

# Chrysalis House Association in partnership with Juniper House

## Strengthening the Safety Net

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Eastern Kings Memorial Health Foundation



The Intersection of Dementia, Domestic  
Violence and Caregiver Stress

**CHRYSALIS HOUSE ASSOCIATION IN  
PARTNERSHIP WITH JUNIPER HOUSE**

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# My Safety Plan

When under stress, I will contact:

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I will prepare a travel bag and put in a safe space to have ready in an emergency. The bag will include the following items (e.g., clothes, keys, medications, money, paperwork):

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If I sense danger, I will use the following code word or signal to tell my family/friends that I am in danger and they should call 9-1-1:

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I will plan my escape route in advance and practice leaving through this way. I will identify multiple routes of escape such as:

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I will always have access to a phone

If I have to leave the house in an emergency, I can go to the following (e.g., neighbor's, friend's or public area):

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# Creating a Safety Plan

A safety plan is a tool that which will help you to focus on your situation, your needs, and how you would get help in case of a concern for the safety of you or others.

Some care partners are more concerned about the well-being of the person with dementia, instead of their own well-being. The care partners are willing to put themselves at risk instead of asking the police for help, as they are afraid of what will happen to the person living with dementia. The safety for both people are important. Asking for help protects you and the person being cared for when you are at risk. Police and health care services will help find the care needed for the person with dementia and keep everyone safe

## Strategies

- If you feel comfortable, tell your friends/family about your situation and how they can help.
- Discuss with family, friends, or neighbors how you will notify them if you need help. Consider having a secret code word or signal, such as flashing a porch light or knocking on a wall.
- Pack a travel bag with a charged cell phone, car keys, money and personal information in a place where it is easy to grab and go.
- Keep emergency phone numbers on speed dial. Keep crisis and emergency numbers on hand including family, friends, and support services.
- Use your judgement and intuition. Acknowledge what the person with dementia needs. If the situation is unsafe, remove yourself from the situation until you are safe.
- Determine a safe room in your home where you can lock the door and call for help.
- Be proactive and remove or secure any dangerous objects. Call the police to dispose of fire arms.
- Have an escape route, try not to let yourself get cornered.



*At the end of this booklet is a template to create a Safety Plan*

# Who We Are

## Chrysalis House Association



**Chrysalis House Association** is a safe and non-judgmental environment providing shelter and outreach services for women and children. These services include support, advocacy, referrals, resources, public education and community development. We recognize that oppression exists in a multitude of forms and are proactive in empowering women to have hope and make their own choices to live free from violence and abuse.

Found at: [www.chrysalishouseassociation.org/](http://www.chrysalishouseassociation.org/)



## Juniper House

## Juniper House

Juniper House is a non-profit organization based on the belief a woman has a right to personal dignity, safety, and freedom from fear and physical and/ or psychological coercion. A woman has a right to information, to moral and personal freedom, and the right to exercise personal autonomy in making decisions, to make choices affecting her own life and to accept responsibility for these decisions.

Found at: <http://www.juniperhouse.ca/>



Chrysalis House Association and Juniper House are members of the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia

## Transition House Association

**Transition House Association of Nova Scotia (THANS)** exists to eliminate violence against women in Nova Scotia by: Found at: <http://thans.ca/>

*Trauma from current or past experiences impacts each of us in different ways. Sometimes our past experiences influence the way we handle things in our current lives. The Nova Scotia Transition Houses work with women daily, who have experienced abuse in their lives and see its impact first hand. We have come to understand women who have experienced violence and abuse may be living with dementia and/or caring for someone who has dementia, and that community support is a vital tool for women facing these concerns. We are promoting a trauma informed approach regardless of which issue we see, and we strive to create connections between services providers that might otherwise have not been considered*

*If you have lived with violence and abuse at some point, and you are also facing challenges associated with dementia, you may wish to speak with services or individuals who understand; how these experiences impact one another, and the difference between the two.*

## This Booklet...

This booklet was created to provide information for service providers whose clients may be; a care partner for someone experiencing dementia; may show signs of possible dementia themselves; and may have past or current experiences of violence and abuse.

As service providers in rural Nova Scotia, we know what works is a collaborative approach. We hope that this information provides a variety of tools to help support those living with intersecting concerns.

This resource you will find information on several topics, which depending on the situation some or all may be useful. The design allows service providers to refer to sections of information when needed to better serve their clients. In addition, there is a safety plan located at the end of the resource intended specifically for service users.

