



# AGING WITHOUT VIOLENCE (AWV) PROJECT

Amber Wardell, Project Coordinator



# Land Acknowledgment



# Aging Without Violence (AWV) Project:

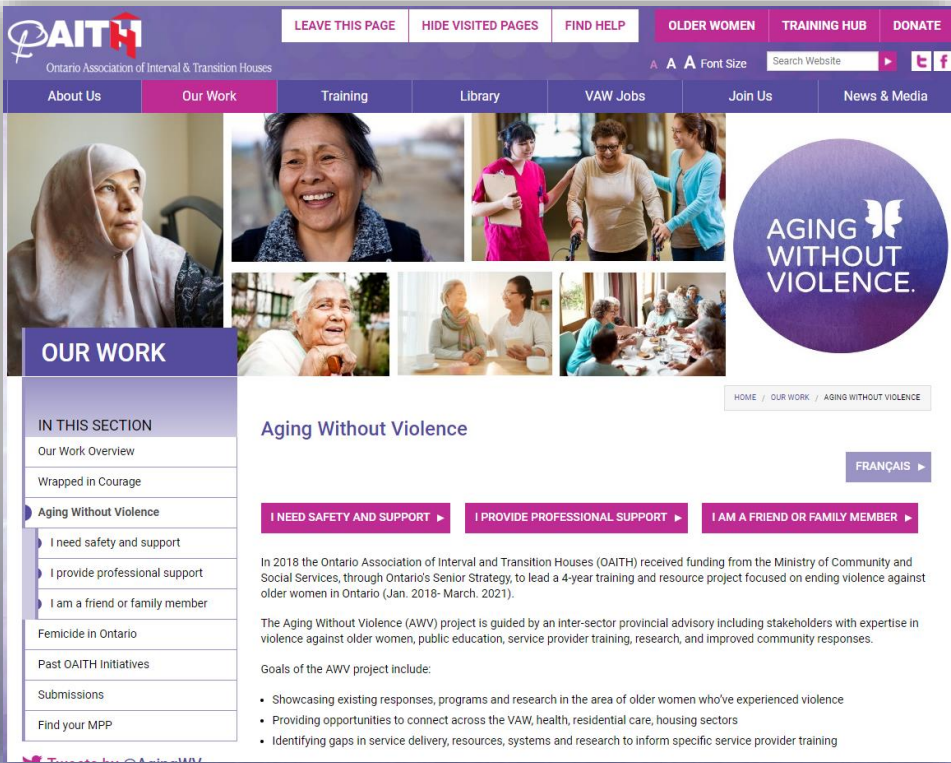
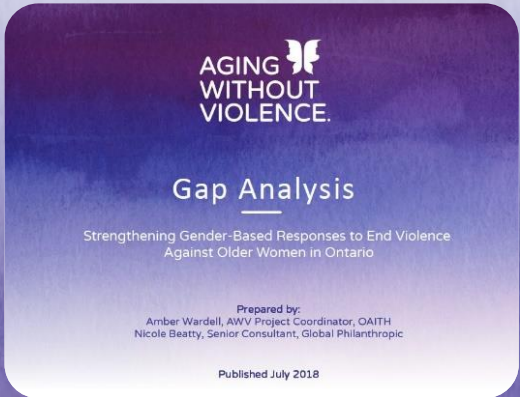


The Aging With Confidence Action Plan for Seniors includes dedicated efforts to address violence against older women, under the Strengthening Elder Abuse Prevention section.



## January 2018 - March 2021

- Funded by the government of Ontario,
- Sponsored by OAITH
- Guided by an intersectoral provincial advisory
- Focused on ending violence against older women across Ontario by increasing the capacity of service providers and public awareness



[www.oaith.ca](http://www.oaith.ca)



# AWV Project Advisory Members

**Linda Baker** – Violence Against Women Learning Network

**Julie Béchar**d - Centre Passerelle pour femmes du nord de l'Ontario

**Denise Christopherson** – YWCA Hamilton

**Janice Du Mont**- Women's College Research Institute

**Miranda Ferrier**- Ontario Personal Support Worker's Association

**Jeanine George**- Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario

**Francine Groulx** – Fem'aide

**leZlie lee kam** - LGBTQ+ Consultant

**Marianne Park** - Social Services Consultant

**Yasmeen Persad**- The 519

**Huong Pham**- Assaulted Women's Helpline

**Nicole Pietsch**- Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres

**Kripa Sekhar** – South Asian Women's Centre

**Raeann Rideout**- Elder Abuse Ontario

**Barbara Michailk** – Rekai Centre



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# Language- VAW



## **Violence Against Women (VAW)**

The United Nations defines violence against women as: “Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”

VAW sector includes emergency women’s shelters, sexual assault centres, transitional housing, and community and school based programs such as counselling. These services are available to women of all ages including trans women, and non cis- gender women.

## **Violence Against Older Women (VAOW)**

This may include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or verbal abuse, financial abuse, spiritual abuse, neglect, and includes trauma/violence/abuse experienced throughout the lifetime of the older woman.

