

Safety for Older Adults

Older adults are at increased risk of victimization (including lethal forms of violence) by an intimate partner and also by a caregiver, support person and/or family member (adult children, sibling, grandchildren). Older adults are also at heightened risk of fraud by others in general. More is being learned about the abuse experiences of older adults, including acknowledging the complex barriers and needs present in keeping them safe or in leaving the abusive situation.

Important Resources

- ☐ Download a detailed safety planning toolkit for older adults at <http://www.eapon.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Safety-Panning-Toolkit-Full-Documents-mar-29-2017.pdf>
- ☐ Call the Elder Abuse Ontario Seniors Safety Line at 1-866-299-1011 for information and referrals.
- ☐ The Halton Regional Police Service has investigators within each Division who investigate offences against older adults that include physical assault, financial crime, etc. If you have a concern about the safety and/or well-being of an older adult you can call the non-emergency number of the Halton Regional Police at (905) 825-4747 and press 0 to speak with Communications/Dispatch to request a well-being check. If your concern is urgent, please call 911.
- ☐ Learn more about your legal rights and access to legal clinic by visiting Advocacy Centre for the Elderly at <http://www.advocacycentreelderly.org> or by calling 1-855-598-2656.
- ☐ Halton Women's Place provides emergency safe shelter for older women experiencing violence/abuse by an intimate partner or by their family. Call 24-hour crisis line at 905-332- 7892 (South Halton) or 905-878-8555 (North Halton).
- ☐ Seek legal advice for matters involving family law including, divorce, custody/ access, child/ spousal support, and property division as soon as you are able in order to make informed choices.
- ☐ If you need legal help, it may be possible to get a 2-hour legal aid certificate. Halton Women's Place can provide the certificate to clients so they can access the lawyer through legal aid. You can also call Legal Aid Ontario's general call center at 1-800-668-8258 to make an application for a certificate. Women's Centre Halton offers free legal advice phone calls by appointment after completing the required intake form.

Safety At Home

- ☐ If you are in immediate danger, call 911.
- ☐ If you feel that a situation is becoming dangerous, try to get to a room with a phone, cell phone or lifeline button so you can call for help.
- ☐ Trust your instincts. If the situation is dangerous, do what you need to do in order to calm the situation down, or to get out of the dangerous area.
- ☐ Keep a phone close by and have important numbers available. Consider having a phone by your bed.
- ☐ If you need to leave home to keep safe, know how to get to a place of safety- a shelter, family, friends or neighbours.
- ☐ Consider asking neighbours to call the police if they hear a disturbance coming from your home.
- ☐ Have a safety word or signal pre-arranged with someone you know to indicate you are in danger either in person or by phone.
- ☐ Plan ahead for outings - how you will get there, how to leave early if needed, and how to get home.
- ☐ Plan ahead in case you have to leave your home. Have a bag ready with important items you want to take with you, such as address book, hearing aids, medication, income tax papers, bank papers, bank cards, cheque book, items of sentimental value, eye glasses, cane, walker, wheelchair, keys to home and car and mailbox.
- ☐ If you are living in a Long Term Care facility, one of the staff may be the person hurting you.
- ☐ Try to notify your family, friends and/or workers or counsellors. You can also report the abuse to the Long Term Care Action Line at 1-866-434-0144.
- ☐ Keep items such as money, purse, wallet, medications, expensive jewellery out of sight and in a locked cupboard if possible.
- ☐ Always keep your doors locked; even when you are at home or when you are visiting or doing laundry within your building.
- ☐ Always check who is at the door before you open it. Do NOT open it to anyone if you don't feel safe.
- ☐ Avoid sharing any banking information or any other personal information with people you don't know.
- ☐ If you are hearing impaired, devices such as phones, door bells and fire alarms should have a visual signal so even if your hearing aids are off you can be alerted.
- ☐ Leave a light on even when you are not at home.
- ☐ Have good outside lighting.

- ☐ Avoid giving your house key to anyone unless they are on your "Who You Can Trust" list.
- ☐ Avoid leaving notes on your door when you are gone.
- ☐ Avoid giving out information over the telephone that you are alone or that you won't be home at a certain time.
- ☐ Try to create strong passwords on your computer, when using internet sites or apps, or for online banking.
- ☐ If you are on a shared computer or visiting a public or banking website, always remember to log off.
- ☐ Avoid sharing personal information on-line.
- ☐ Be cautious of emails and phone calls that ask you for personal information or money.
- ☐ Be cautious with email attachments. If unsure, don't open the attachment. Seek out advice from family/friend, or check on-line for information about the business, person, or if it is an identified scam.
- ☐ Consider using/purchasing antivirus software.