Furthermore, in this resource you will find contact information for a number of agencies. Our goal is to strengthen current partnerships and encourage new ones as we work toward supporting people in the ways that will be most helpful to them.

We hope you find this information useful. If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions please contact Chrysalis House at: [admin@chrysalishouseassociation.org](mailto:admin@chrysalishouseassociation.org)



# Emergency Planning

People with dementia can become lost, even in familiar places. If you care for someone with Alzheimer's disease or other dementias, your greatest fear is your loved one going missing or coming to harm. Below are resources in preparation for or if your loved one goes missing.

## Call 911



RCMP Digby Detachment

If someone with dementia is missing, don't wait and don't search on your own. Call 9-1-1 immediately. Time is of the essence. Police would prefer to be alerted immediately.

Found at: <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/detach/en/d/373>

## Make an Identification Kit



Finding Your Way - helps people living with dementia, their families, care partners and communities to recognize the risk of going missing, be prepared for incidents of going missing, and ensure that people with dementia can live safely in the community. A Finding Your Way Identification kit can be shared with emergency responders. Found at: <http://findingyourwayontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/FYW-Safety-Kit-Identification-Kit-English-Jul2016.pdf>

## Invest in a Medic Alert Bracelet



Medic Alert is a 24/7 Emergency Hotline. Critical information and the hotline number are engraved on the unique MedicAlert blue bracelet worn by the person with dementia. Should they ever go missing, police can quickly identify them by calling us.

Found at: <https://www.medicalert.ca/safely-home>

## Create a Safety Plan

# Resources / Services

Chrysalis House – West Hants/Kings/Annapolis Counties (902) 679-1922 or TF 1-800-264-8682

Juniper House – Tri Counties of Digby, Yarmouth and Shelburne (902) 742-8689 or TF 1-800-266-4087

Alzheimer Society-NS (902) 422-7961 or TF 1-800-611-6345

Alzheimer Society Coordinator, Education and Outreach- Annapolis Valley (902)-790-4189

Seniors Mental Health Services- Kentville, TF 1-855-273-7110

Adult Protection Services, TF 1-800-2225-7225

Senior Safety Coordinators: Kings County (902) 375-3602; Hants County (902)758-5805; Annapolis County (902)665-4481; Digby County (902) 245-2579; Yarmouth County (902) 881-7107; Shelburne County (902) 637-2015

Mental Health Crisis Line, TF 1-888-429-8167

Victim Services - Kentville (902) 679-6201 or TF 1-800-565-1805

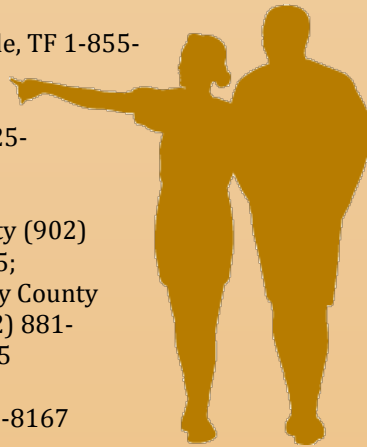
Child Protection (902) 678-6176 or TF 1-877-424-1177

Legal Aid/ Information - Kentville (902) 679-6110, TF 1-866-679-6110

The Women's Place Resource Centre (902) 532-1898

Tri County Women's Centre (902) 742-0085

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA): NS (902) 466-6600



# Moving Toward a Trauma Informed Approach

## Moving Toward a Trauma Informed Approach for Service Providers

In the discussion guide “Trauma-informed approaches: An introduction and Discussion Guide for Health and Social Service Providers” (2015), Trauma-informed practice (TIP) is promoted as a universal and systemic approach to service provision.

Found at:

[https://novascotia.ca/dhw/addictions/documents/TIP\\_Discussion\\_Guide\\_1.pdf](https://novascotia.ca/dhw/addictions/documents/TIP_Discussion_Guide_1.pdf)

It is based on an understanding of the prevalence of many forms of violence and trauma among children and adults. Trauma-informed practice is not about treating trauma; instead, it is about creating safety and trustworthiness through interactions by providing opportunities for choice, collaboration, and connection.

A key aspect of trauma-informed services is creating an environment in which clients are not further traumatized and where they can make decisions about their treatment needs at a pace that feels safe to them.

A trauma-informed approach is strengths-based, skill building and empowering, promoting self-regulation and resiliency, assisting children, youth, and families. Service providers emphasize teaching and modelling skills for recognizing triggers, calming, centering, and staying present.

