

Safety Plan

Although you do not have control over your partner's behavior, you do have control over how you prepare for it, respond to it, and get to safety. You decide if and when to tell others what is happening. Below are suggestions for increasing your safety.

Section A: Staying

1. Identify the "cues" you have seen in the past right before your partner has been violent. Keep these in mind as warning signs, and when you see these things in the future you will know it is time to take action to prepare yourself:

- ____ Use of alcohol/drugs
- ____ Verbal abuse/put-downs
- ____ Jealousy
- ____ Embarrassing you in front of friends
- ____ Disagreements about sex
- ____ Arguments about money problems
- ____ Criticizing your family

2. Write down the ways you have tried to protect yourself in the past.

Ways that have not worked:-----

Ways that have worked:-----

3. When you sense there is going to be an argument, try to go to a place where other people might hear the arguing, and/or a place where there is less risk of injury. (Avoid kitchens, bathrooms, garages, anywhere near weapons or any room without an outside exit.)

Try to avoid having an argument:-----

When I feel a fight coming on, I will try to move to a PLACE THAT IS LOWEST RISK FOR GETTING HURT such as

----- (at home), ----- (at work), or -----

----- (in public).

4. I will keep my cell phone or change for pay phones on me at all times. The closest pay phones near my home are:

Write numbers you can call for help when you sense that you are in danger: (Always have these numbers, your cell phone and/or change for phone calls on you.)

Police: _____ Under what circumstances will you call? _____

Hotline: _____ Under what circumstances will you call? _____

Other: _____ Under what circumstances will you call? _____

5. Identify the people you can turn to for help who are willing to be a part of your safety plan:

<u>Name</u>	<u>How They Will Help</u>
Friend: _____	_____
At Work: _____	_____
Relative: _____	_____
Other: _____	_____

6. Choose a code word and how it will be used to let people know when you need help:

7. If you need to get out of the house quickly when you are in danger, how will you escape? Plan as many escape routes as possible, including using doors, window, fire escapes, elevators, stairwells, etc. (Practice the escape route.)

You can purchase rope ladders in order to escape from second floor window.

8. If you need to go to a safe location where your partner will not find you, where will you go?

9. When walking, riding, or driving home if problems occur, I can: _____

Where are pay phones on the routes you walk, ride, or drive?_____

10. I can use my answering machine or ask my co-workers, friends, or other family members to screen my calls and visitors. I have the right not to receive harassing phone calls. I can ask:

_____ (at home) or _____ (at work) to help screen my phone calls.

11. Do you know what an Order of Protection is and how to get one? Who can help you get the Order of Protection?_____

12. If you get an Order of Protection, you should carry a copy on you at all times and have copies at your home, work and any place else you are likely to be. Where will you keep copies of the order of protection (or who will hold them for you?) _____

13. Do you have medical insurance in case of injury? _____

If not, talk with a DSS worker, case manager or domestic violence agency for assistance to see if you are eligible.

14. Plan and practice some ways to increase your independence so you will be better prepared to make it on your own if you decide to end this relationship in the future. List ways you can become more independent financially, emotionally, socially, physically, etc.

SECTION B: Breaking Up

While ending the relationship now is probably the best decision for you in the long run, you should know that the breakup period is the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship. Below are some strategies for increasing your safety.

1. Plan the breakup carefully with the help of people you trust. If possible, involve a counselor from a local domestic violence services organization, friends, family members and co-workers who you trust.

The more people who are aware of what's going on, the more people can look out for you and support you.

Write the names of the people who will help you to carry out your breakup safety plan:

2. Getting an order of protection is recommended if you think you might be in any danger. It is not a guarantee of safety, but it is a legal court order that says your ex-partner must stay away from you and can be arrested if he or she does not. This may scare your ex into leaving you alone. (Ask a domestic violence services agency for help.)

Write where you can go to get an order of protection in your community:

3. Do not break up with your partner in an isolated place. Do it in public, around people who are a part of your safety plan and know what's going on. If necessary for safety reasons, do it by phone or by letter.

Write where and when you will break up with your partner: _____

Write who will be around when you do it: _____

4. Be very clear with your partner that you are ending the relationship and that your decision is not negotiable.

Write down the words you will use: _____

5. Be prepared for your partner's reaction. It could be violent, or your partner could be very sweet and try to win you back.

Ways your partner might react:

How you will handle these reactions:

6. After breaking up, avoid being alone with your ex-partner or being in a situation where s/he might try to corner you. You can change your routines, change your travel routes, and ask a friend or family member to travel with you to work. Try not to go out alone, especially at night. Never open the door if your ex comes knocking, no matter how sweet, apologetic, or sincere, s/he sounds.

