

# Bridging to Adulthood Tips: Safety Resources for Adults with Disabilities

The following resources relate to promoting personal safety while engaging in daily activities at home, online and in the community. The resources are for general reference and examples only. Please use sound judgement and/or consult with a relevant professional when developing strategies for specific people and situations.

## Are you in crisis or need immediate safety supports?

- **Call 911** or go the **emergency department** if you or someone else is in immediate danger or needs emergency services.
  - If you are **pre-registered** use **text 9-1-1** services after initiating a regular 9-1-1 voice call for people who are **deaf, hard of hearing or have a communication disability**.
  - Identify if you are on the **Vulnerable Person's Registry** (see below) and/or ask if a **mental health crisis team** is available (if applicable).
- Call **Kids Help Phone** 24/7 by calling **1-800-668-6868** or text **CONNECT** to **686868**.
- Call **2-1-1** or use **2-1-1 online** to contact a local **crisis line, in-person crisis service, emergency shelter, or victim of crime support program** in Ontario.
- If you are a youth with an **intellectual disability** or caregiver who is in crisis, contact your **Developmental Services Ontario (DSO)** case manager to **seek crisis support** as applicable.

## Do you suspect that a person is being harmed, neglected or abused?

- **Call 911** if in immediate danger
- **Children up to age 17:** Call your local **Children's Aid Society**, open 24 hr/day, 7 days/week. Everyone has the duty to report suspected child neglect or abuse in Ontario.
- **Adults with Developmental Disabilities:** Contact ReportON, open 24 hr/day, 7 days/week.  
Tel: 1-800-575-2222  
Toll-free TTY: 1-844-309-1025  
Email: reportONdisability@ontario.ca

## 1. Cell Phone Safety and Communication

- Connectability.ca has a variety of [Cell Phone Safety](#) videos, webinars, tips and resources (scroll to middle of the webpage).
- Autism Speaks has tips for [Using Your Cell Phone](#) safely that apply to a range of people.
- [Hi, tech!](#) Is a 1:1 virtual support program for adults with disabilities through March of Dimes Canada. It provides **help with learning how to use technology** to keep in touch with others.
- Communication Disabilities Access Canada (CDAC) offers tips for [telephone communication](#) and [related vocabulary](#) people with communication disabilities.

## 2. Community Safety

- CHEO's Foundational Family Services [Community Safety online workshop](#) is available for youth registered through the Ontario Autism Program.
- [Community Safety](#) resources from Autism Speaks can apply to a variety of people.
- [Personal Safety Checklist](#) and [Safety Tips](#) are available from the City of Toronto.
- [Staying Safe in the Community When You Have a Disability](#) is an online resource from the Centre for Independent Living Toronto (CILT).
- [Street Safety Tips](#) are available from Connectability.ca.
- [Wandering Prevention Resources](#) from Autism Speaks may be a consideration for people with developmental disabilities who are at risk for wandering or elopement or for people with reduced safety awareness.

## 3. Emergency Services

- **Vulnerable Persons Registry:** Contact your local police department to ask about their vulnerable persons registry. This is a voluntary database that gives first responders key information about a specific person when interacting with them (e.g. special needs, behaviours, de-escalation strategies, contact information of guardians).
- **Are you deaf, hard of hearing, or have a communication disability?**  
Pre-register for [text 9-1-1](#) if you live in an applicable area. Once registered, you must still call regular 9-1-1 to start a regular voice call. The emergency responder will then send you a text to continue with the communication.
- **Communicating with first responders in an emergency.** Options may include:

- A **medical alert bracelet** or **emergency wallet card** with pertinent information
- A more detailed [Communication Passport for Emergency Room Visits](#) or [emergency communication display](#)