Trauma-informed services recognize cultural and historical aspects of trauma and the need to be gender-responsive, culturally safe, and supportive of healing through cultural connections.

A trauma informed approach encourages the participation and involvement of clients and their peers in the design and delivery of services.

### PRINCIPLES

- Trauma awareness
- Safety and trustworthiness
- Opportunity for choice, collaboration, and connection
- Strengths-based skill building and empowerment
- Recognition of cultural, historical, and gender issues
- Promotion of service user and peer involvement

# Domestic or Family Abuse/Violence

Domestic or family abuse/violence is when someone intentionally uses one or more forms of abuse/violence with a family member, partner or former partner. It is characterized by an imbalance of power whereby the perpetrator uses abusive behaviors and tactics to obtain power and control over the victim causing fear. It can occur in all age, racial, social, economic, educational, occupational, and religious groups.

## Types of Abuse/Violence

Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use of physical force against another person in a way that ends up injuring the person, or puts the person at risk of being injured</li></ul>
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Verbal abuse including insults, ridicule, humiliation, insults or threats. Harassment, stalking, intimidation, controlling behavior or isolation.</li></ul>
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Withholding resources, stealing from the victim, or using the victims name to incur debt</li></ul>
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Forced Sex, unwanted touching, often linked to physical abuse</li></ul>
Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Failure to meet the basic physical and emotional needs of a person you are responsible for</li></ul>

If you yourself or you know someone experiencing domestic / family abuse or violence, there are resources and supports available listed at the end of this booklet.

*The effects of family violence are broad, impacting on the individual experiencing abuse, children who are exposed to the violence and the wider community.*



# Continuing Care

The following resources may be of assistance to those living with dementia and those who continue to care for them.

## Caregiver Benefit

This Benefit recognizes the important role of caregivers in their efforts to assist loved ones and friends. Potential benefit of \$400/month.

<https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/caregiver-benefit.asp>

## Health Equipment Loan Program

Specialized hospital type beds are loaned free of charge to seniors who need them at home.

<https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/health-equipment.asp>

## Home Care

Nursing services such as medical care, therapy and palliative care and a range of personal care and home support services.

<https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/home-care.asp>

## Home Oxygen Service

Eligible Nova Scotians can receive oxygen equipment.

<https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/home-oxygen.asp>

## Personal Alert Service

Financial assistance providing up to \$480/year to reimburse for the purchase of a personal alert assistance service.

<https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/personal-alert-service.asp>

## Respite Care

Facility-based respite care is made available for an affordable cost of \$34 a day.

<https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/respite-care.asp>

## Self-Managed Care

Allows people with physical disabilities to hire their own care providers and develop their own care plans.

<https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/self-managed-care.asp>

## Supportive Care

Supports eligible Nova Scotians with cognitive impairments by providing them with \$500/month for Home Support Services.

<https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/supportive-care.asp>

# Stresses of being a Care Partner

Caring for an individual with dementia can be challenging and, at times, overwhelming impacting every aspect of daily life. As the disease advances, their needs will increase, and care partner responsibilities will become more challenging. At the same time, the ability of the person with dementia to show appreciation will diminish.

Frustration and stress may negatively impact physical health and may trigger compassion fatigue - feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and social isolation, leading to the growing inability to be empathic.

Maintaining emotional and physical fitness is crucial. Care partners need to:

- Learn to recognize the warnings signs of frustration.
- Calm down physically.
- Modify thoughts in a way that reduces stress.
- Communicate assertively.
- Learn to ask for help.

## Planning A Support Network

- Plan as early on as possible
- Ask for Help
- Learn or Update care partner skills
- Join a support group
- Learn how to manage stress
- Make use of available resources
- Plan for your own care

### CARE PARTNER STRESS

- *Denial about the disease and its effects*
- *Anger at the person*
- *Social withdrawal*
- *Anxiety about the future*
- *Depression*
- *Exhaustion*
- *Sleeplessness*
- *Irritability that triggers negative responses and actions.*
- *Lack of concentration that makes it difficult to perform familiar tasks.*
- *Health problems*

Source: Alzheimer's Association

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*Caregiving distress mimics clinical signs of PTSD*

*National Institutes of Health*

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More information can be found at The Alzheimer Society of Canada website: <http://www.alzheimer.ca/en/Home>

# Past Childhood Abuse

Abuse, trauma and/or interpersonal victimization early in childhood can result from a range of things such as living in domestically violent situations or being raised in situations where the parent's needs – such as drug use or alcohol abuse – influence their ability to provide for their child's needs.

