

SAFETY PLANNING

FOR OLDER ADULTS
KEEPING SAFE IN UNHEALTHY
RELATIONSHIPS



TOOLKIT FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

2018



Elder Abuse Ontario
Stop Abuse - Restore Respect
Maltraitance des personnes âgées Ontario
Arrêtez les mauvais traitements - Restaurez le respect

Acknowledgements

The Safety Planning Toolkit was produced by Elder Abuse Ontario in partnership with METRAC Action on Violence funded by The Law Foundation of Ontario.



This Toolkit was adapted in partnership with Alzheimer Society of Ontario in October, 2018.



For More Information Contact:



Elder Abuse Ontario
Stop Abuse - Restore Respect
Maltraitance des personnes âgées Ontario
Arrêtez les mauvais traitements - Restaurez le respect

Elder Abuse Ontario
2 Billingham Road, Suite 306
Toronto, ON M9B 6E1

Tel: 416-916-6728
www.elderabuseontario.com

Funded by:



**Safety
Planning for
Older Adults**

**Keeping
Safe in
Unhealthy
Relationships**

Contents of Safety Planning Toolkit



Safety Planning for Older Adults

Keeping Safe in Unhealthy Relationships

1. Overview of Toolkit
2. Safety Planning
 - * What is a safety plan?
 - * Supports in Planning
 - * Understanding Power and Control
3. Domestic Violence and Elder Abuse
 - * Defining Forms of Abuse: Violence Between Intimate Partners, Elder Abuse and Family Violence
4. Statistical Profile
5. Warning Signs of Older Adults Living in Unhealthy Relationships
6. Red Flags of Possible Abuse by Family Member, Spouse or Partner
7. Domestic Violence Risk Factors
8. Legal Information
9. What Happens if Police are Called to Domestic Violence
10. Taking the Journey
 - * Does the Older Adult Want to Stay in the Relationship

Contents of Safety Planning Toolkit



Safety Planning for Older Adults

Keeping Safe in Unhealthy Relationships

11. Older Woman's Journey: Shelter Services and Beyond
12. Considerations for Making a Safety Plan
13. Steps to Support an Older Adult who is Living in an Abusive Relationships
14. Steps to Support an Older Adult who is Thinking of Leaving an Abusive Relationship
15. Supporting an Older Adult who has Left or Ended an Abusive Relationship
16. Emotional Support
 - * How to Keep Emotionally Safe and Healthy
17. My Safety Plan
18. Shelter and Transitional Homes
19. Supports and Services Available to Help Older Adults
20. Helpful Websites
21. References



OVERVIEW OF TOOLKIT

This toolkit was designed for agencies supporting older victims who are vulnerable, at-risk or experiencing abuse.

Whether the individual is an older woman or man, the Safety Planning Toolkit provides important information about family and partner violence. It also provides suggestions and strategies to help protect older adults in situations of risk or danger on how to maintain their safety and security.

The Toolkit uses an approach to answer common questions many older adults ask such as, is my relationship unhealthy? What can I do? Who can help me?

The Toolkit Provides:

- * **Key facts and statistics on abuse and violence in later life.**
- * **Tips on how to recognize the warning signs of unhealthy relationships or abusive partners.**
- * **Action steps for an older adults personal safety including making a personalized safety plan.**
- * **Contact information on programs and services.**

Similar to other forms of family violence and domestic abuse, elder abuse can be very complex. Often older adults remain in an abusive situation because they do not want to leave their partner or family member.

In these circumstances having a safety plan can be important to help keep an older adult or someone they care about safe.

If you believe an older adult has experienced abuse and/or recognize elevated risk factors then you can take action to support them to live safely.

This toolkit provides information only. It is recommended that older adults contact a local agency for support. They can also call Victim Services or the Seniors Safety Line at 1-866-299-1011 for a customized safety plan.

SAFETY PLANNING

What is a Safety Plan?

A safety plan is an outline of actions that an older adult can put in place and follow to increase their safety.

An older adult may be at risk from one or several different types of abuse from a caregiver or family member. A safety plan includes steps and strategies to help keep an older adult safe if they are in an unhealthy relationship. They can use the plan to prepare in advance for the possibility of (further) violence, as well as during and after a crisis situation.

When you are developing a safety plan with an older adult, try to make it practical, realistic and take into consideration their strengths and limitations. Think about how they can stay physically and emotionally safe. This means that the older adult knows what steps to take if a person says or does things that make them feel out of control and very upset.

Supports in Planning

When making a safety plan, reach out to other community agencies for guidance and support such as a shelter, victim services, or home care support services. The safety plan should be tailored to meet the older adult's specific situation.

Community support services working with older adults should ensure they:

- Maintain confidentiality (do not disclose personal information).
- Listen to their story.
- Believe the older adult and not make negative comments or judgments about their situation.
- Provide on-going reassurance that they are not alone.
- Ask what their goals are, what they want to do and why.
- Work together to explore options and ideas.
- Offer information and resources for the older adult and the abuser.

- Be realistic on how the agency can support the older adult in meeting their needs.

Safety planning is not a guarantee of safety. However, it can help older adults to talk, plan, think and prepare themselves to be safe. Safety planning is never final, because it is important to regularly check what their situation is and whether the safety plan is helping. As the situation changes, you should assist in modifying the safety plan with the older adult accordingly. Community support agencies should strive to ensure the plan is customized to reflect the older adult's needs as they change. (*Seniors Rights Victoria- Safety Planning with Older People*).

Understanding Power and Control

An abusive person uses their power to take away another person's control over some or all parts of their life. For example, an abusive partner or family member may not let the older adult make their own decisions about where they go, who they see, or how they spend their money. If an older adult needs help to do something, and their caregiver, partner, power of attorney or substitute decision maker refuses without a good reason, it may be a way of controlling and not respecting the older adult's right to make choices for themselves.

Developing a safety plan can help an older adult feel more in control. It can be an important step to help an older adult to understand if a person is controlling and abusing them and how they can get help if needed.

A safety plan can also help older adults feel more confident, with less fear and stress, because it helps them find ways to feel safer and more in control of their life. By making a plan, the older adult asserts their right to be treated with respect and dignity.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ELDER ABUSE



Forms of Abuse

Violence between intimate partners

Any form of physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse, including financial control, harassment and stalking. It occurs between opposite or same-sex intimate partners.

