

The following steps represent my personalized plan to increase my safety. The plan allows me to prepare in advance for future violence.

Domestic violence is never the survivor's fault. There are precautionary measures that you can take to prepare you for what steps you need to take to act quickly and methodically.

Please consider keeping a copy of this plan where the abuser is not likely to look or find it.

PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT A SAFETY PLAN IS NOT A REPLACEMENT FOR CONTACTING 9-1-1.

Step 1: Safety during a violent incident.

Planning this section may help you make quicker and informed decisions in the heat of the moment.

- If you believe that an argument or violent incident is about to happen, think about where you can move that is safer? Avoid rooms with no windows and spaces that are far from the home entrance/exit (What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells, fire escapes you could use to get there)

- Where will you keep your purse and car keys to make it easier to leave quickly?
 - I will put them on (location)

- Can you teach your children how to call 9-1-1 in case of emergency? Do they know what phone to use?

- Have you discussed the following with your child(ren) regarding what they should do in case of an incident?
 - Stay out of the fight
 - Avoid getting trapped in a small room, closet, or kitchen (they may need to run out for safety and stay away from areas where there are dangerous objects)
 - Call 9-1-1
 - Escape to a safe place, relative or neighbors
 - Tell them this is not their fault

- If you need to leave, where will you go? (Decide this even if you think there will not be a next time)

- If you cannot go there, where else can you go? (Decide this even if you think there will not be a next time)

- Is there a neighbor or a trusted person that you could talk to about calling the police?

- How would you alert them (call, text, listen for suspicious noises)?

- Is there a code word you can use to let others know you need help?

- My code word _____
- I will tell the following people about the code word.

YOU KNOW YOUR PARTNER BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE. YOU SHOULD USE YOUR INTUITION AND MODIFY YOUR SAFETY PLAN AS YOU FEEL NEEDED.

Step 2: Safety when preparing to leave.

Having a plan in place for when you decide to leave is critical and can be beneficial. Abusers escalate their behavior when they believe their partner is leaving the relationship.

- Can you keep copies of important documents, money, clothes, and an extra set of keys with a trusted person or a place outside the home?
 - List with who and where if so

- Can you open a separate bank account to increase your independence?

- Can you get a prepaid phone cell phone to make phone calls without your partner knowing? (Understand that if you use your phone, credit card, or a debit card attached to the abuser's account, they may be able to track you. The abuser may also have a tracking application on your phone.)

- Have you checked with trusted individuals to see if they will let you stay with them?
 - I have checked and confirmed with _____ and _____.
- What other steps could you take when preparing to leave?

- Items to consider taking or keeping with a trusted person: (check off all that apply)
Cell Phones _____, ID Card _____, Birth Certificates for you and your children _____, Social Security Cards _____, School Records _____, Medical Records _____, Shot Records _____, Car title/registration _____, Debit/Credit Cards _____, Lease/rental agreement _____, Work Permits _____, Passports _____, Insurance documents _____, Jewelry _____, Medications _____, Financial documents _____, clothing _____, keys _____, Divorce Papers/Custody Papers _____, Children's favorite toys/blankets _____, Sentimental items _____, Money _____. (Even if you do not work, you can take money from a joint account. Otherwise, legally, he will be able to take all the money out and close the account)

REVIEW AND REHEARSE YOUR SAFETY PLAN. INCLUDE YOUR TRUSTED PERSON(S) IN THE REVIEW PROCESS, SO THEY KNOW HOW TO HELP.

Step 3: Safety in your own residence.

There are steps that you can take to increase safety in your home. These steps can be added over time, as it may be too costly to do it all at once.

Safety measures you can take:

- Change locks on doors and windows.
- Replace wooden doors with steel doors.
- Install security systems, including additional locks, window bars, and surveillance cameras.
- Install smoke detectors, fire extinguishers on each floor of your home.
- Purchase rope ladders to escape from a second-floor window.
- Install outside lighting with motion sensors.
- Inform your neighbors that your partner no longer lives there, and they should call the police if observed near the residence.

- Teach the children how to contact you and another adult in case your partner takes them.