Experiencing trauma, abuse and/or interpersonal victimization as a child can impact on an adult's quality of life in fundamental ways. It can affect mental health, physical health, and relationships. Below is a range of psychological conditions that are associated with childhood abuse or trauma.

- Panic attacks
- Depression
- Dissociation
- Dissociative Identity Disorder
- Bipolar
- Schizophrenia
- Eating disorders
- Personality disorders
- Post-traumatic stress disorder

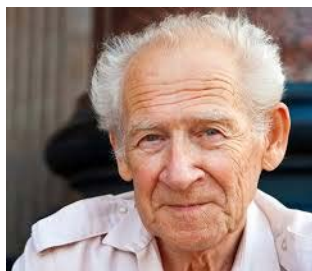
The consequences of experiencing child abuse and neglect will vary considerably. For some adults, the effects of child abuse and neglect are chronic and debilitating, other adults have less adverse outcomes. Some childhood abuse victims have problems in their adult relationships and trusting other people again. Many even end up in abusive relationships and find themselves re-enacting the past. Research is now linking Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and adult survivors of childhood sexual and/or physical abuse. Community support is a vital tool in preventing child abuse and the PTSD that can result from it.

## Duty to Report

The Children and Family Services Act, section 23 (1) states that every person who has information, whether or not it is confidential or privileged, indicating that a child is in need of protective services shall forthwith report that information to an agency.

# Abuse/Trauma & Dementia

Violence, abuse and trauma can have far reaching consequences.



## Abuse/Trauma Link to Dementia

Recent research is focusing on the potential link of cumulative, chronic everyday life stressors to the cognitive dysfunction associated with aging, including potential links between Trauma, Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and Alzheimer's Disease.

Dr. Don Weaver, a senior scientist with the Toronto Western Research Institute, states that much like the growing evidence that repeated hits to the head in sports can lead to early-onset dementia, more recent concerns are that victims of domestic/family abuse and interpersonal victimization could be at risk of dementia too.

(Evaluating spousal abuse as a potential risk factor for Alzheimer's disease: rationale, needs and challenges. Leung FH1, Thompson K, Weaver DF. Neuroepidemiology. 2006;27(1):13-6. 2006 Jun 13.)

The Alzheimer Society of Canada states that people with dementia are, in turn, more vulnerable to abuse, financially, verbally, physically and psychologically due to their cognitive impairment and dependence upon others.

## Trauma Linked to Care Partners



A 2009 study by the National Institutes of Health found that care partners often experience chronic stress and caring for those with dementia can cause significant psychological distress, impaired health habits, psychiatric illness and physical illness.

Found at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2791523/>

Barry J. Jacobs, Psy.D., developed "The Emotional Survival Guide for Caregivers: Looking After Yourself and Your Family While Helping an Aging Parent which can guide a care partner throughout the process of caring and beyond.

Found at: <http://www.emotionalsurvivalguide.com/book.htm>

# Alzheimer Society, NS

Behind every person with Alzheimer's disease or other dementias, there are hundreds of people dedicated to helping.

**Alzheimer Society**  
NOVA SCOTIA

The Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia is the leading not-for-profit health organization working to improve the quality of life for Nova Scotians affected by Alzheimer's disease or other dementias and advance the search for the cause and cure.

Found at: <http://www.alzheimer.ca/en/ns/About-us>

The Alzheimer Society offers care partner support groups that provide a safe place where you can connect and receive support to help each other through this journey. If you are interested in participating in a support group more information is available at:

<http://www.alzheimer.ca/en/ns/We-can-help/Support>

The Alzheimer Society offers a variety of educational programs to help provide information and strategies for people who have been diagnosed with the disease, their family, and care partners through this journey.

For more information for educational programs visit:

<http://www.alzheimer.ca/en/ns/We-can-help/Education>

First Link is an Alzheimer Society program that provides comprehensive information about dementia and connects people with dementia and their care partner with programs that are available in their own communities.

For more information about the First Link program visit:

<http://www.alzheimer.ca/en/ns/We-can-help/First%20Link>

## Alzheimer InfoLine

*An opportunity to talk with someone who understands*

**Call 1-800-611-6345**





# Public Safety & Dementia

The police are devoted to making our community safe for everyone. Occasionally, people living with dementia may find themselves in situations where they encounter the police.