Abusers:

Current or former partner or spouse, including intimate companion.

Elder Abuse

One or many actions or lack of appropriate action, that harms an older person. It occurs in any relationship where one person is trusted or has authority to care for the older person. (WHO, 2002)

Abusers:

Partner, spouse, adult children, niece, nephew, grandchildren, other family members, non-family members such as paid caregivers, professionals.

Family Violence

Family violence is any form of abuse that a child or adult experiences from any other family member. It is an abuse of power by one person to hurt and control someone who trusts and depends on them. It also includes neglect, which means the family member who is supposed to provide care does not look after a person's living needs, like food, health, cleaning, proper clothing and housing.

Abusers:

Spouse or intimate partner, sister, brother, child, niece, nephew or other family member.

Statistical Profile



Although the older population has the lowest rates (3%) of domestic violence when compared to younger groups, this is still a societal problem, with close to 3000 individuals over the age of 55 being victims of police-reported spousal violence in Canada in 2013. It's also important to note that, similar to younger age groups, a large number of older victims do not report the violence they experience.

In 2013, the rate of family-related violence among seniors aged 65 to 74 was 1.5 times higher than the rate for seniors aged 75 to 84 and double that reported for seniors 85 and older.

Similar to statistics of violence between younger Canadian partners, older women are affected more than older men. The rate of "family violence" against senior women in Canada was 62.7 women per 100,000, significantly higher than the rate for senior men at 49.7 per 100,000.

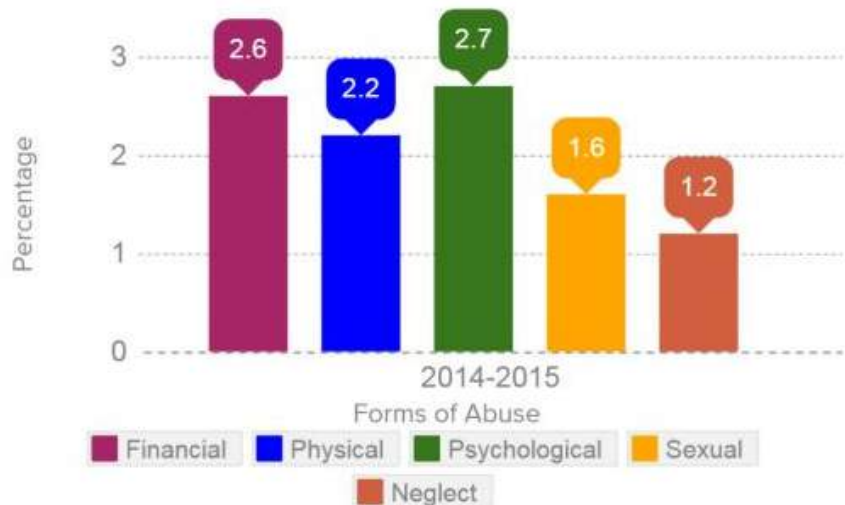
Family Violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2013. Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics

A recent study of elder abuse in Canada, *Into the Light : National Survey on the Mistreatment of Older Canadians (2015)* found the prevalence of mistreatment was 8.2% which represents 766,247 Canadians.

2 in 10 Canadian men are victims of abuse by family members.



4 in 10 Canadian women are victims of abuse by family members.



Prevalance of Elder Abuse in Canaada

Source : National Initiative For the Care of the Elderly, 2016 Canadian National Survey on the Mistreatment of Older Adults in Canada.

Perpetrators

The National Survey also found that the most common perpetrators for Psychological, Neglect and Physical Abuse was by a spouse/ex-spouse followed by a child or grandchild . In cases of sexual abuse older adults frequently reported person to sexually abuse was a friend followed by a spouse/ex-spouse.



WARNING SIGNS AN OLDER ADULT IS LIVING IN AN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

“I thought this was something that happens to younger adults, not someone like me in their 70’s – not a grandmother”

“My daughter removed my phone, refuses to allow me to see my friends or family members alone and always follows me around wherever I go – she is so controlling”

Warning Signs – Abusive Behaviour



Unique factors or circumstances that may prevent accessing help:

- Controlling behaviour
- Speaking for a family member, at medical visits for example, answering questions and not letting the older adult talk
- Making all the decisions without asking
- Preventing visits with family and friends
- Threatening to leave, neglect or hurt
- Often being short-tempered or angry with the older adult
- Not respecting privacy
- Putting locks in the house, such as bedroom doors, to keep the older adult in or out
- Reading or withholding mail
- Controlling finances without permission or legal authority
- Blaming the older adult
- Treating the older adult like a child
- Belittling and name calling
- Leaving a dependent person alone for long periods of time

- Older adult may feel dependent on the person who is the abuser, so they feel there are no other options.
- Older adult is unable to talk about their unhappy feelings with the abuser, or they don't speak in the same language as the person causing harm.
- Older adult does not feel they can tell anyone because they feel ashamed or embarrassed that someone they loved, such as a spouse or family member, has harmed them.
- Older adult does not know about any support services that can help, and is unaware of their options.

See: It's Not Right-It's Not Right! Neighbours, Friends and Families for Older Adults



