

**National Adult Protective Services Resource Center
NAPSA/NCPEA Research Committee
Research to Practice Brief
Research Summary**

Title - Addressing Elder Abuse: The Waterloo Restorative Justice Approach to Elder Abuse Project

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Summary of Research

The Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) of Waterloo Region in southern Ontario, Canada, in partnership with a number of other social service agencies, designed and implemented a restorative justice model applicable to older adults who have been abused by a person in a position of trust. The project was very successful in building partnerships, as many community agencies came together to deal with the problem of elder abuse. The program also raised the profile of elder abuse in the community. However, despite intensive efforts, referrals to the restorative justice program were quite low. Because of this, the program moved to a new organizational model, the Elder Abuse Response Team (EART), which has retained the guiding philosophy of restorative justice but broadened the mandate. The team has evolved into a conflict management system, with multiple points of entry for cases, and multiple options for dealing with elder abuse. The team has developed a broad range of community partners who can both facilitate referrals to the EART and also help to provide individualized responses to each case. The transition to the EART has been successful, and the number of referrals has increased significantly.

Practice and Policy Implications

The physical, psychological, financial abuse or neglect of older adults, by someone whom they should be able to rely on, is a community problem. It is essential to work in partnership to provide opportunities for change and healing for the people affected by elder abuse. Integral to Waterloo's victim-focused, community response is a restorative justice world-view that considers: a) why the abuse happens, b) how to repair harm, and c) what needs to be put into place by families, communities and government for the prevention and resolution of elder abuse. Further research is required to evaluate the impact of this model.

For Further Reading

Website: www.healingapproaches.com

Dussich, J. and Schellenberg, J. (2010) (A. Groh, Contributor) *The Promise of Restorative Justice: New Approaches for Criminal Justice and Beyond*, Boulder, USA, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.

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Groh, A. (2003) *A Healing Approach to Elder Abuse and Mistreatment: The Restorative Justice Approaches to Elder Abuse Project*. Waterloo: Community Care Access Centre of Waterloo.

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Pranis, Kay (2005) *The Little Book of Circle Processes, A New/Old Approach to Peacemaking*, Intercourse, Pa: Good Books.

Pranis K., Stuart, B. & Wedge, M. (2003) *Peacemaking Circles, From Crime to Community*, Living Justice Press, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Sharpe, S. (2011) *Walking the Talk: Developing Ethics Frameworks For the Practice of Restorative Justice*. Community Justice Initiatives Association, B.C. http://www.cjivc.org/walking_the_talk.

Zehr, H. (2002) *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, Intercourse, Pa: Good Books.

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This National Adult Protective Services Resource Center (NAPSRC) re-search summary is part of a series sponsored by the National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) and the National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (NCPEA) joint Research Committee. The purpose of this research summary is to provide direct access to findings in order to enhance practice and clarify policy choices.

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