


Appendix 13: Risk assessment practice considerations across the community

Presentations of common risk factors used against Aboriginal people



Perpetrators of family violence against Aboriginal victim survivors (adults, children or young people) are often non-Aboriginal. The circumstances, family and community connections, context of risk and impact to the victim survivor will need to be explored. The questions below are seeking information about the circumstances and presentations of risk used against Aboriginal victim survivors. You should explain the reason you are asking questions relating to community and connection before beginning assessment of these additional presentations of risk.

Questions for Aboriginal people	Practice guidance	
<p>Are you able to get support from your family and community?</p>	<p>Risk factor:</p> <p><u>This question is asking about:</u></p> <p>Isolation</p> <p><u>Other risk factors to keep in mind when asking this question include:</u></p> <p>Controlling behaviours</p> <p>Why is it important to ask this question?</p> <p>Connection to family and community is important to Aboriginal communities. Each community experiences isolation differently. You should explore whether the victim survivor is being alienated from culture and community. If family and community are not supportive, this will need to be further explored with the victim survivor and will inform safety planning and risk management.</p> <p>What should you keep in mind when asking this question?</p> <p>The victim survivor may not be from the local community. You should ask whether the individual is living on their own land, or if not, what support they would receive from the community they are currently living in by asking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What engagement they have with the local community? • What links they have back in their own country and home community? • Would they re-locate back to their own country if needing refuge/housing? <p>Family members may work in local services and you should ask whether there are services that the victim survivor feels safe to access.</p>	
<p>Are you concerned that other people in the community or other family members will find out what is occurring?</p> <p>Are you concerned about further violence from other family members or the community?</p>	<p>Risk factor:</p> <p><u>This question is asking about:</u></p> <p>Isolation</p> <p>Why is it important to ask these questions?</p> <p>Connection to culture and community is integral to Aboriginal communities. Fear of losing community connection and support can also make a victim survivor reluctant to report family violence.</p> <p>You should also consider if the family shares money and resources which may be impacted by the form of violence being perpetrated or the support being provided by family and community.</p> <p>There may be additional risk from family and community members who are not supportive. Family and community violence may not be physical. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feuding between families and community blocking access to services and support, such as making local Aboriginal organisations unsafe to access. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family groups not talking to each other/ostracising victims. <p><i>What should you keep in mind when asking these questions?</i></p> <p>The victim survivor may fear they will not be believed because the perpetrator has more status and credibility in the community. Without community support, leaving the perpetrator may not be viewed as an option by the victim survivor. Community conflict and fear of the removal of children are also concerns the victim survivor may have about leaving a perpetrator.</p>
<p>Have you ever been made to go or stay somewhere you didn't want to be?</p>	<p>Risk factor:</p> <p><u>This question is asking about:</u></p> <p>Controlling behaviours</p>
<p>Have you been deprived access to your culture? (including language, community events, sorry business)</p>	<p><u>Other risk factors to keep in mind when asking this question include:</u></p> <p>Isolation</p> <p>Escalation</p> <p><i>Why is it important to ask these questions?</i></p> <p>Some victim survivors may purposefully isolate themselves from community to increase their safety if violence is within the community. It is important to explore whether the victim survivor has actively isolated as a safety measure or whether the perpetrator has blocked access.</p> <p>Isolation may also take the form of the victim survivor being able to attend family and community events or services only in the company of the perpetrator. An Aboriginal person may be isolated if they are not allowed to attend family or community events, such as sorry business alone. Young Aboriginal people and children may not be able to access social media which may be their form of connection to family and community.</p> <p>Escalation of violence may occur when the victim survivor needs to attend sorry business, such as restricting financial means or permission to attend without the perpetrator, involvement in funeral preparation, travel to Country, interactions with family who may or may not be supportive, and other cultural responsibilities.</p> <p><i>What should you keep in mind when asking these questions?</i></p> <p>Aboriginal cultures take a holistic view of life and health, and cultural, spiritual and social wellbeing are integral to the health of Indigenous people.</p>

Presentations of common risk factors used against people who identify as belonging to diverse communities

There are a range of patterns of behaviour related to common risk factors and how these present in family violence perpetrated against victim survivors from diverse communities, including older people. These primarily relate to controlling behaviours, isolation, financial abuse, emotional and spiritual abuse. The circumstances, family and community connections, context of risk and impact to the victim survivor will need to be explored. The questions below seek information about the circumstances and presentations of risk used against victim survivors from a range of diverse communities. You should explain the reason you are asking questions relating to a person’s community and connection before beginning assessment of these additional presentations of risk.

