



## **BARRIERS TO LEAVING ABUSERS & SAFETY PLANNING IN RURAL AREAS**

### *LOCATION*

- Shouts for help may not be heard as neighbours could live too far away.
- Cell phone and internet service can be unreliable in remote areas.
- Police response time may be longer increasing the lethality of the assault. When calling police go to a safe place to wait for them to arrive, like a trusted friend or neighbor.
- If you leave the abuser, think about moving out of your area, even if you get a protective order.

### *RESOURCES*

- Traditional gender roles are common in rural areas with many supporting themselves by farming. Leaving could eliminate a source of income.
- 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.

### *TRANSPORTATION*

- Rural communities don't usually have public transportation; if an abuser holds keys to the car, it can be difficult to leave. If you do not have access to a car, and you need to get out of the home you can:
  - Make a plan with a trusted family member, friend or neighbour who can give you a ride.
  - Ask police for an escort to help you get to a safe place.
  - See if your local church can connect you with someone who can drive you.
  - Talk with a counsellor at a women's shelter to see if they can provide you with transportation.
  - If you do have access to a car try to make sure you always have a full tank of gas.



#### *LACK OF ANONYMITY*

- 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.
- In some areas media prints the names of people making domestic violence calls and/or filing restraining orders.
- It may be more difficult to access family court; hearings for restraining orders may not occur as quickly.

#### *INCREASED FIREARMS*

- 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.
- Know where guns, knives, and other weapons are. Lock them up or make them as hard to get to as possible.
- If an argument seems unavoidable, try to have it in an area that has access to an exit. Avoid the bathroom, kitchen, garage, and workshop or anywhere near weapons.