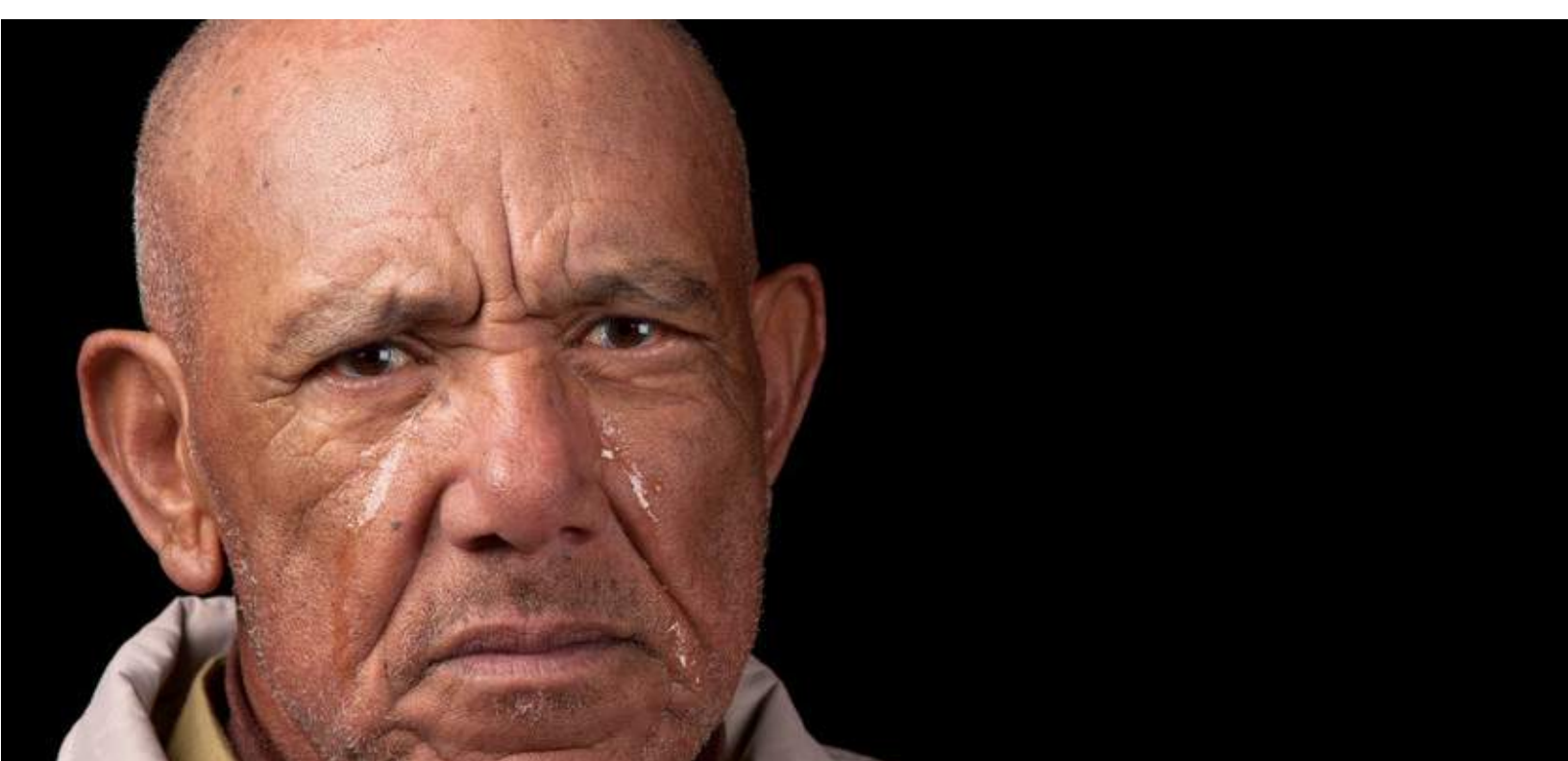
RED FLAGS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE BY FAMILY MEMBER, SPOUSE/PARTNER

"You are not alone, abuse can happen to anyone at any age"

"All threats should be taken seriously, no matter how long ago they were made or if you think they are irrelevant. Help is available!"

"It's never too late for a change in your life, everyone has the right to live free from abuse and treated with respect"

- Forces the older adult to sign over the legal control of their property or health when they are capable of looking after these things themselves; forced to change their will, or to sign over the ownership of their home, or add them to their bank / credit card accounts.
- The substitute decision maker or power of attorney for property and/or personal care is not acting in older adult's best interest, has not paid their bills or provided enough money for food and necessary items.
- Demeans older adult verbally or with gestures and/or calls names.
- Refuses older adult to have medication, food, water or personal care items.
- Limits use of assistive devices (walker, cane, glasses, hearing aids).
- Hits, pushes, slaps, kicks, burns, pinches and/or restrains or locks older adult in a room.
- Makes older adult fearful or nervous when they are present.
- Takes money, property or belongings without agreement or consent, lives with them and refuses to pay their share of the rent/ mortgage.
- Puts limits on their using the phone or having contact with other people.
- Forces older adult to take part in sexual activity, makes unwanted comments of a sexual nature, shows unwanted images of a sexual nature or forces you to watch others engage in sexual activities
- Yells, threatens, and makes fun of them.



Domestic Violence Risk Factors

It is important to recognize risk factors that may put an older adult at higher risk of harm and abuse. These risk factors may be related to a history of domestic violence, or may have started recently.

Risk factors which can indicate if a situation of *domestic violence is getting worse and could lead to serious harm or death.*

(Domestic Violence Lethality Factors)

- o A history of domestic violence
- o Actual or pending separation
- o Obsessive behaviours by abuser
- o Abuser is depressed
- o Level of violence is increasing
- o Prior threats / suicide attempts by abuser
- o Threat to kill
- o Prior attempts to isolate abused person
- o Abused person is uneasy or afraid (intuitive sense of fear)
- o Abuser is unemployed

Risk factors when *no prior history* of Domestic Violence.

- o Abuser has mental health issues – depression
- o Social isolation
- o Deteriorating health and loss of mobility,
- o Chronic cognitive and physical illnesses
- o Older adults has disabilities and is dependent on other family/care providers
- o Poverty
- o Fear of being a burden, being separated, been sent to a 'home' increases vulnerability
- o Lack of coordinated approach and services to support families, increases vulnerability
- o Lack of respite for caregivers in situations of intensive care



LEGAL INFORMATION ABOUT CALLING POLICE

Some forms of abuse are against the law. For example, hitting, slapping or other intentional forceful contact with an older adult's body is assault.

Attempting or threatening to assault someone is also a crime. If the police think an assault probably happened, they can arrest and charge a person with assault.

Sexual assault is when someone touches or threatens to touch another person in a sexual way directly or with an object when the other person does not agree or give consent or is incapable of giving consent.

A person can also be charged for sexually assaulting an older adult even if they are married spouses, common law partners or living together.

If an older adult is assaulted or afraid of being assaulted, they can call the police at 911. Anyone who thinks an assault has happened or may happen can also call the police. It may be helpful to talk to family members and a service provider to develop a safety plan for the survivor and accused older adults, if police lay charges.

It is important to know that in Ontario, if the police believe that a person has been assaulted or sexually assaulted by their current or former spouse/intimate partner, police must lay a criminal charge, even if the person who was assaulted does not want them to. This will mean that the person who is charged will be removed from the home, if they live with the assaulted person. In most cases after a person is charged with assault there cannot be any contact between the two parties involved in the assault until the police and possibly the court have dealt with the case.

