

Is it SAFE?

A companion tool to the “Seniors at Risk Guidebook for Service Providers”



How to use this Guide:

This guide encompasses the many dimensions of risk and vulnerability related to older adults and is intended to be used as a communication tool to inform further assessments, interventions (i.e. safety plans) and community referrals. It should be used alongside the complete Guidebook for Service Providers. **It is strongly recommended that this document be completed with the older adult at risk.** Stress your desire to keep the older adult safe and functioning in the community. A home visit is frequently needed. If a language barrier or sensory impairment is present, efforts must be made to enhance communication (i.e. interpretation services).



Suicide, Social, Substance

- Changes in mood, energy, interest or sleep
- Experiencing social isolation
- Stressful life events or losses (i.e. driver’s license)
- Experiences discrimination
- Substance misuse or dependence
- Caregiver burnout
- Major life changes or transitions
- Smoking cigarettes
- Safety concerns with family or substitute decision maker
- Suicidal ideation
- Other: _____



Abuse and Neglect

- Self or other reports of physical abuse _____
- Self or other reports of emotional abuse (incl. stalking) _____
- Self or other reports of sexual abuse _____
- Self or other reports of financial abuse _____
- Self or other reports of neglect _____
- Legal/justice system involvement ([Safe Pathways](#))



Functional

- Concerns with hygiene; presents unkempt
- Concerns about malnutrition
- Concerns about wandering
- Recent falls
- Recent hospital admission
- Recent changes in cognition
- Taking more than 5 medications
- Medication mismanagement
- Currently driving
- Diagnosis of Major Neurocognitive Disorder
- Responsive Behaviour (BPSD + associated risk): _____
- Frequent use of Emergency Department
- Other: _____



Environmental

- Unsafe housing
- Unstable housing (risk of eviction)
- Hoarding
- Squalor
- Lives alone
- Home safety risks (smoking, pets, firearms): _____
- Household composition (family, young children): _____
- Other: _____

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Seniors at Risk
Guelph Wellington

Risk Considerations

If there is immediate danger to self or others, the older adult may need involuntary hospitalization. In other instances, it may be appropriate to utilize resources such as respite services, facility placement, adult day services, or home care services. Risk is present on a continuum of severity and likelihood of harm and can be categorized in many ways. The presence of substantial risk necessitates ongoing monitoring, intervention, risk mitigation and potentially hospitalization. Examples of high risk situations include: dangerous behaviors or circumstances that can cause serious and imminent harm including physical aggression, elder abuse or neglect, intimate partner violence, severe self-neglect, and sudden deterioration of health. Inability to protect oneself from danger or victimization is another example of a high risk situation. It is also important to note that an individual can **choose** to engage in risky behavior despite being aware of the possible consequences. **Older adults can be capable and choose to live at risk.**

Client Strengths, Wishes and Capacity

Establishing the older adult’s capacity to make and implement decisions is a crucial component of every risk assessment. Another essential component of risk assessment includes an examination of an individual’s strengths, protective factors, resources, and willingness to accept intervention. Service providers must weigh all of these factors combined.

Concerns with Support Network (formal/informal)

Client has a Substitute Decision Maker (SDM) Yes No

Next Steps/Intervention

The goals of intervention in cases of vulnerability are to promote autonomy, ensure safety, reduce morbidity and mortality, maximize function, and improve quality of life.

Overview of risk provided to Primary Care Provider Info provided to client/family re: Advance Care Planning

For more information and definitions visit gwseniorsatrisk.ca