Encounters with the police may occur due to situations such as appearing lost; not being properly dressed for the weather, unable to answer questions and/or giving inappropriate answers; not following the rules of the road; accidentally taking items from a store while thinking it's paid; and displaying inappropriate or harmful behavior.

## Driving

As the brain changes, it may not be safe for a person with dementia to drive. It is important that you call 9-1-1 immediately if a person with dementia attempts to drive and is a danger to themselves or others.

## Behavior

There are some behaviors that a person with dementia may exhibit, which include aggression, wandering, and physical or verbal agitation. These behaviors can be extremely distressing to both the person with dementia, and for those experiencing them. If you feel that your safety is at risk leave the area and call 9-1-1 immediately

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*A diagnosis of dementia does not preclude an individual from being charged criminally by the police for domestic/family violence*

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## Physical Safety

If you feel your safety is at risk for any reason call 9-1-1. When you are at risk, reaching out for help is the best way to protect yourself and the person you are caring for. Police and health care services will work with you to care for the person with dementia and protect the safety of everyone involved.

# What is Dementia?

Dementia is not a specific disease, it's a general term that describes a wide range of symptoms that are caused by disorders which effect the brain. Dementia is associated with a decline in memory or other thinking skills severe enough to reduce a person's ability to perform everyday activities. Alzheimer's disease accounts for 60 to 80 percent of cases. Vascular dementia, which occurs after a stroke, is the second most common dementia type.

## Symptoms & Signs of Dementia



Getting an accurate and timely diagnosis can rule out causes of memory loss not due to dementia and can assist you in accessing the supports and resources that you need.

More info can be obtained at Alzheimer Society, Nova Scotia. Found at: <http://www.alzheimer.ca/en/ns/About-dementia/What-is-dementia>

Resources specific to Indigenous peoples can be obtained at Indigenous Cognition & Aging Awareness Research Exchange. Found at: <https://www.i-caare.ca/factsheets>

# How Does Dementia Affect Me or My Loved Ones?

Dementia affects people in different ways. The different disorders affecting the brain causing dementia, can lead to changes in a person's behaviour and/or personality. Since Dementia is progressive, people with it may not recognize the changes in their personality or their actions and behaviors.

*People living with dementia may not understand that these changes are happening or that they are behaving differently.*

*H. Theresa Daly, Reg. N., MSW, RSW*

## Psychological Changes

- Personality Changes
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Inappropriate behavior
- Paranoia
- Agitation
- Hallucinations



Individuals experiencing these effects should seek the assistance of a health care professional. Care partners of the individual will find they need to change their own responses and routines to reduce triggers and risks which can initiate extreme behavior changes.

Not only is it very important for the individual with dementia to seek additional assistance when experiencing personality and behavior changes, those who care for them also need to seek supports and resources to assist them emotionally and learn coping techniques.

# Vulnerable Adults

Some adults are more vulnerable than others. They may be unable to protect themselves from harm because of disability, age or illness.

## Who Needs Protection?

Those adults who experienced abuse, trauma and/or interpersonal violence in their past or are suffering from dementia are more vulnerable to harm and may need community care services.

Nova Scotia, Adult Protection Services defines vulnerable adults as:

“Those 16 years and older who are living in a situation of significant risk of self-neglect or experiencing abuse or neglect by others which results in serious harm to the person and their inability to protect themselves from abuse or neglect by reason of mental and/or physical incapacity.”

Adult Protection Services has the authority to intervene based on the following:

- The person is living in an immediate/significant level of risk and does not understand or appreciate the risk he/she is living in.
- The person does not have the physical capacity to protect him/herself from the assessed risk.
- The person has a permanent, irreversible condition that affects their physical or mental ability to protect themselves.

Found at:

[novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/FactSheets/Protecting\\_Vulnerable\\_Adults\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_ENGLISH.pdf](https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/FactSheets/Protecting_Vulnerable_Adults_Fact_Sheet_ENGLISH.pdf)

For more information for protecting vulnerable adults visit:

<https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/protecting-vulnerable-adults.asp>

## Duty to Report

Under the Adult Protection Act, section 5 (1) states that every person who has information, whether or not it is confidential or privileged, indicating that an adult is in need of protection shall report that information to the Minister.

*If you know of an adult in need of protection, you must immediately report it by calling 1-800-225-7225.*

*Adult Protection Services*