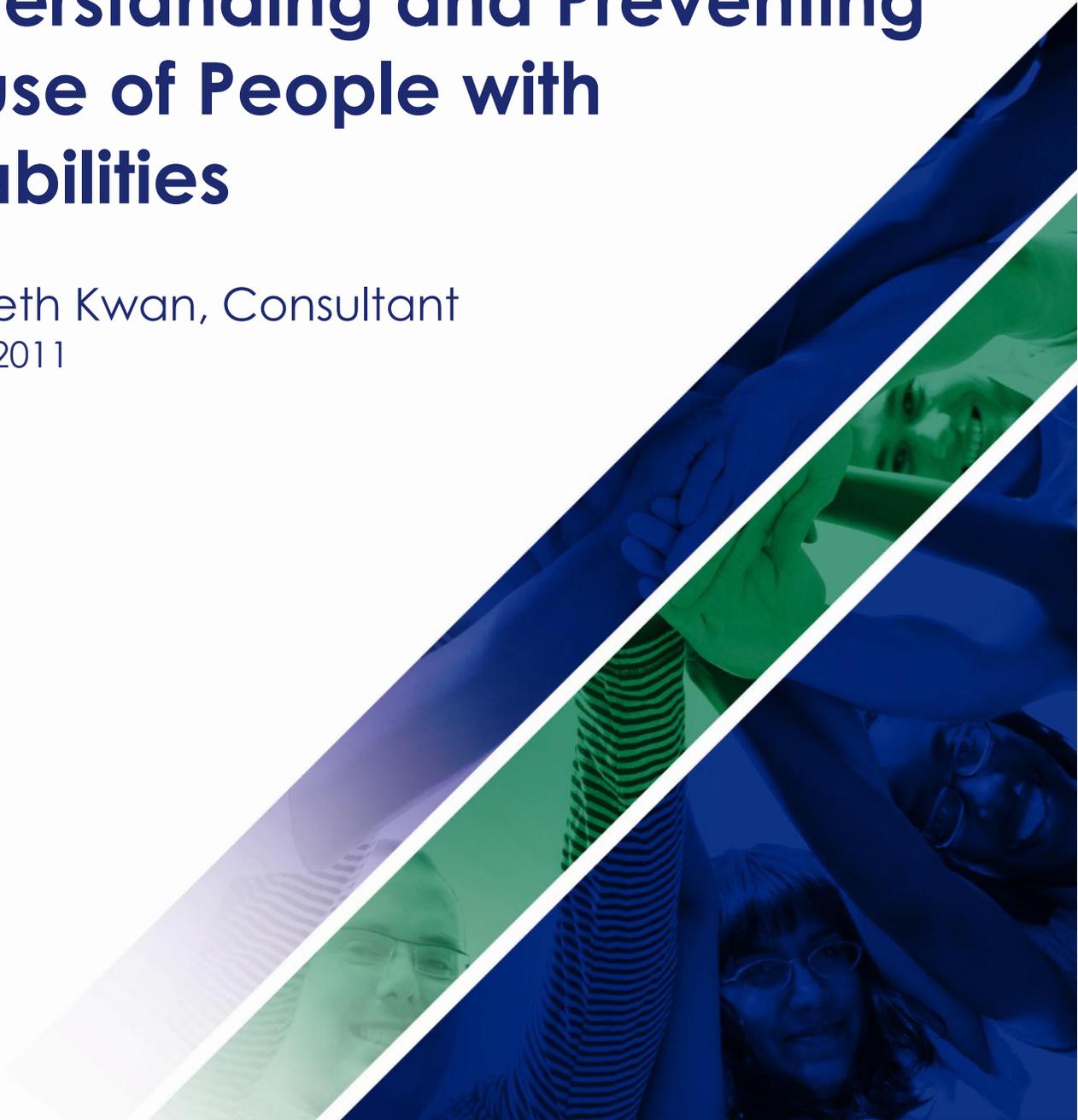




# Serving Disabled Victims: Understanding and Preventing Abuse of People with Disabilities

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## Introduction

CODA is a community-based initiative dedicated to developing awareness and understanding of the abuse of people with disabilities and working towards prevention. CODA is inclusive and collaborative initiative that strives to respect a diversity of perspectives and value the lived experience of people with disabilities. CPO was instrumental in the creation of "Connecting on Disability and Abuse" (CODA).

