

OUTREACH

PRINCIPLE

Outreach is essential for ensuring older women understand their rights, recognise sexual assault, and know how to access support. Effective outreach extends beyond information-sharing—it builds trust, relationships, visibility, and safety pathways for women who have historically been excluded from sexual assault responses.



CONSIDERATIONS

Older women frequently report that they:

- **Do not know sexual assault services are available** to them.
- Believe services are “**for younger women.**”
- Fear they will **not be believed or taken seriously.**
- **Do not recognise some experiences**—especially within relationships or care settings—as sexual assault.
- **Lack digital access or confidence** to reach services online.
- Have mobility, transport, cultural, or language **barriers.**

Barriers for services include:

- **Limited age-inclusive messaging** or imagery in advertising.
- Outreach methods that **rely heavily on digital access.**
- **Workforce discomfort** with raising sexual assault with older women.
- **Lack of partnerships** with older women’s groups, aged care, community health, or seniors organisations.
- A tendency to **wait for disclosures** rather than actively creating opportunities for safe conversations.

Effective outreach requires:

- Presence in the places **older women already go.**
- Messaging that **explicitly names older women.**
- Repetition, visibility, trust-building, and culturally appropriate **engagement.**

IMPLICATIONS

Without proactive outreach:

- Older women **remain unaware** of their rights and available services.
- Sexual assault among older women **remains hidden and unaddressed.**
- **Services receive few referrals**, reinforcing the false belief that sexual assault of older women is rare.
- **Research fails** to capture older women’s experiences.
- **Prevention efforts do not reach communities** most affected by inequality, isolation, or violence.

Outreach is not a “nice to have”—it is fundamental to improving safety, access, and justice.

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES

- **Host events specifically for older women** on rights, safety, and healthy relationships.
- **Partner with older women’s groups**, neighbourhood centres, seniors centres, migrant women’s organisations, and aged care providers.
- **Attend community events** where older women are present (Seniors Festival, cultural celebrations, local markets).
- **Provide printed materials**, large-print resources, and multilingual options.
- **Make all imagery and language age-inclusive**—explicitly show and refer to older women.
- **Offer outreach sessions** in environments where older women feel comfortable and familiar.
- **Work with older women** to co-design outreach strategies and messaging.
- Ensure outreach includes **information on confidentiality, rights, and what to expect when accessing services.**