

Personal Safety Plan

The following steps represent my plan for increasing my safety and preparing in advance for the possibility of further domestic violence. Although I do not have control over my partner's violence, I do have a choice about how to respond to them 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, victims may use a variety of strategies. I can use some or all of the following:

1. If I decide to leave, I will _____.
(Practice how to get out safely. What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells or fire escapes can I use?)
2. I can keep my purse and car keys ready and put them (place) _____
_____ in order to leave quickly.
3. I can tell _____ about the violence and request that they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my house.
4. I can teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the police and the fire department.
5. I will use _____ as my code word with my children and friends so they can call for help.
6. If I have to leave my home, I will go _____.
(Decide this even if you don't think there will be a next time.)
7. If I cannot go to the location above, then I can go to _____
_____ or _____.
8. I can also teach some of these strategies to my children.
9. If I think we are going to have an argument, I will try to move to a space that is lowest risk, such as _____.
(I will try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, and kitchen, near weapons or in rooms without access to an outside door.)
10. I will use my judgment and intuition. If the situation is very serious, I can give my partner what they want to calm them down. I have to protect myself until we are out of danger.
11. If my house is difficult to locate from the street, I will apply reflective color to my mailbox or make sure my street number can be seen more clearly.

Step 2: Safety when preparing to leave. Victims frequently leave the residence they share with an abusive partner. Leaving must be done with a careful plan in order to increase safety. Abusers often strike back when they believe that a victim is leaving a relationship. I can use some or all of the following safety strategies:

1. I will leave money and an extra set of keys with _____ so I can leave quickly.
2. I will keep copies of important documents or keys at _____.
(If taking original documents may arouse the suspicion of my abuser, I can make photocopies and keep them with a trusted friend or in a safety deposit box at a bank.)
3. I will open a savings or checking account in my name by _____ to increase my independence.
4. I will obtain a personal loan in my name to establish credit.
5. I will obtain a credit card in my own name to establish credit.
(I should try to have one to use in emergency situations and one gas card.)
6. I will locate all papers regarding insurance coverage of my residence, cars and family's health so I can understand them. I will look into the cash value of the life insurance policy and get a better understanding of any pension/retirement plan.
7. I will make an inventory of all assets and liabilities.
(I know that accounts listing names separated by "or" are joint and that accounts listing names by "and" require two signatures.)
8. I will get my own post office box. When I am ready, I will begin forwarding my mail.
9. I will establish my own transportation by _____.
10. EDVP's crisis line number is 1-425-746-1940 or 1-800-827-8840. I can seek emergency shelter or information on available programs by calling their crisis line.
11. I will be cautious about keeping any information about crisis intervention agencies, hotlines, shelters, or counseling dealing with domestic violence (brochures, pamphlets, business cards, etc.) at my residence. My abuser may become upset upon finding any of this information that may indicate that I plan to leave the relationship. They may attempt to prevent my leaving or retaliate against me.
12. I can keep change for phone calls on me at all times or I can purchase a telephone calling card. I understand that it is important to be careful when I use cell phones. Calls made on cell phones can be traced to specific cell towers to the establish location of a person.
13. If I share my home with my abuser, I will be careful to use my telephone or computer knowing that my abuser can use technology to find out where I placed phone calls and what sites I am visiting on the Internet.
14. I will check with _____ and _____ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.
15. I can leave extra clothes and personal items with _____ at _____.

16. Other things I can do increase my independence include: _____
_____.
17. I will sit down and review my safety plan every _____ in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence. _____ (domestic violence advocate or friend) has agreed to help me review this plan.
18. I will rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.
19. If I have pets and animals in my care, I will make plans for them to be placed with others I trust to care for them if I am unable to bring them with me.
20. I will be careful to keep a paper trail related to the abuse in my relationship by taking photos of my injuries and collecting written observations from medical professionals when I seek healthcare. I can talk with people who are safe about the abuse they have witnessed or the injuries they observed about helping me later if I choose to use the legal system in pursuing future safety measures. I understand that if I do choose to use the legal system, these things are very important particularly if I am not reporting the abuse to police. I must also keep these items safe and away from my abuser.

Step 3: Safety in my own residence. If my partner leaves or is forced to leave or I have to seek a new location, I may find myself alone with different safety concerns. There are many things that victims can do to increase safety at home. It may be impossible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step by step. Safety measures I can use include:

1. I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible. Local law enforcement can perform a security check or a walk-through free of charge to help secure my residence.
2. I can replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors.
3. I can install security systems including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, an electronic system.
4. I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows.
5. I can install smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor in my house.
6. I can install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to my house (motion detectors).
7. I can purchase an answering machine or use voicemail to screen my calls. I can use the Caller ID service offered by the phone company as well as other options such as call tracing and last phone contact call-back to assist police in filing charges if I choose to do so.
8. I will seek legal consultation in receiving information regarding options in using the legal system to maintain my safety and the safety of my family.