#### 4. Home Safety

- Autism Speaks has a [Safety Signals](#) book with strategies and visuals for safety at home.
- CHEO's Foundational Family Services [Home Safety](#) and [Home Alone Safely](#) online workshops are available for youth registered through the Ontario Autism Program.
- Consider taking a **Babysitting Training Course** from [Canadian Red Cross](#), [Canada Safety Council](#), or your local library. Even if you do not plan on babysitting, these courses can teach pre-teens and teens about responsible decision making, home safety and first aid.
- There may be specific **fire safety considerations** for people with disabilities
  - The government of Ontario has guidelines for [Fire Safety at Home](#)
  - Your **local fire department** may be able to visit your house to help plan escape routes
  - Fire safety information for people with disabilities is also available from the [National Fire Protection Association](#)

#### 5. Natural Disaster Preparedness

- The Government of Ontario publishes an [Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities or Special Needs](#).
- The Government of Canada also publishes an [Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities/Special Needs](#).

#### 6. Online Safety

- Connectability.ca has a variety of [Online and Social Media Safety](#) videos, webinars, tips and resources (right hand side of the webpage).
- [Getcybersafe.ca](#) is a comprehensive website from the Government of Canada about staying safe online for kids, teens and adults.

- [Keeping Safe Online](#) is an educational resource with visual/ picture support about online safety from the National Speak Out Group.
- [Online Safety](#) resources for parents, kids and teens from the Canadian Centre for Child Protection cover topics including internet safety, sexting, and preventing sextortion.
- Video and written tips for [I Can Be Safe Online](#) are available from Community Living BC.

## 7. Relationship Safety

- A 5 is Against the Law! Social Boundaries: Straight Up! *Revised*. A workbook by Kari Dunn Buron. (2022). “An honest approach for teaching social boundaries and potential legal consequences of social mistakes”. <https://www.5pointscale.com/books.html>
- [Healthy Youth Relationships](#) is a free online course from the Canadian Red Cross.
- [iBelong.ca](#) offers online learning for [relationship safety](#) and [bullying](#).
- [Relationship and Sexual Safety Tips](#) are available from Connectability.ca.
- Speak to your parent, caregiver, teacher, healthcare provider or another person you trust for help with safety when interacting with other people.

## 8. Safeguarding

All people deserve to live a meaningful life with dignity and safety. Although it may be difficult to think and talk about, it is important for all people to understand their rights, learn about personal boundaries, and understand warning signs of inappropriate interactions. It is also important for all people to have strategies to use if feeling unsafe. The following resources may be a starting point for teaching individuals with extra support needs about safeguarding topics and strategies.

### Learning Materials and Tools:

- **BOOST Child & Youth Advocacy Centre** offers [tips for safe relationships](#) and an education [guide for teaching](#) people about abuse and violence.
- **Communication Disabilities Access Canada** offers a range of accessible resources including:
  - [Information about abuse and crimes](#)
  - [Strategies for getting help](#) if a victim of abuse or crime
  - [Words and picture displays](#) to help communicate about abuse and crimes

- [Webinar on Communication Intermediaries](#) for people who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) who are interacting with the police, a lawyer or other justice professional
- [Safeguarding Adults](#) is a comprehensive resource from the UK about understanding rights, recognizing appropriate vs. inappropriate situations, and developing safety strategies for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The resources are written in plain text with picture support.
- [Safe Touch](#) is a physical safety-learning module from the ibelong website.
- [The Advocacy Project](#) has a handout with pictures about keeping safe from abuse and neglect.

### Safety Skills Training Programs

- [Balance for Blind Adults](#) offers self-defense training in Toronto for adults who are blind.
- [Kerry's Place Autism Services](#) sometimes offers workshops on home and internet safety.
- [Safety Includes Me](#) is a workshop for women with an intellectual disability who would like to learn about safety and violence prevention.
- **Vibrant Healthcare Alliance** has a [Gender Based Violence Prevention Program](#) that includes setting boundaries and Wen-Do self-defense.

Please speak with a trusted adult, healthcare professional, school staff, community agency staff, or your local police service (non-emergency line if you are not in immediate need of service) if you are looking for further resources about community safety.

The information provided in this handout is for reference only. It is not intended as a recommendation or endorsement of specific programs, or as a comprehensive resource list.

This handout is brought to you by Holland Bloorview's Transitions Team  
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