This violence may fall under the umbrella of “family violence”, “elder abuse”, “domestic violence”, “intimate partner violence” or “intergenerational trauma” Older = aged 55 or older.

Perpetrators may include family members, care givers, spouses/partners, ex partners, neighbours, acquaintances, service providers. An older woman may experience various types of violence from multiple perpetrators at the same time.



# Why focus on older women specifically?



“Freedom from abusive behaviour, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect or financial abuse, by family or professionals has also been identified as a significant concern. Both men and women are at risk for elder abuse and neglect. Because **older women make up a higher proportion of the frail elderly**, they are **more likely to experience certain kinds of abuse**. **Older women are also more likely to experience abuse by their spouse than are older men**. Women 65 years of age or more are **more frequently the victims of violence at the hands of family members than are men**. Accordingly, issues regarding elder abuse are a concern for both male and female victims, although the particular vulnerability of women in the context of elder abuse must be recognised.” - OHRC

## Older Women vs. Younger women

- Additional barriers to accessing services (including emergency services)
- Older women experiencing abuse/violence more likely to be financially dependent on their abuser(s) than younger women
- Marginalized older women (for example gender diverse, Indigenous, immigrant, racialized, differently abled) described as invisible and often at higher risk for violence and physical harm/lethality by their abuser(s)
- Unique impacts of complex trauma and sexual violence in later life and across the lifespan (post menopausal considerations)
- Different attitudes about abuse and relationships,
- Distrust of services



# AWV Language, Terms, and Approaches

## **Intersectionality**

Intersectionality includes “recognizing the ways in which sexism, racism, colonialism, ageism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism and poverty intersect in our own lives and shape our own life choices and opportunities” – *OAITH’s Intermediate Foundations course*

## **Intersectoral Collaboration**

Collaboration between sectors. The AWV Gap Analysis highlights the need to break down silos between sectors including VAW, Elder Abuse, Healthcare, Justice, and Housing in particular.

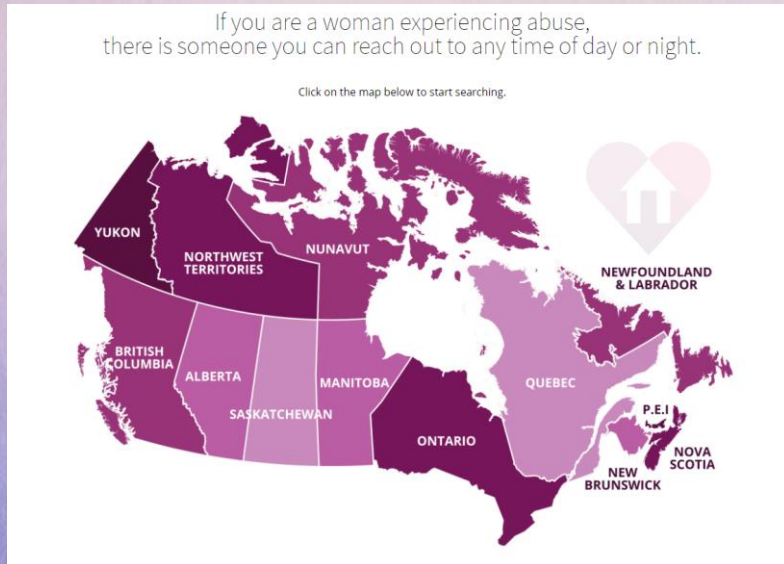


# Overview of VAW Services in Ontario

[www.sheltersafe.ca](http://www.sheltersafe.ca)

[www.oaith.ca](http://www.oaith.ca)

Older  
Women



## Get Help Now

### Seniors Safety Line (SSL)

The SSL provides contact and referral information for local agencies across Ontario that can assist in cases of elder abuse. Trained counsellors also provide safety planning and supportive counselling for older adults who are being abused or at-risk of abuse. Family members and service providers can also call for information about community services.

Seniors Safety Line: 1-866-299-1011

### Assaulted Women's Helpline (AWHL)

AWHL is a anonymous and confidential 24-hour telephone and TTY crisis telephone line to all women in the province of Ontario who have experienced any form of abuse. AWHL provides crisis counselling, safety planning, emotional support, information and referrals accessible 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Deaf, deaf-blind and hard of hearing services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Assaulted Woman's Helpline: 1-866-863-0511 TTY: 1-866-863-7868

### Talk 4 Healing

Talk 4 Healing is a free and culturally safe telephone help line for Aboriginal women living in Northern Ontario.

1-855-554-HEAL

### Fem'aide

Fem'aide is a provincial crisis line confidential services for Francophone women who are victims or survivors of any form of violence or are in distress, providing crisis intervention, support and referrals to community agencies.

