

CREATING A PERSONAL SAFETY PLAN

You hope that your partner will change. Although they beg for forgiveness, sound very sincere and you still love them, statistics show that very few batterers stop their abusive behavior and that the abuse will continue to get worse. The first step is always the most difficult.

SAFETY WHEN PREPARING TO LEAVE

Remember that you are statistically more likely to be harmed if your partner knows you are leaving. For many abusers this signals their belief that they are losing control and may escalate their abusive behavior.

- Keep the shelter or hotline number close at hand or save the number in your phone under an inconspicuous name.
- Do not use your home computer or cell phone to send escape plans to family and friends, since it might be monitored.
- You may need to leave your cell phone at home so you cannot be tracked.
- Any cell phone, as long as it is charged, will call 911. These are great to give to kids as part of a safety plan as well.
- Have a packed bag ready at a relative's or friend's home in order to leave quickly.
- Determine who would be able to let you stay with them or lend you some money.

SAFETY AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

- Think about and discuss an alternative plan with someone you trust if you are thinking of leaving or returning to a potentially abusive situation.
- Think positive thoughts about yourself and be assertive with others about your needs. Read books, articles and poems to help you feel stronger.
- Think who you can call to talk with freely and openly for the support you need.
- Think about attending a support group to gain support and encouragement from others and learn more about yourself and the relationship.

SAFETY DURING AN INCIDENT

- If an argument seems unavoidable, try to have it in a room or area where you have access to an exit. Try to stay away from the bathroom, kitchen, bedroom or anywhere else where weapons might be available.
- Practice how to get out of your home safely. Identify which doors, windows, elevator or stairwell would be best.
- Identify one or more neighbors you can tell about the violence and ask that they call the police if they hear a disturbance coming from your home.
- Devise a code word to use with your children, family, friends and neighbors when you need the police.
- Decide and plan for where you will go if you have to leave home quickly (even if you don't think you will need to).
- Use your own instincts and judgment.
- If you use your cell phone to dial 911 remember to give them your address & leave the phone on.

SAFETY AFTER YOU LEAVE

- Change the locks on your doors, and get locks or safety devices to secure windows.
- Screen your phone calls, or text only.
- Include your children in the safety plan when age appropriate.
- Inform your children's school, day care, etc. about who has permission to pick up your children.
- Inform your neighbors and landlord that your partner no longer lives with you and they should call the police if they see them near your home.
- Change the passwords on your banking, voicemail, computer and email accounts and your PIN on any bank cards.

SAFETY WITH A PROTECTION ORDER

- Keep your protective order with you at all times. Give a copy to a trusted neighbor or family members.
- Call the police if your partner breaks the protection order.
- Inform family, friends, neighbors and your physician or health care provider that you have a protective order in effect.

SAFETY ON THE JOB AND IN PUBLIC

- Decide who you will inform at work of your situation. This could include office or building security. Provide a picture of your batterer, if possible.
- Arrange to have someone screen your telephone calls, if possible.
- Devise a safety plan for when you leave work. Have someone escort you to your car, or bus and wait with you until you are safely en route.
- Change your routine. Use a variety of routes to go home, to the store, school etc.

YOU HAVE
THE RIGHT TO
BE SAFE!



SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- Trust your instincts. If you feel you are being monitored too closely check for spyware on your computer, in your car or through your cell phone.
- Set-up a separate email account for necessary communication.
- Be aware of the ways technology can be used to get personal information.

Review your safety plan as often as possible in order to know the safest way to leave your batterer.