It is important to inform older adults that they can talk to a senior's support worker, Victim Services, a shelter worker, or other community service if they have been assaulted or the police have laid charges.

Also provide older women with information about the free, 24-hour Assaulted Women's Helpline at: 1-866-863-0511 (TTY 1-866-863-7868), and inform them that they can ask for an interpreter for the language that best meets their communication needs.



WHAT HAPPENS IF THE POLICE ARE CALLED

Investigation

Officers investigating a domestic violence occurrence shall conduct a thorough investigation with the purpose of determining if reasonable grounds exist for the laying of criminal charges and/or other charges.

The investigation of domestic violence occurrences shall include, but not be limited to:

- (a) the interviewing of all parties separately
- (b) the recording of statements including, but not limited to:
 - (i) victims;
 - (ii) neighbours;
 - (iii) children; and
 - (iv) accused persons;
- (c) the preservation of the crime scene, as necessary;
- (d) the collection of evidence

If Charges are Laid Police will:

- Conduct interviews and obtain statements from accused persons, victims and witnesses
- Where applicable, score the Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment (O.D.A.R.A.)
- Provide support that may be necessary to ensure the safety of the victim(s), such as a Home Safety Plan
- Consider the risk implications for victim(s) as per the O.D.A.R.A. score
- Ensure that the victim(s) are kept informed of the status of the case as it progresses through court.
- If necessary Police will attend for a Keep the Peace



Taking the Journey

“The choices and options ahead will take you on a new path in life, on a journey leading to renewed safety and well-being”

Does the older adult want to stay in the relationship?

Recognizing abuse and deciding whether the older adult wants to stay in the relationship with their partner or family member who is abusive is an important first step. It will also affect the details in their safety plan and what action steps to include to increase their safety.

- ❖ Do you want to stay with the person who is causing harm?
- ❖ Are you in the process of leaving or going back to the other person?
- ❖ Have you already ended the relationship?

“At my age 68, I was always worried about how I was going to be able to start over if I left, but I’m doing very well, I have freedom to do what I want and make my own decisions now. I know now that is possible to make changes, even at my age.”

These can be difficult questions to ask, but it's important for preparing the safety plan. Remember, no one has control over another person's actions or how they treat people, including violent behaviours, towards the older adult or others. Older adults however, do have control over how they want to respond to the situation to stay safe. They can decide if and when they want to tell others that they have been harmed, or that they may still be at risk. This is a very personal experience, only they can determine which path to take and when they want to take the journey.

Some older adults may choose to continue to live in an unhealthy relationship while others may act immediately and leave. Whatever steps they take, keep in mind there are supports to help them along the way, including friends, family, neighbours, and community agencies. Taking this journey can happen if an older adult knows what is happening and how agencies can support them.



AN OLDER WOMAN'S JOURNEY SHELTER SERVICES & BEYOND



Adapted with permission from Haldimand & Norfolk Women's Services



Considerations for Making a Safety Plan

There are some specific issues and questions that are important to talk about when you are working with an older adult to develop a safety plan. These discussions can help identify any barriers that may limit the effectiveness of their safety plan. Discussing these issues may also reveal additional information or supports the older adult needs to maintain their independence and safety

Questions about Mental Health and Cognitive Ability to Make Decisions to Manage Personal Care and Property

- Has anyone told you that you are incapable of making decisions? If so, have you been assessed by a physician or capacity assessor?
- Do you have a Substitute Decision Maker or legal guardian?
- Have you prepared a Power of Attorney (POA) for Property and/or Power of Attorney for Personal Care?
- Do you have access to the documents?
- When was the last time you reviewed and/or updated your POA?

If the person who has Power of Attorney is the abuser, discuss options of revoking the POA and make new legal documents if the older adult is capable of making this decision.

Questions about Physical Health and Mobility

- If you have a physical disability, are there physical barriers in your environment that would prevent a safety exit or access to safety?
- Do you require any personal support to manage activities of daily living, such as bathing, making meals, dressing?

Documentation and Personal Information

- Do you have papers about your legal status in Canada, including sponsorship, permanent residence (PR), or citizenship? (e.g. PR card, Birth Certificate, Passport)
- Do you have access to your personal records such as bank statements Birth Certificate?
- Do you have access to a mobile phone or vehicle?

Steps to Support an Older Adult who is Living in an Abusive Relationship

The following are concrete strategies to discuss with the older adult, to promote their safety.

PREVENTION

- Ask your neighbours, friends and family to call the police if they hear sounds of abuse.
- Park your car by backing it into the driveway and keep it fueled.
- Hide your keys, cell phone and some money near your escape route.
- Create a list of safe places you can go to (family, friends, shelter).

NOTIFICATION

- Have a list of phone numbers to call for help.
- Call the police if it is an emergency (911).

SUPPORT

- Contact your local shelter or police, they may be able to provide you with a panic button/cell phone.
- Make a Safety Plan (visit women's shelter).
- Find out about resources in your community (call 211)

PROTECTION

- Don't go to a room where there is access to potential weapons (e.g. kitchen, workshop, bathroom).
- Got to a room where a door can be locked from inside, with a working phone available.
- If an argument is developing, move to a space where you can get outside easily.
- If you are being hurt, protect your face with your arms around each side of your head, with your fingers locked together.



Steps to Support an Older Adult who is Thinking About Leaving an Abusive Relationship

The following are concrete strategies to discuss with the older adult in developing a safety plan, to promote their safety and well-being.

PREVENTION

- Do not tell your partner you are leaving.
- Consider contacting the police or a local women's shelter. Let the staff know that you intend to leave an abusive situation and ask for support in safety planning.

PROTECTION

- Leave quickly.
- Put together pictures, jewelry and objects of sentimental value.
- Arrange with someone to care for your pets temporarily, until you get settled. A shelter may help with this.
- Remember to clear your phone of the last number you called.
- Have a back-up plan if your partner finds out where you are going.
- Gather important documents: identification, bank cards, financial papers related to family assets, last Income Tax Return, keys, medication, doctor information, pictures of the abuser, passports, health cards, personal address/telephone book, cell phone, and legal documents (e.g. immigration papers, house deed/lease, restraining orders/peace bonds).
- If you can't keep these things stored in your home for fear your partner will find them, consider making copies and leave them with someone you trust. Your local women's shelter will also keep them for you.