9. I will teach my children how to use the telephone to make a collect call to me and to _____ (friend/minister/other person) in the event my partner takes the children.
10. I will tell the people who take care of my children who has permission to pick them up and that **my partner is not permitted to do so**. The people I will inform about pick-up permission include:
School: _____
Day Care Staff: _____
Babysitter: _____
Sunday School Teacher: _____
Teacher: _____
Coach: _____
Extra-curricular Activity Staff Member: _____
and other neighbors and friends: _____
_____.
11. I can inform _____ (neighbors, family, friends) that my partner no longer resides with me and they should call the police if they are observed near my home.

Step 4: Safety with a protective order. Many abusers obey protection orders, but some do not. I recognize that I may need to ask the police and the courts to enforce my protective order. The following are some steps that I can take to help the enforcement of my protective order:

1. I will keep my protection order _____ (location).
(Always keep it on or near your person.)
2. I will give my protection order to police departments in the community where I work, in those communities where I usually visit friends or family, and in the community where I live.
3. There is a State registry of protection orders that all police departments can call to confirm a protection order. I can check with the police department to make sure that my order is in the registry.
4. For further safety, if I often visit other cities/towns/counties in _____ (State), I might file my protection order with the court in those areas. I will register my protection order in the following localities: _____
_____ and _____.
5. I can call the local domestic violence program if I am not sure about 2, 3, or 4, above, or if I have some problem with my protection order.

- 6. I will inform my employer, my minister, my closest friend, _____

_____ and _____
_____ that I have a protection order in effect.
- 7. If my partner destroys my protection order, I can get another copy from the courthouse where I received the original order.
- 8. If my partner violates the protection order, I can call the police and report a violation, contact my attorney, call my advocate, or advise the court of the violation.
- 9. 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.
- 10. I can also file a private criminal complaint with the district judge in the jurisdiction where the violation occurred or with the district attorney. I can charge my battering partner with a violation of the protection order and all the crimes that he commits in violating the order. I can call the domestic violence advocate to help me with this.

Step 5: Safety on the job and in public. Victims must decide if and when to tell others about their experience as a victim of domestic violence and that they may be at continued risk. Friends, family, and co-workers can help protect victims. Victims should consider carefully which people to invite to help secure safety. I might do any or all of the following:

- 1. I can inform my boss, the security supervisor, and _____
_____ at work of my situation.
- 2. I can ask _____
_____ to help screen my telephone calls at work.
- 3. When leaving work, I can _____
_____.
- 4. When driving home, if problems occur I can _____
_____.
- 5. If I use public transit, I can _____
_____.
- 6. I can use different grocery stores and shopping malls to conduct my business and shop at hours that are different than those when residing with my partner.
- 7. I can use a different bank and take care of my banking at hours different from those I used when residing with my partner.
- 8. I can also _____

_____.

Step 6: Safety and my emotional health. The experience of being abused and verbally degraded by a partner is usually exhausting and emotionally draining. The process of

building a new life takes much courage and incredible energy. To conserve my emotional energy and resources and to avoid hard emotional times, I can do some of the following:

1. If I feel down and ready to return to a potentially abusive situation, I can _____

_____.
2. When I have to communicate with my partner in person or by telephone, I can _____

_____.
3. I can tell myself " _____
_____ " whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me.
4. I can _____
_____ to help me feel stronger.
5. I can call _____
_____ to be of support to me.
6. Other things I can do to help me feel stronger are _____
_____ and _____
_____.
7. I can attend workshops and support groups at the domestic violence program or _____
_____ to gain support and strengthen my relationships with other people.
8. I can exercise, take up a sport or participate in self-defense classes to improve my self-esteem and confidence in interacting with others.
9. I can continue or establish new social relationships or participate in activities outside or home or work. I can go back to school or build on my education. I will not allow myself to become isolated.

Step 7: Items to take when leaving. When a victim leaves their partner, it is important to take certain items with them. Beyond this, you can sometimes give an extra copy of papers and an extra set of clothing to a friend just in case you have to leave quickly. These items might best be placed in one location in case we have to leave in a hurry.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Identification | <input type="checkbox"/> Keys – House/Car/ Office |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Driver’s License and Registration | <input type="checkbox"/> Money |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birth Certificates | <input type="checkbox"/> Checkbook, ATM Card |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Security Cards | <input type="checkbox"/> Credit Cards |

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Welfare Identification | <input type="checkbox"/> Bank Books |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Green Cards | <input type="checkbox"/> Payment Books |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Passports | <input type="checkbox"/> Lease/Rental Agreement/Deed/Mortgage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Protection Order/Divorce Papers | <input type="checkbox"/> Medications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Records | <input type="checkbox"/> Pictures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance Papers | <input type="checkbox"/> Jewelry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School / Vaccination Records | <input type="checkbox"/> Children's Favorite Toys or Blankets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Address Book | <input type="checkbox"/> Items of Special Sentimental Value |

Telephone numbers I need to know:

Local police department – home _____.

Local police department – school _____.

Local police department – work _____.

EDVP: 1-425-746-1940 or 1-800-827-8840.

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) | TTY: 1-800-787-3224.