

# SAFETY PLANNING FOR OLDER ADULTS



## *Recommendations For Service Providers*

### 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.

A safety plan includes steps and strategies to help keep an older adult safe if they are in an unhealthy relationship.

### I SUPPORTS IN PLANNING

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.
- 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.



### I TYPES AND OPTIONS OF SAFETY PLANNING

- When living with the abuser.
- When preparing to leave an abusive partner.
- After leaving relationship- staying safe while in the community.
- Getting help if leaving is not an option.
- Emergency escape plan.
- Reducing the risk of physical violence
- Home safety.



## I Making A Safety Plan for the Older Adult

- Make it practical, realistic and take into consideration the older adult's strengths and limitations.
- Think about how the older adult can stay both physically and emotionally safe.
- Reaffirm with the older adult the steps to take if a person says or does things that make them feel out of control and very upset.

## I How to make a safety plan

- Create the plan with the older adult and tailor it to their individual needs and circumstances.
- The plan should contain all of the vital information the older adult needs in order to exit quickly in an emergency taking into consideration their unique situation and living arrangements.
- May focus on increasing safety within relationships, in the community, during an assault, while exiting an abusive relationship or after a person has left.



## I Consider Barriers

- Physical barriers could prevent a safety exit - Stairs.
- Do they require any personal support to manage activities of daily living, such as bathing, meals prep, and dressing?
- Do they require assistive devices (i.e. cane, walker)? If their device was taken or destroyed by the abuser, would they have access to a replacement?
- Do they have a family/friend, someone who can provide support?
- Are they able to care for themselves on a short term basis?

**Exploring risk factors prior to safety planning can help older adults engage with the creation of a safety plan.**



# 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).

## SUPPORT

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

## NOTIFICATION

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

## 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.

## WHERE TO GET HELP Provincial supports & Services

**Victim Support Line:** access to victim services and other supports. Multilingual 24/7  
1-888-579-2888

**Assaulted Women's Help Line :** 24/7 crisis line for all woman who have experienced abuse.  
1-866-863-0511

**Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH) :** Information and resources.

**Shelter Safe:** access an online map to locate the closest shelter in your community.

**Support Services for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse:** counselling, peer support, and referrals.  
1-866-887-0015

**Fem'aide:** for self-identified Francophone Women.  
1-877-336-2433

**Talk 4 Healing :** free and culturally safe helpline for Indigenous women.  
1-855-554-HEAL (4325)

## Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario



Elder Abuse  
Prevention  
Ontario

For more  
Information and  
Resources

416-916-6728 | Toll-Free : 1-833-916-6728  
[www.eapon.ca](http://www.eapon.ca)