

Personalized Safety Plan

The following steps represent my plan for increasing my safety and preparing in advance for the possibility of further violence. Although I do not have control over my partner's violence, I do have a choice about how to respond to him/her and how to best get myself, and my children to safety.

STEP 1: Safety During a Violent Incident

It is not always possible to avoid violent incidents. In order to increase safety, I may use a variety of strategies.

I can use some or all of the following strategies:

A. If I decide to leave, I will _____.
(Practice how to get out safely. What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells or fire escapes would you use?)

B. I can keep my purse/wallet and car keys ready and put them _____
in order to leave quickly. *(place)*

C. I can tell _____ about the violence and request they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my house.

D. I can teach my children how to call 911 to contact the police and fire department.

E. I will use _____ as my code with my children or my friends so they can call for help. *(words or action)*

F. If I have to leave my home, I will go _____.
(Decide this even if you don't think there will be a next time.)

If I cannot go to the location above, then I can go to _____ or _____.

G. I can also teach some of these strategies to some/all my children.

H. When I expect we are going to have an argument, I will try to move to a space that is lowest risk, such as, _____.
(Try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, kitchen, near weapons or in 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 he/she wants to calm him/her down. I have to protect myself until I/we are out of danger.

STEP 2: Safety When Preparing to Leave

Abused individuals frequently leave the residence they share with the battering partner. Leaving must be done with a careful plan in order to increase safety. Abusers often strike back when they believe that their victim is leaving the relationship.

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 bank account by _____ to increase my independence.
(Set a deadline for yourself)

D. Other things I can do to increase my independence include: _____

_____.

E. The domestic violence program's hotline number is _____.
I can seek shelter by calling this hotline.

F. I understand that if I use my cell phone, the following month the phone bill will tell my abuser those numbers that I called after I left. To keep my telephone communications confidential, I must either use telephone calling cards or borrow a friend's cell phone for a limited time when I first leave.

G. I will check with _____ and _____
to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.

H. I can leave extra clothes with _____.

I. I will sit down and review my safety plan every _____ in
order to plan the safest way to leave the residence. _____
has agreed to help me review this plan. (domestic violence advocate or friend)

J. I will rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.

STEP 3: Safety in My Own Home

There are many things that I can do to increase my safety in my 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 include:

- A. I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible.
- B. If I live in rental property, I can talk to my landlord about what we can do to improve the safety of my home.
- C. If I own my home, I can visit a local home improvement center and get information on improving the safety of my home.
- D. I will find out if a Neighborhood Watch program exists in my community so I can get involved.
- E. I will teach my children how to use the telephone to make a collect call to me and to _____ in the event that my partner takes the children.

(friend/minister/other)

F. I will tell 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:

School: _____

Day Care Staff: _____

Babysitter: _____

Sunday School Teacher: _____

Teacher/Principal: _____

Other(s): _____

G. I will inform the following people that my partner no longer resides with me and that they should call the police if he/she is observed near my residence.

Neighbor: _____

Pastor: _____

Friend: _____

STEP 4: Safety with a Protection Order

Many abusers obey protection orders, but one can never be sure which violent partner will obey and which will violate protection orders. I recognize that I may need to ask the police and the courts to enforce my protection order.

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

A. I will keep my protection order _____ (location).

(Always keep it on or near your person. If you change purses/wallets, that is the first thing that should go in.)

B. I will give my protection order to police departments in the community where I work, in those communities where I usually visit family or friends, and in the community where I live.

C. For further safety, if I often visit other counties in Ohio, I might file my protection order with the court in those counties. I will register my protection order in the following counties:

_____, _____ and _____.

D. I can call the local Prosecutor's office or Clerk of Courts if I am not sure about B or C above or if I have some problems with my protection order.

E. I will inform my employer, my minister, my closest friend and _____ and _____ that I have a protection order in effect.

F. If my partner destroys my protection order, I can get another copy from the County Courthouse.

G. If my partner violates the protection order, I can call the police and report a violation, contact my attorney, call my advocate, and/or advise the court of the violation.

