

PERSONAL SAFETY PLAN FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

I. SAFETY BEFORE AN EXPLOSIVE INCIDENT

Practice leaving your home safely. Identify which doors, windows, elevator or stairs would be best to use in an emergency.

Have a packed bag ready and keep it at a relative's or friend's home in case you need to leave your home quickly.

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.

Decide whether you need to leave your home and think about how to leave safely.

Think about how to safely take your child(ren) with you if you do need to leave. Designate a "safe place" for your child(ren) where they may go if necessary (and where you will know to meet them).

Decide and plan for where you will go if you need to leave home quickly (even if you don't think you will need to leave).

Devise a code word to use with your children, family, friends and neighbors when you need help from the police.

Teach your children to dial 911.

II. SAFETY DURING AN EXPLOSIVE INCIDENT

If an incident 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.

Use your own instincts and judgement. Consider giving the abuser what he/she wants to calm her/him down. You have the right to protect yourself until you are out of danger.

If possible call 911.

Call the person with whom you have identified a code word.

Tell your children to call 911; go to the designated safe place; inform the neighbors.

Always Remember –You Don't Deserve to be Hit or Threatened!!

III. SAFETY WHEN PREPARING TO LEAVE

Open a savings account and/or a credit card in your own name to increase your options. Think of other ways in which you can increase your independence.

Leave money, an extra set of house and car keys, copies of important documents, extra medicines and clothes with someone you trust so you can leave quickly.

Determine who would be able to let you stay with them or lend you some money.

Discuss a safety plan with your child(ren) for when you are not with them.

Inform your child(ren)'s school, day care, etc., about who has permission to take your child(ren).

Keep the shelter or hotline phone number close at hand and keep some change or a calling card on you at all times for emergency phone calls.

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

Remember-Leaving May Be Your Most Dangerous Time

IV. SAFETY AND DRUG OR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

The use of alcohol or other drugs by a victim may reduce awareness and the ability to act quickly in response to danger. An abuser's substance use may become an excuse for violence. Victims must, therefore, make specific safety plans when substance use is an issue.

The consequences of using illegal drugs can be disastrous for a victim! They may hurt your relationship with your children and may put you at a disadvantage in other legal actions with your abuser. Be aware of the potential losses involved when using illegal drugs.

V. SAFETY WITH A RESTRAINING ORDER OR IF YOU ARE NO LONGER WITH YOUR ABUSER.

Leave your restraining order on you at all times. Leave extra copies at work, with a friend, in your car etc.

Call the police if your batterer does something the restraining order says not to do-this is a violation of the restraining order!

Think of ways to keep safe if the police do not respond immediately.

Change/add locks on your doors and windows as soon as possible. Add a peephole and increase outdoor lighting if possible. Try to borrow a portable or cellular phone.

Inform neighbors and landlord that your partner no longer lives with you and that they should call the police if they see your abuser near your home.

VI. SAFETY ON THE JOB AND IN PUBLIC

Decide whom at your workplace or school you will tell about your situation-include office, building or campus security. Provide a picture of your abuser if possible.

Devise a safety plan for leaving work or school. Have someone escort you to your car, bus or train. Use a variety of routes home.

VII. SAFETY AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

If you are thinking of returning to an abusive situation, first discuss it with someone you trust. You may want to call your local battered women's support organization.

Try to arrange for an answering machine, Caller ID, or a trusted friend to screen your call. Consider changing your phone number.

If you have to communicate with your partner, plan the safest way to do so.

Find someone you can call to talk to freely and openly and feel supported. Plan to attend a support group for at least two weeks to gain support from others and learn more about yourself and the relationship.

VIII. FOR TEENS IN A VIOLENT RELATIONSHIP

If things in your relationship don't feel right to you, talk about it with someone you trust.

Decide which friend, teacher, relative or police officer can talk with or go to in case of an emergency.

Call any battered women's hotline for individual or support group counseling. It will help you feel less alone as you learn about yourself and your relationship.

Get information about restraining orders from your local court, police, or battered women's hotline.

CHECKLIST-WHAT YOU NEED TO TAKE WHEN YOU LEAVE

IDENTIFICATION

- Driver's license
- Child(ren)'s birth certificate(s)
- Your birth certificate
- Social Security cards (yours and your children's)
- Welfare Identification and EBT cards
- Medical or Insurance Cards

FINANCIAL

- Money and/or credit (Warning: credit cards and phone cards could be traced by an abuser)
- Bankbooks
- Checkbooks

LEGAL PAPERS

- YOUR RESTRAINING ORDER
- Lease, rental contract, house deed, rent receipts
- Car registration and Insurance papers
- Medical records for you and your children
- School records (including IEP)
- Immunization records
- Work permits/Green cards//Visa
- Passport
- Marriage Certificate/License
- Divorce papers
- Custody papers (or any other court papers)

OTHER

- House and car keys (safe deposit box key)
- Medications
- Child(en)'s favorite toys, blankets
- Address/phone book
- Change of clothes for you and your child (ren)
- Pictures of you your child (ren) and your abuser
- Personal items with special meaning for you and your child (ren)
- Current unpaid bills in your name
- Jewelry or small valuables to pawn