What might a new system of Information & Referral Services for Seniors in B.C. look like?

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Presentation to Lionsview Seniors Planning Table, January 15, 2019
The presentation in a nutshell

• **Information and Referral (I&R)** services for seniors in BC are changing.

• Changes tend to be **organization-specific, ad hoc** – in response to shifts in the seniors population, technology, government services and developments at the national and global levels – and **uncoordinated**.

• **A new system** of intentionally-designed I&R services for seniors is called for; the **development of the CBSS sector** provides an opportunity.

• Designed with seniors, and fully integrated with the larger CBSS and restructuring social-service sectors, the new I&R services should be **senior-friendly**.
Today’s presentation

1. The evolution of Information & Referral Services
2. Important shifts behind changes in I&R services
3. bc211
4. Healthy Aging CORE (Collaborative Online Resources & Education)
5. Working Group on I&R and Personal Advocacy
6. Questions and discussion
1. The ‘evolution’ of I&R for Seniors – a brief sketch

• **Information** on services, programs, etc. available on a call-in and walk-in basis and more recently by email and online
• Brochures ... websites
• Resource directories ... online
• Resource library
• Satellite and even mobile locations (e.g. public libraries, vans)
• **Referrals** to other agencies, programs, sources of information ...
• **Personal advocacy**

TYPICALLY PROVIDED BY SMALL, MEDIUM & LARGE NON-PROFIT AGENCIES OFTEN WITH ONE AGENCY SPECIALIZING IN I&R PER REGION
2. Important shifts behind changes in I&R Services

TECHNOLOGY-related shifts
• Innovations in communications technology
• More individualized information procurement online – ‘Googling’
• Increased use of smartphones

SENIORS POPULATION-related shifts
• More older seniors making inquiries
• More seniors with dementia
• More seniors living with poverty (BC Seniors Poverty Report Card, 2017)
• More seniors with housing-related inquiries
• More seniors with mobility issues
2. Important shifts (cont’d)

GOVERNMENT SOCIAL SERVICES-related shifts
- Fewer staff devoted to I&R (insufficient levels of funding)
- More bureaucratic waits and delays

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT-related shifts
- E.g. increased #’s of immigrant/refugee seniors
- More call for multi-lingual service needs
- More call for settlement information

OTHER shifts?
3. bc211

A United Way Partnership
Who We Are

- Vancouver-based non-profit operating in partnership with the United Way
- Since 1953, we have been bridging the gap between service providers and individuals needing all kinds of support
- Part of a network of 211 service providers across Canada and USA
What We Do

▶ Strengthen communities by connecting people with the help they need

▶ Provide free information and referral service for community, government and social services via phone, text, web chat, and online directory

▶ Maintain an extensive database of agencies and programs (13,000+ records)
211 Service

› 300K+ inquiries /year 24/7/365
› Free & Confidential; 160+ Languages
› Phone, Text, Chat, Online Directory, Email
› Phone/text service currently available in:
  Vancouver Island
  Gulf Islands
  Metro Vancouver
  Fraser Valley
  Squamish-Lillooet
  Sunshine Coast
4. Healthy Aging CORE (Collaborative Online Resources & Education)
HEALTHY AGING

Collaborative Online Resources & Education
The knowledge hub for volunteers, caregivers and senior service professionals in BC

Find & Join Discussion Groups

Find Resources

Get Training
At home. In community.

HEALTHY AGING
by United Way

Upcoming Training
Avoiding Frauds & Scams
Sept 25, 4 - 6 PM

Latest News
New study on transportation issues released

Upcoming Event
Provincial Summit on Aging
Aug 20, 4 - 6 PM

Featured Program
Active Aging
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Sign up for our Newsletter
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An initiative of United Way Healthy Aging
Other topics/focus areas on CORE

- Better at Home
- Sector Strengthening
- Funders
- Research & Evidence
- Multi-Sectoral Seniors action tables
- Political Leadership
- Elders Connect
- Sector Capacity Building
- Health Authorities
- Funding
- Volunteers
- Provincial Resources
- Active Aging
- Community Programs

Healthy Aging. At home. In community. an initiative originated by the raising the profile project
Provincial Working Group on I&R and Personal Advocacy

• Created by CBSS Leadership Council in fall 2018

• Based on Raising the Profile Project findings and regional consultations

• Co-Leads: Marion Pollock, 411 Seniors; Bev Pitman, United Way

• Members:
  411, WESN, Centre for Seniors Information Kamloops, Seniors Outreach (Kelowna), People for a Healthy Community (Gabriola) and others
The CBSS or Community-Based Seniors Services Sector

A sub-sector of social services that includes all municipal and non-profit organizations in BC providing services and programs for older adults, including seniors’, community and recreation centres, seniors’ and multi-service agencies, community coalitions and neighbourhood houses.
CBSS Leadership Council

Brings community voices to CBSS sector development

Includes executive directors, managers and senior volunteer leaders from not-for-profits and municipalities

Role includes:
- guiding development of Knowledge Hub or CORE
- helping identify systemic and emerging policy issues
- supporting ongoing outreach to CBSS sector across BC
- Coordinating working gro
10 Priority Areas for Capacity-Building Identified

| 1. Volunteer infrastructure | 6. Information, referral and advocacy |
| 2. Develop seniors planning tables and roundtables | 7. Development of transportation infrastructure |
| 3. Consistent and sustained funding | 8. Diversity and inclusion |
| 4. Shared language concerning the sector’s benefits | 9. Development of intergenerational programs |
| 5. Training by the sector and for the sector | 10. Urban, rural and remote connection |
Working Group (cont’d)

• Objectives -
  address challenges, strengthen I&R programs, create toolkits for CORE, develop recommendations for Seniors Summit 2019

• Challenges -
  Funding
  Volunteer recruitment/training/retention
  Government downloading and bureaucratic delays
  Inappropriate referrals
  Increasing #’s of seniors with complex care needs and cognitive issues
6. Questions and discussion

a. What would you like the Working Group to know about successes and challenges of I&R for seniors on the North Shore?

b. How are changes in the seniors pop’n impacting your I&R services?

c. How do you imagine the integration of I&R for seniors to proceed?

d. How do you integrate ‘personal advocacy’ if at all?
Thank you!

For further information, please contact:

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