Crime Prevention Ottawa (CPO) is dedicated to "crime reduction and enhanced community safety in Ottawa through collaborative, evidence-based crime prevention." It brings together City Government, Police Services, School Boards, child protection, the United Way as well as community, business and academic partners. It was established in 2005 by City Council as a quasi-independent body.

One of the key elements of CODA's strategy is education about disability and abuse. CODA identified a need for smaller workshops to target service providers about the abuse of people with disabilities.

Thus, *Serving Disabled Victims: Understanding and Preventing Abuse of People with Disabilities* was launched as a project designed to reach out to service providers to increase their awareness of the abuse of people with disabilities and to increase their capacity to better serve disabled victims of abuse.

The objectives of *Serving Disabled Victims: Understanding and Preventing Abuse of People with Disabilities* were:

1. To raise awareness of service providers of the continuum of violence against persons with disabilities including neglect, physical, sexual, mental, psychological, emotional, and financial abuses; and
2. To increase educational supports for service providers on what constitutes abuse against persons with disabilities and how to recognize it.

## ***Serving Disabled Victims: Understanding and Preventing Abuse of People with Disabilities Workshop***

The *Serving Disabled Victims: Understanding and Preventing Abuse of People with Disabilities* workshop consisted of a PowerPoint slides, handouts, interactive activities and referral resources. The workshop was marketed to service providers and the delivery of the workshop was tailored to the specific needs of interested parties.

The *Serving Disabled Victims: Understanding and Preventing Abuse of People with Disabilities* workshop was offered in 2 or 3-hour sessions, while presentations were offered in 1 to 1.5 hour sessions. English-language workshops were delivered by Elizabeth Kwan and Christine Murphy, and the French language workshops by Anca Sultana and Christine Murphy.

### **Response to the Workshop**

By the end of March 2011, the *Serving Disabled Victims: Understanding and Preventing Abuse of People with Disabilities* workshop was received by an impressive range of service providers.

As of March 31, 2011, nine workshops had been delivered to the following service providers:

1	Accessibility Day, City of Ottawa (English)	December 3, 2010
2	Accessibility Day, City of Ottawa (French)	December 3, 2010
3	Social Services, City of Ottawa	January 11, 2011
4	Rideau Community Support Services	January 18, 2011
5	Victimology Graduate Certificate Program, Algonquin College	February 8, 2011
6	Aphasia Centre of Ottawa	February 11, 2011
7	Ottawa Community Housing	February 23, 2011
8	Social Work Class, Carleton University	March 1, 2011
9	Legal Services, Vanier Community Service Centre	March 24, 2011

The workshop has been very well received and successful in the community, thus creating a demand for it. There are another 10 workshops that could possibly be delivered after March.

## Main Observations about the Workshop

Four key observations made about the *Serving Disabled Victims: Understanding and Preventing Abuse of People with Disabilities* workshop were:

1. Stakeholder engagement and marketing was challenging. The workshop was marketed to some key stakeholders that were mentioned in the CODA RFP (request for proposal) such as Police, City of Ottawa, women shelters and community health centres. The marketing of the workshop addressing both abuse and people with disabilities did not seem to resonate with service providers who felt that their agencies had been exposed to training on either abuse or disabilities. As well, some service providers had challenges with the logistics of organizing a group for the workshop.

The uptake of the workshop was mainly through known contacts from CODA, the Consultants or participants who had attended the workshop. After the first few initial workshops, the news of the workshop started to reach out into the community. There are potentially 8 workshops on the wait list after March 31st, 2011.

As a result, CODA is being well promoted in the community and is well regarded as a leader in addressing abuse against people with disabilities.