Questions for people from culturally and linguistically diverse and faith communities	Practice guidance		
<p>If you are not a citizen or permanent resident, have they threatened your immigration status, made threats to send you or your children overseas, or taken away your passport?</p>	<p>Risk factor:</p> <p><u>This question is asking about:</u></p> <p>Controlling behaviours</p> <p><u>Other risk factors to keep in mind when asking this question include:</u></p> <p>Isolation</p> <p>Why is it important to ask these questions?</p> <p>Threats to immigration or to be sent overseas are serious threats to the victim survivor’s wellbeing and have a major impact on the ability to leave the relationship. Victim survivors may also face further risk of violence if sent overseas. A perpetrator may threaten to remove children overseas or create custodial issues if the family or some members travel outside of Australia. For example, a parent may be trapped in Australia away from extended family and support networks to maintain access to children.</p> <p>Whether support is available from family and friends is a key protective factor for the victim survivor. A victim survivor separating from the perpetrator may face increased risk if family and community are not supportive. Additionally, some perpetrators may misrepresent or threaten to misrepresent the reason for separation or divorce to the victim’s family, increasing their isolation.</p> <p>Some families and communities may pressure victim survivors not to take action against perpetrators. Victim survivors may experience threats and be excluded from the community.</p> <p>What should you keep in mind when asking these questions?</p> <p>Conditions created by immigration, such as visa class, often shape experiences of family violence after settlement. This is particularly the case when visa sponsorship establishes a dynamic of dependency on the perpetrator, and when the conditions of temporary visas restrict access to employment, social security, housing, healthcare, childcare and education.¹ You should ask whether there is anything urgent about the victim survivor’s immigration status.</p> <p>Immigration status and citizenship are also considerations for risks relating to custody and children. If migration status is temporary, a referral for assistance with migration issues should be made. It is also important to understand the migration status of children. A fear of losing the right to remain in Australia is a</p>		
<p>If you were thinking about separating from your partner, would your family or friends be supportive?</p> <p>(Exploration of other risks in relation to this question, such as honour killings)</p>			
<p>Are you concerned that other people in the community or other family members will find out what is occurring?</p>			

¹ Vaughan, C., Davis, E., Murdolo, A., Chen, J., Murray, L., Quiazon, R., Block, K., & Warr, D. (2016).

Promoting community-led responses to violence against immigrant and refugee women in metropolitan and regional Australia. The ASPIRE Project: Research report (ANROWS Horizons 07/2016). Sydney: Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety.

significant factor in victim survivor decision-making especially for those on partner visas, dependants of other temporary visa holders.²

Trafficking and slavery offences can occur within a domestic setting/familial relationship. If you think this may be the case, consider consulting with a specialist service and/or referral to the Australian Federal Police for investigation.

Victim survivors may not have a support network beyond family and community networks. These networks may actively support the perpetrator and/or ostracize the victim survivor from the community. Community and family members may collude with the perpetrator to aid in stalking behaviour.

Are you dependent on them for financial needs? (consider ineligible for Centrelink or work rights in Australia, access to own bank account)

Risk factor:

This question is asking about:

Controlling behaviours

Other risk factors to keep in mind when asking this question include:

Financial abuse

Why is it important to ask this question?

Financial abuse can make it particularly risky for victim survivors to separate. The arrangements for transfer of wealth and sharing of resources between families, particularly relating to marriage and children, may increase risk of financial abuse such as demands for dowry or other payments.

What should you keep in mind when asking this question?

Migrant victim survivors may not be able to access Centrelink payments or be able to work.

All financial resources may be set up in the partner/family member's name. This can be a particular risk for victim survivors on spousal visas.

Some cultures may normalise the control of a woman's finances by male relatives.

Additionally, some perpetrators may use financial abuse when there is a change in the relationship. This could be separation or if the perpetrator re-partners and establishes a new family they may deny support to children in previous relationship. If a victim (adult or young person) gains financial literacy or independence this can relate to escalation of risk.

Are you restricted from having contact with your family, friends and community in Australia or overseas? (including children)

Risk factor:

This question is asking about:

Controlling behaviours

Other risk factors to keep in mind when asking this question include:

Isolation

Why is it important to ask this question?


This isolates the victim survivor and increases risk. Migration can lead to social isolation and perpetrators can perpetuate and worsen isolation through controlling behaviours.

What should you keep in mind when asking this question?