Steps to Support an Older Adult who is Thinking About Leaving an Abusive Relationship

The following are concrete strategies to discuss with the older adult in developing a safety plan, to promote their safety and well-being.

NOTIFICATION

- If you are injured, go to a doctor or an emergency room and report what happened to you. Ask them to document your visit.
- Request a police escort or ask a friend, neighbour or family member to accompany you when you leave.
- Ask for an officer who specializes in domestic violence cases/elder abuse (information shared with the police may result in charges being laid against the abuser).
- Keep any evidence of physical abuse (such as photos).
- Keep a journal of all violent incidents, noting dates, events, threats and any witnesses.

SUPPORT

- Contact your local women's shelter. It may be a safer temporary spot than going to a place your partner knows.
- Consult a lawyer.



Supporting an Older Adult who has **Left and Ended** an **Abusive Relationship?**

It is important to know that when an intimate relationship is ending, there is a greater risk of violence.

Here are some safety suggestions to share in developing a safety plan with an older person after she or her partner has left the relationship and she is NOT living with her abuser.

PREVENTION

Housing:

- Go to a shelter.
- Attempt to find housing (even if temporary) that has adequate security: in a location that cannot be easily accessed from the street, doors with locks, locked front entranceway, etc.
- Consider living with someone else or in a shelter for a short time.
- If you are staying in your home, talk to a family lawyer. You may be able to change the locks on doors and/or install security measures such as additional locks, window bars, pole to wedge against doors, etc. Security can be increased by blocking sliding windows and placing barriers under door handles.
- Do not put your name in your apartment building directory.

In Your Community

- If you live in the same neighbourhood as your abuser, or associate with the same group of people, tell the people who you trust that you have left/ended the relationship due to safety concerns. Tell them what you want them to do if they see your abuser approach you. If you feel unsafe walking alone, ask a neighbour, friend or family member, police or security guard to accompany you depending on the situation
- Inform your neighbours that your abuser no longer lives with you and ask them to call the police if they see them near you or your house.
- Have secret code words with trusted family, neighbours or friends in case you need to contact them when your safety is at risk.
- Hide clothing and your Emergency Escape Plan items at a neighbour's house.

Supporting an Older Adult who has Left and Ended an Abusive Relationship



It is important to know that when an intimate relationship is ending, there is a greater risk of violence.

Here are some safety suggestions to share in developing a safety plan with an older person after she or her partner has left the relationship and she is NOT living with her abuser.

PREVENTION

Routines and Schedules

- Consider changing your doctor, dentist and other professional services you would normally use. Or tell them about your concerns, and ask for a safety plan when you go to appointments. Change your appointment times, or request that your services be transferred to another office.
- Think about changing schedules and routes to avoid being found. Think about places and patterns that your abuser will know about and try to change them. For example, consider using a different grocery store or asking friends to meet you in different places.
- Try a different restaurant or shopping mall, and go at hours that are different, if your abuser knows your routine.
- Use Internet banking or use a different bank or branch, and change the day or time of errands, if you had a regular schedule.
- Inform any service providers that you have left a violent relationship and provide a description of your abuser.
- Don't be ashamed to ask for help or support. Your abuser may be less likely to intimidate, threaten or abuse you when others are around.
- Refuse to be alone with your abuser.



Supporting an Older Adult who has **Left and Ended** an Abusive Relationship

NOTIFICATION

If you are afraid your abuser might hurt you and you want the court to order them to stay away from you:

- i) if your abuser is your spouse or partner you live with, or used to be your spouse or partner you lived with, talk to a lawyer about what a Restraining Order is and what it can do.
- ii) if your abuser is not someone you married or a partner you have lived with, then ask the police about what a Peace Bond is and how to get one.

- Consult a lawyer or legal aid clinic about actions to protect yourself. Let your lawyer know if there are any Criminal Court proceedings.
- Consider applying for a restraining order or peace bond that may help keep your partner away from you. Keep it with you at all times, as part of a full safety plan.
- Provide police with a copy of any legal orders you have.
- Keep a copy of any protection orders (Restraining Order or Peace Bond) with you at all times. If you call the police to enforce it, they will ask to see a copy.
- Visit the closest police station and ask to speak to an officer who specializes in domestic violence/elder abuse cases.



Supporting an Older Adult who has **Left and Ended** an Abusive Relationship

PROTECTION

- Obtain an unlisted telephone number, get caller ID and block your number when calling out.
 - Access personal monitoring devices (i.e LifeLine) or cell phone.
 - Keep emergency numbers on hand.
 - Do not return to your home unless accompanied by someone who can help keep you safe, such as a trusted family member, or the police.
-
- Consider telling your supervisor about your situation if you are working. If you are afraid your partner may hurt you at work and you tell your supervisor, your employer has a legal duty to take all reasonable steps to help keep you safe.
 - Never confront the abuser.
 - Carry a photo of the abuser.

How Can I Plan To Stay Safe When I Think My Situation Is Getting More Dangerous?

! If I have an argument with the abusive person, I should try to remain calm and get to a room or area that has access to an exit.

! I should try to avoid bathrooms, kitchens or anywhere where objects can be used as a weapon.

! If police come and I know there are weapons in the home, I should tell the police including the kinds of weapons and how many are in the home.



Supporting an Older Adult who has Left and Ended an Abusive Relationship

SUPPORT

- Contact victim services, mental health services, sexual assault centres for support and/or counselling.
- Learn about peer support programs to help talk about your feelings and work through possible solutions.
- Join social community groups/clubs to be active and engaged in the community.

If DRUG OR ALCOHOL use occurs when I am afraid or being abused, I can increase my safety by taking preventative actions. I will try to remember that:

- It is easier to keep safe when I am not using substances.
- Alcohol and drug use impairs my judgement and makes it harder for me to choose safe options and access services.
- It can be hard for me to ask for help when I am using drugs or drinking.

If you get assistance from community agencies to help support your mental health or substance use issues, you should consider:

- Keeping phone numbers of supportive professionals
- Writing down the names and phone numbers of your advocate/supports
- Listing your medications, doses, and when you take each medication
- Making sure this personal information is stored with other important documents

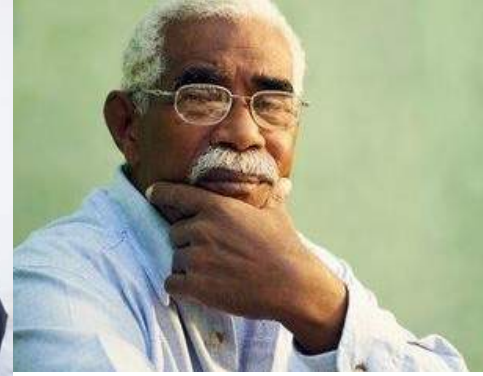
Financial Information:

Even if you have never worked, you can take one-half of the funds in a joint chequing or savings account with your spouse or partner more If you don't take any money from the accounts, he/she can take all money and/or close the account and you may not get your share until the court rules on it, if ever.

