

BARRIERS TO SAFETY PLANNING IN RURAL COMMUNITIES



Escaping an abusive relationship is extremely difficult and may be dangerous for some. For women who reside in a rural community, they face another set of challenges when escaping an abusive relationship.

What are some of the barriers that women in rural communities experiencing domestic violence face?

Individual [Level] Barriers

- The location of residing in a rural community allows for increased isolation.
- Cell phone and internet service can be unreliable in remote areas.
- Access to transportation (Lacking a personal vehicle or the abuser may hold on to vehicle's keys).
- Personal perceptions and ideas surrounding domestic violence that cause shame and fear.
- Internalized stigma.
- Lack of knowledge of domestic violence support services.
- Language barriers.
- Traditional gender roles are common in rural areas with many supporting themselves by farming. Leaving could eliminate a source of income.

Community [Level] Barriers

- Lack of anonymity as people in rural communities often know everyone, including police officers, judges and firefighters, increasing the chances that the first responder who arrives to help knows the survivor or the abuser.
- Emergency medical services and police response time may be longer.
- Hunting is common in rural areas, therefore guns are more common as well. Abusers in rural communities are more likely to cause severe injuries than those in urban areas.

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What are some of the barriers that women in rural communities experiencing domestic violence face?

Systematic [Level] Barriers

- It may be more difficult to access family court; hearings for restraining orders may not occur as quickly.
- Often there are fewer economic opportunities, with some rural areas suffering from high levels of poverty, it is difficult to offer services such as domestic violence shelters.
- Gaps in the system design of such resources.
- Lack of funding for domestic violence support services.
- Gaps in service provider/education training – Lack of understanding on the increased danger that women in rural areas experiencing domestic abuser face.
- Lack of public transportation.

Can Three Oaks support me in developing a safety plan?

To create a safety plan, you may contact our 24/7 Crisis Line. The staff at Three Oaks are here to support you in developing a safety plan that keeps you [and your children] safe. We will work with you where you are at. Your safety plan will be unique to you and your situation. Whether you are living with an abusive partner, thinking about leaving an abusive relationship or have already left, we are here to support you in keeping you [and your children] safe.

Can I call Three Oaks to create a safety plan even if I do not want to access any services?

You may call our Crisis Line to share your story, receive emotional support and to create a safety plan. You do not have to access any of our services to call us.

You may also call our Crisis Line to get information on or to access any of our services. Our services are all self-referral. Our services are both free and confidential!

SAFETY PLANNING IN RURAL COMMUNITIES



While developing your safety plan, remember

- You are not responsible for the abuse and/or violence your [ex] partner has inflicted upon you.
- You are not to blame for the abuse that your children have been exposed to.
- You cannot control your [ex] partner's abusive and/or violent acts, but it is possible to increase the safety of you [and your children].

Three Oaks is here to support you. Our Crisis Line is available 24/7, 365 days a year.

Checklist: What to take with you when you leave.

- Identification: Drivers License, SIN number, status card, citizenship papers, immigration papers passport, birth certificates, permanent resident or citizenship cards
- Vehicle registration and Insurance
- Prescription medication
- Medical records
- Social Assistance documentation
- Legal documents: marriage certificate, divorce papers, restraining order documents, court orders, etc.
- Lease/rental agreement, house deed, mortgage payment book
- Bank books, cheque book, bank statements
- School records
- Credit cards, bank cards
- Picture of spouse/partner

24/7 Crisis Line: 613-966-3074 or toll free 1-800-267-0533