
Manual for Seniors' Training and Empowerment Project **(STEP)**

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Preface:

Settlement Assistance and Family Support Services (formerly South Asian Family Support Services) is a non-profit, charitable community based multi-service organization that offers linguistically and culturally appropriate services to the community in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) with a particular emphasis on un-served and underserved areas of Scarborough since 1989. For more than 30 years, SAFSS has been a leader in serving and meeting the needs of our diverse from diverse communities. This legacy of community service is clearly reflected in SAFSS' mission, vision and values, and is the source of our energy as we look into the future.

Mission

Our mission is to assist, educate, enhance capacity and empower newcomers, women, youth, seniors, children and families in their integration process and improve their health and quality of life to realize their fullest potential and become contributing members of the Canadian society.

Seniors Training and Empowerment Project (STEP):

SAFSS submitted a small proposal titled “**Seniors Training and Empowerment Project (STEP)**” to the **New Horizons for Seniors under the Ministry of Service Canada** in 2017-2018 and the New Horizons for Seniors has approved the requested money to address the overt and covert forms of abuse for South Asian Seniors and help them lead a dignified life without abuse.

Senior abuse among the South Asian community exists in staggering proportions in Toronto. However, it remains invisible

and silent due to cultural and linguistic factors. Our proposal Seniors' Training and Empowerment Project (STEP) is intended to initiate a community response to senior abuse amongst visible minorities from 7 South Asian countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri-Lanka, Nepal, Burma and Bhutan.

The project increases coordinated community response to address senior abuse with a particular emphasis on the South Asian community. The primary objective of the proposal is to address the overt and covert issues of senior abuse including financial abuse.

Duration of the program: April, 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019

The main objectives of the proposal are:

- To promote senior safety and address overt and covert issues of senior abuse
- Eliminate or reduce re-victimization
- Strengthen individual knowledge and skills in the community with a particular emphasis on seniors, youth and their family members and enhance community response
- Hold perpetrators accountable
- Promote community education on senior abuse by encouraging community leaders to educate their communities in formal and informal gatherings, meetings and functions
- Coordinate service providers and the legal system to address senior abuse
- Foster coalitions and networks in the community to address senior abuse

The project addresses:

1. Physical abuse such as beating, punching, pushing or shoving, slapping, hitting by hand or other materials and physical coercion.
2. Emotional or psychological abuse such as insulting the person, name-calling, yelling, ignoring, threatening etc.
3. Financial abuse such as causing financial hardship, cashing pension or other cheques without authorization
4. Neglect such as personal care, safety, comfortable living conditions, a clean environment, personal space for privacy, occasional outings etc.
5. Isolation such as socially isolating them, not allowing visitors to meet them, not allowing them to go to the park, evening walks or social outings
6. Medical abuse such as not allowing them to go on doctor's visits, to buy medicines, to have required tests done and to receive personal care from care givers
7. Human rights issue such as withholding information, restricting the person's liberty and freedom, going through their mail and ridiculing their religious beliefs and convictions

This Training Manual is developed to facilitate the seniors that attend the workshops to have a ready reference guide of community and government resources to address all forms of abuse and explore volunteering opportunities so that they can break the isolation, enhance social integration and foster networks amongst seniors.

NOTE: This Manual is printed in large print considering this manual is for seniors and will be available to all seniors attending the training program.

This training manual has been developed under 3 categories as per the proposal:

- 1. Community and Government Resources for Seniors**
- 2. Volunteering for Seniors**
- 3. Breaking Isolation and Networking for Seniors**

Note: This training manual is printed exclusively for the seniors participating in our Seniors' Training and Empowerment Project funded by the New Horizons for Seniors. However, the soft copy of the Manual will be posted on our website and be available for all once the project is complete.

1. Community and Government Resources for Seniors

Toronto is a wonderful city full of opportunities, programs and events that seniors can enjoy. What makes the City of Toronto unique for seniors is that the city is senior-friendly and has affordable resources and activities to help seniors enjoy the freedom that retirement brings.

The City of Toronto embeds the values of respect, dignity, diversity, independence and equity for older residents in all its policies, programs and services. It is important to help Toronto remain a safe, navigable, affordable, accessible and enjoyable city for everyone.

Community and Government Resources:

Crisis and emergencies:	Call 911 for all emergencies such as police, fire and ambulance
Crisis Lines: Distress Center of Toronto	416-408-HELP (4357)
Seniors Safety Line	1-866-299-1011 (150 Languages)
Seniors Crisis Access Line	416-619-5001
St. Elizabeth Health Centre Community Crisis Response (Etobicoke, North York)	416-498-0043
Elder Abuse: If you are concerned about an individual's physical or mental state or housing conditions, contact the Seniors Crisis Access Line	416-619-5001
You can also call Toronto Police Service	416-808-2222
Alternatively contact the Elder Abuse Coordinator	416 808-0130.
Worried about a neighbor: Concerns about someone's ability to care for himself, or about the safety of an neighboring property, can be directed to Toronto Health Connection	416-338-7600 (Mon-Fri, 8:30 am-4:30 pm) After hours and weekends: call 311
If you are concerned about an older person's health and safety contact the Seniors Crisis Access line	416-619-5001.

Wandering Persons Registry- Alzheimer Society of Toronto Safely Home:	416-322-6560
Eviction & Eviction Prevention: If you are facing eviction call the Tenant Hotline, a housing help center Tenant Hotline	1-888-332-3234 Mon-Fri 8:30 am-6 pm Service in 150 languages
Emergency Shelter and services provided by the City of Toronto, including waste collection, water, roads (Service is offered in more than 180 languages using interpreters provided through Language Line, Services 24/7)	Call 311 TTY 416-338- 0889
Central Intake for emergency shelter (24/7)	416-338-4766 Toll free 1-877-338-3398
211 Toronto Findhelp Information Services (Information about community programs and social services)	211 Toll free TTY 1-888-340-1001
Seniors Information Line	Toll free 1-888-910-1999 TTY Toll free 1-800-387- 555
Information about provincial seniors programs and benefits Government of Ontario	416-326-1234 Toll free 1-800-267-8097 TTY 416-325-3408 TTY Toll free 1-800-268- 7095

<p>General information on provincial services, including health services, Ontario Guaranteed Annual Income System and Reduced Co-Payment for Lower Income Seniors</p> <p>Community Care Access Centre (CCAC):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information, referral and assessment for health and home care services • There are several different CCAC offices serving Toronto, each with a different phone number • To find the office nearest you, visit the website or call the central number Community Navigation Access Program (CNAP) 	<p>416-310-2222 Toll free 1-877-540-6565</p>
<p>Seniors and caregivers support services including adult day programs, food, counselling, and supportive housing Drug and Alcohol Helpline</p>	<p>Toll free 1-800-565-8603</p>
<p>Confidential information about drug and alcohol addiction and treatment programs: Mental Health Helpline</p>	<p>Toll free 1-866-531-2600</p>

Confidential information and referral to mental health services and supports (Access to interpreters for more than 170 languages Public Health Agency of Canada-Division of Aging and Seniors)	416-973-0003
General information on public health issues affecting seniors and healthy aging Seniors Canada	Toll free 1-800-622-6232 TTY Toll free 1-800-926-9105
General information about federal government programs such as services and benefits for seniors, information about elder abuse Counselling Family Service Toronto	416-595-9230
Legal Advice Advocacy Centre for the Elderly	416-598-2656
Community based legal center providing free legal services to low-income seniors 60+	416-947-3330
Toronto Transit Commission	416-393-4636
Information on fares, routes and schedules as well as accessibility and TTC Wheel-Trans Customer Service	416-393-4111 Reservations 416-393-4222 Priority Line 416-393-4311

	TTY Service 416-393-4555
Reporting Abuse Toronto Police Service	416-808-2222- nonemergency number 416-808-0130 Elder Abuse Coordinator
Crime Stoppers	416-222-TIPS (8477) Toll free 1-800-222-TIPS (8477)
Report a situation involving an adult whom you believe to be mentally incapable and suffering, or at risk of suffering serious harm. Health Wellness Community Care Access Centre (CCAC)	416-310-2222
Community Navigation Access Program (CNAP)	Toll free 1-877-540-6565
Seniors care providers to health support services such as personal care, social work, and day programs for seniors who are frail or have dementia Telehealth Ontario	Toll free 1-866-797-0000 TTY Toll free 1-866-797- 0007
Finding a Doctor - Health Care Connect (A Ministry of Health and Long- Term Care program that helps people find a family doctor accepting new patients)	Toll free 1-800-445-1822

House Calls for Primary health care services for home-bound, frail seniors including physician, Nurse-practitioner for 65+ with valid OHIP card and must consent to transfer care to HouseCalls: Self-referral, or by family member, caregiver, health care professional	416-631-3000
Toronto Public Health	311
Toronto Health Connection	416-338-7600 TTY 416-392-0658
Health Cards-Ontario Health Insurance Program (OHIP) Ontario Ministry of Health INFOline	Toll free 1-800-267-8097 TTY Toll free 1-800-268-7095
To book an appointment for new or OHIP replacement cards	Toll free 1-888-376-5197
Assistive Devices Program Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care: Covers equipment in the following categories: prostheses; wheelchairs/ mobility aids and specialized seating systems; enteric feeding supplies; monitors and test strips for insulin-dependent diabetics; respiratory equipment; orthosis, such as leg, arm and spinal braces or splints; visual and communication	416-327-8804 Toll free 1-800-268-6021 TTY 416-327-4282 TTY Toll free 1-800-387-5559

aids; and oxygen equipment for Ontario residents with long-term disabilities	
Canadian Hearing Society	416-964-9595/ 416-928-2500
Technical Devices	1-800-465-4327 Toll free 1-877-215-9530 TTY 416-964-0023
Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)	416-486-2500 Toll free 1-800-563-2642 TTY 416-480-8645
Daily living aids for people with little or no sight,	1-866-659-1843
Hemophilia Ontario: Medical equipment, walkers for persons with bleeding disorders	416-924-3446 Toll free 1-888-838-8846
March of Dimes Canada Assistive Devices Program Intake Department: Financial assistance for prescribed medical equipment to increase Mobility- Must have an assessment letter from an Occupational Therapist	1-866-765-7237
Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada	416-922-6065 Toll free 1-800-268-7582
Loans of assistive devices;	416-488-2699 Ext 164

subsidies for equipment and incontinence supplies for Toronto residents with confirmed diagnosis of multiple sclerosis Muscular Dystrophy Canada	Toll free 1-800-567-2873
Funding available for some prescribed equipment for persons with neuromuscular disorders Sunnybrook Centre for Independent Living (SCIL)	416-480-4261
Amputee care and prosthetics Referral required from health care provider Toronto Employment and Social Services Application Centre Assistive devices and home care supplies, including products for incontinence for 55+ and adults with disabilities living in Scarborough	416-397-0330 416-221-2130
Seniors Abuse	
In emergencies	Call 911
Ontario Provincial Police	1-888-310-1122 (24 hour toll-free)
Crime Stoppers	1-800-222-TIPS (8477)

Ministry of the Attorney General's Victim line	1-888-579-2888 (toll-free)
Support Line in Toronto	416-314-2447
Seniors' InfoLine	1-888-910-1999 (toll-free) TTY 1-800-387-5559
Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse	416-916-6728
Advocacy Centre for the Elderly Ontario Association of Community Care Access Centre	416-750-1720
Retirement Home Complaints Response	1-800-361-7254
Long-Term Care and Information Service	1-866-434-0144

2. Volunteering for Seniors

Canadian seniors collectively volunteered more than 372 million hours in 2010 alone (Statistics Canada, CSGVP 2010)

The Canadian Perspective of Volunteering

Over 13.3 million people—accounting for 47% of Canadians aged 15 and over—did volunteer work in 2010. They devoted almost 2.07 billion hours to volunteer activities: a volume of work that is equivalent to just under 1.1 million full-time jobs. The number of volunteers in 2010 was significantly greater than in earlier years.

The 13.3 million people who volunteered marked an increase of 6.4 % over 2007 and of 12.5% over 2004. In comparison, the rate of growth recorded for the general population aged 15 and over was 8.4% between 2004 and 2010.

Many Canadians become involved in volunteering because people they know are doing it. In 2010, 43% of volunteers said they did their volunteer work as part of a group project with their friends, neighbors or co-workers; another 25% said they had joined members of their immediate family in their volunteer work. These proportions are essentially the same as those recorded in 2007 and 2004.

While the increase in the number of volunteers continued to increase in 2010, about one-half of Canadians contributed their time, energy and skills to groups and organizations such as charities and non-profits. They provided leadership on boards and committees; canvassed for funds; provided advice, counselling or mentoring; visited seniors; prepared and delivered food; served as volunteer drivers; advocated for social causes; coached children and youth. In short, they shaped their communities and enabled non-profit organizations to deliver programs and services to millions of their fellow Canadians.

Why seniors should volunteer?

People volunteer for a wide variety of reasons, especially wanting to help others. But it's also OK to want some benefits for you from volunteering.

Some people are uncomfortable with the notion that a volunteer "benefits" from doing volunteer work. There is a long tradition of seeing volunteering as a form of charity, based on altruism and

selflessness. The best volunteering does involve the desire to serve others, but this does not exclude other motivations, as well.

Instead of considering volunteering as something you do for people who are not as fortunate as yourself, begin to think of it as an exchange.

Consider that most people find themselves in need at some point in their lives. So today you may be the person with the ability to help, but tomorrow you may be the recipient of someone else's volunteer effort. Even now you might be on both sides of the service cycle: maybe you are a tutor for someone who can't read, while last month the volunteer ambulance corps rushed you to the emergency room. Volunteering also includes "self-help." So if you are active in your neighborhood crime watch, your home is protected while you protect your neighbors' homes, too. Adding your effort to the work of others makes everyone's lives better.

Motivation for Volunteering

Think about how much you receive when you give and consider why you want to volunteer. You may have several different reasons. Here are just a few of the many possible motivations identified by other volunteers:

- To feel a needed
- To share a skill
- To get to know a community
- To demonstrate commitment to a cause/belief

- To gain leadership skills
- To act out a fantasy
- To do your civic duty because of pressure from a friend or relative
- To get a sense of accomplishment
- To keep yourself constructively busy
- To get recognized
- To repay a debt to the community
- To donate your professional skills because there is no one else to do it
- To have a positive impact in the community
- To learn something new
- To become an "insider"
- To be a watchdog
- To feel proud of yourself
- To make new friends
- To explore a further education and learning
- To help someone
- To do something exciting and have fun
- To satisfy your religious or spiritual quests
- To keep skills alive (use it or lose it)
- To do what you love
- To feel good
- To be part of a team
- To gain social status
- To test yourself
- To be an agent of change

You will probably have some special reasons of your own. Remember that the motivations you have to select the place to offer your services to may not be the reasons why you stay. Once you're on the volunteer job, you will continue to serve as long as you feel that your efforts are accomplishing something, that your talents are appreciated, and that you are making a difference. And if you like the people with whom you work, so much the better!

As long as you are truly serving through your volunteer work, isn't it wonderful that such an exchange occurs? In fact, it tends to strengthen your commitment to volunteering when you can see the benefits to both the recipient of your efforts and to yourself. And it is much more comfortable than "charity" because it upholds the self-esteem of those with whom you volunteer

Where to find volunteering opportunities?

Volunteer Toronto is a membership-based charitable organization committed to supporting, enabling and celebrating volunteering in the City of Toronto.

Volunteer Toronto supports the involvement of volunteers in the non-profit sector in Toronto through professional practice, research, program management, promotion, advocacy and innovation. As a destination point for information on volunteerism, Volunteer Toronto is considered as an expert in volunteer trends and the resource of choice for professional support in the Voluntary Sector in Toronto.

Volunteer Toronto builds organizational capacity through volunteer recruitment support, consultation, training and advocacy

for members, community stakeholders, non-profit and for profit organizations, funding bodies. They are committed to inclusivity and broadening the scope of volunteerism with regards to age, ability, gender/sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, skills and abilities as well as interest and opportunity.

3. Breaking isolation and better network for Seniors

Breaking barriers of isolation for seniors is particularly important for those from non-English-speaking backgrounds. The later years of life can be very isolating as they feel lonely and they don't mix well with the other people because of language problems.

In very simple language, social isolation can be defined as less social contact for seniors than what they wish in their social set up. Social isolation may lead to negative outcomes such as poor health, loneliness or other emotional distress. Anyone can become socially isolated but seniors are especially at risk of social isolation. Technological up-gradation, changing trends in the value system and other factors impact on social isolation of seniors.

The effects of social isolation or exclusion:

Social isolation is a concern because of the negative impact on individuals and their families. Research has found that social isolation and exclusion are associated with:

- Increased chance of premature death
- Lower general well-being
- More depression
- More disability from chronic diseases
- Poor general and mental health

- Increased use of health and support services
- Reduced quality of life

Seniors most likely to experience the most social exclusion:

- Are older
- Are living in urban areas
- Have no partner
- Have activity limitations due to health
- Were born outside of Canada.
- Have lower levels of education

City of Toronto Seniors Strategy:

The City of Toronto has developed The Toronto Seniors Strategy: Towards an Age Friendly City based on public consultation. The Toronto Seniors Strategy is based on four principles:

(1) Equity: Older adults should have equitable access to services and programs

The unique needs of Toronto's diverse older population should be met in keeping with the City of Toronto's Vision Statement on Access, Equity and Diversity. Older Torontonians should be treated fairly regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, disability, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, same sex partnership, age, marital status, family status, immigrant status, receipt of social assistance, political affiliation, religious affiliation, level of literacy, language and/or socioeconomic status The goal of the City of

Toronto is to achieve access and equality of outcomes for all residents

(2) Inclusion: The social and physical connectedness of Toronto should be enriched by facilitating older adults' participation in city life

Older Torontonians should have the opportunity to participate in and contribute to their communities. Intergenerational connections should be encouraged and social isolation should be prevented

(3) Respect: The contribution of older adults to the life and vibrancy of Toronto should be valued and respected.

The experience and contribution of older Torontonians to their communities should be recognized and reflected in the way they are regarded. Older adults should always be treated with dignity and should be made to feel valued, heard and appreciated.

(4) Quality of Life: Older adults in Toronto should be supported so that they may enjoy a higher level of health and wellbeing.

Older Torontonians should be able to live healthy, independent, active lives. The City should consider the quality of services that it is providing to older residents that address older adults' unique and varied needs.

Tips to break isolation and better network:

Research shows that those educational and social activity group interventions that target specific groups of people can alleviate social isolation and loneliness among older people. Wherever

possible, lonely people should be offered opportunities to reach out to others so that they retain active involvement in the pattern of their own lives, rather than sitting passively waiting for the doorbell to ring. Lonely people may need encouragement and guidance on how to be creative and how to have a positive approach to go outside and meet others.

Older people do not necessarily want to spend their time exclusively with other older people. There are many activities in which they can join with people of other ages:

The most important factor is PARTICIPATION: getting involved, staying active and taking part in the community; being consulted and having one's views considered by family members, friends and community at large.

Some tips to remember:

Make Transportation Available

Lack of adequate transportation is a primary cause of a social isolation. Because many seniors do not drive, this is a big issue for them, so anything that helps seniors get around and make independent choices about travel promotes their social health. At the immediate family level, offering rides to older loved ones and helping them to learn to use public transportation will help them maintain social connections and a healthy sense of independence.

Promote Sense of Purpose

Seniors with a sense of purpose or hobbies that really interest them are less likely to succumb to the negative effects of social

isolation. Besides providing a sense of purpose, many hobbies and interests are inherently social in nature. Anything that involves a group, for example, playing bridge, could be said to be socially healthy. Volunteering is also great way of maintaining and expressing a sense of purpose. Encouraging seniors to remain active in their hobbies and interests, and providing them opportunities to volunteer can help them maintain their sense of purpose and keep them from becoming isolated and lonely.

Participate in Religious Function or at Places of Worship

For seniors who have been regularly attending their places of worship has been shown to be quite beneficial. The seniors may not only benefit from the social interaction but also cultivate a sense of purpose that worship centres offers.

Encourage Hearing and Vision Tests

Seniors with undiagnosed or untreated hearing problems may avoid social situations because of embarrassment and difficulty communicating. Encourage seniors to have their hearing checked and hearing problems treated. A hearing aid may be the only barrier between a senior and better social health. Vision tests are important too as sight problems “limit opportunities for social interactions with others.

Make Adaptive Technologies Available

Adaptive technologies, ranging from walkers to the above mentioned hearing aids, help seniors to compensate for age related deficits and deficiencies that can impede social interaction. Many seniors do not take full advantage of these devices.

Notify Neighbors

Because socially isolated seniors may be vulnerable to a variety of unexpected problems and may have underlying issues such as dementia, their loved ones should consider informing members of their loved one's community that there is a vulnerable adult in the neighborhood. Trusted neighbors within a block radius or so should be introduced to the senior if feasible, informed about any particular issues the senior may have, and asked to keep a friendly eye out in case anything seems amiss.

Participate in Dining with Others

The act of eating with others is inherently social. Food is almost always shared; people eat together; mealtimes are events when the whole family or groups of friends and relatives comes together. Food is also an occasion for sharing, for distributing and giving, for the expressing of altruism, whether from parents to children, children to in-laws, or anyone to visitors and strangers. Dining with others is also likely to help promote better nutrition, which is crucial for the elderly.

Address Incontinence Issues

A senior who experiences incontinence may be hesitant to leave their home and could become isolated. Seniors suffering from incontinence should address this issue appropriately through medications and incontinence supplies. Incontinent seniors can have a better opportunity to recognize their social potentials and live life without embarrassment and fear of going into public.

Give a Hug

Research shows that platonic touching from friends and family, like hand holding or hugging, can lower stress and promote feelings of well-being. On the other hand, people deprived of touch can experience decreased well-being. Whenever possible, include a friendly hug into your greetings and farewells.

Give Extra Support to Seniors Who Have Lost a Spouse

Older adults may be at highest risk for becoming socially isolated during the period after a spouse has passed away. When you've shared your life with a beloved spouse and companion for decades, it can be like losing the foundation of your existence when that person dies. For this reason, it is important to provide extra emotional and social support to widows and widowers while they are grieving. Do more than bring flowers; go the extra mile and spend more time with the senior in the days and weeks following his or her loss. This can make all the difference for the bereaved senior's well-being, and it helps to encourage a healthy grieving process rather than a spiral into prolonged depression and isolation.

Postscript

This manual has been developed through extensive research on seniors. We have incorporated many relevant inputs from the research based on the 3 categories: (1) Community and Government Resources for Seniors (2) Volunteering for Seniors (3) Breaking isolation and better network for seniors for the project titled Seniors' Training and Empowerment Project. We hope this will be used as a ready reference of community and

government resources and to help in breaking the shackles of isolation, enhance volunteering and increase social networking for seniors.

Last but not least, seniors participating in the Seniors Training and Empowerment Project should not hesitate to share the information and resources extensively to needy seniors and their family members and should feel free to copy or reproduce part or the complete workshop for use in our diverse communities.