Step 4: Safety after leaving

If you leave an abusive relationship, you can take precautionary measures to increase your safety. Some may work, and others may not. Think about your geographic location and any other considerations you may need to take to help you stay safe.

- Change locks.
- Change passwords on all your accounts.
- Consider deleting your social media accounts.
- Turn off GPS on all devices.
- Secure all windows.
- If possible, provide a photo of your abuser to your job's security.
- Consider changing your favorite store and restaurant locations (your abuser knows what grocery store you shop in, where your hair and nail techs may be and what your favorite restaurants are).
- Contact a domestic violence service program to talk about keeping your address confidential through the Address Confidentiality Program.

Step 5: Protect your children's safety.

There are certain things you may want to consider about the safety of your children.

- Contact a domestic violence service program and your children's school about keeping the school from publishing any information or pictures of your child.
- Tell the following people, who care for your children, who has permission to pick up your child. If your partner is the biological father, a court order may be needed to exclude them.

_____ (name of school)
_____ (name of babysitter/daycare)
_____ (teacher's name)
_____ (place of worship)
_____ (name(s) of others)

- Plan with your children, when and how, you all will leave if violence escalates.
- If there are court orders in place, what safe place can you meet up for visitations or pick-ups?

- How can you screen gifts given to your children or talk to your children about the abuser using them to obtain information? (Sometimes abusers use family phone plans, the children's phones, or gifts to the children to track your location)

Step 6: Staying safe with a protective order

Abusers could obey the protective order, but that is not always the case. The following are some steps you may take to help the enforcement of the protective order.

- Keep a copy of your protective order with you at all times. If you have multiple purses, keep a copy in all of them, consider keeping a copy in your car and at your job. Where are some other places you may keep the protective order?

- Make sure you double-check that your protective order is filed with the District or County Clerk in the county where you live and work, and if your children are on the protective order, it is filed in the county where they attend school and daycare.
 District/County Clerk Phone: _____
 District/County Clerk Address: _____
 District/County Clerk Phone: _____
 District/County Clerk Address: _____
- Provide a copy of your protective order to the local law enforcement in the city or county where you live, work, and places you go often.
 Local Law Enforcement: _____
- You can inform your employer, close friends, and children’s schools that you have a protective order in effect and provide copies if needed.
 - Employer
 - Close friends
 - Children’s Schools
 - Others _____
- The local family violence program can help if an issue comes up with your protective order.
 Local Family Violence Program: _____
- Call the police if the abuser violates the protective order, keep documentation and proof to show them and the local prosecuting office.

Step 7: Safety on the job

When an abuser cannot find a partner after they leave the relationship, they may turn to the battered person's place of employment. Consider the following steps to ensure your safety at your job.

- Inform your boss, the security supervisor, and a coworker about the situation.

- You can ask _____ to help you screen your telephone calls.
- When leaving work, you can:
 - Ask someone, possibly security, to walk you to your car.
 - Park close to the entrance
 - Avoid parking garages
 - If possible, consider asking to be transferred to a different location.
 - What other precautionary measure can you take?

- If you have a problem driving home you can: (familiarize yourself with the location of your local law enforcement near your job, your children’s schools, your home and places you visit frequently)

Step 8: Safety and your emotional wellbeing.

Experiencing emotional or physical abuse is emotionally draining and terrifying. To build a new life, you will need much courage, energy, and determination. You can do it, and in filling this out, you are taking a significant step to get there.

- If you have to communicate with your partner in person or over the phone, what positive things can you do before or after to feel better?

- What can you do if you feel upset?

- What is one phrase you can use to remind you of all your strengths?

- Who can you call for support? (consider attending workshops and groups, therapy or counseling for you and your children)

Telephone numbers you should know

- Police/Sheriff's department (local)- 911 or _____
- Police/Sheriff's department (work) _____
- Police/Sheriff's department (school) _____
- Prosecutor's Office _____
- Family Violence Program (local) _____
National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-SAFE (7233)
800-787-3224 (TTY)
www.ndvh.org
- County Registry of protection orders _____
- Victim Services _____
- School/Daycare _____
- Your work place _____
- Doctor/Health Care Provider _____
- Local Hospital _____
- Friend _____
- Family Member _____
- Attorney _____
- Attorney _____