If you take money out of a joint account, you should talk to a family lawyer right away. It is a good idea to talk to a family lawyer if you are ending a relationship, to find out and protect your rights to any family property, including your family home, a second property such as a cottage or condominium or time share, bank accounts, pensions and other things.

Adapted from:

Safety Plan for Victims of Violence-Victim Services of Bruce Grey and Owen Sound
Safety Planning for Women who are Abused Neighbours, Friends and Families



Emotional Support

These are positive phrases that you can repeat to yourself that describe how you want to be to feel safe and happy. Place them where they are visible to you every day.

- I feel the love of those who are not physically around me.
- I love and approve of myself.
- You can make a list of supportive friends or family and you can call them if you are feeling down or need support.
- I forgive myself for mistakes I've made.
- I am more than "good enough". I matter and what I have to offer this world also matters. I can be happy, even when I am alone. Fill this day with hope and face it with joy.
- I adopt the mindset to praise myself.





Emotional Support

- You can make a list of supportive friends or family and you can call them if you are feeling down or need support.
- You can join a cultural or faith-based group, for friends and support.
- You can work on reducing your need for help from the abuser, for example by arranging home care services.
- You can join a community visitor or telephone chat program. Consider calling your local victim services, the senior safety line or Elder Abuse Network for more information.
- Try to express your needs and wants with others in a firm and deliberate way.
- Try to keep and maintain positive thoughts about yourself.
- Identify individuals who you can talk freely, honestly and openly with and who can provide the support you need in a thoughtful and respectful way.
- Make learning about yourself and your relationship important to you.
- Attend a support group.



Emotional Support

How Do I Keep Myself Emotional Safe and Healthy?

Self-esteem, that is feeling good about myself, and thinking I deserve to feel safe and treated with respect, is one of the most important factors to maintaining good mental health. It is about how we value our place in the community and our contributions to society and our relationships.

Often low self-esteem can negatively affect our lives. It can affect our body and how we feel. It can also affect our relationships with others in our lives.

Signs of low self-esteem are:

- Trouble sleeping, or feeling very tired
- Feeling dizzy or sweaty when you meet others
- More aware of your body's responses, such as blushing
- Overeating or not having an appetite a lot of the time
- Always try hard to be perfect
- Having difficulty making decisions and holding back from speaking out or sharing your opinion

My Safety Plan

The following steps are my plan to start protecting myself in case of further violence. I do not have control over the other person's violence. I do have a choice about how I respond and get to safety. I will decide for myself if and when I tell others that I have been harmed, or am if I am still at risk. Friends, family and other helpers can help protect me, if they know what is happening and what to do.

I will leave money, a change of clothes, important papers, and an extra set of keys with: (enter name and phone number): _____

If I sense danger, I will use the following "code word" or signal (flashing porch light, knocking on wall of apartment) to tell my family, helpers or friends to call the police: _____

I will call any of the following people for help if I sense I am in danger (enter names and phone numbers below):

- ◆ Police: 911 or _____
- ◆ Friend: _____
- ◆ Relative: _____
- ◆ Neighbour: _____
- ◆ Co-worker: _____
- ◆ Therapist/Counsellor: _____
- ◆ Shelter: _____
- ◆ Other: _____

My Safety Plan

* I will keep my cell phone, phone calling card or coins for pay phones with me at all times.

* I realize that if I use my cell phone, and the bill goes to my home, it will show the phone numbers I called after I left. To keep my calls confidential, I may purchase and use a telephone calling card instead of my cell phone.

* I will keep my purse or wallet, emergency cash and medications hidden in this safe place so that I can leave quickly.

When I sense a fight coming on, I will avoid areas such as the kitchen or garage where weapons are within reach. I will try to move to the following place: _____

If I sense danger, I will grab the travel bag I prepared, if it is safe enough to do so. I will leave at once, and go to (for example: a friend, neighbor or the lobby of the apartment building): _____

I will use my judgment and intuition. If the situation is very serious, I can give the abuser what she or he wants. I have to protect myself until I am out of danger.

If I decide to leave, I have a plan. I will practice getting out safely. If possible, I will move to a room with an exit. I can use the following doors, windows, elevators, stairwells or fire escapes to get out quickly and safely: _____

My Safety Plan

If I have a disability, and my abuser is also my caregiver, I will set up an emergency care plan. I will contact the following people to plan for an emergency care provider or a shelter that can accommodate my disability.

Emergency Care Provider:

Accessible Shelter: _____

If I have pets and have to leave quickly, I can leave my pet(s) at this place, at least for the short term (name, phone number):

I feel safe telling these people about my situation: _____

In an emergency, I will ask trusted friends/family members to call 911 or police at the following number: _____

This person (name, phone number) has agreed to help me review this plan:

I will sit down and review this plan every [week/month/year] in order to plan the safest way to leave.



Safety Planning for Older Adults with Cognitive Impairment

WHAT IS DEMENTIA?

Dementia is an overall term for a set of symptoms that are caused by disorders affecting the brain. Symptoms may include memory loss, and difficulties with thinking, problem-solving or language, severe enough to reduce a person's ability to perform everyday activities. A person with dementia may also experience changes in mood or behaviour.

Dementia is not a specific disease. Many diseases can cause dementia, including Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia (due to strokes), Lewy Body disease, head trauma, fronto-temporal dementia, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, Parkinson's disease, and Huntington's disease. These conditions can have similar and overlapping symptoms.

To learn more visit: <http://alzheimer.ca/en/on/About-dementia/What-is-dementia>

DEMENTIA IN CANADA



564,000

Canadians living with Dementia.

1 IN 5



Canadians have experience caring for someone living with some form of Dementia.



25,000

The number of new cases of dementia diagnosed every year.

AFFECTED

1.1 M

The number of Canadians affected directly or indirectly by the disease.