2. Background research and workshop preparation was very demanding. Customizing the workshop was very effective as it met the specific needs of the service provider group but it took a lot of time to prepare due to the diverse range of service providers. In some cases, the request from the service provider group added to the presentation which in turn, lessened the time for interactive workshop activities or for discussion.
3. Length of the workshop was too short. The workshop could be longer than 3 hours. Some of the workshop activities, such as scenarios or to discussion on practice challenges, were not incorporated often due to the lack of time.
4. Workshop and the materials drew attention to these key gaps:
  - a. Paucity of recent research on the abuse of people with disabilities; since the late 1990s and early 2000s, research on the abuse of people with disabilities has not been prolific. Although, there is more recent statistics on criminalized victimization, there has not been a lot of up-to-date research on abuse or people with disabilities.

b. Lack of research/information on other vulnerable groups; there is very little research and information on disability and abuse that look at the intersection with other vulnerable groups and their specific challenges such as cultural diversity, LGBTTIQQ2S (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Questioning, 2-Spirited) and seniors. Seniors as a group are starting to have more resources from the current priority given to elder abuse but disability may or may not be obvious in the information and service provision. When this information is available, it should be added to the workshop materials.

c. Limited services that are appropriate, effective and accessible to people with disabilities who are fleeing or have fled abuse; service providers that participated in the workshop had practice issues and challenges when they assisted clients with disabilities who were fleeing or had fled abuse to find appropriate, effective and accessible services.

The key issue for the service providers was to find accessible buildings and services that were able to assist with the abuse as well as the needs of the person with disabilities.

At the same time, service provision agencies are stretched, doing more for less with their existing funding. The service agencies may not have the resources, and thus, the capacity, to effectively assist a person with disability who is an abuse survivor.

Service providers have relayed their experience of assisting an abuse survivor who is a person with disability and the tremendous challenges they faced locating the appropriate, effective and accessible service options are few.

d. The lack of case management for people with disabilities who are survivors of abuse; service providers also reported that they did not know what service agencies to contact that could provide services for an abuse survivor who is a person with disability. These service providers retold their experience of approaching service agencies only to find that the abuse survivor could not be served or only be served in a “siloeed” manner. Service providers found that there was no case management to ensure the facilitation and coordination of services for the abuse survivor.

## **Challenges Identified by Workshop Participants**

The most prevalent challenges identified by workshop participants, starting from the most prevalent group of issues, were:

1. The lack of services and funding
2. The lack of awareness/education
3. The lack of housing
4. Cultural issues
5. Fear of reporting by the abuse survivor
6. Social assistance
7. The lack of transportation
8. The lack of service development and planning (community and agency levels)
9. The lack of advocacy
10. The lack of community development

## **Recommendations for CODA**

1. CODA to continue providing the workshop Serving Disabled Victims: Understanding and Preventing Abuse of People with Disabilities to service providers in the community.
  - i. CODA to continue tailoring the workshop to the specific needs of the service provider group.
2. CODA to develop and launch a wider social marketing and educational campaign on understanding and preventing the abuse of people with disabilities.
3. CODA to offer the workshop as a half-day training session that would allow for the inclusion of the learning activities.
4. CODA to advocate for more research that can support policy, program and service development, especially in terms of the inclusion of other vulnerabilities/diversities.
5. CODA to conduct an environment scan of key service providers in the community to assess the accessibility of both the space/venue and the programs/services that serve people with disabilities who are abuse survivors.
6. CODA to investigate the availability of an organizational assessment tool for service providers, and to adapt this tool for service agencies in Ottawa that can determine the accessibility of space/venue and programs/services for abuse survivors with disabilities.

7. CODA to lead in the coordination of service providers that can support the continuum of service and supports needed to assist abuse survivors with disabilities in Ottawa.

## **Workshop Feedback**

The vast majority of feedback from the participants reflected very well on the content of the workshop as well as on the workshop facilitators. There were a couple of comments that suggested shortening the duration of the workshop and providing more interactive activities. Unfortunately, there was a lot of information to present on disability, abuse and abuse against persons with disabilities. Further, when group specifically asked for the workshop to be tailored to their needs, it tended to add to the content.

