# INTEGRATED POLICE RESPONSE FOR ABUSED SENIORS

## ▶ General Overview

Needs Analysis and Police Practices Inventory

## INTRODUCTION

The *Integrated Police Response for Abused Seniors (IPRAS)* is a three-year action research project that has developed, tested, and then implemented a police intervention model to counter mistreatment of older adults. Starting in July 2013 and extending over a three-year period, this project was jointly carried out between the "Section de la recherche et de la planification du Service de police de la Ville de Montréal" (SPVM)[1] and the Research Chair on Mistreatment of Older Adults of the University of Sherbrooke.

This general overview presents the data collection's results enabling the development of the IPRAS Model. Three other general overviews can be consulted. They highlight:

> the evaluation results of the IPRAS Model pilot project;

> the description of the model's components implemented throughout the SPVM;

> the practical and theoretical knowledge learned from the IPRAS action research project.

## OBJECTIVE

To develop a police intervention model to counter mistreatment of older adults based on the inventory of:

> the police practices to counter mistreatment of older adults;

> the SPVM police officers' practices and needs regarding intervention for countering mistreatment of older adults.

## METHODOLOGY

Three documentary analyses and seven data collection took place between July 2013 and December 2014. A total of **160 scientific articles and governmental writings** were analyzed and **46 police services, 32 partners and over 800 SPVM police officers** were consulted. Table 1 shows the different activities carried out and the number of writings consulted, as well as the number of participants recruited in order to achieve these objectives.

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[1] Research and Strategic Planning Division of the City of Montréal Police Service.

**TABLE 1: OVERVIEW OF DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION**

| TYPES OF ACTIVITIES | ACTIVITIES | FOCUS: DOCUMENTING | | SOURCES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | practices | needs | |
| DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH | Scientific literature review | X | | 125 reviewed articles |
| | Summary of practices and governmental literature review | X | | 35 writings |
| | Inventory of Canadian practices outside SPVM | X | | 46 police services |
| DATA COLLECTION | Online survey | X | X | 661 respondents |
| | Police focus groups Neighbourhood Police Stations (NPS)[1] | X | X | 10 groups in 2 NPSs (117 police officers) |
| | Police focus groups – Investigation centres[1,2] | X | X | 23 investigators |
| | Observing the police intervention (cobra)[1,2] | X | X | 3 not targeted, 2 senior targeted |
| | Individual interviews – police officers[1,2] | X | X | 6 police officers |
| | Individual interviews – partners[1,2] | X | X | 32 representing organizations |
| | Identifying SPVM's best practices[1,2] | X | X | 4 cooperation officers; 8 community relations officers – "Senior" mandate; 2 regional projects |

1. Case-study approach (two selected NPSs based on specific criteria[1])
2. Other NPSs or operation centres

## MAIN RESULTS

The analysis of documentary and data collection allowed to classify main results according to the following themes: highlights of the police practices to counter mistreatment of older adults, observations on the SPVM's police practices, needs expressed and barriers encountered by the SPVM police officers.

**(1) Highlights of the police practices to counter mistreatment of older adults**

### INTERNATIONAL

›  Few writings are dedicated to police practice.

›  Among these, few of them deal with the police practice specificities according to police officers' functions.

›  Some writings address prevention, detection and investigation process in situations of mistreatment of older adults.

- ❯ Some projects regarding prevention, awareness activities, training and case follow-ups are listed, as well as **multidisciplinary investigation teams**.

- ❯ Some police services develop practices with experienced and recognized external partners in countering mistreatment. They elaborate clear practice guidelines to facilitate collaboration (role description, operational procedures and action plans).

- ❯ Some police services in cities such as Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Ottawa, Toronto, Hamilton and Kingston stand out by the establishment of **specialized units** to counter mistreatment of older adults.

- ❯ **Training sessions** aiming to introduce police officers to information regarding intervention to counter mistreatment were not widely disseminated due to a lack of time and staff (The Council on Aging of Ottawa, 2006).

## QUÉBEC

- ❯ Most of the police services are part of a local or regional intersystem coordination committee.

- ❯ The police and the Integrated Health and Social Services Centres (CISSS) are important partners on these coordination committees.

- ❯ Several police services use awareness material on forms and types of mistreatment of older adults.

- ❯ A breakthrough pilot project in Québec, namely the socio-judicial agreement between partners, was created in the Trois-Rivières area to facilitate the processing of mistreatment of older adults' cases. This protocol provides different elements such as consultation, prevention, follow-up, investigation and legal action.

