

Comings and Goings: A Training Activity for Multidisciplinary Audiences on Walking in the Shoes of an Older Victim

Purpose	This activity will enhance participants' awareness of why older victims may change their minds about whether or not to interact with the person who is harming them. As a result, participants will tailor interventions to older survivors to address their complex situations.
Time Needed	Approximately 30 minutes depending on the size of the audience and the length of the debrief.
Target Audience	Any audience. This exercise is designed for a multidisciplinary audience.
Audience Size	Since this activity involves inviting participants to move around the room to different posters, the audience size depends on the size of the room. This exercise seems to work best with 20–60 participants but can be done with a larger audience if there are several facilitators.
Pre-Training Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a copy of the script. • Create play money (green slips) and slips to represent the cost associated with asking for assistance (yellow slips) • Print six Comings and Goings posters • Create two closed signs • Copy map of locations for participants who choose not to move about the room
Equipment Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tape or some method to display the posters • Script, posters, money and good will slips, closed signs, map of locations • Bell or another noise maker • Microphone

Room Arrangement	Put up the posters in different areas of the room far enough apart so people can gather in front of them. If possible, arrange the furniture in the room so participants can move freely to each location.
Slides	Slides with the directions and debrief questions can be found at www.ncall.us .
Variations	Feel free to edit the script to meet the needs of your audience. For example, you could create a new scenario to address additional issues/barriers faced by a same-sex couple, a victim with a disability, or someone being abused by an adult child.

Overview of this Exercise

The purpose of this exercise is to give participants an opportunity to experience the challenging decisions that older survivors often have to make. With an enhanced understanding of the complexity of abuse in later life, participants can tailor their interventions to better meet the needs of this population.

This exercise uses posters around the room to represent different housing options for a victim of abuse in later life. Each participant is given a random amount of green slips representing money and yellow slips representing the cost of asking for assistance.

The facilitator will read from a scripted scenario that walks participants through various events and participants will be asked to choose where they would choose from the housing options listed on the posters. Each move will require participants to spend either their money or goodwill at each location.

Prior to Running the Exercise

Put up the Comings and Goings posters in different areas of the room far enough apart so people can gather in front of them. If possible, arrange the furniture in the room so participants can move freely to each location. Participants can drop the slips on the floor or in a container at each location. Slips should be collected at the end of the training or during a break.

Give each participant a packet of slips of papers containing two to six green slips of paper and one to four slips of yellow paper. Place maps on the tables so participants can choose to participate from their seats rather than moving to the posters.

Setting Up the Exercise for the Audience

Let participants know that they can take part by getting up and moving around the room to the posters or staying in their seats and using the Comings and Goings map.

Facilitating the Exercise

Give the directions below before inviting the audience to get up and go to the HOME poster.

We are now going to do an activity called “Comings and Goings.” In this activity, each of you will be in the role of an older victim. During this activity, I will read a scenario describing what is happening to you over time.

After I have described the circumstances, I will ask what you will do and you will choose one of the locations represented on the posters. You have the choice of several locations including staying or returning home or going to a hotel, your son’s home, the domestic abuse emergency shelter, or renting an apartment. If you are eligible, you can go to the nursing home. The nursing home is only open if you have a long-term condition requiring ongoing nursing care.

For those who are willing and able to participate by moving around the room, I will ask you to move to stand by the poster of where you would go. If you choose to remain at your seat, use the Comings and Goings Map in your handouts and mark where you would go.

Deciding to leave will cost you either financially and/or a sense of “goodwill” for asking for assistance. At the end of each scenario, I will tell you the cost of your decisions. Costs are also written on the posters. Green slips (or play money) represent a financial cost. Yellow slips represent the impact on relationships of asking for assistance. We all know that no one can repeatedly ask for help without risking being turned away. This “wearing out your welcome” is

a consideration for victims when asking for help. If you decide to leave, deposit your slips by the location you move to. It is always free to stay or return home.

Additionally, periodically I will be ringing this bell. When I ring the bell, you must either pay again or move to another location. If you run out of resources to use any of the available options, you must return home for the duration of the exercise.

We will discuss the exercise after we are done with all the scenarios. Please remain silent during the exercise so everyone can hear the directions. Are there any questions?

