



Bernice Sewell, Director of Operations

Sage Seniors Association

Theme: Intersectional Policies and Service Provision

The Seniors Safe House is for seniors over 60 who are leaving abusive situations. Seniors Safe House provides temporary housing for men and women requiring safety, shelter and support for 60 days. The 7 suites are fully furnished and include all meals and toiletries. Social workers are on site to assist with all areas of life that have been affected by abuse, such as financial, housing, emotional support and counselling.

Critical Elements

- When developing the model for the safe house older adults as well as individuals from various agencies were consulted about the needs of this population. The three main learnings from the consultation included: Older adults did not want to live in a communal environment; many said they would rather live on the street than live in a shared environment; they said they would need to feel respected.
- Sage uses an Eco Map to look at the needs of individual older adults. It is a very effective case management tool.
- Older adults most often have specialized needs and Sage has found that bringing experts into Sage works best for the clients. For example, Sage has a partnership with the Geriatric Psychiatry Department and a psychiatric nurse comes on site weekly; Sage also has a partnership with Alberta Works.
- Because the needs of older adults are complex the length of stay is up to 60 days. For example, it takes time for a request to have Old Age Pensions to be sent separately from a previous partner.
- The ICM is able to work with those seniors that are on the waitlist to get into Sage. Often they are put up in a hotel until there is space.
- A part time follow-up worker provides support seniors leaving Sage for up to three months.
- Bernice Sewell was a member of a committee that developed a document outlining the promising practices for providing housing supports for older women. This document is available from the Atira BC website. www.atira.bc.ca.