The feedback from the workshop participants are attached for information in the Appendix.

## **Appendix – Workshop Feedback**

### **Carleton University Social Work Class**

#### **(1) What did you like best about the workshop?**

- It was so informative
- I liked the activities
- The stats especially were shocking to me, they were a lot higher than I thought
- Very interactive specifically like the myth/reality activity
- The quiz-I found the statistics shocking! More research like this would be great
- I liked the quiz that was given before going over the stats
- Very informative
- I really enjoyed the interactive game about myths and realistic
- Excellent- great to put faces to theory
- The examples and availability to have open discussion
- That it was thorough. I like that Ms Murphy was passionate about the presentation
- The workshop was well done and I felt very relaxed and open and it was greatly presented
- I really enjoyed the myth and reality “cards/game”
- I like that it was interactive and provided a lot of beneficial and interesting information
- Interactive activities
- Interactive piece-quiz, discussion and myth/reality exercise
- Very organized
- Quiz

#### **(2) What did you learn that was new or that added to you understanding of abuse against persons with disabilities and its prevention?**

- There are many more forms of abuse than I thought there was
- How much laws needed to change
- The stats x 2
- How little accessibility there is
- Hugely shocked about abuse towards people with disabilities. Very effective stats and presentation, specifically liked learning about different risk factors.
- I learned that many more people who are disabled are abused than I thought
- I didn't know about all of the risk factors before
- I learned that abuse is extremely present and often shelters and other services are not available to people with disabilities
- Attitude is extremely important

- The percentage of men abused was alarming
- It was very informal and I learned a lot with this workshop
- I didn't realize how prevalent and long term the abuse is compared to non-disabled persons
- The statistics in the quiz were quite shocking for me and I didn't realize they were that high for sexual abuse
- The statistics stated was interesting and emphasized the key points presented
- Risk factors

**(3) What suggestion would you make to improve the workshop?**

- More involvement, interactive activities
- More stories from individuals about what is going on in the community
- It was great!
- I would recommend getting people into small working groups at the end to discuss and brainstorm on how to prevent abuse of disabled people
- Time for more questions, otherwise it was excellent
- Possibly more solutions
- More real life examples, the more shocking, the better chance I'll remember
- Separate the presentation a little more – a little long to sit
- More time
- Well presented
- Less slides
- Perhaps make it a bit shorter – was a tad dry and long

**(4) What other topics/ aspects would you be interested in exploring?**

- More about children
- More recent statistics/research
- Violence against people with specific disabilities
- More information on deaf culture and abuse towards people born with disability versus later life
- Children and disabilities
- It was all interesting and would like to learn more on all of it
- Disabilities and children x 2
- Connections to addictions
- Connections to elder abuse

**(5) Other comments**

- I very much enjoyed the presentation- informative and helpful
- Really enjoyed it!
- Great workshop
- Thank You! x 4

- Thank you for taking your time to present to our class
- Great presentation
- Well done x 2
- Good presentation-learned a lot
- It was very interesting

## **Aphasia Centre of Ottawa**

### **(1) What did you like best about the workshop?**

- It was interesting to have Christine's participation because she both expressed herself well but has encountered barriers due to her speech
- Very interactive-Provides many different aspects of abuse and violence
- Informative, covered all aspects from definitions to awareness to how to seek help or being helpful
- The way it was catered to our group. Sensitive to most relevant issues
- Clearly outlined with Presentation
- Interactivity
- Presentation & Discussion –well informed presenters-useful material

### **(2) What did you learn that was new or that added to you understanding of abuse against persons with disabilities and its prevention?**

- It was interesting to look beyond the issues affecting our clients and look at issues in a more general context
- Very shocked at how many individuals are abused
- Stats were new to me (age group of abuse -15-26)
- Contacts for abuse help in crisis
- The prevalence for abuse of people with disabilities is much higher than expected
- I knew little going in, so learned a lot. Already was aware of signs because of reading but stats really bring it home