Fem'aide: 1-877-336-2433 (1-877-FEMAIDE) TTY: 1-866-860-7082

VAW services are delivered through more than 100 organizations across Ontario, and include:

- emergency shelters
- crisis and support services
- counselling services
- housing support services
- transitional support services, and
- province wide crisis help lines





# Overview of VAW Services in Ontario- con'd



[www.sexualassaultsupport.ca](http://www.sexualassaultsupport.ca)

[www.sadvtreatmentcentres.ca](http://www.sadvtreatmentcentres.ca)

The screenshot shows the OCRCC website. At the top is the OCRCC logo with a stylized tree. Below it is a navigation bar with links: Find Support, About Sexual Violence, Policy & Political Action, About OCRCC, and What's New. The main content area is titled 'Find Support' and features a photo of hands clasped in prayer. Below the photo, it states: 'Sexual assault centres provide free counselling and information about sexual violence. Click on a city or region below to get contact information for a centre near you.' There are three listed locations: Algoma (Sault Ste. Marie), Barrie, and Belleville-Quinte. To the right, there are two sidebars. The first is 'Francophone support' with text: 'For French-language sexual assault centres in Ontario, visit Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes.' The second is 'Ontario-wide' with two helpline numbers: 'Assaulted Women's Helpline: 1-866-863-0511' and 'Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868'. At the bottom of this sidebar, it says 'Talk4Healing, for Indigenous women.'

The screenshot shows the Ontario Network website. At the top is the Ontario Network logo with the text 'of Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Centres'. Below it is a navigation bar with links: HOME, ABOUT US, OUR SERVICES, NEWS, RESOURCES, and RESEARCH. The main content area is titled 'The Network' and features a photo of a chalkboard with a Venn diagram. The Venn diagram has four overlapping circles labeled 'EMPOWER', 'INSPIRATION', 'LEADERSHIP', and 'VISION'. Below the photo, it says '35 Centres Across Ontario' and '585 Staff'.



OCT.24.18  
1-2:30pm EST

**Colonization,  
Oppression and  
Racism:  
Understanding  
Violence against  
Indigenous  
women who are  
older**



Amber Skye, Researcher,  
Six Nations of the Grand River

[Register Here](#)

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Funded by the Government of Ontario



Funded by the Government of Ontario

Tuesday Jan. 22, 2019  
11:30am-1:30 pm EST

**Sexual Violence and  
Older Women in Long  
Term Care: Intersectoral  
Approaches and  
Promising Practices**

*Presented by*

**Rosalyn  
Forrester,**  
Community Support  
& Outreach, Interim  
Place  
*and*

**Tammy  
Rankin**  
Senior Safety Advisor,  
Regional Municipality  
of Durham  
Long Term Care &  
Services for Seniors  
Division





## How can older women in LTC be supported by VAW services?

- Provide a safe, confidential space to connect with a local or provincial crisis line
- VAW services can provide support related to historical or recent trauma (even if not fully recalled)
- Provide information from VAW services in an accessible format
- If mobility issues permit, arrange for counselling appointments or ask if phone/virtual support is possible
- THSP could attend and meet with her within LTC home if services are needed
- Collaborative meeting to manage risk (assess risk, create safety plan, coordinate with perpetrator services)
- Training from VAW staff for LTC staff and vice versa; increase capacity





## **Live Polling Question:**

**What services in the VAW sector have you referred to or collaborated with while assisting an older woman?**



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**AGING IN WITHOUT VIOLENCE**

**WORD TO THE WISE**  
Existing resources need to be utilized to meet the needs of older women experiencing violence

**AIF**  
All In Family  
A network of support for families and individuals  
www.aif.ca

**Ontario**

**Kurzban**  
Kurzban  
www.kurzban.ca

AGING WITHOUT VIOLENCE

AITH  
Association of Independent Teachers of Health

Life-long Mutual Assistance & Support from AITH is an essential tool for our success in Life & Society

Ontario

WORD TO THE WISE  
Knowledge of capacity, violence and risk is vital in supporting older women

JULY 2019  
www.aith.ca

**Why use the term "Violence Against Older Women?"**

- By using the term **Violence Against Older Women (VAOW)** in research, policy, and practice, either the term "older women" or "elder abuse" or "age-related violence" or "family violence" or "violence against women" are avoided.
- The concept of **gender** when recognizing, or responding to violence against older women.
- Implications of **aging** relate to women's experience of violence.
- The importance of **intersectional** approach which considers systemic oppression, including race, class, and sexual orientation.

**Types VAOW may include:** physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, financial abuse, spirit, all of these types of abuse, or combination of two above and a sibling.

**What barriers do older women experience when accessing services and supports?**

**Aging Without Violence research participants reported on why they believe older women experiencing violence do not access services:**

- Believe it is a personal matter (35%)
- Feels there is no purpose in getting help (length of abuse) (33%)
- She is not aware of the available services (19%)
- She doesn't think your organization supports her age group (8%)

Why is an intersectional approach important when working with older women?