H. If the police do not help, I can contact my advocate or attorney and will file a complaint with the chief of the police department.

I. I can also file a private criminal complaint with Prosecutor's Office in the jurisdiction where the violation occurred. I can charge my abusing partner with a violation of the Protection Order and all the crimes that he/she commits in violating the order. I can call my domestic violence advocate to help me with this.

STEP 5: Safety on the Job and in Public

Each abused individual must decide if/when to tell others that abuse is occurring and there is the possibility of continued risk. Friends, family and co-workers can help to provide protection. I should consider carefully which people to invite to help me secure my safety.

I might do any or all of the following:

A. I can inform my direct supervisor, my Human Resources department, the security supervisor and _____ at work of my situation.

B. I can ask _____ to help me screen my telephone calls at work.

C. When leaving work, I can _____.

D. If problems occur when I'm driving home, I can _____.

E. If I use public transportation, I can _____.

F. I will go to a different grocery store and shopping mall to conduct my business and shop at hours that are different than those I used when residing with my abusing partner.

G. I can use a different bank and take care of my banking at hours different from those I used when residing with my abusing partner.

H. I can also _____.

STEP 6: Safety and Drug or Alcohol Use

The legal outcomes of using illegal drugs can be very hard on a victim of domestic violence, may hurt the relationship with his/her children and put him/her at a disadvantage in other legal actions with the abusing partner. Therefore, I should carefully consider the potential cost of the use of illegal drugs. But beyond this, the use of any alcohol or other drugs can reduce my awareness and ability to act quickly to protect myself from my abusing partner. Furthermore, in the context of drug or alcohol use, I need to make specific safety plans.

If drug or alcohol use has occurred in my relationship with my abusing partner, 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. I can also _____.

C. If my partner is using, I can _____.

D. I might also _____.

E. To safeguard my children, I might _____ and _____.

STEP 7: Safety and My Emotional Health

The experience of being abused and verbally degraded by partners is usually exhausting and emotional draining. The process of building a new life for myself takes much courage and incredible 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 ready to return to a potentially abusive situation, I can _____
_____.

B. When I have to communicate with my partner in person or by telephone, I can _____
_____.

C. I can try to use "I can..." statements with myself and to 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 _____
_____ as other resources to be of support to me.

G. Other things I can do to help me feel stronger are _____,
_____ and _____.

H. I can attend workshops and support groups at the domestic violence program or _____,
_____ or _____ to gain support
and strengthen my relationships with other people.

STEP 8: Items to take when leaving. When leaving abusive partners, it is important to take certain items with me. Beyond this, victims sometimes give an extra copy of papers and an extra set of clothing to a friend just in case they have to leave quickly.

Items in blue on the following list are the most important to take. If there is time, the other items may be taken, or stored outside the home. These items might best be placed in one location, so that if I have to leave in a hurry, I can grab them quickly.

When I leave, I should take:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification for myself Children's birth certificates My birth certificate Social Security cards School and vaccination records Money Checkbook, ATM card Credit cards Keys - house/car/office Driver's license and registration Medications Welfare identification Work permits Green card | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passport(s) Divorce papers Medical records - for all family members Lease/rental agreement, house deed, mortgage payment book Bank book Insurance papers Small saleable objects Address book Pictures Jewelry Children's favorite toys and/or blankets Items of special sentimental value |
|--|--|

Important telephone numbers in Franklin County I need to know:

Emergency Assistance	911
Columbus Police	(614) 645-4545
CHOICES	(614) 224-4663
Prosecutor's Office	(614) 645-7483
Domestic Violence & Stalking Unit	(614) 645-6232
First Link (emergency food, shelter, etc.)	(614) 221-2255
Legal Aid	(614) 224-8374
Suicide Prevention Services	(614) 221-5445

Work number: _____

Supervisor's home number: _____

Minister: _____

Other: _____

I will keep this document in a safe place and out of reach of my potential attacker.

IF YOU NEED HELP IN FILLING OUT THIS PLAN, ASK YOUR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVOCATE OR A CLOSE AND TRUSTED FRIEND.