### **(3) What suggestion would you make to improve the workshop?**

- Already excellent
- Thought it was great
- None – keep up the good work

### **(4) What other topics/ aspects would you be interested in exploring?**

- Maybe looking more into how to go about determining if someone is being abused re: who to contact
- Service delivery – what does happen after numbers are called? More details?
- Is there any difference in prevalence of abuse of people who have a disability as well as having a different sexual orientation (ie. Transgendered, gay/lesbian, bisexual, etc... )

## **(5) Other comments**

- Presented very well-very informative
- Presenters were very informative, able to answer all the questions
- Team approach to presentation was really effective
- Very good. Concise – Covered a lot in 2 ½ hours. Good introduction

## **Ottawa Community Housing**

### **(1) What did you like best about the workshop?**

- Very informative and I liked how informal it was. I like that we could have a dialogue with presenters
- The education and all the statistics – it was eye opening
- Eye opening
- Eye opener on the stats around whom are being abused
- First part on the prevalence and statistics
- The information provided will help being able to refer in case a situation presents itself
- Information
- Very informative

### **(2) What did you learn that was new or that added to your understanding of abuse against persons with disabilities and its prevention?**

- The stats on abuse that were presented
- I didn't realize that there was such a lack of advocacy on coordination of services in this city
- The workshop helped me to better understand how deep noted the sense of humiliation felt by victims of abuse can be
- Powerful presentation
- That the victims of abuse are not always the obvious victims
- That victimization rates are always more severe and last longer for those with disabilities
- How high the occurrence takes place, signs to look for
- Level of abuse
- Reaffirmed things to look out for and identified others
- All was meaningful

### **(3) What suggestion would you make to improve the workshop?**

- More time to dialogue with presenters and those there to learn, ie. Maybe talk about case specific examples
- A handout of resources
- Perhaps make it more interactive
- A full day/half day not enough
- Found workshop very informative
- Less reading of the words on the screen and more talking of expanding

on, the point that is trying to be conveyed

- I would have enjoyed receiving the slides in writing and give more Ottawa based agencies to refer
- Some information (list) could be made available before workshop to prepare for the workshop and allow for more discussion
- Maybe a part II segment on how well OCH is doing and how we can improve as a corporation

#### **(4) What other topics/ aspects would you be interested in exploring?**

- Cultural and languages limitations/barriers
- Issues specific to youth and disability
- Cultural background
- Service usage
- A more focused workshop on perhaps dealing with crisis intervention

#### **(5) Other comments**

- Great workshop-everyone at OCH should take this
- Thank You x 3

### ***Algonquin College - Victimology Graduate Certificate Program***

#### **(1) What did you like best about the workshop?**

- The apparent knowledge and passion that the two presenters had on this topic made the presentation to our class informative and inspiring
- Information overall provided
- I liked the anecdotal accounts of the current short and comings of certain organizations. I wish there had been even more info on this
- All of the information provided will be useful in our future careers in victim services
- The signs of abuse and prevention strategies were very helpful and practical – will be useful to incorporate into my professional life
- The clarity
- Instructors were interactive, responded well to questions and knew the topic well
- It was informative
- The variety of information given
- Informative, interactive, brought real examples and personal experience
- It provided more information on the issue of disability and prevention which I am really interested in
- It was extremely informative and well put together. I liked best how easy it was to understand and how organized it was
- It was very informative and really open my eyes
- Having two knowledgeable speakers who were able to sustain our attention span for 3 hours – not an easy task, but you both kept it

interesting

**(2) What did you learn that was new or that added to your understanding of abuse against persons with disabilities and its prevention?**