Communications barriers may make it difficult for victim survivors to access information and support. For some victim survivor's their experience of racism, discrimination and cultural isolation will create new concerns and potential barriers.

² Segrave, M (2017) Temporary migration and family violence: An analysis of victimisation, vulnerability and support. Melbourne: School of Social Sciences, Monash University.

	<p>Additionally, a perpetrator may use spiritual abuse directly including denying access to family, community and culture, as well as preventing or limiting access to faith services, other practices or use of language.</p>
<p>Did you have a choice about being married? (Only relevant if married)</p>	<p>Risk factor:</p> <p><u>This question is asking about:</u></p> <p>Controlling behaviours</p> <p>Why is it important to ask this question?</p> <p>This can indicate whether the victim survivor was forced into marriage. Some arranged marriages facilitate living with extended family (usually the perpetrator’s) and can result in family violence first occurring later in the relationship, and/or worsening over time. This can also result in multiple perpetrators perpetrating violence against the victim survivor.</p> <p>What should you keep in mind when asking this question?</p> <p>A forced marriage in Australia is defined as a situation where ‘one, or both parties, has not freely and fully consented to the marriage, because of the use of coercion, threat or deception’. ³This is distinguished from an arranged marriage which is based upon the presence of the full and free consent of both parties.⁴</p>
<p>Are there any cultural or religious beliefs that would prevent you from leaving the relationship?</p>	<p>Risk factor:</p> <p><u>This question is asking about:</u></p> <p>Isolation</p> <p><u>Other risk factors to keep in mind when asking this question include:</u></p> <p>Emotional (spiritual) abuse</p> <p>Why is it important to ask this question?</p> <p>This can help to indicate the risk of pressure from the perpetrator, family and community to remain in or return to the relationship if the victim survivor chooses to separate. For many victim survivors this will act as a barrier to leaving, which will inform safety planning and risk management.</p> <p>What should you keep in mind when asking this question?</p> <p>Victim survivors may feel pressured by cultural or religious positions on marriage, feeling shame and blaming themselves for the perceived failure of the relationship and/or cultural taboos regarding sharing personal information outside of the family.</p> <p>Some perpetrators may use religion as a tactic of abuse. For example, by mocking the victim survivor’s beliefs or by refusing to grant a religious divorce.</p> <p>For some migrant women changes in gender norms and roles can increase the likelihood of their experiencing violence, particularly if there are underlying beliefs held by a perpetrator about gender roles and their position of authority in a family.</p>

<p>Questions for people from LGBTIQ communities</p>	<p>Practice guidance</p>	
<p>Have they undermined or refused to accept your identity, including in public and with other</p>	<p>Risk factor:</p> <p><u>This question is asking about:</u></p> <p>Isolation</p>	

³ DIBP 2016: 24, see also s270.2A of the Criminal Code

⁴ Segrave, M (2017) Temporary migration and family violence: An analysis of victimisation, vulnerability and support. Melbourne: School of Social Sciences, Monash University

<p>family members? (sexual orientation and gender identity)</p>	<p><u>Other risk factors to keep in mind when asking this question include:</u></p> <p>Controlling behaviours</p> <p>Harm and threat to harm</p> <p><i>Why is it important to ask these questions?</i></p> <p>This behaviour can isolate the victim survivor from support and undermine confidence. Threats of outing are a form of manipulation and a way to exercise power over the victim survivor. The act of outing can expose someone to isolation, rejection, possible violence and discrimination from others.</p> <p><i>What should you keep in mind when asking these questions?</i></p> <p>LGBTIQ people often experience undermining or refusal of identity as a form of family violence from parents, siblings and extended family. Bisexual people may experience biphobia and alienation from both the LGBTIQ and heterosexual communities.</p> <p>Undermining of identity may be expressed through controlling behaviours such as threats relating to restricting caring responsibilities for children, especially non-biological children, and non-nuclear family arrangements.</p> <p>Refusing to accept identity maybe linked to the perpetrator not being out, and the pressure for the victim survivor to keep the relationship a secret creates a barrier to disclosing abuse in the relationship.</p> <p>A perpetrator may threaten to ‘out’ a victim survivor to family, friends, their workplace or within their cultural community as a method of control.</p> <p>A victim survivor may be out in some parts of their lives and not others (e.g. out to family but not in the workplace). They may also be out about some aspects of LGBTIQ identity but not others (e.g. out as bisexual but not as transgender).</p> <p>Outing someone may lead to the victim survivor experiencing physical, emotional and verbal abuse and/or discrimination and ostracisation. This can occur in the victim survivor’s family of origin, family of choice, cultural and linguistically diverse and/or faith community, workplace and/or school. This can include outing someone’s HIV positive status and exploiting HIV stigma and this may cause isolation both within and outside of the LGBTIQ community.</p> <p>Some perpetrators may use sexuality as a means of control. For example, telling the victim survivor to ‘act straight’, name calling, withholding affection and/or trying to control the way the victim survivor expresses their sexuality.</p>
<p>Are you concerned that other people in the community or other family members will find out what is occurring?</p>	<p>Risk factor:</p> <p><u>This question is asking about:</u></p> <p>Isolation</p> <p><i>Why is it important to ask this question?</i></p> <p>LGBTIQ communities can be a powerful source of support and a protective factor for victim survivors. However, fear of losing community support can also make a victim survivor reluctant to report family violence.</p> <p><i>What should you keep in mind when asking this question?</i></p> <p>Perpetrators may exploit status and credibility within the community to ostracise the victim survivor if they disclose violence. The victim survivor may fear they will not be believed because the perpetrator has more status and credibility.</p> <p>Without community support, leaving the perpetrator may lead to homelessness or unemployment. Victim survivors may not have supportive relationships with their family of origin.</p>
<p>If affirming your gender, have they stopped you</p>	<p>Risk factor:</p>