Invite participants to stand in front of the poster marked HOME. Read the description of the older victim. Next, read the scenario and ask participants if they want to stay home, or go to any of the possible locations. They are not eligible for the nursing home while they are in good health. Continue to read the different scenarios based on participants chosen locations. Pause after each scenario to let people move and pay (by leaving money and assistance slips at each poster). Whenever the bell is rung, participants must pay again or move to another location. At some point in the scenario, you will be told to put up a "CLOSED" sign on the DV shelter and the son's home. Participants will no longer be able to go to those locations. If participants run out of resources, they return home for the rest of the exercise.

Comings and Goings: Script

Note to Facilitator: You will benefit from using a microphone so that everyone can hear the scenarios. You may need to remind folks of their options and how much they cost a few times at the beginning of the exercise. Be sure pause between scenarios to give participants time to think and move. At the same time, keep the activity moving to keep the energy high. If participants start chatting, feel free to ask them to hold their comments until the debrief discussion so that everyone can hear. Some participants may try to go to the nursing home early or become homeless by refusing to go to any of the posters, especially if they are out of resources. Feel free to allow for some creativity during the exercise and to bring up these experiences during the discussion. Finally, keep in mind that you may have survivors of abuse walking through this activity and it may raise memories of their lived experience. Sometimes survivors share their lived experience during the discussion. Be sure to check in with anyone who seems especially moved by this activity.

Older Victim in a Long-term Relationship

You are 68-years old and have been married for 49 years. You are active in your church and enjoy time with your grandchildren. You have lived in your current home for 30 years. You tend a beautiful garden in the backyard and love your 10-year-old pet.

TO EVERYONE

#1: Every Tuesday you play cards with your friends. This Tuesday as you prepare to leave, your partner starts to yell at you. They are so upset you call your friends and cancel your plans. You are concerned about your partner's increasingly controlling behavior. What do you and your pet do?

Note to Facilitator: *Describe the options available and the cost. Pause to give participants time to move.*

TO THOSE AT HOME

#2: A few weeks later you have plans to go to the annual church social. Your partner is not feeling well but you decide to go anyway. Your partner becomes angry, grabs you hard by the arm, and pushes you into the living room wall. You think they may have bruised your arm. What do you do?

Note to Facilitator: Describe the options available and the cost. Pause to give participants time to move.

TO THOSE AT HOME

#3: A few months later you go shopping with your partner. Your partner is unhappy because they feel you wasted money on an air purifier that your doctor recommended to help with your asthma. They argue with you on the way to the car and intentionally slam your hand in the car door. What do you do?

Note to Facilitator: Pause to give participants time to move.

TO THOSE NOT AT HOME

#4: You left quickly so you need to buy some new clothes. You find that your partner has canceled your ATM and credit cards. If you want new clothes, it will cost you one green card. What do you do?

RING BELL Remember, whenever the bell is rung, you must pay again or move to another location. If you run out of resources, return home for the rest of the exercise.

Note to Facilitator: While participants are deciding about whether or not to buy new clothes, ring the bell to keep the exercise moving. Now everyone needs to decide about clothes and pay up if they want to stay somewhere other than home. Pause to give participants time to move.

TO THOSE AT HOME

#5: Several months later, your partner is angry that dinner is not ready precisely at 5 p.m. Your partner pushes you and you fall down the stairs and break two ribs. You go to the hospital. Your partner threatens to take your name off your partner's company's provided insurance if you don't return home. Without insurance, leaving costs

three green cards of out of pocket money so you can get your medication. What do you do?

Note to Facilitator: *Pause to give participants time to move.*

TO EVERYONE

#6: You decide to get a divorce but find you have too many resources for free legal help. Do you get an attorney? If yes, it costs you five green cards.

Note to Facilitator: *Pause to give participants time to move.*

TO THOSE NOT AT HOME

#7: You decide to talk to your pastor. Your pastor reminds you that you made a promise before God to stay in this marriage for better or for worse. What do you do?

RING BELL Remember, whenever the bell is rung, you must pay again or move to another location. If you run out of resources, return home for the rest of the exercise.

Note to Facilitator: *While participants are deciding if the faith leader's words impact their decisions, ring the bell to keep the exercise moving. Now pay up if they want to stay somewhere other than home. Remind participants that if they are out of options, they must go home for the remainder of the exercise. Pause to give participants time to move.*

TO THOSE AT HOME

#8: You have returned home from the hospital. Your partner now acts thoughtful, caring, and supportive. Someone has called adult protective services. A worker comes to the home and offers to help you. The worker recommends family counseling and respite care for your partner. Accepting help costs one yellow card. What do you do?

Note to Facilitator: *Pause to give participants time to move.*

TO THOSE NOT AT HOME

#9: Your partner begins to stalk you. You see their car when you are shopping. You find footprints up to your bedroom window. You file for

a restraining order.

For those staying at your son's home, one night you overhear your daughter-in-law talking to your son about asking you to leave because she is afraid that your partner might hurt your grandchildren. What do you do?

RING BELL Remember, whenever the bell is rung, you must pay again or move to another location. If you run out of resources, return home for the rest of the exercise.

Note to Facilitator: *Pause to give participants time to move.*

For those with an attorney, your attorney has interviewed all the necessary parties and now needs two more green cards to file any papers. What do you do?

Note to Facilitator: *Pause to give participants time to move.*

TO THOSE AT HOME

#10: Your partner is angry that you talked to "the government" who is now meddling in your personal business. On Friday night, your partner takes the shotgun out of the closet, lays it on the kitchen table, starts drinking, and threatens to kill you. What do you do?

Note to Facilitator: *Pause briefly to give participants time to move.*

#11: You hide the gun. Your partner finds it, loads it, and comes after you. You call 911. The sheriff comes, removes the shotgun shells from the gun and the home, and tells your partner to settle down. The sheriff tells you that jail is no place for an older person so he will not arrest your partner. What do you do?

Note to Facilitator: *Pause to give participants time to move.*

TO THOSE NOT AT HOME

#12: Your son says you can no longer stay with them. The shelter says your time is up and you must leave. What do you do?

Note to Facilitator: Put the red CLOSED signs on the SON's HOME and DV SHELTER posters (with a little masking tape on the back) to remind everyone the these options are no longer available throughout the exercise and then **RING BELL.**

Remind participants that whenever the bell is rung, they must pay again or move to another location. If they run out of resources, they must return home for the rest of the exercise.

TO THOSE AT HOME

#13: At breakfast, you can't find your pet. Your partner laughs and says, "We are better off without that Popsicle." Later that morning you find your pet, barely alive, in your freezer. What do you do?

Note to Facilitator: *Pause to give participants time to move.*

TO THOSE NOT AT HOME

#14: The increased stress has taken its toll and your asthma now requires ongoing daily medical assistance from skilled nurses.

You cannot stay with relatives or at the shelter.

You could stay in the hotel for two green cards or move to an apartment and pay three green cards and one yellow card for medical help if you have the resources.

You could go to the nursing home, without your pet or partner and get the medical help you need.

You could remain at home and have in-home services and your partner's "help."

Note to Facilitator: *After describing the options above, RING BELL. Pause to give participants time to move.*

Thanks everyone, please return to your seats and we will have a discussion about your experience.

Comings and Goings:

Potential Discussion Questions/Talking Points

Encourage participants to identify what it felt like as they maneuvered through the different housing options.

- How did you feel each time the bell rang? Sample answers:
 - Frustrated
 - Angry
 - Desperate
- What obstacles did you experience? Sample answers:
 - Not enough money or good will to choose different options
 - Shelter had limited time for me to stay and I had to leave
 - Didn't know what to do with my pet.
- How do you think agency policy and procedures can add to the obstacles faced by victims? Sample answers:
 - No pets at the shelter meant the hard decision of leaving my own pet behind
 - Apartment too expensive
- If you have any victims who didn't leave, ask if they will tell you why? Sample answers:
 - I felt like I didn't have any options
 - Afraid of running out of money
 - Not enough money/assistance
 - Staying was better than ending up in the nursing home
- Discuss how many people chose the nursing home. Sample answers:
 - Most people would rather not go to a nursing home if they had any other options.

Complete the discussion by describing other reactions you have seen from audiences – like having some say they had medical problems to get to the nursing home, becoming homeless, sharing rent, committing suicide, etc.

Wrap up the exercise by thanking the volunteers for their participation. Remind the audience that abuse in later life is a serious problem and there are no easy answers.