



Community Legal
Information Association of PEI



P.E.I. People First

Being Safer:

A Guide for Women with Intellectual Challenges



The Rights of Women with Disabilities

There are laws that protect the rights of people with disabilities. The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* says everyone in Canada has the right to live, be free and be safe. Canada signed an agreement with other countries called the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. This agreement says every woman with a disability has the right to live safely without violence or abuse. She also has the right to privacy and to decide what is best for herself.



What is Abuse?

Abuse happens when someone hurts you or doesn't give you the care you need. Abuse can be:

- **Physical:** hitting, slapping, kicking, pushing, pinching, forcing you to stay in a chair or room
- **Sexual:** unwanted touching, kissing, rubbing, unwanted sexual comments or sex
- **Emotional:** scaring you, calling you names, treating you like a child, yelling, insulting, controlling, stalking, taking your things, keeping you away from other people or making you feel bad about yourself
- **Financial:** taking your money or controlling your bank account
- **Spiritual or cultural:** making fun of your spiritual beliefs, refusing to let you attend religious activities, insulting your culture or heritage, refusing to let you take part in cultural activities

Women with disabilities get abused more often because they often depend on other people for help or care. Because women with disabilities have special needs, they can face different kinds of abuse.

You can be abused by someone you know and trust such as a family member, caregiver or professional. You can be treated with abuse by strangers, neighbours, friends or community members.

You have the right to be safe. Abuse is wrong and against the law.



This Book

This booklet is a “safety plan workbook”. A **safety plan** is used to help you to be safer. It gives you the chance to think about what to do ahead of time and how to handle the situation if you are abused or you are unsafe.

Read through this booklet carefully. If you need help, ask someone you trust. When you write down the name of someone in this book, remember to ask that person if they are willing to help you.

Women with intellectual challenges from across PEI helped to create this booklet. Everything in it is based on the information they gave us.

Every woman is different. You may have special concerns about your safety. If you need more help with your safety planning, contact Anderson House at **1-800-240-9894** (toll free) or **892-0960**.

Being Safe at Home

Sometimes you may feel unsafe at home. You may feel unsafe at home if:

- People in your home yell and fight.
- People in your home drink or do drugs.
- Someone you don't know is banging on your front door or ringing the doorbell and running away.
- People call and hang up, sometimes more than once.
- Your home does not have proper locks, fire alarms and other safety items.
- You are alone or lonely.

There may be other times you don't feel safe.

Things I can do:

When I feel unsafe because of people living in my home, I will stay away from places where I might be trapped. The places where I will go when I am scared by people living in my home are:

*If I need to get out of the house, what doors, windows, elevators or stairs would I use?
This is the way I will get out of the house:*

If I need to leave to get to a safe place, I can pack a bag of important things like medications, medical cards, some money, and an extra set of keys. A safe place I can leave it or keep it hidden is:

I may need help to leave the house. Here is who I can call for help:

Name: _____ Phone: _____.

Here is where I would go: _____.

If I am afraid of any of the people living in my home, I can:

- Talk to someone I trust, like a friend or family member. The person I will call is: _____ and the phone number is: _____.
- Call Anderson House at **1-800-240-9894** (toll free) or **892-0960**.
- Talk to my social worker: Name: _____ Phone: _____.

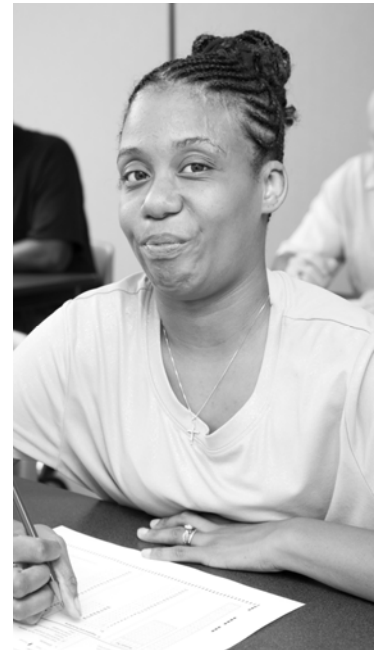
Call 911 if:

- A crime is happening right now. For example, if someone is trying to break into your home.
- You or someone else is in danger right now. For example, if someone is attacking you.
- You or someone else is having a medical emergency. For example, if someone is having a heart attack.
- If there is a fire.



