

My Safety Plan

The following represents my plan for increasing my safety and preparing in advance for the possibility of further abuse or violence. Although I do not have control over my abuser's behavior, I do have a choice about how to respond to him/her and how to best get myself to safety.

Some of the things I can do are:

Increase my overall safety

I may not always be able to avoid violent incidents. In order to increase my safety, I 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, stairwells or fire escapes would I use?)

- b. I can keep my personal belongings (purse, car keys, etc. _____) ready and put them (where? _____) in order to leave quickly.
- c. I can tell _____ and _____ about the violence and request they call the military or civilian 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, and how to report violence of other problems.
- e. I will use _____ as my code word with my children or my friends so they can call for help.
- f. If I have to leave my home, I will go _____
(I should decide this even if I think there won't be a next time.) If I cannot go to the location above, then I can go to _____ or _____.
- 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 incident, I will try to move to a space that is lowest risk, such as: _____
(I will try to avoid incidents in the bathroom, garage, and 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 abuser what he/she wants to calm him/her down. I have to protect myself until I/we are out of danger.

Protect Myself During Incidents or If Planning to Leave

If I am planning to leave, I should do so without telling my abuser face to face. If I have to leave quickly or during an incident, I WILL JUST LEAVE. I will not talk with my abuser about it. If I am going to leave at another time, I will leave when my abuser is not home and communicate with him/her later by phone or letter from a safe place.

Protect Myself When Preparing to Leave

I may decide to leave the residence I share with my abuser. I must have a careful plan for leaving in order to increase my safety. My abuser might strike out and become more violent if he/she believes that I am leaving the relationship.

- a. I will leave money and an extra set of keys with _____ so I can leave quickly.
- b. I will keep copies of important documents or keys at: _____.
- c. I will open a savings account by (date) _____ to increase my independence. I will use _____ as my mailing address so that the monthly statement is not sent to my home.
- d. Other things I can do to increase my independence include: *(stockpiling baby supplies, filtering kitchen necessities to a friend, moving clothing, household necessities, etc. to a storage area, putting documents in a safe deposit box, etc.)*

- e. The domestic violence program's hotline number is: _____.
I can seek shelter by calling this hotline.
- f. I can keep change for phone calls on me at all times. I understand that if I use my telephone credit card or cell phone, the following month the bill will tell my abuser those numbers that I called before or after I left. To keep my telephone communication confidential, I must either use coins or a pre-paid phone card or cell phone, or I might get a friend to permit me to use his/her telephone/cell phone/credit card for a limited time when I first leave.
- g. I will check with _____ and _____ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.
- h. I can leave extra clothes with _____.

- i. I will not tell my abuser face to face that I am leaving, or I will leave without talking with my abuser.
- j. 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.
- k. I will rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.

Items to Take When Leaving

If I decide to leave my abuser, it is important to take certain items with me. I may also want to give an extra copy of papers and an extra set of clothing to a friend just in case I have to leave quickly.

Items on the following list are the most important to take. If there is time, I might take other items or store them somewhere outside my home so I can get to them easily.

These items might best be placed in one location, so that if we have to leave in a hurry, I can grab them quickly. When I leave I should take:

Identification for myself	Green card
Military ID card	Divorce papers/ custody papers
Children's birth certificates	Medical records
My birth certificate	Lease or rental agreements, mortgage payment book
Passports	Bank books
Social Security Number for myself, my abuser, and my children	School and vaccination records
Money/cash	Insurance papers
Checkbook, ATM card	Address book
Credit cards	Pictures
Keys – house/car/office	Jewelry
Drivers' license and registration	Children's favorite toys and/or blankets
Medications	Small saleable items (not abuser's property)
Work permits	

Safety in My Own Residence

If I no longer reside with my abuser or if I have my own residence, there are many things that I can do to increase my safety in my own residence. Depending on my residence, it may not be possible to do all the measures that are listed here or to do them all at once, but I will take all of them into consideration to protect my safety.

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 with steel/metal doors.
- 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 telephone call to me and to _____ (friend, clergy person, other) in the event that my abuser takes the children.
- h. I will tell people who take care of my children which people have permission to pick up my children. The people I will inform about pick-up permission include:
 - a. School: _____
 - b. Day Care Staff: _____
 - c. Babysitter: _____
 - d. Sunday/Religious School Teacher: _____
 - e. Teacher: _____
 - f. Others: _____
- i. I can inform the following people that my abuser no longer resides with me and they should call the military or civilian police if he/she is observed near my residence:

Safety with a Protection Order

My abuser should obey protection orders, but I can never be sure. I recognize that I may need to ask the military or civilian police, the courts, and the military commanding officer to enforce my protection order.

The following are some steps that I can take to help the enforcement of my protection order.

