

Safety Plan

A safety plan is unique for each individual and may need to be revised as your situation changes. A safety plan is a tool. Below are suggestions others have found helpful. You are the best expert on your own situation. Some suggestions here may be useful for you while others may not meet your needs. Feel free to add your own ideas. Take what you like and leave the rest!

The following steps will help you to prepare in advance for the possibility of future violence and will help keep you safer. Although you are not responsible for, nor do you have control over an abuser's violence, you do have a choice about how to respond to the abuser, and how best to get yourself (and your children) to safety.

Staff will support you in the decisions that you make for your life. Your physical safety will always be a priority for us. Hopefully, one or more of the following steps will help you in safety planning.

STEP 1: Safety During a Violent Incident

- If I feel the abuser is about to be violent, I will try to move to the _____.
(Try to avoid the bathroom, garage, kitchen, places near weapons or rooms without access to the front door.)
- If it's not safe to stay, I will _____.

(Practice how to get out safely. What doors, windows, elevators or stairwells will you use?)
- I will keep my bag ready and keep it _____
in order to leave quickly.
- I will tell _____
about the violence and ask them to call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my home.
- I will use _____ as my code word/phrase with my children or my friends so they can call for help.
- If I leave my home, I will go to _____
_____. (Keep a list of emergency numbers in your purse or wallet.)

- I will remember that if I call 911 and leave the phone off the hook, the domestic violence incident will be tape-recorded and an officer should respond to the scene.
- Remember, you know your abusive partner best. You know how to protect yourself and your children better than anyone else.

STEP 2: Safety When Preparing to Leave

- I will leave money and an extra set of keys with _____ so I can leave quickly.
- If I own a car I will try to make sure that I keep a set of car keys with _____ and adequate gas in the car.
- I will open my own bank account by _____ (date) to increase my independence.
- I can also begin to _____ as a way of increasing my safety and independence.
- I will memorize the 24-hour crisis line of the agency closest to me. That number is _____. I will keep the number in my wallet along with a quarter (if possible).
- I will check with _____ and _____ to see if I could stay with them in an emergency. (It is best if the abuser does not know them or where they live.)
- I will review and update my safety plan.

STEP 3: Safety in My Own Home

- I will find a safe place to keep this plan.
- If my abuser has recently left, I will change the locks on my doors and secure locks on my windows as soon as possible.

- I will tell school and/or child care who has permission to pick up my children.
- I will tell my neighbors if my abusive partner no longer lives with me and ask them to call 911 if he/she is seen near my home.

If there are weapons (guns, knives, etc.) in my house, I will try to remember:

- to make sure the gun remains unloaded at all times (I will only unload the gun myself if I know how to do so safely!!!)
- to encourage my partner to get rid of the gun if it is safe for me to do so.
- to stay out of rooms where weapons are kept, especially during an explosive situation.
- to move the knives out of their usual location so that my partner will have trouble finding a knife quickly.
- that almost anything can be used as a weapon.
- that cleaning a gun or knife in front of me is a threat and may imply that my partner is capable of taking my life or hurting my children.

STEP 4: Safety With a Protective Order (or other court order)

- I will keep an emergency copy _____.
- My children's teachers and babysitters will have copies of the order.
- If my partner violates the order I will call the police.
- If the police are not responsive I will _____.
- I will tell _____ that I have a valid Protective Order.

STEP 5: Safety on the Job and in Public

- I will inform _____ at work of my situation, if I feel safe with this person. I will ask _____ to help screen my calls at work.

- When leaving work, I will _____ to help keep myself safe.
- If problems occur while I am driving home, I will _____.
- If I ride the bus and see my abuser, I will _____.

STEP 6: Safety and My Emotional Health

- When I have to talk to my (ex) partner, I will _____ to keep myself safe and take care of myself.
- I will read _____.
- I will call _____ for support.
- I will call my local crisis line or other support system if I need immediate help. That number is _____.
- I know that community support groups are available to help me take care of myself.

STEP 7: Safety and Sobriety

- I will remember it is easier to keep safe when I am sober.
- I know that alcohol and drug use can impair my judgment and make it harder for me to choose safe options and access services.
- I will call my local DV/SA advocate or the National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-7233 or the Rape Abuse Incest National Network (RAINN) 1-800-656-4673 when I need information, referrals or support.
- I will call a sober friend, sponsor, alcohol/drug counselor or the Alcohol Drug 24 Hour Help Line for support when I feel like drinking or drugging to cope. The help line number is 1-800-562-1240.