- AODA : This is an interesting piece of legislation that will improve the lives of people with disabilities but it seems shocking that it will not be in effect until 2025
- Just the idea of trying to live with a disability (ie. Para-Transpo) the barriers I take for granted
- I learned about CODA, which was an organization I did not know existed. I also appreciated learning about some of the difficulties people with disabilities face that I may not have considered because of my privilege
- The information regarding signs of abuse was helpful as well as understanding the role of an abuser
- Prevention strategies for the team and agency
- How to react when abuse is disclosed to you
- The Extent of the barriers
- Some of the practical problems are things I had not thought of (ie. Leaving a home and services may not follow)
- The abuse stats were shocking. It was also interesting to learn about all the barriers people face when leaving – OC Transpo, benefits and caret etc.
- I didn't realize that the numbers were so high of people who are disabled and are getting abused
- I didn't realize the numbers were so high in terms of victimization
- How the power and control wheel can also be applied to the issue of disability and not simply on violence against women
- The high percentages of those abused, it was shocking
- OC Para Transpo service comment shocked me! It really made me think of what can be done
- The amount of work still needing to be done in the areas of disabilities (both prevention and reactions to victimization)

**(3) What suggestion would you make to improve the workshop?**

- I think the format of the workshop is very good
- The interactive aspect allowed the students to realize the lack of knowledge we may have on the topic
- I would have liked to hear more about institutional shortcomings and resources on how to get more involved in instituting real change
- Clips and short videos
- To provide scenarios
- Perhaps some case studies or examples so we could get a more personal feel for the issue

- Explain more on how to help with the aftermath of abuse
- Chocolate! I felt that nothing was missing given the time restraint
- Perhaps to put some focus on mental and developmental disability
- More interactive
- Bring chocolate!

**(4) What other topics/ aspects would you be interested in exploring?**

- I might be interesting to hear about specific examples of how the City of Ottawa has systemic abuse for people with disabilities
- Do people in physical disabilities feel “lumped” together with people who suffer mental disabilities? Is that another barrier? (not trying to be rude/disrespectful, but I am curious)
- Men with disabilities and the issues facing them that are different from women
- Elder abuse
- Best practices for service providers? If there are any?
- What would the system of service delivery include/look like in a perfect world? (ie. What should we strive towards?)
- Different kind of disability affecting the same person
- Impact of abuse on person with disability – how is it different than victim without disability or is it similar
- More recommendations about what can be done
- More ways that we are able to help people with disabilities not be abused and help them with the aftermath
- Perhaps more information on children
- Ways that the government can give money to those who cannot work- the funding aspect
- Ways of accessing services-social assistance
- Chocolate
- More chocolate!

**(5) Other comments**

- I was glad to have Christine comeback and deliver another talk/workshop to our class. It was very informative and built on our previous knowledge given last semester
- I enjoyed your presentation and learned a lot!
- Overall this presentation was educational and insightful. Thank you for coming in and speaking with us
- Really great and informative presentations!-Thank You
- Excellent!
- Great job! Thanks for all the info
- Great!
- Great presentation!

- Keep up the great work. You two are inspirational

### **City of Ottawa, Social Services**

#### **(1) What did you like best about the workshop?**

- Speakers
- Statistics
- General discussions and information gathering-awareness
- The honest approach to the needs of disabled persons facing abuse
- Different stats and presentation
- Presentation of all varieties of info for individuals and service groups
- The presenters were very knowledgeable
- Good information
- The information and presentation
- Variety of programs experiences presented
- Presenters dedicated to topic
- The general information
- Presenters adaptability re: technical issues
- Increased awareness of how vulnerable this group is
- Addressing an issue that is almost taboo...
- Learned a lot, especially: the amount of abuse
- Very informative, interactive
- It was very informative
- Information offered x 2

#### **(2) What did you learn that was new or that added to you understanding of abuse against persons with disabilities and its prevention?**

- Statistics from 2009
- Number of people that are abused are very high
- Thought the % would be decreasing with higher awareness but it's not evident
- The realistic description of the complexity of a disabled person who is dependent on the abused trying to access services
- The high percentage of abuse
- The severity of abuse toward disabled client
- The amount of abuse actually declared
- Barriers
- Hearing the information/perspective of the disabled presenter
- The rates are quite high but as was pointed out in the field this is not coming through in the clientele
- What are we missing?
- A lack of resources available to victims with disabilities
- 15-24 year old risk factors
- Caregiver abuse-with holding of services