- a. I will keep my protection order at (location) _____.
- b. I will always keep a copy of my protection order with me. If I change purses/wallets, that's the first thing that should go in.

- c. I will give a copy of my protection order to military and civilian police departments in the community where I work, in those communities where I usually visit family or friends, and in the community where I live.
- d. There may be a county registry of protection orders that all police departments can call to confirm a protection order. I will check to make sure that my order is in the registry. The telephone number for the county registry of protection orders is _____.
- e. For further safety, if I often visit other counties, I might file my protection order with the court in those counties. I will register my protection order in the following counties:

- f. I can call the domestic violence program if I am not sure about b., c., or d. above or if I have some problem with my protection order.
- g. I will inform my employer, my clergy person, my closest friends, and

that I have a protection order in effect.
- h. If my abuser destroys my protection order, I can get another copy by going to _____ located at: _____.
- i. If my abuser violates my protection order, I can call the police and report a violation, contact my attorney, call my advocate, and/or advise the court of the violation.
- j. If law enforcement does not help, I can contact my advocate or attorney and will file a complaint with the chief of the law enforcement department.
- k. I can also file a private civil complaint in the jurisdiction in the U.S. where the violation occurred. I can charge my abuser with a violation of the protection order. (I can also ask if the jurisdiction where the violation occurred permits the filing of private criminal complaints.) I can call the domestic violence advocate to help me with this.

Safety on the Job and in Public

I must decide if and when I will tell others that my abuser is abusive and that I may be at continued risk. Friends, family and co-workers can all offer protection. I should carefully consider which people to invite to help secure my safety. I might do any or all of the following:

- a. I can inform my boss, the security supervisor, military commanding officer, senior enlisted advisor, and _____ at work about my situation.
- b. I can ask _____ to help screen my phone 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 can use different grocery stores and shopping malls to conduct my business and shop at hours that are different than those when I was residing with my abuser.
- g. I can use a different bank and take care of my banking at hours different from those I used when residing with my abuser.
- h. I can also _____

_____.

Safety and Drug or Alcohol Use

Many people use alcohol. Many use mood-altering drugs. Some drugs are legal and others are not. I should carefully consider the potential costs to my family and me if someone in my family is using illegal drugs. But beyond this, the use of any alcohol or other drugs can reduce my awareness and ability to act quickly to protect myself from my abuser. Alcohol or drug use may also affect the way my abuser responds to different situation. Therefore, in the context of drug or alcohol use, I need to make specific safety plans.

If drug or alcohol use has occurred in my relationship with my abuser, I can enhance my safety by some or all of the following.

- a. If I am going to use alcohol, I can do so in a safe place and with people who understand the risk of violence and are committed to my safety.
- b. I can also _____

_____.
- c. If my abuser is using, I can _____
_____.
- d. I might also _____

_____.
- e. To safeguard my children, I might _____

_____.

Safety and My Emotional Health

The experience of being battered or verbally degraded by abusers is usually exhausting and emotionally draining. The process of building a new life for myself 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.

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

 _____.
- b. When I have to communicate with my abuser in person or by telephone, I can _____

 _____.
- c. I can try to use "I can..." statements with myself and to be assertive with others.
- d. I can tell myself " _____ " whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me.
- e. I can read _____ to help me feel stronger.
- f. I can call _____, _____ and _____ as other resources to be of support to me.
- g. Other things I can do to help me feel stronger are _____

 _____.
- h. I can attend workshops and support groups at the domestic violence program or _____
 _____ or _____ to gain support and strengthen my relationships with other people.

I SHOULD NOT KEEP THIS PLAN WITH ME. I SHOULD DISCUSS WITH MY VICTIM ADVOCATE WHERE AND WITH WHOM THIS PLAN WILL BE KEPT.

I SHOULD DETACH THE PHONE LISTING ON THE LAST PAGE AND KEEP IT WITH ME.

Phone List

Keep a hard copy of this phone list with your safety plan (even if you have all the numbers in your cell phone).

National domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE

Police Department – home: _____

Police Department – school: _____

Police Department – work: _____

Military Police: _____

Commanding Officer/Senior Enlisted Advisor/Abuser's Supervisor: _____

Family Advocacy Program Office: _____

Chaplain/Clergy: _____

Community Domestic Violence Hotline: _____

Domestic Violence Program/Advocate: _____

County Registry of Protective Orders: _____

Work Number (abuser): _____

Supervisor's Home Number (abuser): _____

Work Number (mine): _____

Supervisor's Home Number (mine): _____

Attorney: _____

School/Daycare: _____

Doctor: _____

Friend: _____

Family Member: _____

Military One Source (US): 1-800-342-9647

Military One Source (overseas): 484-530-5747

Other: _____