If you have to leave your house, gather together things that are important, such as:

- Medication, hearing aids, eye glasses, walker, wheelchair, or other medical aids.
- Keys for your house, car, and work.
- Money, cheque books, bank books, your debit cards.
- Health cards, records of needles you've gotten.
- Any important cards or documents about you or your home.
- Change of clothes.
- Cell phone.
- Items your children need, if you have children.
- Family photos
- Anything else that is important to you.
- _____



If I have pets, Anderson House can help me find a good place for them while I work on being safe. I can call Anderson House at **1-800-240-9894** (toll free) or in the Charlottetown area at **892-0960**. I can also ask a friend or neighbour to look after my animals. Plans for my animals can be:

If I am feeling alone or lonely, I can call: _____ Phone: _____ .

If I would like to meet new people and make new friends, I can:

- Join a club or group - I can ask my friends and family to help me find safe clubs to join.
- Find out what events are happening in my town.
- Idea: _____
- Idea: _____

Some tips for feeling safe at home are:

1. Make sure you have good locks on your doors. You may need to talk to your landlord about getting good locks. Always lock your doors.
2. Make sure you have working smoke detectors and fire alarms. Check the batteries.
3. Have a working phone so you can call for help. Make sure your cell phone is charged. Keep emergency numbers near your phone. You can use the list on page 18.
4. Get to know your neighbours. Neighbours can call the police if they hear violence happening in your home or they think you are in danger.
5. Ask a friend or family member to check in on you to make sure you are safe.
6. Tell your social worker if you are afraid of the people in your home or your neighbours.
7. Meet new people and make new friends in places where you feel safe.

If your home is unsafe because it needs repairs like a broken lock or has health hazards like mold, call or write a letter to let your landlord know right away. If the problems are not fixed, call the Island Regulatory and Appeals Commission at **892-3501** or **1-800-501-6268** (toll free) to make a complaint. If you need help calling them or help finding a new place to live, speak with your social worker, friends or family.

If I need help to talk to my landlord or the Island Regulatory and Appeals Commission, I will call:

Name: _____ Phone: _____ .



Being Safe in a Relationship

Family, friends and romantic partners can be a wonderful part of life. However, sometimes people we love and trust can become violent. You may feel unsafe in a relationship because the person you are with:

- Goes through your things without your permission.
- Yells at you or uses an angry tone of voice.
- Touches you in a sexual way without your permission.
- Teases you, calls you names and makes you feel bad about yourself.
- Doesn't treat you with respect and dignity.
- Hits, slaps, pushes, or holds you down.
- Takes away your wheelchair, walker, or other things you need.
- Takes your money or makes you give them your money



There may be other times you don't feel safe in a relationship.

If someone is hurting me, I need to tell someone. I can tell my social worker, a trusted friend or family member. The person I will tell is:

Name: _____ Phone: _____ .

If they do not help me, I will tell someone else. That person will be:

Name: _____ Phone: _____ .

If you are in danger, call 911 or your local police right away.

You can also call Anderson House at **1-800-240-9894** (toll free) or **892-0960**. If you are being sexually abused or have been sexually assaulted, you can call the PEI Rape & Sexual Assault Centre at **566-1864** or **1-866-566-1864** (toll free).

You can report the abuse and ask for help from **Adult Protection** at any Home Care office. Adult Protection is a government program that protects adults from abuse and neglect:

Souris: **687-7096**

Montague: **838-0786**

O'Leary: **859-8730**

Charlottetown: **368-4790**

Summerside: **888-8440**



You can also report the abuse to the **Police** at:

Charlottetown: **629-4172**

Queens District RCMP: **368-9300**

Summerside: **432-1201**

East Prince RCMP: **436-9300**

Kensington: **836-4499**

West Prince RCMP: **853-9300**

Montague RCMP: **838-9300**

Souris RCMP: **687-9300**

The phone number for
the police near me is:

If you need help with the justice system, you can call Victim Services in Charlottetown at **368-4582** or in Summerside at **888-8217**. Victim Services is a government program that helps victims of crime, including people who are abused or neglected. A worker at Victim Services can help you apply for a court order to protect you. A judge can make a court order that says the person hurting you cannot talk to you or come near you, your home or work. A Victim Services worker can help you prepare for court, if you need to go to court.

If you need to get some legal information or legal advice, you can call Community Legal Information Association at **892-0853** or **1-800-240-9798** (toll free). Community Legal Information Association has legal information in plain language.

If the person who is hurting me is my caregiver, I can call my social worker or trusted family member or friend to help me find a new caregiver. I may need help until I can find a new caregiver. Someone I can ask to help me while I get a new caregiver is:

Name: _____ Phone: _____ .

