

## **WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE BEING ABUSED?**

### **If you are being abused, you need to know**

- You are not to blame for the violence or the threats.
- You do not deserve to be abused.
- You have a right to live without fear.
- You have the right to a safe, healthy relationship and to have your own life.
- You cannot control the abuser's behaviour.
- Abuse often gets worse over time.

If you are not ready, or do not want to do anything right now, that is your choice - it is okay.

But you can find out information about what you need to know, or do, if you decide to leave at a later date. Information gives you personal choice and personal power.

### **If you live in the community**

- Tell someone what is happening to you.
- Ask others for help if you need it.
- If someone is hurting or threatening you, or if it is not safe for you where you are, call the police.
- Find out more from community resources about your options to take care of your financial security and personal needs.
- Call for counselling and support.
- Make a safety plan in case you have to leave quickly:
  1. Set aside an extra set of keys, I.D., glasses, bank card, money, address book, medication, and important papers. Keep this outside of your home.
  2. Find a safe place with friends and family so you have a place to go to in an emergency.
- Considering obtaining a restraining order to protect yourself.

### **If you live in a place such as a nursing or retirement home**

- Tell someone what is happening to you.
- Ask others for help if you need it. Staff members have a responsibility to see that abuse stops and that you get the help you need.
- If someone is hurting or threatening you, or if it is not safe for you where you are, call the police.

### **If You Know Someone Who is Being Abused**

If you think an adult needs help, talk to them first to find out how you might assist. Ask:

- Are you having some trouble? Can I help you?
- Is there someone I can put you in touch with who can help?
- How would you like to be assisted?

Ask the advice of someone you trust who might know where to get the kind of help the adult needs.

- **Believe the abused older person.** Even if the abuser seems nice, even if the abuser is also your friend.
- **Listen to the person without judging.** Do not give advice, do not express pity; reinforce that you care and will support the abused person with whatever she or he needs.
- **Educate yourself.** Realize that battering exists in your own community and to ignore and deny that fact further isolates the survivor.
- **Understand** that leaving an abusive relationship is difficult. Allow abused older people to make their own decisions and to take back control of their lives at their own pace.
- **Offer** the abused older person a place to stay.
- **Encourage the person** to seek support and assistance.

Source: *Public Guardian and Trustee BC* [www.trustee.bc.ca/abuseneglect.htm](http://www.trustee.bc.ca/abuseneglect.htm),