**Cultural context**

Centralism  
Individualism  
Collectivism  
Power Distance  
Uncertainty Avoidance  
Masculinity  
Femininity  
Long-term Orientation  
Short-term Orientation  
Confucian Dynamism  
Other cultural dimensions

Power, Authority, Tradition, Family, Education, Career, Wealth, Status, Honor, Face, Harmony, Balance, Moderation, Simplicity, Frugality, Humility, Modesty, Respect, Obedience, Loyalty, Filial Piety, etc.



**AGING WITH VIOLENCE**

**OATH**  
ORANGE COUNTY  
AGING WITH VIOLENCE

**WORD TO THE WISE**

[www.oath.ca](http://www.oath.ca)

408.474.4071 (toll free)

Strategies to increase visibility, accessibility and staff capacity

## Helpful Resources

### Native Women's Association of Canada - CNWAC

Founded on the conviction that all women possess the right to a voice, CNWAC is a national organization that works to ensure that the voices of First Nations, Métis and Inuit women are heard and that their concerns are taken into account. CNWAC is a national organization that works to ensure that the voices of First Nations, Métis and Inuit women are heard and that their concerns are taken into account.

[www.cnwac.ca](http://www.cnwac.ca)

### Canadian Red Cross Society - Red Cross

Red Cross is a national organization that works to ensure that the voices of First Nations, Métis and Inuit women are heard and that their concerns are taken into account.

[www.redcross.ca](http://www.redcross.ca)

### National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly (NICEL)

NICEL is a national organization that works to ensure that the voices of First Nations, Métis and Inuit women are heard and that their concerns are taken into account.

[www.nicel.ca](http://www.nicel.ca)

### National Clearinghouse on Abuse / Elder Abuse (NCAELA)

NCAELA is a national organization that works to ensure that the voices of First Nations, Métis and Inuit women are heard and that their concerns are taken into account.

[www.ncaela.ca](http://www.ncaela.ca)

[illegible]

**Paraphrases may include part of a sentence, a word, or a phrase. They are not intended to copy the original verbatim, to replace the original, or to mislead the reader. They are intended to be used in a way that is consistent with the original and to provide a new perspective on the information.**

**At what age does a woman become "older?"**

*(Imagine a circle of 100 women, with 100% representing the total population. 50% are 50 years old or older, 50% are 50 years old or younger. 50% are 50 years old or younger, 50% are 50 years old or younger.)*

**What is "older" anyway?**

*(Imagine a circle of 100 women, with 100% representing the total population. 50% are 50 years old or older, 50% are 50 years old or younger. 50% are 50 years old or younger, 50% are 50 years old or younger.)*

[illegible]

1. **What is the main purpose of the study?**  
 The study aims to investigate the effectiveness of a new teaching method in improving student performance in mathematics.

2. **What are the research questions or hypotheses?**  
 The research questions are:  
 - Does the new teaching method lead to higher scores than the traditional method?  
 - Are there any differences in student engagement between the two methods?  
 The hypothesis is that the new teaching method will result in significantly higher scores and greater engagement compared to the traditional method.

3. **What is the significance of the study?**  
 This study is significant because it explores a novel educational approach that could potentially revolutionize the way mathematics is taught, leading to better learning outcomes and increased student interest.

4. **What are the limitations of the study?**  
 The study has several limitations, including a small sample size, a short duration, and the lack of a control group, which may affect the generalizability of the findings.

5. **What are the conclusions and recommendations?**  
 The study concludes that the new teaching method shows promise in improving student performance and engagement. It recommends further research with a larger sample size and longer duration to confirm these findings.

[illegible]



# Word to the Wise- Factsheet Highlight – Resources related to age, capacity, and consent

## What is important to know about capacity issues when working with older women experiencing violence?

Understanding capacity laws and utilizing capacity-related resources and supports may be useful if an older woman you are working with has capacity issues, is experiencing abuse from a caregiver or from her Power of Attorney or is caring for an abusive spouse/family member.

In Ontario, matters related to mental capacity are governed by the **Substitute Decisions Act**, the **Health Care Consent Act**, and the **Mental Health Act**.

Threats to try to have an older woman's rights taken away by means of capacity assessment or misuse of Power of Attorney may be used by an abusive partner or family member as a tactic of power and control. Providing information about her rights, offering support during appointments, and connecting her with a resource to provide more information (such as the **Seniors Safety Line** 1-866-299-1011) can help increase her safety and provide choices.

Under the Ontario Human Rights Code, "before determining that a person lacks capacity, an organization, assessment body, evaluator, etc. has the duty to explore accommodation options to the point of undue hardship."<sup>1</sup>

Never assume capacity issues or ability limitations due to age. If you are unsure if an older woman is capable, presume capacity and work with her to get a Capacity Assessment through the **Capacity Assessment Office** (CAO): CAO@ontario.ca 1-866-521-1033

If an older woman is deemed incapable by a capacity assessor, work with the older woman and her **Power of Attorney** (POA) or substitute decision maker to access services and support.

If the POA or substitute decision maker is abusive, call the Office of the Public Guardian of Trustees (OPGT): Toll Free: 1-800-518-7901 TTY: 1-877-425-0575

If the older woman is capable of making decisions she will choose if she wants to report to police, however if she is living in long term care or a retirement home the service provider is obligated to report abuse.

