

PREVENTION

Session 11: Safety planning

Materials for this session⁴⁰

- Sign-in sheet
- Participant Manual, one for each participant
OR copy of Module 11 for each participant (Manual pages 130-143)
- Trainer Notes
- PowerPoint
- Handouts
- Participant Evaluation Form #1
- Compilation and Summary of Data Collected with Evaluation Form #1

Key points for Module 11

Safety planning for older persons

- Safety planning: a process in which an older person and a trusted helper work together to ensure the older person's safety *in advance of any crisis*.
- Recommended even if the person has sought some form of protection through the justice system.

Five strategies for safety planning

- To begin safety planning, know the status of the relationship between the older person and the person who is causing harm or making threats.
- The older person may:
 - want to stay with the other person;
 - be in the process of leaving or going back to the other person;
 - or,

⁴⁰ See pages 28-29 in this Guide for a Training Checklist and a list of materials, supplies and equipment for each training session.

- have already ended the relationship.
- Five strategies for safety planning include:
 1. *Prevention*: preventing future violence or abuse;
 2. *Protection*: looking at ways older persons can protect themselves during a violent incident;
 3. *Notification*: planning ahead for ways to get help in a crisis;
 4. *Referral*: finding services that can help; and,
 5. *Emotional support*: finding emotional support and ways to become less isolated.

What you can do as a helper

- Build rapport and help the older person feel safe by active listening.
- Learn about what the older person fears about the perpetrator and what might happen if harmful actions or threats are carried out.
- Brainstorm creative options and ideas together. A good safety plan is victim-driven and victim-centered. It is based on the older person's goals, and not the helper's opinions.

What NOT to do as a helper

- Tell the older person what to do (“I think you should live with your son.”)
- Simply refer the older person to local agencies (“Here’s a list of agencies you can call. Let me know how it goes.”)
- Impose your cultural, spiritual or generational values that may impact the older person's choices. (“I think your only choice is to divorce him.”)
- Talk to the perpetrator on your own.
- Recommend strategies that could increase risk for the older person (such as recommending the purchase of a gun or other weapon, attending couples counseling, saying “just stand up to him”.)
- Blame the older person if he or she does not follow the safety plan and experiences further violence.

If you work with or care for an older person: planning for your own safety

- Ahead of time:
 - Call ahead to assess the situation;
 - Do not enter the home if you suspect or sense danger;
 - Have a cell phone with you, especially if the older person has no phone;
 - Let someone from your office know where you will be;
 - Ask a colleague to go with you on the visit, so you do not go alone; and,
 - Carry only what you need.
- During a home visit:
 - Do not enter a home if your instinct tells you not to go in;
 - Do not stay if you are being threatened. Leave immediately;
 - If you arrived by taxi, ask the driver to wait outside. If you are not out in a given time, ask the driver to call your cell phone;
 - When going into a home, try to stay near an exit door at all times;
 - Check for household objects that could be used as weapons; and,
 - If you need help immediately, and others may hear you, shout “Fire!”

Safety planning involves problem-solving in advance!

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AGENDA

Activity #	Activity	1.5 Hour session	Materials
1	<p>Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome participants. • Introduce yourself if necessary. • Participant introductions, if necessary. • Make housekeeping announcements. <p>Guidelines for being together (See some examples on p.14)</p> <p>Today's topic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefly explain that this is Session 11 in the <i>Respect Aging</i> training program. Today's topic is <i>Safety planning</i>. <p>Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Agenda. • If participants do not have their own copies of the Participant Manual, hand out copies of Module 11. 	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint slides 1-2 • <i>Participant Manual</i> • OR one copy of Module 11 for each participant
2	<p>Learning together <i>Safety planning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show slides. • Refer to the Additional Notes on the slides for more information. 	25 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint slides 3-12 • Handout 1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At slide 5, read Sandra's story from <i>Stories from the Front Lines</i> (available on the Notes page for slide 5). • For each of the Five Strategies, ask the group to call out ways to make Sandra safer. 		
3	<p>Small group activity <i>Practicing safety planning</i></p>	35 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flipchart and markers for each group • Handouts 2 & 3
4	<p>Learning together <i>Safety planning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show remaining slides. 	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint slides 13-15
5	<p>Wrap-up / Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute <i>Participant Evaluation Form #1</i> and ask that they be completed. • Do a final go-round. Ask participants to briefly share how the session was for them. • Ask them how they will use what they have learned in their work or interactions with older persons. • Thank participants for their input, sharing and time. • Collect <i>Participant Evaluation Form #1</i>. 	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Participant Evaluation Forms</i>
<i>Total time</i>		90 minutes	

IMPORTANT!