- ❯ Overall, prevention and awareness are well developed, whereas follow-ups, investigation and judicial process are less so.
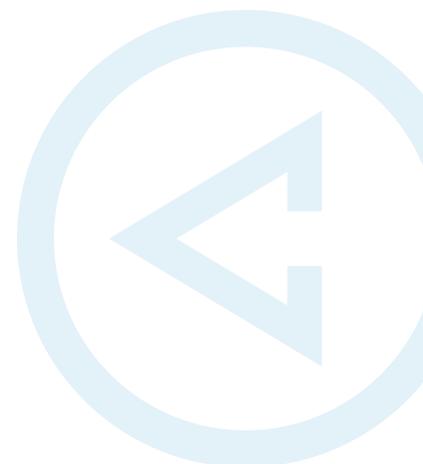
## ② Observations on SPVM police practices

### EXISTING PRACTICES

Prior to the IPRAS project, the SPVM developed three practices towards older adults.

- ❯ Two regional investigation support projects involving older adults.

  - Analysis of police reports is enhanced to optimize detection and case follow-ups of mistreatment.

  - Socio-legal follow-ups are prioritized.

  - Support is available to investigators.

  - Investigation best practices are highlighted.

- ❯ The practice of the community relations officers responsible for cases involving older adults in NPS.

  - The mandates and the time devoted to these cases may vary.

  - Some emphasize on prevention while others favour follow-ups according to the specific needs of the territories and the number of community relations officers per unit.

  - Detection is primarily carried out by patrol officers.

> Police officers observe that mistreatment is often perpetrated by a family member and the most common type is financial mistreatment.

> Respect, active listening and good communication between the older adult and the patrol officer are essential to create a relationship of trust.

> Observed mistreatment signs are often the condition of the premises, the presence of food, the person's overall condition and apparent physical injuries.

> Police officers have a heterogeneous approach to detect mistreatment and they do not systematically use indicators or the same indicators.

> Support from a community relations officer is the most frequently internal resource used by the patrol officers.

> Community relations officers play a central role in interventions involving older adults in situations of mistreatment. Their practice is based on an intersystem collaboration.

> Intersystem collaboration to counter mistreatment of older adults is of great importance and constitutes a guarantee of good practices. The collaboration among police officers and partners allows to better cover the different aspects of the problem (public safety and older adults' physical, mental and social health).

> Whenever possible, investigators give priority to cases of mistreatment involving older adults.

> Mistreatment cases take more time than others. Follow-ups focusing on non-judicial options are valued.

## ③ Needs expressed by the SPVM police officers

> Police officers do not feel well-equipped to detect situations of mistreatment of older adults, to intervene or to act when the older adult's trust and collaboration is not yet acquired.

> Clarifications need to be made for various concepts, such as mental health, dementia, cognitive decline and Alzheimer's disease.

## ④ Barriers encountered by the SPVM police officers

> Older adults may be reluctant to report a situation of mistreatment or even file a complaint against a family member.

> Non-criminal situations of mistreatment are challenging for police officers because their range of action is limited.

> According to some partners, the police should not intervene in all cases of mistreatment, especially when the older adult does not wish to, when there is no immediate safety issue, or even when it is a non-criminal situation.

> Interventions may be lengthy when it comes to situations of mistreatment. Police officers feel they do not have enough time due to high volume of calls received.

> Communication issues arise when older adults are confused, have cognitive impairment or mental health problems.

> Confidentiality and information sharing with partners may constitute a challenge.

> Police officers may lack knowledge regarding older adults' resources in their territory, including their partners' roles and limits of action.

> Collaboration with partners is more developed in prevention than it is for detection and follow-ups. Respecting the older adult's confidentiality is of major importance when sharing information with partners.

> Some cultural communities have negative perceptions of the police.

> The language barrier remains an obstacle, especially when the interpreters are relatives.

## BASIC STRUCTURE OF THE IPRAS MODEL

The data analysis allowed to identify 25 priority needs to be addressed in order to improve police intervention. The cross-analysis of these results, the SPVM's existing practices and the ones prevailing across Canada and around the world led to the design of the basic structure of the IPRAS Model. It is based on:

> **five areas of the police intervention**, namely prevention, detection, response to calls (front line intervention), follow-ups and investigations/judicial process.

