

Tips for Safety Planning

If you, or someone you know, are in an abusive relationship, it is very important to make a safety plan ahead of time. It is important to be discrete when planning and packing. Here are several things that you may need to consider.

Numbers to call for help

- List names and numbers of friends, relatives, shelters, etc. you can contact for help
- Find safe place to hide phone numbers (freezer, plant, tampon box, save under different name)
- Between Friends 24-hr crisis line, 1-800-603-HELP (4357)
- Statewide Helpline, 1-877-863-6338 (info on shelters)
- Orders of Protection – 555 W. Harrison

Inform Others

- Discuss signals with friends, family, and neighbors for when you need help or want them to call police (flicking lights off/on, code word over the phone, open/closed curtain, scream/knock on wall)
- Discuss with friends, family, and neighbors possibly staying with them in case of emergency
- Do not share info with people who know abuser

Emergency Bag

- Prepare bag with items and documents (or copies) in case you need to leave in a hurry:
 - Change of clothing for yourself and children
 - Birth certificates, social security cards, identifications, marriage license
 - Car/Life insurance policies
 - Financial/Home account information
 - School and vaccination records for children
 - Medication
 - Order of Protection
 - Evidence of abuse – pictures, police reports, emails, voice/text messages
- Keep bag with friends, relatives, neighbors
- Hide items (under spare tire, in freezer, rent a locker/safety deposit box)

Personal Items

- Always carry Order of Protection with you
- Open post office box and have personal mail sent there
- Keys
 - Keep keys out of sight of abuser
 - Give extra keys to trusted friends, family, and/or neighbors
 - Tape or hide extra keys
- Telephone
 - If don't have one, get one
 - Change number and make it unlisted
 - Keep important/emergency numbers saved
 - Hide phone if necessary
 - Tape calls to document abuse

Money

- Open separate account
- If possible, begin saving money little by little (out of grocery budget or any other source)
- Hide money where it is easily accessible
- Put valuables in safety deposit box and hide key
- Get traveler's checks and keep them hidden

Hiding places

- Be aware of your surroundings and be aware of your physical capabilities
- Know places in your house to hide
- Make an escape plan for each room
- Make a "safe room" that has lock, phone, and means to escape
- Do not lock yourself into a small space (car, bathroom)
- Know in advance where you would go if you leave

Protect yourself

- Be aware of cues before an assault; try to leave before if possible
- Know in advance what you are capable of doing
- Black pepper, salt, chili powder, or hair spray in the eyes can be effective
- Attend a self-defense class
- If all else fails, roll up in a ball and protect your head

Protect your children

- Develop a family safety plan including what to do when they are scared or when you give them a signal
 - Where to hide, when to leave, who to call, how to call
 - Have them remember their address and phone number
- Inform babysitters, schools, medical personnel, parents of child's friends, etc. that the child should not leave with the abuser.
- Share order of protection with child's school and daycare center

Protect your home

- Keep doors and windows locked at all times
- If abuser has keys, change locks
- Obtain an alarm or dog
- Move, if possible
- Install outdoor lights

Weapons

- Hide or throw away any ammunition
- Hide or lock weapons where abuser does not have access
- Put knives in inaccessible places
- If police are called, ask them to take away weapons
- Never pick up a weapon unless you are sure how to use it

My Safety Plan

Below are some factors that we know increase the risk of harm to people in abusive relationships. A safety plan is important for anyone who experiences any fears or danger in their relationship. It is especially important, however, if you have experienced any of the following factors.

- Injuries requiring medical attention
- Following, stalking, or spying
- Threats of suicide
- Threats to kill or harm you, your children, or your loved ones
- Access to weapons
- Harm to pets or important property
- Forcing you to have sex against your will
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Physical abuse during pregnancy
- Increase in frequency and intensity of physical or sexual violence in the past year
- Recently left the relationship

Use the suggestions on the other side of this handout to help you develop your own safety plan. If you write down this plan, make sure to keep it where your partner or family member cannot find it.

Warning signs that my safety may be in danger:

Numbers to call for help:

Safe people to ask for support:

Where I will go if my home is unsafe:

What to pack in my emergency bag & where to keep it:

Code word/ signal for children: _____

Family safety plan (what children should do if you use the code word/signal):
