

SAFETY PLANNING

The following steps represent my plan for increasing my safety and preparing in advance 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, debit card, 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 cell phone 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, debit card, and an extra set of keys with _____, or hidden _____ 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 my phone and charger on me at all times. I understand that if I use my joint cellphone, the following month the telephone bill will tell my partner those numbers that I called after I left. To keep my cellphone communications confidential, I must either use a new cellphone or ask a friend to use their cellphone for a limited time when I first leave. I could also use a pay per minute cellphone.
- 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"/> Important phone numbers and addresses |
| <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 add braces and locks to doors and windows, including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors
- C. I can install security systems, with cameras and audio.
- 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 cellphone to call 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, schools, work, where I usually go to, 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 phone 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 emails, phone calls, or text 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 _____.