If an older woman has been assessed and disagrees with the incapacity finding, a review can be requested from the **consent and capacity board**: ccb@ontario.ca Toll free: 1-866-777-7391 TTY: 1-877-301-0889

## Capacity & intimate relationships

In Ontario, decisions related to marriage, separation and divorce only require a low level of capacity on the "competency hierarchy". One Ontario Court of Appeal case found a woman in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease had the capacity to decide to leave her husband, although she had been deemed as lacking the capacity to understand financial and legal issues and instruct council.<sup>2</sup>

## Capacity & sexual consent

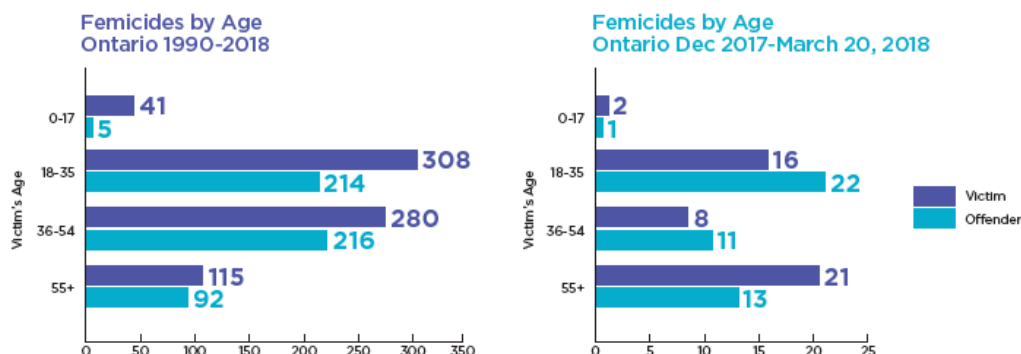
When a person with cognitive impairments is deemed incapable, this does not mean they are mentally incapable for all purposes at all times. The assessment of sexual consent capacity is complex, and distinct from other types of capacities due to the fluidity of intimate relationships, barriers to usage of substitute decision-makers or guardians, and lack of assessment and diagnosis strategies.<sup>3,4</sup>



# Word to the Wise- Factsheet Highlight – Women over age 55 are losing their lives to gender-based violence

## Are femicide rates of older women increasing?

Media reports of Femicide against older women in Ontario are increasing. 45% (21/47) of femicide victims from December 2017-November 2018 have been women aged 55 or older; this rate has nearly doubled compared to femicide rates between November 2016- December 2017 (29%). (OAITH and University of Guelph Ontario Femicide Data, 2018).

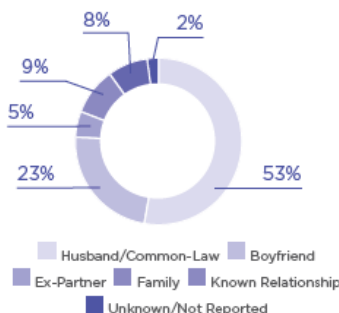


## Who are the perpetrators of violence against older women?

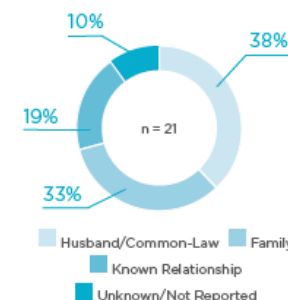
Femicide victims over 55 years old are most **likely to be killed by their partner** (including husband and boyfriend), son, ex-partner, or neighbour.

Between December 2017-November 2018, 38% of femicides of older women were committed by their partners, 33% by a family member such as a son, son-in-law or grandson, 19% by a neighbour or acquaintance, and in 10% of cases the victim-offender relationship is unknown.

**Femicides by Victim-Offender Relationship 55+ 1990-2018**



**Femicides by Victim-Offender Relationship 55+ Dec 2017- March 2018**





# Elder Abuse Network Community Consultations

One EAN network in each region of Ontario invited to complete an in person focus group, based on EAO consultant recommendations.

- Help to inform and guide the AWW project
- Identify challenges unique to each region in relation to meeting the needs of older women experiencing violence
- Gather information on promising practices already in place
- Feedback on what curriculum, resources, and information might be most helpful for frontline service providers in your area
- Completed in Durham, Brant, Cornwall, Peel, and London
- Survey across all Ontario EANs
- Shelter tour completed in each area



2018 Map of all active EANs in Ontario (38)



# SCENARIO

**Raneeta** is a 62-year-old woman who recently called for support as she is worried about her husband of 40 years. Raneeta and her husband live on a farm and do not have many friends or family, although sometimes Raneeta speaks with her sisters in India via phone. Raneeta seems anxious while you are speaking. Raneeta is worried about her husband, who has started drinking more lately. Raneeta's husband has threatened to kill her on numerous occasions and has been obsessing over her whereabouts, accusing her of adultery and following her. Raneeta's husband recently began to purchase firearms. Raneeta spoke about being shocked when her husband ridiculed her in front of neighbours last week, as he has never done this before. Raneeta's husband has never physically harmed her.