About Disability Support Payments: *If the person who is hurting me collects my disability support payments for me, I can call my Disability Support Program (DSP) caseworker to have a new person collect my payments for me.*

Caseworker name: _____ Phone: _____ .



Being Safe at Work

You may have a job. Sometimes a workplace is unsafe. You may feel unsafe at work if:

- Co-workers make fun of you or don't invite you to staff social activities.
- The building is not accessible for people in a wheelchair or who use a walker.
- You are not told how to do things in a way that you can understand.
- There is a lot of noise and confusion.
- A staff person is too controlling.
- A co-worker is bothering you or touching you without your permission.



There may be other times you feel unsafe at work.

To feel safer at your job, you can ask your supervisor or boss to show you:

- Where the emergency exits are, including exits that are accessible for wheelchairs.
- Where the first aid kits are.
- Where the fire alarm and fire extinguishers are.
- What the rules are about bullying at work and what you can do if you're being bullied.
- Any safety rules in a way you can understand.

You can also ask for a tour of the workplace, so you know where everything is.

I can ask _____ to help me make sure my wage is fair and to help me decide how I want to get my pay.

If I don't understand my job duties or if I need training, I will talk to my supervisor. If I need someone to support me while I talk to my supervisor, I will ask this person to come with me:

Name: _____ Phone: _____ .

If my workplace isn't accessible for me, I can talk to my supervisor about the things I need to be able to come to work and do my job. This is what I will tell my supervisor about the problem:

If your supervisor does not fix the problem, you can call the PEI Human Rights Commission at **368-4180** or **1-800-237-5031** (toll free) . The law says that employers must “reasonably accommodate” people with disabilities. This means that after you tell your employer that your workplace or job is not accessible, the employer must make changes so that it is possible for you to do your job. However, if the changes you need will mean the business can't stay open or that other employees will be unsafe, the employer does not have to make the changes. The PEI Human Rights Commission has more information about this.

I have the right to be treated equally and with respect. If co-workers are teasing me or making jokes that upset me, I will speak with my supervisor. If I need someone to support me while I talk to my supervisor, I will ask this person to come with me:

Name: _____ Phone: _____ .



If your supervisor does not stop the teasing, you can call the PEI Human Rights Commission at **368-4180** or **1-800-237-5031** (toll free). The law says that employers must provide respectful and safe workplaces. You can also call Community Legal Information Association, if you want to get some legal information or to talk about your rights at **892-0853** or **1-800-240-9798** (toll free).

If you need support and information, you can also call:

- PEI People First: **892-8989**
- PEI Citizen Advocacy: **566-3523**
- PEI Council of People with Disabilities: **892-9149** or **1-888-473-4263** (toll free)
- PEI Association for Community Living: **566-4844** or **1-888-360-8681** (toll free)



Being Safe in the Community

Sometimes you may feel unsafe in your community. This may be because:

- Someone yells at you or says hurtful things to you.
- Someone follows you.
- You have to go out alone, sometimes at night.
- Someone tries to make you get into their car.
- Someone keeps asking where you live, for your phone number or email address.
- Cars are going too fast or will not stop for you at crosswalks.
- You feel like the police do not believe you or that they are not helping you.

Knowing your neighbours and knowing people in your community can make you safer. There are many ways to get to know people. You can join community groups or a church. You may wish to become a member of PEI People First, which is a self-advocacy group for people with intellectual challenges. You may wish to contact PEI Citizen Advocacy to see if you can be paired with a friend.

I want to know more people in my community. Some ideas I have for meeting people are:

If someone is following you, you need to go to a place with other people like a gas station or a grocery store. Once you are there, you can ask to use the phone to call **911**. If you know the person and he or she has bothered you before, you can call Victim Services at **368-4582** or **902-888-8217**. A Victim Services worker can help you get a court order that says the person must not come near you or contact you.

If I am afraid, I can call:

Name: _____ Phone: _____ .



If you have to go out alone in your community, you can:

- Stay on main roads, where there are lots of people.
- Try to do your errands during the day.
- Think about calling someone so they know where you are going and when you should be back.
- Wear a reflective badge, armband or vest or carry a flashlight so that drivers can see you.
- Use crosswalks.
- Make sure your wheelchair or walker works properly and safely.
- Carry a cell phone, if you have one, and call or text someone to let them know where you are going.