Write the routines you will have to change: _____

Name the people who are willing to travel with you: _____

Plan what you will do if you ex shows up at your Home: _____

Work: _____

Other: _____

7. To increase my safety, when I have to talk to my partner in person I can _____

To add to my safety, when I have to talk to my partner on the phone, I can _____

SECTION C: Breaking Up With Someone You Live With

In addition to following the steps in Section B, take the extra precautions below before breaking up.

1. Identify where you can stay, preferably a place where your partner will not find you:
(If needed, get information about your local shelter from your local domestic violence hotline)

2. If you are going to stay with a family member or friend where your partner might be able

to find you, make sure that everyone living in the household is a part of your safety plan.

3. Get any important personal possessions, identification, documents, money, etc., out of your home before the breakup. Items such as:

You and your children's birth certificates
Social Security cards
Immigration documents
Marriage license

Leases or deeds with your name on them
Checkbook
Credit cards
Bank statements

Credit card statements
Proof of income for you and your spouse (W2's)
Documentation of past incidents of abuse (photos, police reports, medical reports)

Insurance policies

These should be kept together and in a safe place. Going back for them could be dangerous, or your partner could try to control you by destroying or "holding hostage" things you need. It is also suggested that you copy these items and leave the copies with someone you trust if possible.

Write down things you will remove from the home: _____

This is where you will keep them: _____

In the event that you are unable to take needed items with you prior to leaving the home, you can call 311 for police accompaniment to remove needed items.

4. If you plan to stay where you live now and ask your partner to leave, change the locks so your partner doesn't have access to the home. (Do this before you break up or immediately after, and don't stay home alone until the locks are changed.)

Write the name and number of the locksmith you will use, and how you will pay for it: _____

5. I can install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to my house.

6. If you plan to stay where you live now, do not allow your ex-partner in the home when you're alone to get his or her belongings. Have him or her do this when you're not home. You can request police be present when your partner picks up his/her things by calling 311.

Plan how you will stay safe when your partner gets his or her belongings

SECTION D: If you have a child or children with your partner

If you have a child or children with your partner, your safety plan will also have to include making sure your children are safe physically and emotionally. In addition to the precautions above, make sure you do the following things for the safety of your children:

1. Get counseling for your child{ren} and advice on how to help them deal with the emotional effects of witnessing the violence. Write where you will go for help with this: _____

1. Call the police or child welfare services if your partner abuses your child{ren}. You are responsible for protecting your child{ren}, and if you partner hurts them and you fail to seek help, you could be charged with neglect and the child{ren} could be taken away.

3. If your child{ren} are old enough, teach them how to use the phone to call the police or fire department. If you have a programmable phone, program these numbers on speed dial and teach the child{ren} when and how to use them.

4. If your child{ren} are old enough, teach them the escape plan in case they feel they are in danger.

5. Let anyone who cares for your child{ren} know who else has permission to visit or pick the child{ren} up. If you have an order of protection that includes the child{ren}, make sure the school, day care or sitters have copies.

SECTION E: While you are in a shelter

While staying in a shelter there are several precautions to consider.

1. For your safety as well as the safety of the other women and children in shelter, never disclose any information regarding the shelter location. Though this is sometimes difficult, you can not tell even your trusted friends or family members the address or even county in which you are staying.

2. Locate the closest police station to the shelter. The closest police station to my shelter is located at

3. Do not return back to the shelter if you feel you are being followed. Instead drive to the closest police station if possible. If not possible, drive to a populated location such as a grocery or convenience store, gas station or any public area with people.

4. Try to limit your contact with your abusive partner. Write down at least two ways to deal with urges to call or talk to your partner (i.e. I'll call my best friend anytime I want to talk to my partner).

5. Carry a cell phone with you at all times. If you do not own a cell phone, the shelter will be able to provide a 911 cell phone for emergencies.

6. Call for a police escort if you ever feel in danger.

7. Contact work and your children's school about Protective Order. Keeping people close to you informed will help ensure your safety. List below places you will give copies of your protective order.

SECTION E: SAFETY IN PUBLIC OR AT WORK

1. Inform building security and coworkers you trust of your situation. If possible, provide a photograph of your abuser to building security. If you have an order of protection, give a copy to someone at your place of employment and security.

2. Vary your routes to and from work and arrange for someone to escort you to your car, bus, or train.