Raneeta and her husband receive social assistance. Raneeta uses a cane due to knee and hip issues and is rarely able to access a vehicle.





# High Risk Scenario Responses

- 62 year old racialized woman
- Emotionally, socially and physically isolated
- Increase in abusive behaviours
- Control, tracking
- Recent firearms purchase
- Threats involving firearm

Safety planning – 42%

Explore client's needs, goals, priorities – 18%





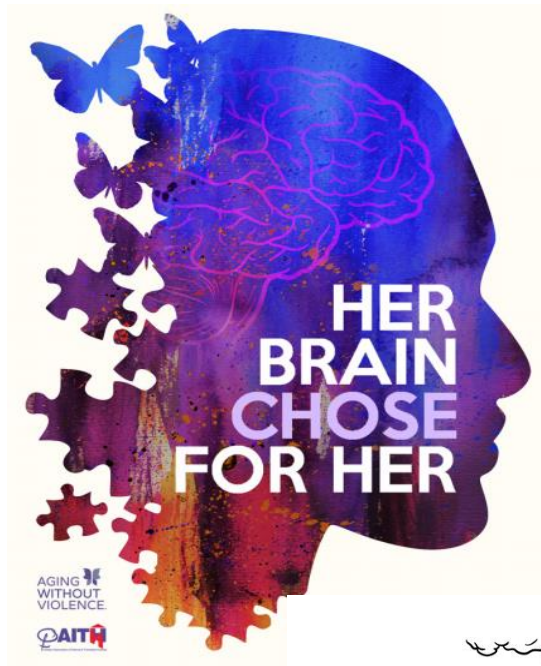


# Elder Abuse Network Survey

- 23 responses total – 63% response rate
- Wide range of activities
- 69% of responding EANS do discuss VAOW
- 86% rated older women's lack of knowledge of services as primary barrier, in addition to not believing what they are experiencing is violence/abuse and transportation (81%)

By acknowledging implications of gender when discussing EAN work and projects	63.16%	12
By promoting violence against women specific resources/training/information electronically (email, website, newsletter, social media)	31.58%	6
By developing resources targeted towards service providers of older women specifically	26.32%	5

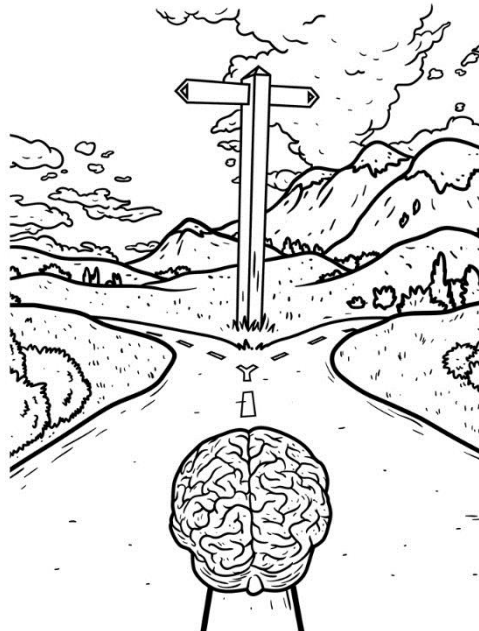
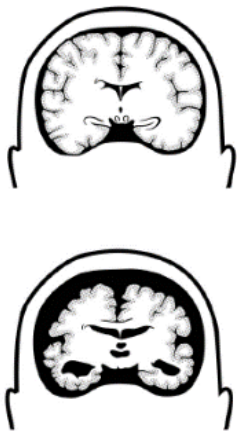




# “Her Brain Chose for Her”

A Visual Training Tool for direct service providers to better understand the neurobiology of trauma and violence against women across the lifespan

