

## Domestic Violence Safety Planning Tool

This document is used to explore possible ways in which a person experiencing abuse in a relationship can keep themselves and their children safer. It is divided into two parts, which separately explores strategies while continuing to live in the abusive relationship and strategies when leaving the abusive relationship. Develop a safety plan and discuss it with your children. Review the plan as often as possible.

### SAFETY TIPS:

- Ways to make your home safe:
  - ❖ I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible.
  - ❖ I can replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors.
  - ❖ I can install security systems including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, an electronic system, etc.
  - ❖ I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows.
  - ❖ I can install smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor in my house/apartment.
  - ❖ I can install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to my house.
- Make sure your children's school and/or day-care know who is authorized to pick up your children.
- Tell your neighbors and landlord that your abuser no longer lives there and ask them to call the police if they see him or her near your home.
- If you have an order of protection (EPO), keep it with you at all times.
- Inform building security and co-workers you trust of your situation. If possible, provide a photograph of your abuser to building security.
- Vary your routes to and from work and arrange for someone to escort you to your car.
- Change your routine. Go to different grocery stores or bank locations at different times than usual.
- If an argument seems unavoidable, move to a room or area with easy access to an exit - not a bathroom, kitchen, or anywhere near weapons.
- Identify which door, window, stairwell or elevator offers the quickest way out of the home - and practice your route.
- Have a bag packed and ready. Keep it in an undisclosed but accessible place where you can retrieve it quickly.
- Devise a code word to use with your children, family, and friends when you need the police.
- Decide where you will go if you have to leave, even if you do not think it will come to that.
- Use your instincts and judgement. Consider giving the abuser what he or she wants to defuse a dangerous situation.
- You have a right to protect yourself when you are in danger.
- **YOU DO NOT DESERVE TO BE BATTERED OR THREATENED**

- **Step 1: SAFETY DURING A VIOLENT INCIDENT**

**You 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 and car keys ready and put them \_\_\_\_\_ (place) in order to leave quickly.
- 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 use the telephone to contact the police and the fire department.
- E. I will use \_\_\_\_\_ as my code for my children or my friends so they can call for help.
- 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 \_\_\_\_\_.
- G. I can also teach some of these strategies to some/all of 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, and 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**

**You can use some or all the following safety strategies:**

- A. I will leave money and an extra set of keys and clothes with \_\_\_\_\_ so that I can leave quickly.
- B. I will keep copies of important papers and documents or an extra set of keys at \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. I will open a savings account by \_\_\_\_\_, to increase my independence.
- D. I will check with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money in an emergency.

E. I will sit down and review my safety plan every \_\_\_\_\_ in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence.

**SAFE PEOPLE I CAN TRUST:**

There are people I can speak to safely about being in an abusive relationship. I can discuss with these people how they can help me to be safer. These people are: (family, friends, neighbors, co-worker, church, doctor, counsellor)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**SAFETY AND MY EMOTIONAL HEALTH:**

The experience of being battered and verbally degraded by partners is usually exhausting and emotionally 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 of me.

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

H. I can attend counselling and support groups to gain support and strength.

I. 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),  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (and),  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (others),

J. I can inform \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ (neighbors),  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (pastor), and, \_\_\_\_\_ (friend) that my partner no longer resides with me and they should call the police if he is observed near my residence.

Step 8: Items to take when leaving. When women leave partners, it is important to take certain items with them. Beyond this, women sometimes give an extra copy of papers and an extra set of clothing to a friend just in case they have to leave quickly. These items might be placed in one location, so that if we have to leave in a hurry, I can grab them quickly.

Money: Even if I have never worked, I may be entitled to the funds in the checking and savings accounts. If I don't take any money from the accounts, he can legally take all money and/or close the account and I may not get my share until the court rules on it if ever.

**When I leave, I should have:**

- ✓ Birth certificates, SIN card, AB healthcare card
- ✓ School and vaccination records
- ✓ Money, chequebook, debit card, Credit cards
- ✓ Keys - house/car/office
- ✓ Driver's license, insurance and registration
- ✓ Medication
- ✓ Passport, divorce papers
- ✓ Emergency Protection Order/Restraining Order papers
- ✓ Medical records - for all family members
- ✓ Lease/rental agreement, house deed, mortgage papers
- ✓ Bank books, Insurance papers
- ✓ Small saleable objects
- ✓ Address book, pictures, jewelry

- ✓ Children's favorite toys and/or blankets
- ✓ Items of special sentimental value

**Telephone numbers I need to know:**

Emergency: 911

Family Violence Info Line: 310-1818

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