> **four cross-cutting strategies** to all these areas, namely knowledge transfer, intersystem collaboration, coordination and strategic management.
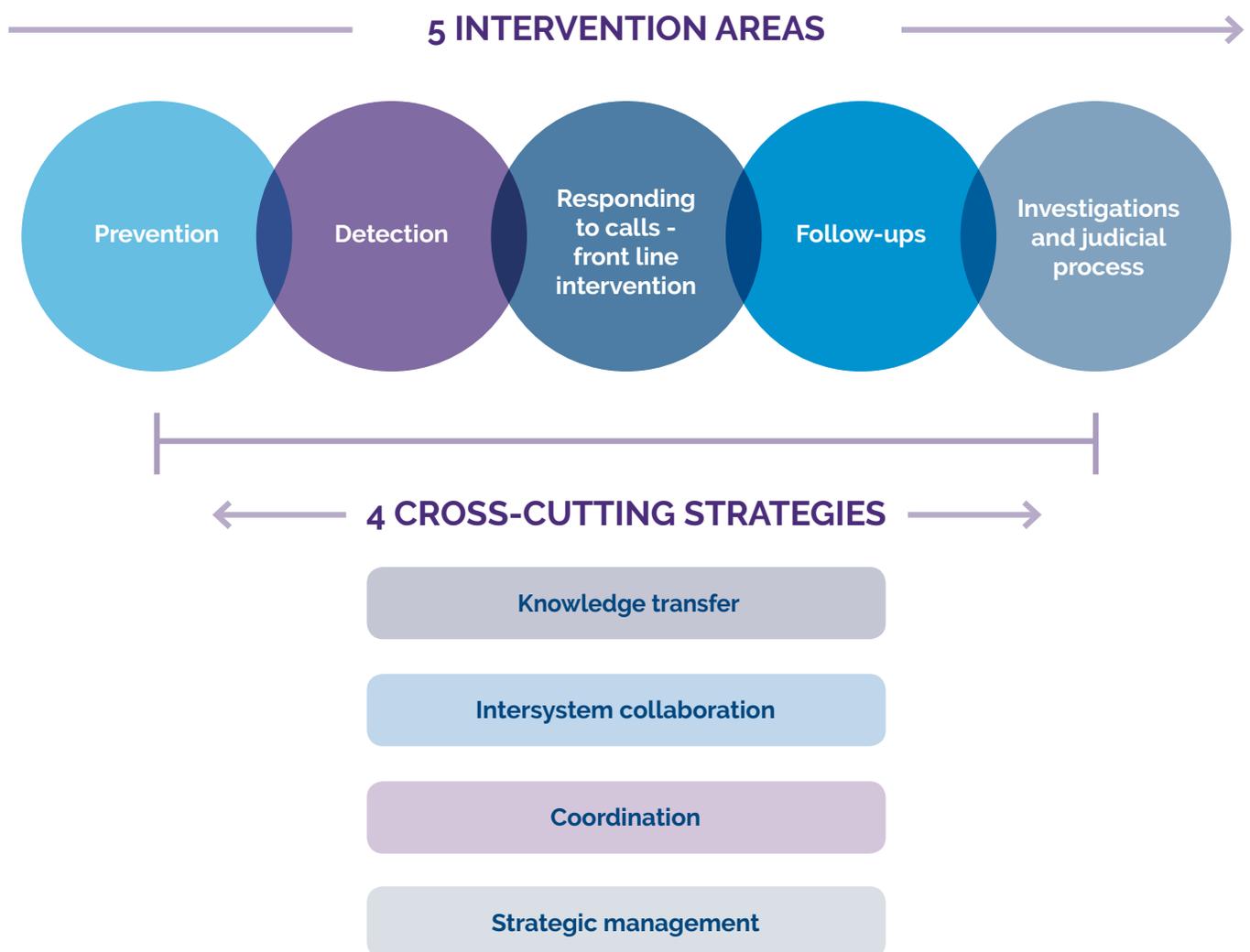
**5 INTERVENTION AREAS**

| Prevention | Detection | Responding to calls - front line intervention | Follow-ups | Investigations and judicial process |

**4 CROSS-CUTTING STRATEGIES**

Knowledge transfer

Intersystem collaboration

Coordination

Strategic management

**FIGURE 1: BASIC STRUCTURE OF THE IPRAS MODEL**

# REFERENCES AND FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Beaulieu, M., Côté, M., Cloutier, J., D'Amours, M., Lavoie, N., Loock, J. & Diaz, L. (February 2015). *Police Practices in Situations of Mistreatment Against Older Adults. Summary of Outcomes. Data Collection and Early Analysis*. Sherbrooke, Québec: University of Sherbrooke. 19 p.

The Council on Aging of Ottawa. (2006). *Elder Abuse Training Manual. Instructor's Manual*. Developed for Ottawa Police Service. Ottawa. 224 p.

For more details on the final IPRAS Model adopted by the SPVM, it is possible to consult the General Overview: Description of the Model's Components.

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