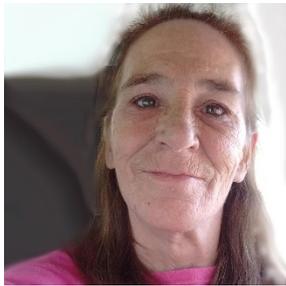




# SAFE AND SECURE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

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Wellness is a commonly ignored health crisis in rural areas. As a Branch Manager of a small library in a small rural community, most of my community's needs are apparent, however, there are hidden issues that may not come into the light often but are always there under the surface. Many problems feel way out of our control, like poverty, lack of city support, or housing availability and cost.

Women are also the most likely people in our communities to be the silent sufferers of harassment, abuse, and assault. This is a guide for an adaptable enriched program to support women's feelings of safety and security.

What is in this tool?

This tool will help facilitate a better awareness of available resources for community members to improve Physical and Mental Health outcomes by building a sense of Shared Identity as well as Individual Voice and Power.

## IN THEIR WORDS

"And the best way to change the kids is to educate them. To show them options. To expose them to other things, other ways of living, other ways of seeing the world. To get them into the library and into community programs where they feel love. Where they are not talked down to. Where they are heard. Where they feel safe."

Susan, interview #5-2-14

## AWARENESS OF LOCAL RESOURCES

Throughout the guide below, I will use a program designed for local women as an example, but you can identify which community members may need the most support in your town right now.

Do you feel safe in your community, in the way you define safety?

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Are there "hidden" safety issues that are not openly discussed in your community?

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Does your community have in-town health care options available to residents?

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Before moving on to the next section, take this space to write down any connections you see between the health and safety concerns in your community, and the assets or potential partner organizations you listed above.?

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## ROADMAP FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

This section will walk you through the steps to develop an empowerment program for a specific audience in your community. This will include: building a positive connection with a local support agency or organization; helping the members of your community have a safe location and resources for physical and mental wellbeing; Improving feelings of power in participating individuals; and improve members of the community's knowledge of resources to continue to enrich and empower themselves and their communities.

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### Step 1. Find a Partner

Who would you contact first to partner with on this program?

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In my community we began by contacting our local law enforcement for help finding a self-defense instructor. Due to the target participants being people who identify as women, some of whom may have experienced violence, we sought out a female instructor trained to work with trauma survivors.

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**Step 2. Identify Local Resources**

We contacted our region's women's shelter for a speaker who could share information, strategies, and resources with the women in the community.

Which people, agencies and organizations in your region can provide trusted information and resources to your target participants?

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**Step 3. Hold an Event**

It is okay to keep it manageable to start; you are not going to solve all the problems right away. Our first Women's Night Out was a partnership with our local police. Our guest speaker was regional and a local officer provided self-defense training.

Write down some ideas for an event you could hold.

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**Step 4. Assess, Revise, and Expand on Your Idea**

Our event was a great start, but feeling secure is about more than just self-defense. We continued to seek partners to grow our resource connecting service, and we are now partnering with our local Department of Health offices.

To help determine next steps we asked participants: In what ways did this program benefit you? Was there anything missing that you would like to see in future programming? What about this program brought you out to the library? What other programs and services you would like to see in your community?

**How will you use your first event to build stronger support systems for your target participants?**

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**Step 5. Build a Community Culture of Awareness, Collaboration, and Action!**

Our connection with the Department of Health led to a Wellness Fair. Our service focus is still on women, but we made the Wellness Fair feel more like a community wide celebration of wellness and power.

What are some things you can do to bring hidden issues into the light to build a more supportive and secure community culture?



## NATIONAL PREVENTION AND SUPPORT RESOURCES

Below are some national resources for individuals and families facing abuse. Many of them can help you identify state and local resources in your area.

**National Resources for Sexual Assault Survivors and their Loved Ones**, this is a number one site that covers everything from elderly abuse to sexual abuse, mental health and suicide resources as well as military and resources from legal help to prevention and training. <https://www.rainn.org/national-resources-sexual-assault-survivors-and-their-loved-ones> (includes 24/7 help, a telephone number (800-656-HOPE), live chat and resources on a national, statewide and local level).

**Child Abuse: Darkness to light**, helps people not only recognize child sexual abuse but actually GET TRAINED to Learn to prevent, recognize, & react responsibly to child sexual abuse. <https://www.d2l.org/>

Child abuse, sometimes called child maltreatment, describes four types of child mistreatment: physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, and neglect. In many cases, children are the victims of more than one type of abuse. The abusers can be parents or other family members, caregivers such as teachers or babysitters, acquaintances (including other children), and (in very rare instances) strangers.

National Child Abuse Hotline: They can provide local referrals for services. A centralized call center provides the caller with the option of talking with or texting a counselor. They are also connected to a language line that can provide service in over 140 languages. Call or text hotline: 800.422.4453. <https://www.childhelp.org/>

**National Domestic Violence Hotline**: Through this hotline an advocate can provide local direct service resources (safehouse shelters, transportation, casework assistance) and crisis intervention. Interpreter services available in 170 languages. They also partner with the Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Center to provide a videophone option. Hotline: 800.799.SAFE. <https://www.thehotline.org/>

**National Center for Victims of Crime** helps victims of crime rebuild their lives. We are dedicated to serving individuals, families, and communities harmed by crime. This site includes a variety of resources including but not limited to finding the right legal help if you have been a victim of a crime, safe neighborhoods resources and prison reform resources. <https://victimsofcrime.org/>

**Eldercare** Locator, a public service of the U.S. Administration on Aging connecting you to services for older adults and their families. You can also reach us at 1-800-677-1116. <https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx>