



**Kitchener-Waterloo  
Sexual Assault Support Centre**

151 Frederick St, Suite 201,  
Kitchener, Ontario, N2H 2M2

**24 Hour Crisis &  
Support Line** (519) 741-8633

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Business Line (519) 571-0121  
Fax Line (519) 571-0522  
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Website [www.kwsasc.org](http://www.kwsasc.org)

## **SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST OLDER WOMEN**

### **Older women may worry about what will happen if they do reach out for help.**

Many senior women may be afraid they will lose their independence if they talk about being sexually assaulted. They may worry that their children, family members, or friends will become overprotective, think they are unsafe living on their own, or think they can't look after themselves anymore.

Older women may also worry about how their spouse or partner may react to the news that they were sexually abused as a child or sexually assaulted later in life. They may worry that their spouse or partner will not believe them, will reject them, or will blame them for the assault.

### **Older women may have held onto their secret for a long time.**

An older woman, who was sexually abused or assaulted many years ago and who has never told anyone about the violence, may feel especially ashamed about having held onto the secret for so long. Or she may feel that it happened so long ago, why bothering telling anyone now?

### **Older women are more likely to have had a bad experience in the past if they did try to tell someone about the sexual violence.**

In the 1970's and 1980's, we began to hear about sexual abuse more often. Before that, children were being sexually abused and women were being sexually assaulted but it wasn't talked about openly, in public or private. Family problems were kept inside the family and certain things like sex and violence were not talked about.

If an older woman who was sexually abused as a child told her parents about the abuse many years ago, she may have been made to feel that she shouldn't have said anything or that the abuse was her fault. Having lived through these kinds of reaction once, older women may not want to try telling anyone ever again, even if they are sexually assaulted as an adult.