

Living in Rural Areas

People who live in rural areas do not experience higher rates of violence, but are considered more vulnerable to the harms caused by domestic violence due to many factors and barriers. Larger communities may have access to a variety of services and programs but in small towns there may be limited resources available and slow response from emergency services. Alternatives to living with abuse do exist. A women's program can provide support, safety planning for you and your children, information about options, transportation, legal information, safe shelter, and referrals to financial assistance, education and job training.

Consider the following additional factors when creating your safety plan:

- ☐ If you have to call 911 on your cell phone, tell the 911 dispatcher where you are and what emergency services you need. (i.e. I am at 123 Country Lane in the town of Halton Hills and I need Halton Police). A 911 call from a land line reveals to the 911 operator where you are calling from but your cell phone does not automatically reveal this.
- ☐ If you have to call 911 and you know it may take police a long time to respond, identify ways to stay safe until the police arrive. Think this through ahead of time.
- ☐ Learn about the nearest community that has a Crisis and/or Women's Shelter.
 - ☐ Have this contact information available in a safe place in case of emergency.
 - ☐ Call ahead to learn about admission, possible transportation, and space in the shelter.
 - ☐ Use their 24-hour crisis line for support
- ☐ If you don't have access to a cell phone, identify a safe place (i.e. neighbor, local business or agency) where you could go to make calls.
- ☐ If you do not have access to a vehicle, identify a person or people who can give you a ride to the community.
- ☐ Identify people you can call for help.
- ☐ When meeting with a service provider, discuss ahead of time communication between appointments. If it is not safe for you to leave a phone number in a service provider's voicemail to call you back at, schedule a time/date for your next phone appointment/check-in.

- ☐ If you are receiving services regarding your experience, consider informing them of the barriers you are experiencing regarding your geographic location to explore options to address the barriers.
- ☐ If you have been injured by your (ex)partner and have limited contact with others to note and document your injuries, consider taking pictures of your injuries and sharing them with a trusted support person.
- ☐ Consider if it's possible for you to stay safe from your (ex)partner and still live in your home community. Remember, in remote or rural areas, vehicles are easily recognized and your activities may be reported to your (ex)partner.
- ☐ Make plans for any animals (livestock or pets) if you are concerned about their safety if you leave your home. Shelters can provide information/resources to help with your pet(s).
- ☐ If there are firearms on your property- explore ways to have firearms removed or ammunition stored elsewhere or change locks on the gun cabinet. If not possible, plan an escape route out of your house that takes into consideration where the guns are stored, and where the ammunition and keys to the gun cabinet are kept. The public can confidentially call the Canadian Firearms Program 1-800-731-4000 if they believe a person who owns firearms could be dangerous to themselves or to others.
- ☐ If you are a farm family: A farmer's finances are often tied up in land and equipment, so a person thinking of ending a relationship faces a risk that they may lose the family farm or (ex)partner will be left with no means of income.
 - ☐ If you are a one-income family and have no access to finances, prepare ahead to obtain information about financial support.
 - ☐ Consider receiving emotional support
 - ☐ Consider seeking legal advice on the impact of court orders in situations where home and business are at the same address.