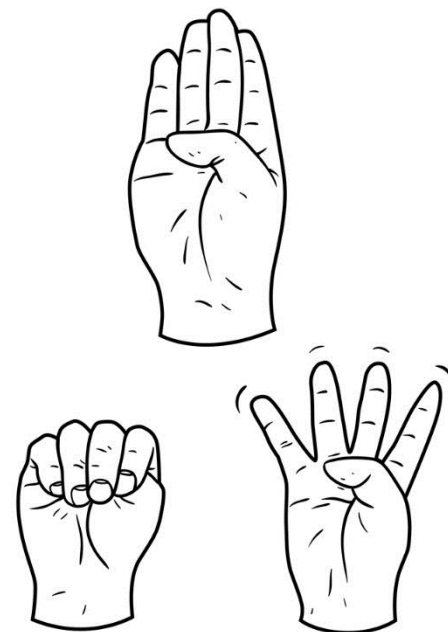
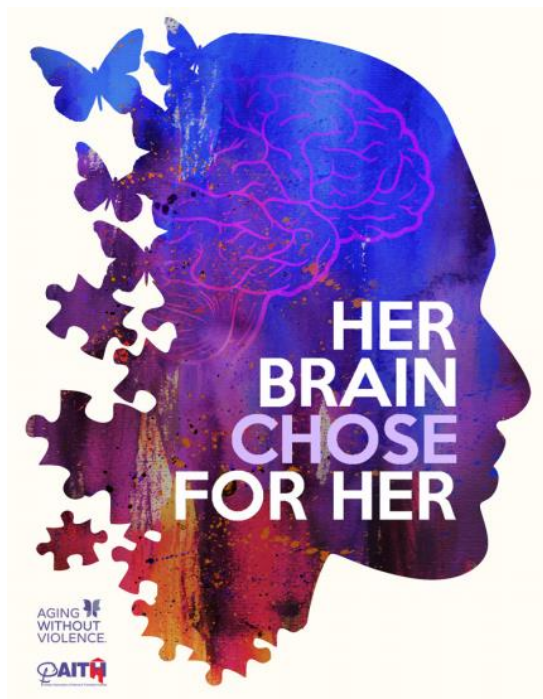
*“Often it isn’t the initiating trauma that creates seemingly insurmountable pain, but the lack of support after.”- S. Kelley Harrell*



F26--WHEN OUR BRAIN CHOOSES





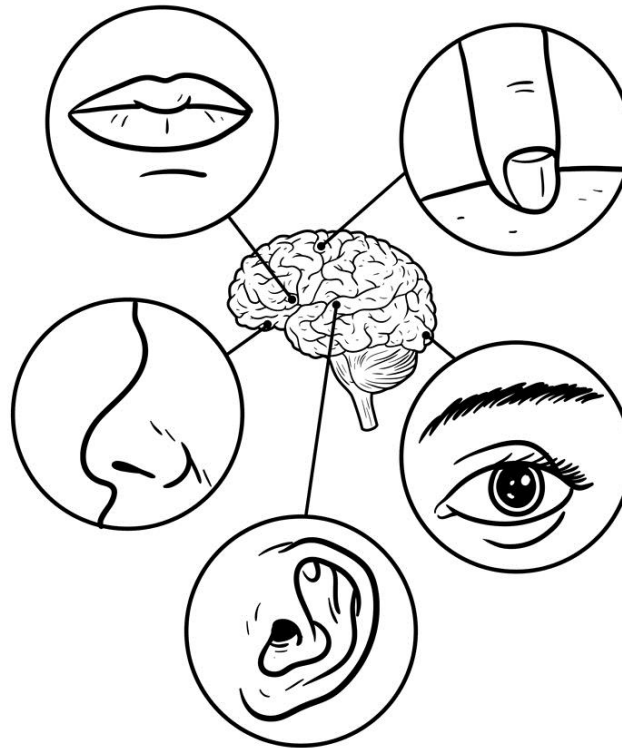
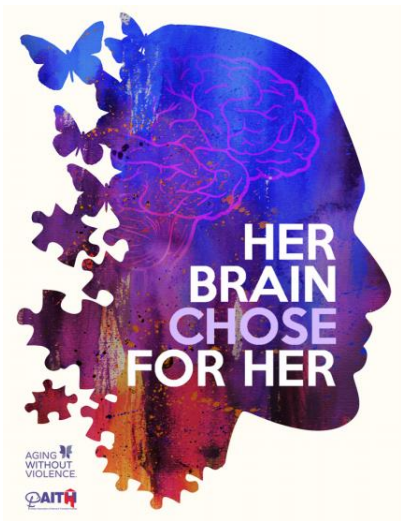


F6- FLIPPING YOUR LID

## “Her Brain Chose for Her” Flipping Your Lid Exercise

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## “Her Brain Chose for Her” Trigger Senses & Grounding

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# **AGING WITHOUT VIOLENCE**

**A Video Introduction to Complex Trauma**



# Aging Without Violence Public Education Campaign

## Pre-Campaign Evaluation

*Completed by Leger on behalf  
of OAITH*

- Measure VAW and VAOW attitudes
- Determine awareness of warning signs, support services, and existing public education campaigns and messaging
- Create a baseline for our “Invisibility” campaign

## Methodology, Data Analysis & Reliability

- **Sample Size-** 1,012 across Ontario (18+, lived in Ontario 6 + months)
- Non-random internet survey = margin of error not reported as margin of error accounts for sampling error, but if these data had been collected with probability sample, the margin of error would be +3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.
- Raw data weighted according to population distribution from Stats. Can. – age, gender, region, visible minority status
- Online surveys via Leger’s online panel between **March 14- March 24, 2019**

**Leger**





# What does violence against women mean to you?

- Physical abuse/assault/harm/violence/physical aggression – 59%
- Mental/emotional (inc. 5% no rights/ freedom, 2% threats) -32%
- Verbal- 21%
- Inappropriate/negative behaviour/illegal/crime/bad – 15%
- **Sexual assault/abuse/harassment – 14%**
- Financial abuse – 3%