After facilitating this session, please complete the form titled **Compilation and Summary of Data Collected with Evaluation Form #1** (page 221). Your feedback will help us keep project materials relevant, useful and up-to-date. Mail or fax within one week of the session to:

Provincial Training Coordinator
Women's Policy Office/Violence Prevention Initiative
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
Confederation Building, 4th floor, West Block
St. John's, NL
A1B 4J6

PHONE: (709) 729-5009
FAX: (709) 729-1418
EMAIL: vpi@gov.nl.ca

PREVENTION – SESSION 11 ACTIVITY

Activity 3: Practicing Safety Planning

1. Divide the group into five smaller groups. Assign one of the five safety-planning strategies to each group - Prevention, Protection, Notification, Referral, Emotional Support.
2. Hand out one copy of *Handout 2: Matthew's Story* to each group. Ask for a volunteer to read the story out loud to her or his group. Also provide a copy of *Handout 3: Checklist for Creating Safety Plans* to all participants.
3. Ask each group to assign a reporter and a recorder.
4. Ask each group to use *Matthew's Story* to create a safety plan based on their assigned safety-planning strategy. Remind groups that in developing a safety plan, they are working together with Matthew and others in Matthew's circle of family, friends and helpers.

Matthew's Story

Matthew, 65, has a developmental delay. He lived with his mother until she died last year. He then lived on his own in the family home with the help of neighbours. Recently, his younger brother Phil was released from jail and moved in with him. Phil has a drug problem. Phil has been taking all of Matthew's money. He has been physically and emotionally abusive. Matthew now wanders the streets asking for money and food. The neighbours do not come by anymore because they are afraid of Phil.

5. Recorders in each group should make notes on a flipchart of highlights of the group's conversation.
6. Ask groups to consider the following questions as they plan:
 - How would you engage Matthew to talk about the importance of safety planning?
 - What concerns would you raise with Matthew?
 - What issues need to be taken into account?

7. Bring the large group back together. For each strategy, have the group report the highlights of their conversation.

PREVENTION – SESSION 11 HANDOUTS

HANDOUT 1: FIVE STRATEGIES FOR SAFETY PLANNING

Strategy	Description	Examples
1. Prevention	Preventing future violence or abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Going to a shelter • Moving to another residence • Getting a peace bond or Emergency Protection Order • Hiding or disarming weapons • Changing schedules and routes to avoid being found
2. Protection	Looking at ways older persons can protect themselves during a violent incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having an escape route • Having the older person seek shelter in a room where a door can be locked from inside, with a working phone available
3. Notification	Arranging ways to get help in a crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cell phone • Emergency numbers on hand • Life-lines (personal security devices) • Security system • Waving a towel in a window • Having secret code words with trusted family, neighbours or friends
4. Referral	Finding services that can help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Health Authority • Sexual assault centre • Mental Health Crisis Line • Justice system • Victim Services • Transition houses / shelters • Faith or spiritual community

5. Emotional support	Finding emotional support and ways to become less isolated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exercise/yoga group• Hobby, art, music classes• Trusted friends and family• Peer support; support groups• Seniors centre• Community groups
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HANDOUT 2: MATTHEW'S STORY

Matthew, 65, has a developmental delay. He lived with his mother until she died last year. He then lived on his own in the family home with the help of neighbours. Recently, his younger brother Phil was released from jail and moved in with him. Phil has a drug problem. Phil has been taking all of Matthew's money. He has been physically and emotionally abusive. Matthew now wanders the streets asking for money and food. The neighbours do not come by anymore because they are afraid of Phil.

HANDOUT 3: CHECKLIST FOR CREATING SAFETY PLANS⁴¹

Safety planning involves problem-solving in advance. This helps an older person know what to do, both during and after a crisis situation. Below is a list of questions to consider and discuss with the older person when preparing the safety plan.

- What experience has the older person had with safety planning and protection strategies? Which strategies worked? Which were ineffective?
- How has the perpetrator behaved in the past? Is the perpetrator likely to re-offend?
- Does the perpetrator have access to weapons? Have weapons been used in the past?
- Is there a peace bond or protection order in effect? If so, what is the status?
- Where does the older person keep important phone numbers, personal documents, photographs, bank books?
- What/who are the older person's community supports?
- Does the older person have information on counselling and other therapeutic or support services?
- Is there a process to review and update the safety plan on a regular basis?
- Has the older person practiced giving precise information on where she or he is and if there is danger?
- What are the older person's cultural or religious values about independence and the right to unrestricted movement?
- Is the older person willing to move to a safe place (shelter or transition house)?
- What are the older person's experiences with the justice system and other service providers?
- What is the older person's first language and country of origin? Is language a potential barrier to getting help?
- What is the older person's legal status (i.e. refugee, landed immigrant)?
- What is the older person's physical and health status?

⁴¹ Adapted in part from:

Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse. (no date). *The Free from Harm Tools Guide*. Retrieved from www.onpea.org/english/download.php?name=FreeFromHarmTools.pdf.

- If the older person is living with a disability, are there physical barriers in the person's environment that may prevent a safe exit or access to safety?
- What challenges might affect the older person's safety or ability to follow through with a safety plan? This could include things such as substance abuse, mental health issues or dementia.
- Is the older person comfortable with the safety plan and willing to live life within its constraints, at least in the short term?
- Is the older person aware of other potential risks, such as:
 - Cyber-stalking on the Internet?
 - Identity theft (credit cards, passport, other ID)?
 - Seeking help from people or organizations that have little experience with violence against older persons?