from taking steps to do so?

Have they ever stopped you from accessing medication? (e.g. Hormones, HIV medication)

This question is asking about:

Controlling behaviours

Other risk factors to keep in mind when asking this question include:

Emotional abuse

Physical Harm

Sexual Assault of victim

Why is it important to ask these questions?

This exerts control over victim survivor's body, social relationships and self-image. Preventing access to hormones undermines a victim survivor's right to their own body and to their own gender presentation, as discussed above. It can also lead to physical health problems. Controlling hormones can also be used with other forms of violence, such as elder abuse where other family members do not respect an older person's gender identity.

Controlling access to hormones and treatment gives a perpetrator direct control over the victim survivor's physical and mental health.

What should you keep in mind when asking these questions?

This may include obstructing treatment, refusing finances for treatment or taking victim survivor's money so they can't afford it, or trying to prevent them attending medical appointments. It could also take the form of verbal abuse and insults: body shaming, stating that transition/gender affirmation will be unsuccessful, and policing gender presentation.

Denying access to HIV medication can lead to illness and death. Denying access to HIV medication (PREP) can be a form of sexual control over people with HIV as it denies access to safe sex.

Questions for people with disabilities

Practice guidance



Does anyone in your family use your disability against you?

(Consider whether they, or any other family member, withheld, misused or delayed needed supports, or stopped the victim survivor from accessing therapy, aids, equipment, medication, or control disability support payment or NDIS funding?)

Risk factor:

This question is asking about:

Isolation

Other risk factors to keep in mind when asking this question include:

Controlling behaviours

Emotional abuse

Why is it important to ask this question?

Victim survivors with a disability may be experiencing family violence from a perpetrator who is their intimate partner and/or carer, in addition to other family members. They may not recognise that the perpetrator's abusive tactics aimed at their disability constitutes violence.

What should you keep in mind when asking this question?

Fears of reprisal, not being believed, trivialisation of violence and abuse, feelings of shame and secrecy, and social and economic dependence on a partner or care provider are common barriers to disclosure for victim survivors with a disability.⁵

For women with specific disabilities (mental health, intellectual or communications impairments) these fears may be because of the perpetrator's ongoing and active targeting of their disability including through emotional abuse.

⁵ Healey, Lucy. Voices Against Violence: Paper 2: Current Issues in Understanding and Responding to Violence Against Women with Disabilities (Women with Disabilities Victoria, Office of the Public Advocate and Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria, 2013).

Do you have access to support from services and/or your community?

If supported by the person using violence, do you fear they will stop supporting you?

Does anyone in your family control your daily activities, such as your engagement with family, friends, services or the community?

Risk factor:

This question is asking about:

Isolation

Other risk factors to keep in mind when asking this question include:

Controlling behaviours

Emotional abuse

Why is it important to ask these questions?

Victim survivors with a disability may have limited social interaction. For example, they may be accessing community groups but the perpetrator speaks for them and/or limits their interactions. Some victim survivors may even be isolated from access to their doctor/GP.