## What are the reasons that older women do not report abuse or violence?

- Fear (54%)
- Shame/Stigma (33%)
- Unaware of help available (18%)
- Financial fear (10%)



# What are the warning signs that an older woman is experiencing or may experience violence?

- Bruises/cuts/wounds/marks/scarring/scabs/blood/other physical signs (57%)
- Isolation (34%)
- Change in behaviour (17%)
- Depressed/sad/unhappy (12%)
- Fearful/afraid (10%)
- Nervous/anxious (10%)
- Timid/shy/no self confidence/insecure (9%)





## Only Half of Ontarians have knowledge of supports and services related to violence against older women

- Most recognized support – Police (44%)
- Women's shelters- (19%)
- Abuse/crisis/SA hotlines (11%)
- Elder abuse organizations/hotlines (5%)
- Health services (13%)
- Community/social/family services (11%)
- Church/clergy – (3%)





# Invisibility posters- Service Providers

---



The women in  
this ad **feel** the  
way they **look**.

Older women experiencing violence often  
feel invisible. Learn more about what to look  
for and how to confidently provide support.

[www.oaith.ca](http://www.oaith.ca)





# Invisibility posters- General Public

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The women in  
this ad **feel** the  
way they look.

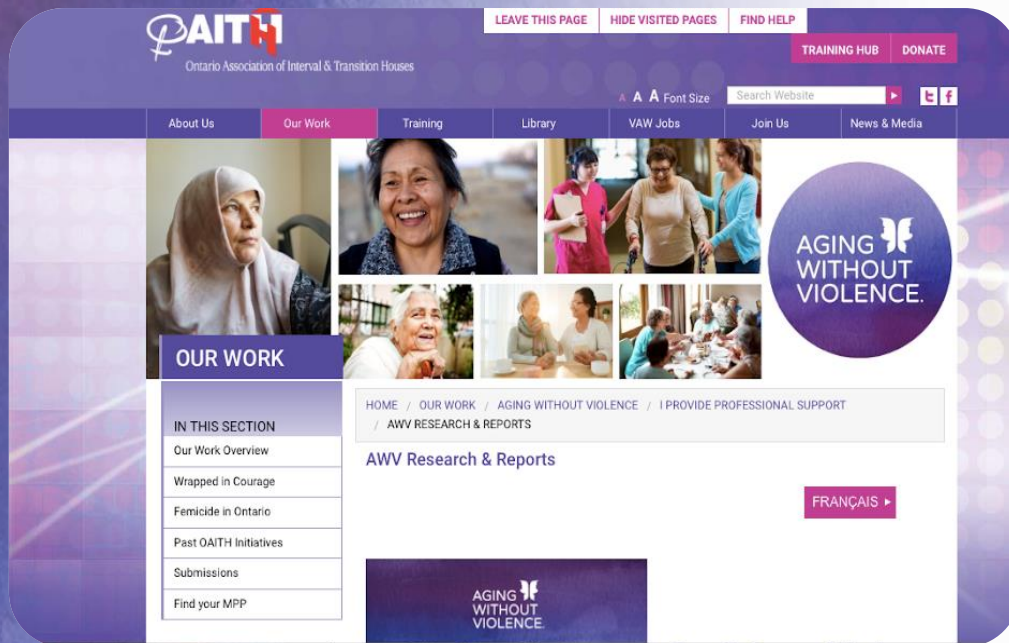
Older women experiencing violence often  
feel invisible, but the warning signs are clear  
when you know what to look for.

Senior Safety Line: 1-866-299-1011

  [oaith.ca](http://oaith.ca)



# AWV Content Now Online



- Tools and resources for service providers
- Where to find help for older women experiencing violence
- Information for the personal supports of older women
- Aging Without Violence Gap Analysis, Forum Report, and environmental scan

[www.oaith.ca](http://www.oaith.ca)





## **Elder Abuse Ontario**

<http://www.elderabuseontario.com/>

(416) 916-6728

**Senior's Safety Line: 1-866-299-1011**

## **Assaulted Women's Helpline**

[www.awhl.org](http://www.awhl.org)

1-866-863-0511

## **Ontario Network of Sexual Assault/ Domestic Violence Treatment Centres**

[www.satcontario.com/en/home.php](http://www.satcontario.com/en/home.php)

(416) 323-7518





# Questions?

The logo is a circular emblem with a gradient from dark purple at the top to a lighter, more vibrant purple at the bottom. Inside the circle, the text "AGING WITHOUT VIOLENCE." is written in a clean, white, sans-serif font, stacked in three lines. To the right of the text is a white icon of a butterfly with its wings spread.

AGING  
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VIOLENCE.



# Contact the Aging Without Violence Project

**Amber Wardell**  
Aging Without Violence  
Project Coordinator  
(416) 977-6619 ex. 104  
[amber@oaith.ca](mailto:amber@oaith.ca)

Stay informed about our  
future webinars and  
training opportunities



AGING   
WITHOUT  
VIOLENCE.