FUTURE IMPACT

937,000

The number of Canadians who will be living with the disease in 15 years.



65%

Of those diagnosed with dementia over the age of 65 are women.



10 WARNING SIGNS



Whether you're experiencing possible symptoms or concerned for someone you care about, the Alzheimer Society of Ontario has developed the following list of signs to look for:

1. Memory loss affecting day-to-day abilities – forgetting things often or struggling to retain new information.
2. Difficulty performing familiar tasks – forgetting how to do something you've been doing your whole life, such as preparing a meal or getting dressed.
3. Problems with language – forgetting words or substituting words that don't fit the context.
4. Disorientation in time and space – not knowing what day of the week it is or getting lost in a familiar place.
5. Impaired judgment – not recognizing a medical problem that needs attention or wearing light clothing on a cold day.
6. Problems with abstract thinking – not understanding what numbers signify on a calculator, for example, or how they're used.
7. Misplacing things – putting things in strange places, like an iron in the freezer or a wristwatch in the sugar bowl.
8. Changes in mood and behaviour – exhibiting severe mood swings from being easy-going to quick-tempered.
9. Changes in personality – behaving out of character such as feeling paranoid or threatened.
10. Loss of initiative – losing interest in friends, family and favourite activities.

(Adapted from: O'Connor, D. & Donnelly, M. (2009)



Older Adults with Dementia - Risk for Abuse

"People with dementia are more vulnerable to situations of abuse and neglect. On the one hand, increasing dependency on others and deteriorating social networks leave the person more isolated, creating a context that is ripe for becoming abusive. Simultaneously, cognitive difficulties interfere with the ability to take action—for example the person may have difficulty organizing to leave or seek support" (O'Connor, D. & Donnelly, M. (2009, p. 107).

Risk Factors

Chronic disease and a progressive decline in activities of daily living and cognitive function heighten the risk of older adult abuse. Diminishing cognitive function has a significant impact since it may lead to disruptive behaviour on the part of the care receiver (Cooper, C., Selwood, A. & Livingston, G., 2009).

Research has also shown that caregivers report not only their fears of becoming violence with the older adult they are caring for, but also admit to being verbally, physically abusive and neglectful (NCEA, 2017). It is important to plan and support with older adults who are living with dementia to decrease their vulnerability to abusive situations.

Barriers to Reporting/Disclosing Abuse

Older adults who experience abuse, especially those who have a form of dementia, encounter many barriers to disclosure (Donovan, K. & Regehr, C.2010).

- Diminished capacity to comprehend.
- Ignorance of the law.
- Cultural differences.
- Shame and fear when the perpetrator is a family caregiver.
- Fear of placement in a care facility.
- A socio-culture norm that discourages involvement of outsiders in family matters.
- Belief that there is little that police or social agencies can do to help.



Communication Tips with Older Adults with Cognitive Impairments

- Introduce yourself – don't make the assumption that they will be able to recall your name if they are a long time client/customer
- Speak clearly and slowly – allow the person additional time to process what you are saying. It can take a person living with dementia 7 times longer to process information
- Use short, simple sentences – avoid asking open-ended questions. Instead try to provide the person with choices (e.g. would you like the _____ or the _____?)
- Be aware of your non-verbal messages: facial expressions, tone of voice, gestures, eye contact
- Be patient, reduce distractions, listen – give the person your undivided attention, show respect
- Provide visual cues/landmarks if you are giving directions. Label items such as the emergency bag, have a clear written plan to aid with memory.
- If you are on the phone with a person with dementia you can use many of the same strategies as listed above: ask people to look for items you need them to reference, ensure you are speaking slowly and clearly, take notes so you can put the clues together, ask them to repeat, and take their time as needed



Shelters and Transitional Homes

WHAT IS AN EMERGENCY SHELTER/ TRANSITION HOUSE?

It is a safe and welcoming home that accommodates women and their children when they are fleeing violence. Shelter addresses are kept confidential so that women (and children) cannot be found. They can generally stay for up to 30 days and sometimes longer and there are no charges to stay there.

Shelters provide critical support services that will help women make their transition to a life free of abuse. Shelter workers liaise with a number of providers in the community to help women and their children and ensure that they have counseling support and health care.

Staff and volunteers at shelters are there to listen, to offer emotional support, information and referrals to other services a woman may need such as legal, financial, medical and housing. In many homes, staff will help with transportation to appointments. The women residents generally share household tasks and cooking.

WHAT IS SECOND-STAGE HOUSING?

Second-stage houses provide short-term, safe, affordable, supportive and independent housing and some services similar to those provided in shelters/transition houses. Women and their children can usually stay at a Second Stage House for 6 months to a year in furnished units. Rent is geared to your income and there are generally no costs for the programs.



Shelters and Transitional Homes

Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses

There are 96 emergency violence against women shelters that offer a range of supports, services and advocacy for women and their children fleeing violence:

- * 24 Hour Support and Crisis Lines
- * Safe Emergency Shelter
- * Counselling Programs
- * Referrals to Community Resources
- * Transitional and Second Stage Housing Programs
- * Legal Support and Advocacy with Family, Criminal Law and Immigration Law
- * Children and Youth Programs
- * Violence Prevention Programs
- * Women's Community Outreach Support

Shelter Safe

An on-line map is available at sheltersafe.ca to help women find a shelters located in communities across Ontario. Agencies can assist older adults by searching locations that older adult would like to move to temporarily to stay safe.

For more information go to: <http://www.sheltersafe.ca/find-help/>

(Adapted from www.oaith.ca)



SUPPORT AND SERVICES AVAILABLE TO HELP OLDER ADULTS

Victim Services:

Assaulted Women's Helpline..... 1-866-863-0511
TTY Mobile: 1-866-863-7868
(Fido, Rogers, Bell, Telus) #SAFE (#7233)

Fem'aide1-877-336-2433
TTY: 1-866-860-7082

Seniors Safety Line.....1-866-299-1011

Victim Witness Assistance Program

Victim Support Line..... 1-888-579-2888

Health Care and Support Services:

Alzheimer Society of Ontario..... 1-800-879-4226
Community Care Access Centre..... 310-2222
Canadian Hearing Society.....1-877-347-3427
Elder Abuse Ontario..... 416-916-6728
Talk4Healing..... 1-855-554-4325
Rainbow Health Ontario..... 1-416-324-4100
Talk4Healing..... 1-855-554-4325