A victim survivor may have very limited ability to make choices about their body and lives due to the perpetrator's behaviour. You should gain a better understanding of what supports the victim survivor has and the tactics that the perpetrator is using to inform safety and risk management planning.

What should you keep in mind when asking these questions?

The perpetrator can use controlling and abusive behaviours relating to the victim survivor's disability and caring activities such as:

- Withholding food, water and medication
- Over-medicating
- Mobility aids restrictions
- Personal care and support (for example, using water that is too hot or neglecting to bathe, moving resulting in pressure sores)
- Hiding/breaking hearing and communication aids
- Verbal abuse with a focus on the disability
- Speaking for or about the victim survivor in their presence as if they are unable to communicate themselves
- Blocking access to therapy.

You should utilise easy language and/or visual or audible materials as appropriate to the victim survivor's required communication supports.

To be safe, are there new or more support services that you need?

(This question is relevant to considering what supports a person with disability might need when supports relating to their disability were being provided by a family member but are no longer being provided by them - or is there a new support they might need to be safe?)

Risk factor:

This question is asking about:

Isolation

Why is it important to ask this question?

Victim survivors with a disability may have mobility and communication aids and access requirements which impact their ability to leave. These need to be considered when safety planning and planning to leave.

You should document what supports the victim survivor would need to have in place to leave and/or if the perpetrator/carer were removed from the home.

What should you keep in mind when asking this question?

The perpetrator may threaten to send the victim survivor to an institution or residential facility. Some victim survivors may not be aware they have the right to make decisions about their caring including the gender of their carer and services that they access.

Questions for rural/geographically isolated people

Practice guidance



Do you have mobile reception where you live?

Risk factor:

This question is asking about:

Isolation

Why is it important to ask these questions?

Victim survivors in geographically isolated areas may feel disconnected from their community and/or have no support networks. This can be a result of the perpetrator's tactics and/or technological issues such as no mobile reception.

There may also be limited community services in their area including alternative and crisis accommodation.

You need to identify if there is a lack of mobile reception and/or people close by to inform safety planning and risk management.

What should you keep in mind when asking these questions?

Isolation on properties is a major barrier in rural communities for being able to access help when needed.

Do you have people close to you to help should you need practical assistance?

Are you concerned that other people in the community or other family members will find out what is occurring?

Risk factor:

This question is asking about:

Isolation

Why is it important to ask this question?

The close-knit nature of some small communities can be a barrier for victim survivors. The perpetrator may have close relationships with police members, legal and justice services staff, and community clubs and associations. The victim survivor may consider these relationships and that it would be easy for the perpetrator to locate them if they leave. The victim survivor may also fear that knowledge of the family violence would become widespread in the community.

What should you keep in mind when asking this question?

In some communities, services who have relationships with the perpetrator may minimise the violence. Rural communities can also have unspoken norms on keeping personal information private.

A victim survivor could feel that they don't fit in with the local community due to differences in values and beliefs.

Is your closest police station located far from your property or is it open only limited hours?

Risk factor:

This question is asking about:

Isolation

Why is it important to ask these questions?

Physical distance and transport can be a barrier for victim survivors in seeking assistance. The perpetrator may be blocking access to vehicles.

Consideration of the proximity and hours of the local police station and access to transport are key considerations for safety planning and risk management.

What should you keep in mind when asking these questions?

Access to transport in rural communities can be limited. Private transport may not exist or be very expensive and public transport may be irregular or not exist.

Do you have access to transport?



Are you dependent on them to meet your daily needs?

Risk factor:

This question is asking about:

Controlling behaviours

Other risk factors to keep in mind when asking this question include:

Isolation

Why is it important to ask this question?

Neglect is the failure of the carer to provide necessities and can also extend to refusing to allow others to do so. A perpetrator may be receiving carer’s allowance and not providing care for the older victim survivor.

Signs of neglect include:

- Inadequate nutrition, accommodation, clothing, medical or dental care (this includes inappropriate clothing for the season)
- Poor personal hygiene and/or malnourishment and unexplained weight loss
- Being left alone or unattended for long periods of time
- Under or over-medicating
- Carer being overly attentive in the company of others
- Injuries that have not been cared for
- Lack of social, cultural, intellectual, or physical stimulus.

What should you keep in mind when asking this question?

You should keep in mind the older victim survivor’s sense of autonomy and perception of risk. Older victim survivor’s may minimise their level of fear due to dependence on the perpetrator, desire to preserve the relationship, or feelings of shame that the perpetrator has AOD, mental health or gambling issues (where present). The perpetrator may have ceased employment to become the carer.

