

Domestic Violence Personalized Safety Plan

The following steps outline my plan for enhancing safety and preparing in advance for the potential of further violence.

Although I do not have control over my partner's violence, I do have a choice about how to respond to them and how to best get myself and my children to safety.

STEP 1: Safety During a Violent Incident

People cannot always avoid violent incidents. To increase safety, you may use a variety of strategies.

I can use some of the following strategies:

- A. If I decide to leave, I will _____.
(Practice how to get out safely. What door, windows, elevators, stairwells, or fire escapes would you use?)
- B. I can keep my purse and car keys ready and put them (location) _____ to leave quickly.
- C. I can tell _____ about the violence and request that she or he call the police if she or he hears suspicious noises coming from my house.
- D. I can teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the police, the fire department, and 911.
- E. I will use _____ as my code with my children or my friends so they can call for help.
- F. If I have to leave my home, I will go to _____.
(Decided this even if you don't think there will be a next time.)
- G. I can also teach some of these strategies to some or all of my children.
- H. When I expect that we are going to argue, I'll try to move to a place that is low risk, such as _____.
(Try to avoid interactions in the bathroom, garage, kitchen, near weapons, or in any rooms without access to an outside door.)
- I. I will use my judgment and intuition. If the situation is very serious, I can give my partner what they want to calm them down. I must protect myself until I/we are out of danger.

STEP 2: Safety When Preparing to Leave

This safety plan was adapted from the:



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Survivors frequently leave the residence that they share with the person using violence (PUV). Leaving must be done with a careful plan in place to increase safety. PUVs often strike when they believe their victim is leaving.

I can use some or all of the following strategies:

- A. I will leave money and an extra set of keys with _____ so I can leave quickly.
- B. I will keep copies of important documents or keys at _____.
- C. I will open a savings account by _____, to increase my independence.
- D. Other ways I can boost my independence include:

- E. I will consider the best way to handle my phone calls. If I have a cell phone on the same plan as my partner, I will not use it for calls related to our safety or security. I will consider getting a separate phone just for myself or see if there are phones available from law enforcement.
- F. I will check with _____ and _____ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.
- G. I can leave extra clothes or money with _____.
- H. I will review my safety plan every week to plan the safest way to leave. _____ (domestic violence advocate or friend's name) has agreed to help me review this plan.
- I. I will rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.

STEP 3: Safety in My Own Residence

There are several steps that someone affected by domestic violence can take to enhance her safety in her own residence. It may be impossible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step by step.

Safety measures I can use:

- A. I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as I can.
- B. I can replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors.
- C. I can install security systems, including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, an electronic system, etc.
- D. I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second-floor windows.

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- E. I can install smoke detectors and fire extinguishers on each floor of my house/apartment.
- F. I can install an outside lighting system that activates when a person is close to the house.
- G. I will tell the people who take care of my children which people have permission to pick up my children, and that my partner is not permitted to do so. The people I will inform about pick-up permission include:

_____ (name of school)
 _____ (name of babysitter)
 _____ (name of teacher)
 _____ (name of Sunday-school teacher)
 _____ (name[s] of others)

- H. I can inform _____ (neighbor) and _____

(friend) that my partner no longer resides with me and that they should call law enforcement if they are observed near my residence.

STEP 4: Safety with an Order of Protection

Many people who cause harm obey protection orders, but one can never be sure which violent partner will violate them. I recognize that I may need to ask law enforcement and the courts to enforce my protective order.

The following are some steps I can take to help with the enforcement of my protection order:

I will keep my protection order _____ (location). (Always keep it on or near your person. If you change purses or bags, the first thing that should go into the new one is the protection order.)

- A. I will give copies of my protection order to law enforcement departments in the community where I work, in those communities where I visit friends or family, and in the community where I live.
- B. There should be county and state registries of protection orders that all law enforcement departments can call to confirm a protection order. I can check to make sure that my order is on the registry. The telephone numbers for the county and state registries of protection orders are:

_____ (county) and
 _____ (state).

- C. I will inform my employer, my minister, rabbi, etc., my closest friends, and _____ that I have a protection order in effect.

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- D. If my partner destroys my protection order, I can get another copy from _____.
- E. If law enforcement does not help, I can contact an advocate or an attorney and file a complaint with the Chief of Police Department or the Sheriff.
- F. If my partner violates the protection order, I will call 911 or law enforcement and report the violation.