- Many prevalence of abuse and lack of services
- The amount of it
- Higher % than I thought
- I think seeing abuse through a set of eyes we usually don't interact with when we talk about abuse
- The stats are very realistic, understanding and prevention
- The numbers, no easy solution, very complex issue

**(3) What suggestion would you make to improve the workshop?**

- Functioning equipment (not fault of presenters who did great job)
- Current list of resources available
- Actual resources and community agencies
- Slideshow issues improved
- More group discussion and opportunity to case conference
- Length was good and info and exercise were helpful
- Make resources more available
- Balance more between the 2 speakers
- Room wasn't great for this presentation
- To improve communication – presenters face participants-space limited
- Well presented
- I think this workshop is just what is needed right now
- The discussion about our suggestions should occur earlier
- It was very informative, it was good

**(4) What other topics/ aspects would you be interested in exploring?**

- Resources-services in Ottawa in French
- Community resources specific to the needs of the disabled trying to flee abuse
- All abuse issues
- Specific agencies that attempt to deal with problems
- What has happened over the past 20-30 years-gains and losses
- More about the subject, more on prevention

**(5) Other comments**

- More effort to engage solicit others to get involved; invitation to view information, attend meetings, etc.
- Too long, 1 hour would be sufficient
- This was an excellent opportunity to begin exploring the issues-Thank You!
- Very well presented –Excellent examples without being preachy
- I enjoyed today
- A presentation to the Council committee for human services might be worthwhile
- Would have been interesting to have more time for discussions

## **Rideau Community Support Services**

### **(1) What did you like best about the workshop?**

- Hershey kisses! (joking)
- Very informative, lots of factual statistics
- Tailored to fit our needs
- Christine's personal accounts
- Very informative, great interaction amongst guest speakers and participants, information most beneficial
- The opportunity to learn more about the challenges and barriers faced by persons with disabilities

### **(2) What did you learn that was new or that added to your understanding of abuse against persons with disabilities and its prevention?**

- Shocking statistics
- One time funding for emergencies
- The statistics – shocking x 2
- Myths!
- On-going challenges
- Statistics of abuse
- New Spiritual abuse
- Prevention- How it is a joined effort of service providers and workers

### **(3) What suggestion would you make to improve the workshop?**

- More Hershey kisses!
- Squeeze in those scenario's they make it real and keep you engaged
- Lots of info to take in for a 3 hour presentation
- A "break" would be beneficial

### **(4) What other topics/ aspects would you be interested in exploring?**

- Crisis Planning & non-crisis-Safety planning
- Forward future topics

### **(5) Other comments**

- It was a pleasure to meet you both
- Your passion on this topic is evident and is commended
- Great job! Thank you so much for coming out
- Thank You for sharing your expertise of this very important topic
- Enjoyed presentation and opportunity to increase my awareness of challenges faced by persons with disabilities
- Elizabeth and Christine make a great team!-They complement each other!
- Thanks for the chocolate!

## **Vanier Community Services Centre – Legal Aid**

### **(1) What did you like best about the workshop?**

- The facilitators x3
- Christine's courage to present the topic
- Christine was very effective at putting a face to the problem x 2
- The contents
- The statistics
- The signs of abuse

### **(2) What did you learn that was new or that added to you understanding of abuse against persons with disabilities and its prevention?**

- Understanding how widespread the problem are x5
- Systemic barriers and the difficulty for we as lawyers to denunciate
- Understanding the different types of abuse
- Understanding the different forms abuse can take

### **(3) What suggestion would you make to improve the workshop?**

- Illustrate with more examples and to discuss them x2
- More examples if time permitted
- More time
- Clearer focus in the objective of CODA

### **(4) What other topics/ aspects would you be interested in exploring?**

- Very comprehensive contents
- What can we do for CODA
- What next (after sensitivity training)

### **(5) Other comments**

- Many thanks x3
- More workshops
- Would be profitable for all of the Vanier community Service Centre and other organizations x3







## **Crime Prevention Ottawa**

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