Adult children with a history of or current family violence may return to the home and perpetrate against their parent(s).

A spouse caring for a partner with dementia where they are not able to access the right support could be over-medicating or locking doors to prevent behaviours if the person with dementia is violent, abusive and/or committing sexual assault, and wandering away.

Are they dependent on you or are you dependent on them financially?

Risk factor:

This question is asking about:

Financial abuse

Other risk factors to keep in mind when asking this question include:

Controlling behaviours

Why is it important to ask this question?

Financial abuse is the most common type of abuse for older victim survivors.⁶ For example, the misuse of power of attorney, coercion to change a will, entering financial agreements with family that is disadvantageous to the victim survivor without getting independent legal advice and pressure to relinquish an

⁶ Australian Institute of Family Studies (2016) Research Report No.35 <https://aifs.gov.au/publications/elder-abuse/3-what-known-about-prevalence-and-dynamics-elder-abuse>

inheritance, sell the house and/or hand over money or other assets in exchange for care.

Additionally, a child or other family member may be financially dependent on the older person and may perpetrate by demanding access to the older person's money or restricting their access. For example, an older victim survivor may have someone move in with them without permission.

You can ask further questions such as:

- "Do you have power of attorney?"
- "Who can sign at the bank to access your account?"
- "Who can access your online banking?"
- "Who can access Centrelink?"
- "Do you trust them to look after your money?"
- "Does anyone help you to pay your bills?"
- "Has anyone moved into your home? Do you want them to be living with you?"

What should you keep in mind when asking this question?

Financial abuse is a complex area. In addition to what's noted above, financial abuse can also include stealing goods and can be complicated by family disputes regarding money, assets and inheritance. Family members may have a sense of entitlement and siblings may be arguing over assets resulting in the perpetrator blocking access to the older victim survivor.

Have they threatened to relocate you or make you stay somewhere you do not want to go? (forced into care, forced to downsize your home)

Risk factor:

This question is asking about:

Controlling behaviours

Other risk factors to keep in mind when asking this question include:

Isolation

Emotional abuse

Why is it important to ask these questions?

The perpetrator may be using a variety of tactics to control the older victim survivor including threats to change or disrupt housing arrangements, withdraw support or care, threats to harm and to misuse authority they may have via guardianship or power of attorney.

The perpetrator may threaten to move the older victim survivor into a residential aged care facility or into a living arrangement they don't want to be in (for example, moving them into a granny flat so that the perpetrator can solely reside in the main residence).

Emotional abuse is a significant aspect of controlling behaviours around isolation and housing/financial abuse. Older people with a child (adult or young person) who is a perpetrator may experience significant levels of shame or guilt about the behaviour and may be reluctant to engage with services or statutory services for intervention fearing impact on their children. There is also a high degree of expectation or entitlement from some children, grandchildren or other family member toward the older victim survivor's assets or money.

In order to isolate the older victim survivor perpetrators may:

- Prevent contact with family and friends, including grandchildren
- Withhold mail or other communication
- Block access to a phone/internet, monitor calls or disconnect phones without consent
- Live in the home without consent

- Prevent engagement in cultural or religious practices, limit use of language.

What should you keep in mind when asking these questions?

If the older victim survivor and perpetrator are socially isolated, there may be an increased risk of abuse and neglect. Older women are at particular risk of homelessness due to a lack of financial independence or literacy, or access to services.

If on medication, do you manage your medication on your own?

Risk factor:

This question is asking about:

Controlling behaviours

Other risk factors to keep in mind when asking this question include:

Physical harm

Why is it important to ask this question?

A perpetrator may be using medications to control the older victim survivor. This can be through purposefully over-medicating by administering too much medication and/or giving medication that is not needed. The perpetrator may also be withholding needed medication, either entirely or by reducing dosage amounts.

The misuse of medications may lead to the older victim survivor having impaired alertness, agility, and pain and as a result limit their social interactions. The perpetrator may be using medications to confine the older victim survivor, either within the home and/or bed. Medication misuse could also lead to serious health risks and problems, particularly if the perpetrator is not administering according to a doctor's instructions.

What should you keep in mind when asking this question?

The perpetrator could also be withholding medications for illicit use.

Some older people with significant depression can present as cognitively impaired. This can cause misdiagnosis and introduction of medications which are wrongly prescribed.

Additionally, the withholding of medication could relate to the denial of an older victim survivor's transgender or non-binary identity, with significant personal consequences for the victim survivor.