

## SAFETY PLANNING

**The following steps represent my plan for increasing my safety and preparing for the possibility of further violence. Although I do not have control over my partner's violence, I do have a choice about *how* to respond to him/her and how to best get myself, and my children to safety.**

**Step 1: Safety during a violent incident.** Victims cannot always avoid violent incidents. In order to increase safety, abuse victims may use a variety of strategies.

I can use some or all of the following strategies:

- A. If I decide to leave, I will \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Practice how to get out safely. What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells or fire escapes would you use?)
- B. I can keep my money and car keys ready and put them \_\_\_\_\_(location).
- C. I can tell \_\_\_\_\_about the violence and request they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my house.
- D. I can teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the police and the fire department.
- E. I will use \_\_\_\_\_as my code for my children or my friends so they can call for help.
- F. If I have to leave my home, I will go \_\_\_\_\_. (Decide this even if you don't think there will be a next time). If I cannot go to the location above, then I can go to \_\_\_\_\_.
- G. I can also teach some of these strategies to some/all of my children.
- H. When I expect we are going to have an argument, I will try to move to a space that is lowest risk, such as \_\_\_\_\_. (Try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, kitchen, near weapons or in rooms without access to an outside door.)
- I. I will use my judgment and intuition. If the situation is very serious, I can give my partner what he/she wants to calm him/her down. I have to protect myself until I/we are out of danger.

**Step 2: Safety when preparing to leave.** Abuse victims frequently leave the residence they share with the abusive partner. Leaving must be done with a careful plan in order to increase safety. Abusers often strike back when they believe their victim is leaving the relationship.

I can use some or all of the following safety strategies:

- A. I will leave money and an extra set of keys with \_\_\_\_\_, so that I can leave quickly.
- B. I will keep copies of important documents or keys at \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. I will open a savings account by \_\_\_\_\_, to increase my independence.
- D. Other things I can do to increase my independence include: \_\_\_\_\_.
- E. I can call the domestic violence hot line number: \_\_\_\_\_.
- F. I will make a list of important phone numbers I might need and keep it on or near me at all times.
- G. I can keep change for phone calls on me at all times. I understand that if I use my telephone credit card, the following month the telephone bill will tell my partner those numbers that I called after I left. To keep my telephone communications confidential, I must either use coins or I might ask a friend to permit me to use their telephone card for a limited time when I first leave. I could also purchase prepaid calling cards.
- H. I will check with \_\_\_\_\_and \_\_\_\_\_to see if they would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.
- I. I can leave extra clothes with \_\_\_\_\_.
- J. I will sit down and review my safety plan every \_\_\_\_\_in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence. \_\_\_\_\_(DV Advocate or friend) has agreed to help me review this plan.
- K. I will rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.

### **When I leave, I should have:**

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Identification for myself                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Children's Birth Certificates             | <input type="checkbox"/> My Birth Certificate                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Security Cards                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> School & vaccination record               | <input type="checkbox"/> Money                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Checkbook, ATM card                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Credit Cards                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Keys – house/car/office                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Driver's License & Registration                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Medication                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Passports/Divorce papers                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bank books, Insurance papers                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Small saleable objects                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Address Book                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pictures, jewelry   | <input type="checkbox"/> Children's favorite toys, and/or blankets |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Welfare identification, work permits, Green Card          |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Records – for all family members |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lease/rental agreement, house deed, mortgage payment book |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Items of special sentimental value       |

**Step 3: Safety planning in my own residence.** There are many things that a victim can do to increase her/his safety in their own residence. It may be impossible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step by step. Safety measures, I can use, include:

- A. I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible.
- B. I can replace wooden doors and windows as soon as possible.

- C. I can install security systems including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, an electronic system, etc.
- D. I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows.
- E. I can install smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor in my house/apartment.
- F. I can install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to my house.
- G. I will teach my children how to use the telephone to make a collect call to me or \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_(friend or minister or DV Advocate)
- H. I will tell people who take care of my children which people have permission to pick up my children and that my partner is not permitted to do so. The people I will inform include:  
 School: \_\_\_\_\_ Babysitter: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Day care staff: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sunday School teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Others: \_\_\_\_\_
- I. I can inform \_\_\_\_\_(neighbors),  
 \_\_\_\_\_(Pastor), \_\_\_\_\_(friends), that my partner no longer resides with me, and they should call the police if he/she is observed near my residence.

**Step 4: Safety with a Restraining Order.** Abusers may or may not obey restraining orders. I recognize that I may need to ask the police and the court to enforce my restraining order.

Some steps that I can take to help the enforcement of my restraining order:

- A. I will call the police if my abuser tries to make contact with me.
- B. I will keep my restraining order \_\_\_\_\_(location).  
 ALWAYS KEEP IT ON OR NEAR YOUR PERSON.
- C. I will give my protection order to police departments in the communities where I usually visit family or friends, and in the community where I live.
- D. There should be a county registry of restraining orders that all police departments can call to confirm it. I can check to make sure that my order is in the registry. The telephone number for the county registry of restraining orders is # \_\_\_\_\_.
- E. If I often visit other counties, I might file my protection order with the court in those counties. I will register in the following counties: \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- F. I can call the local domestic violence program if I am not sure about C, D or E above, or if I have some problem with my protection order.
- G. I will inform my employer, my minister, my closest friend and \_\_\_\_\_ that I have a protection order in effect.
- H. If my partner destroys my restraining order, I can get another copy from the Courthouse, by going to the Circuit Court Clerk's office.
- I. If my partner violates the restraining order, I can call the police and report a violation, contact my attorney, call my DV Advocate, and/or advise the court of the violation.
- J. If the police do not help, I can contact my Advocate or Attorney and will file a complaint with the chief of the police department.
- K. I can also file a private criminal complaint with the district justice in the jurisdiction where the violation occurred or with the district attorney. I can charge my abusive partner with a violation of the restraining order and all the crimes that he/she commits in violating the order. I can call the DV Advocate to help me with this.

**Step 5. Safety on the job and in public.** Each abuse victim must decide if and when he/she will tell others that their partner has abused them and that he/she may be at continued risk. Friends, family and co-workers can help to protect victims. Each victim should consider carefully which people to invite to help secure his/her safety.

I might do any or all of the following:

- A. I can inform my boss, the security supervisor and \_\_\_\_\_ at work of my situation.
- B. I can ask \_\_\_\_\_ to help screen my telephone calls at work.
- C. When leaving work, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- D. When driving home, if problems occur, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- E. If I use public transit, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- F. I will go to different grocery stores and shopping malls to conduct my business and shop at hours that are different than those of my abusive partner.
- G. I can use a different bank and take care of my banking at hours different from my abuser.
- H. I can also \_\_\_\_\_.