If you are unhappy with how a police officer is treating you, you can ask to speak to his or her supervising officer. You can also call the Police Commissioner to make a complaint. The phone number for the Police Commissioner is **368-7200** or **1-877-541-7204**. If the officer is an RCMP officer, you can make a complaint to the Commission for Public Complaints at **1-800-665-6878**. If you need help making a complaint, you can call Victim Services in Charlottetown at **368-4582** or in Summerside at **888-8217**.

If I feel unsafe in my community because sidewalks or public buildings are not accessible or are dangerous, I can talk to my Town Council. I will tell them:

Here is the phone number for my Town Council: _____

Here are the names of some of my Town Councillors:

Name: _____	Phone: _____.
Name: _____	Phone: _____.
Name: _____	Phone: _____.

If I need help to talk to Town Council, I will ask:

Name: _____ Phone: _____.

You can also ask for help from:

- PEI People First: **892-8989**
- PEI Citizen Advocacy: **566-3523**
- PEI Council of People with Disabilities: **892-9149** or **1-888-473-4263**
- PEI Association for Community Living: **566-4844** or **1-888-360-8681**

Safety Tips

The women who helped us write this booklet had safety tips for other women with intellectual challenges.

Tips:

- Have a buddy system. You and your friends can keep each other safe. You can walk together, check in on each other, and have fun!
- Have a set of emergency numbers by your phone. We have included a list on page 18 that you can cut out and put by your phone.
- Stand up for yourself and speak up for your rights.
- Share your story, if you are comfortable. You may find others have experienced the same thing.
- Share the information in this book with other people. You may really help someone.
- Make plans. Talk to your friends or family members about different times you may be unsafe and what you can do to be safer.
- Be yourself. Try not to care what other people think of you.
- Trust your feelings. If something feels scary or wrong, it probably is. Get to safety!



Important Phone Numbers

Police and RCMP

Charlottetown Police Department	629-4172
Queens District RCMP	368-9300
Summerside Police Department	432-1201
East Prince RCMP	436-9300
Kensington Police Department	836-4499
West Prince RCMP	853-9300
Montague RCMP	838-9300
Souris RCMP	687-9300

Call 911 if:

- A crime is happening right now. For example, if someone is trying to break into your home.
- You or someone else is in danger right now. For example, if someone is attacking you.
- You or someone else is having a medical emergency. For example, if someone is having a heart attack.
- If there is a fire.

Anderson House (24-hour crisis line)

892-0960 or 1-800-240-9894

Provides 24-hour service for physically and emotionally abused women and their children.

Chief Mary Bernard Memorial Women's Shelter (24-hour crisis line) **831-2332 or 1-855-297-2332**

Provides safe housing on Lennox Island to women and children who are experiencing family violence or who are homeless.

PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre **566-1864 or 1-866-566-1864**

Provides support and counselling to adults who have experienced sexual assault or sexual abuse when they were children.

Victim Services: Charlottetown **368-4582**; Summerside **888-8218**

Provides victims with information and support about the criminal justice system.

Adults in Need of Protection

Helps vulnerable adults who are unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect.

Charlottetown: **368-4790**

Souris: **687-7096**

Montague: **838-0772**

Summerside: **888-8440**

O'Leary: **859-8730**

Friend I can call if I am afraid: _____

My Rights

I have the right to:

- Decide what I want to do in life.
- Live and work in a safe place.
- Decide where I will live and work.
- Have relationships, get married, have children.
- Decide when and if I have sex or take part in sexual touching.
- Choose who my friends are.
- Be respected and treated with dignity.
- Do what I want with my body.
- Decide what I want to eat and when I want to eat.
- Say no to anything that feels uncomfortable, scary or wrong.
- Speak up and be listened to.
- Have my privacy respected.
- Have my belongings respected.
- Choose what medical treatments I get.
- Take part in my community, groups and activities.





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For more information, you can telephone CLIA at 902-892-0853 or 1-800-240-9798, visit our website at www.cliapei.ca or email us at clia@cliapei.ca. You can also find us at: www.facebook.com/CLIAPEI, www.twitter.com/CLIAPEI and www.youtube.com/CLIAPEI.

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P.E.I. People First is a self-advocacy group run by and for adults who have an intellectual disability. People First members work together to:

- ✓ promote equality for people labelled with an intellectual disability
- ✓ help one other to speak up and make decisions
- ✓ teach the community about our rights and abilities
- ✓ support each other to live as independently as possible

If you would like more information about People First, please call our office at 892-8989 or e-mail us at peipeoplefirst@eastlink.ca. Our address is 81 Prince Street, Charlottetown, PE C1A 4R3.

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