STEP 5: Safety on the Job and in Public

Each survivor must decide if and when they will tell others that their partner has harmed them and that they may be at continued risk. Friends, family, and co-workers can help to protect survivors. Each survivor should carefully consider how to invite others to help secure their safety.

I can do any or all of the following:

- A. I can inform my boss, the security supervisor, and _____ at work.
- B. I can ask _____ for help screening my telephone calls at work.
- C. When leaving work, I can _____.
- D. If I have a problem while driving home, I can _____.
- E. If I use public transit, I can _____.
- F. I will go to different grocery stores and shopping malls to conduct my business and shop at hours that are different from those I kept when residing with my partner.
- G. I can use a different bank and go at hours that are different from those I kept when residing with the PUV.

STEP 6: Safety and Drug or Alcohol Use

Substance abuse and domestic violence are deeply interconnected issues that create a harmful cycle affecting individuals, families, and communities. For people who have experienced domestic violence, the use of illegal drugs can carry serious legal consequences. These outcomes may affect custody arrangements, complicate other legal matters involving their partner, and strain relationships with their children. It's important to thoughtfully consider these potential impacts when making decisions about substance use.

In addition, alcohol or drug use can impair a person's ability to stay alert and respond quickly in situations where their safety may be at risk. Substance use by a partner may also be used as a justification for violent behavior, even though there is never an excuse for abuse.

Because of these risks, it's essential to develop safety plans that consider any use of alcohol or drugs—whether by the survivor or their partner. Support is available, and no one should have to

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navigate these challenges alone.

If my partner has used alcohol or substances, or if both of us have, I can enhance my safety by some or all of the following:

- A. If I am going to use, I can do so in a safe place and with people who understand the risk of violence and are committed to my safety.
- B. If my partner is using, I can _____ and/or.
- C. To safeguard my children, I can _____.

STEP 7: Safety and Emotional Health

Being targeted by a partner for physical violence or verbal abuse is usually exhausting and emotionally draining. Building a new life requires considerable courage and energy.

To conserve my emotional energy and resources and to avoid hard emotional times, I can do some of the following:

- A. If I feel down and lonely, I can _____.
- B. When I must communicate with my partner in person or by telephone, I can _____.
- C. I will try to use “I can ...” statements with myself and be assertive with others.
- D. I can tell myself,
“ _____ ” whenever I
feel others are trying to control or abuse me.
- E. I can read _____ to help me feel stronger.
- F. I can call _____ and
_____ for support.
- G. I can attend workshops and support groups at the domestic violence program or
_____ to gain support and strengthen relationships.

STEP 8: Items to Take when Leaving

When survivors leave their partners, it is vital to take certain items. Beyond this, survivors sometimes give an extra copy of papers and an extra set of clothing to a friend just in case they must leave quickly.

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Money: Even if I do not work outside of the home, I could take money from jointly held savings and checking accounts.

Items on the following lists marked with asterisks (**) are the most important to bring with you. If there is time, the other items might be taken or stored outside the home. These items might best be placed in one location, so that if we must leave in a hurry, I can grab them quickly.

When I leave, I should take:

- **Identification for myself
- My birth certificate
- School and vaccination records
- Checkbook, ATM card
- Keys – house, car, office
- **Medications
- Passport(s), divorce papers
- Medical records – for all family members
- Lease/rental agreement, house deed, mortgage payment book
- Bank books, insurance papers
- Public assistance identification, work permits, green cards
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- Children’s birth certificates
- Social Security cards
- **Money
- Credit cards
- Driver’s license and registration
- **Copy of protection order
- Address book
- Pictures, jewelry
- Children’s favorite toys and/or
- Blankets
- Items of special sentimental value

Telephone numbers I need to know:

Police/sheriff’s department (local) – 911 or _____

Prosecutor’s office _____

Domestic Violence program (local) _____

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-SAFE (7233) 800-787-3224 (TTY)

www.thehotline.org

Work number _____

Supervisor’s number _____

I will keep this document in a safe place and out of reach of the person who has used violence against me.

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Use the following links for alternative online safety plans:

<https://www.thehotline.org/plan-for-safety/create-your-personal-safety-plan/>

<https://www.ilcadv.org/safety-planning-for-survivors/#1555353244474-77b25632-1fbf>



**Prisoner Review Board
Victim & Witness Services
PRB.VictimServices@illinois.gov
1-800-801-9110**

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