SUPPORT AND SERVICES AVAILABLE TO HELP OLDER ADULTS

Law Enforcement and Government Agencies:

Senior Crime Stoppers..... 1-800-222-TIPS (8477)
Ontario Provincial Police..... 1-888-310-1122

Mandatory Reporting of Abuse of Older Persons in Care:

Long-Term Care ACTION Line..... 1-866-434-0144
Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority..... 1-855-275-7472

Capacity and Guardianship Issues:

Capacity Assessment Office..... 1-866-521-1033
TTY: 416-314-2687
Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee..... 1-800-366-0335

Advocacy & Legal Advice:

Advocacy Centre for the Elderly (ACE)..... 1-855-598-2656
Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic..... 1-416-323-9149
(for women affected by violence in GTA region)
Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario..... 1-866-598-0322
Law Society Referral Service..... 1-855-947-5255
Justice Net..... 1-866-919-3219
(reduced fees for low income people who do not qualify for Legal Aid)
Legal Aid Ontario..... 1-800-668-8258
Ontario Ombudsman..... 1-800-263-1830
Ontario Human Rights Commission..... 1-800-387-9080

24 Hour Support or Crisis Lines:

Assaulted Women's Help Line..... 1-866-863-0511
Mental Health Helpline1-866-531-2600
Ontario Network of Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Centres
..... 1-416-323-7327
Support for Male Survivors..... 1-866-887-0015



HELPFUL WEBSITES

Advocacy Centre for the Elderly

www.advocacycentreelderly.org

Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic

www.schliferclinic.com

Community Legal Education Ontario

www.cleo.on.ca

www.yourlegalrights.ca

Elder Abuse Ontario

www.elderabuseontario.com

Family Law Education for Women (FLEW)

www.onefamilylaw.ca

Family Legal Information Centres (FLICs)

FLICs offer free assistance and information for clients who are either new to the court system or who don't have a lawyer. Help with issues related to separation and divorce and other family law matters.

www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/family/infoctr.php

Francophone Legal Advice Lines

French-speaking clients can get free, confidential advice and referrals by telephone for many of the legal issues covered by community legal clinics. Four advice lines are available in:

Northern Ontario... 1-877-687-2847 Southwestern Ontario... 1-855-650-9716

Eastern Ontario... 1-877-500-4508 Greater Toronto Area... 1-877-966-7345

www.legalaid.on.ca/en/contact/flapp.asp

It's Not Right- Neighbours, Friends and Families

Ontario is changing the conversation to stop abuse of older adults. In January 2017, the Ministry of Seniors Affairs, Elder Abuse Ontario and Western University launched a provincial initiative to educate Ontarians as bystanders to recognize warning signs and learn how to respond to elder abuse.

www.itsnotright.ca



HELPFUL WEBSITES

JusticeNet

The program includes a publicly available online directory of participating professionals, as well as a telephone-based service.

www.justicenet.ca

Law Society Referral Service

www.lsuc.on.ca/lrs/

Local Community Legal Clinics

www.legalaid.on.ca/en/contact/contact.asp?type=cl

METRAC

METRAC works with individuals, communities and institutions to change ideas, actions and policies with the goal of ending violence against women and youth.

METRAC's Community Justice Program provides accessible, multi-language legal information and training about laws important for women affected by violence.

www.metrac.org

Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses

www.oaith.ca

Ontario Network of Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Centres

Comprised of 35 hospital-based centres that provide 24/7 emergency care to women, children and men who have been sexually assaulted or who are victims or survivors of domestic violence (intimate partner) abuse. Services include: emergency medical and nursing care, crisis intervention, collection of forensic evidence, medical follow-up and counselling and referral to community resources.

www.satcontario.com

Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres

www.sexualassaultsupport.ca/

Ontario Women's Justice Network

www.owjn.org

Support Services for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse

www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/ovss/male_support_services/

References

Allan, N. & Dawe, P. (2015). **Respect Aging: Preventing Violence Against Older Persons Train-the-Trainer**. Violence Prevention Initiative. Violence Prevention Initiative, Women's Policy Office Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Alzheimer Society of Canada (2016). **Prevalence and Monetary Costs of Dementia in Canada**. Table 2c. Toronto, ON

Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (2016). **Family Violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2014**. Minister responsible for Statistics Canada.

Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children (CREVAWC) (2012). **It's Not Right Neighbours, Friends and Families of Older Adults..** London, Ontario.

Donovan, K. & Regehr, C. (2010). **Elder abuse: Clinical, ethical, and legal considerations in social work practice**. Clinical Social Work Journal, 38: 174-182.

Edwards, P. (2011). **Elder Abuse in Canada – A Gender Based Analysis**. Division of Aging and Seniors, Public Health Agency of Canada.

France, D. (2006). **And Then He Hit Me**. AARP The Magazine.

Harrigan, M.L. (2010). **Alzheimer Society of Canada-Older Adult Abuse and Dementia: A literature Review**.

Hightower, J. (2004). **Age, Gender and Violence: Abuse Against Older Women**. Geriatric & Aging, 60- 63. v7 (3).

National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly (2016). **Into the Light: National Survey on the Mistreatment of Older Canadians (2015)**. Toronto, Ontario.
<https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/3229238/Canada-Report-June-7-2016-Pre-Study-1-1.pdf>

National Centre on Elder Abuse. Dementia and Elder Abuse (2011). **How at Risk for Abuse Are People with Dementia?** Research Brief. www.ncea.acl.gov/resources/docs/Risk-Abuse-Dementia-2011.pdf

Neighbours, Friends and Families (2006). **Safety Planning for Women who are Abused**. www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca/how-to-help/safety-planning.

References

O'Connor, D. & Donnelly, M. (2009, p. 107). **Confronting the challenges of assessing capacity: Dementia in the context of abuse.** In D. O'Connor & B. Purves. (Eds.). *Decision-making, personhood and dementia: Exploring the interface* (pp. 106-118). London, UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario (2013). Domestic Violence Death Review Committee Annual Report 2012. Toronto, Ontario.

Seniors Rights Victoria. **Seniors Rights Victoria Safety Planning With Older People.** Melbourne, Australia. www.seniorsrights.org.au

Statistics Canada (2011). **CANSIM Table 105-1300.**

Victim Services of Bruce Grey and Owen. **Safety Plan for Victims of Domestic Violence.** Owen Sound, Ontario.