

Safety Planning in Situations of Possible Abuse

Safety during an Explosive Incident

- If an argument seems unavoidable, try to have it in a room or area that has access to an exit. Avoid the bathroom, kitchen or anywhere near weapons.
- Practice how to get out of your home safely. Identify which doors, windows, elevator, or stairs would be safe and easily accessible.
- Have a packed bag ready. Keep it in a secret but accessible place in order to leave quickly.
- Identify a neighbor you can tell about the violence and ask that they call the police if they hear a disturbance coming from your home.
- Make up 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 (even if you do not think you will need it).
- If the situation is very dangerous, use your own instinct and judgment to keep yourself safe. Call the police as soon as it is safe to do so. You can obtain a restraining order.

Safety when preparing to leave

- Identify who would let you stay with them or lend you some money.
- Always try to take your children with you or make arrangements to leave them with someone safe.
- Leave money, an extra set of keys, copies of important documents, and extra clothes with someone you trust.
- Open a savings account in your own name to start, establish, or increase your independence. Think of other ways to increase your independence.
- Keep the shelter numbers close at hand and keep change or a calling card with you at all times.
- Review your safety plan with a friend or counselor in order to plan the safest way to leave your batterer.
- To avoid being reported as missing, leave a brief note indicating your departure. If you are taking your children with you, indicate this in a note.

Safety in your Home

- 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.
- Rehearse a safety plan with your children for when you are not with them.
- Inform your children's school or day care about who has permission to pick your children up. (Give them a copy of the restraining order).
- 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 cellular phone.
- Change your telephone number, and make sure it is unlisted. Do not give it to any one you do not trust.

Safety with a Restraining Order

- Keep your restraining orders with you at all times. Leave extra copies at work, with a friend, in your car, etc.
- Call the police if your estranged partner breaks the court order.
- Think of alternative ways to keep safe if the police do not respond right away.
- Inform family, friends and neighbors that you have a restraining order in effect.
- Try to avoid places in the community your batterer may frequent.

Your Safety and Emotional Health

- If you are thinking of returning to a potentially abusive relationship, discuss an alternative plan with someone you trust.
- If you have to communicate with your partner, determine the safest way to do so.
- Have positive thoughts about yourself and be assertive with others about your needs.
- Plan to attend a group to gain support from others and learn about the law and your rights.
- Decide who can trust to share things so that they will be kept confidential
- Eat regularly, read books and magazines, get exercise and proper rest. Have fun with your family in order to help you feel and stay strong.

If you are a teen in a violent dating relationship

- If things in your relationship do not feel right to you talk to someone you trust about it.
- Decide which friend, teacher and/ or relative you can go to in an emergency.
- You should never feel afraid or pressured in your relationship “No Means No.”
- Contact the police and/ or the Crisis Line in order to get help with a safety plan and with seeking out a restraining order.

Checklist-What You Want To Take When You Leave

- Driver's license, car title, registration, proof of insurance
- Birth Certificates (you & children's), Marriage Certificate
- Restraining Order
- Lease/ Rental Agreement, House Deed
- Money, Cheque Books, Credit Cards (In your name)
- Insurance Papers, Will
- House and Car Keys
- Medications, Medical Records, Shot Records, Health Cards
- Address Book, Pictures
- Jewelry, Toys
- Pets (if desired and possible)
- Social Insurance Card
- Social Assistance/ EI Information
- School Records
- Immigration/ Citizenship, Work Permit Papers
- Separation, Divorce Papers