

# Safety Plan

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You can't stop your partner's violence and abuse – only he can do that. But there are things you can consider doing to increase your own and your children's safety.

Name.....

Date.....

## Step 1: Safety during a violent incident

- 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 (location) .....  
 ..... in order to leave quickly.
- C. I can tell ..... about the violence and request that she or he can 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 emergency services (e.g. 112).
- E. I will use .....as a code word with my children or my friends so they can call for help.
- F. If I have to leave my home, I will go to .....  
 ..... (decide this even if you don't think there will be a next time).
- G. When I expect we are going to have an argument, I'll try to move to a place that is low risk such as ..... (try to avoid arguments in the

*bathroom, garage, kitchen, near weapons, or in rooms without access to an outside door).*

- H. If my partner owns or has access to weapons, I must report it immediately to the police department.

## Step 2: Safety when preparing to leave

Leaving must be done with a careful plan in order to increase safety. Perpetrators often return more aggressively when they believe their partners are leaving their relationship.

- 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 at .....  
.....
- C. I will open a savings account by ..... to increase my independence.
- D. To keep my phone communications confidential, I must either use coins, or ask to use a friend's phone card for a limited time when I first leave.
- E. I can have extra clothes or money in a suitcase with .....
- F. I will rehearse my escape plan and as appropriate, practice it with my children.

## Step 3: Safety in my own residence

It may be impossible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step by step. These are some things you can consider doing if and when you can.

- A. I can change the locks on my doors and/or windows as soon as possible.
- B. I can replace wooden doors with steel/ metal doors.
- C. I can install security systems such as window bars, extra locks or an electronic system.
- D. I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows.
- E. I can install smoke detectors and fire extinguishers for each floor of my house or 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 them up and that my partner is not allowed to do so ( school, babysitter, teacher, sports teacher, etc)
- H. I can inform my neighbors and friends that my partner no longer resides with me and that they should call the police if he is observed near my residence.

#### **Step 4: Safety with an order of protection**

I understand that I may need to ask the police and the court to enforce my protective order.

- A: I will keep my protection order ..... (location). Always keep on or near you. If you change purses, that's the first thing that should go in the new purse.
- B. I will give my protection order to police departments in the community where I work, where I live, and in the communities where I visit friends or family.
- C. I will inform my employer, my minister, my closest friend and the people I see often, that I have a protection order in effect.
- D. If my partner destroys my protection order, I can get another copy from the court.
- E. If the police do not help, I can contact an attorney and file a complaint form with the chief of the police department.
- F: If my partner violates the protection order, I need to immediately call the police and report the violation.

#### **Step 5: Safety on the job and in the family**

Friends, family and co- workers can help to protect you if they know the danger you are in. You must carefully consider which people should be invited to help you stay safe.

- A. I can inform my boss, the security supervisor and ..... at work.
- B. When leaving work, I can .....
- C. If I have a problem with going back home alone, 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 shops and different hours from those I kept when living with my abusive partner.

**Step 6: Safety and drug or alcohol use.**

The use of alcohol or other drugs can reduce a woman’s awareness and ability to act quickly to protect herself and her children. For the perpetrator, any alcohol or drug abuse can simply provide him with the excuse to use violence.

- A. If I am going to use any alcohol or illegal substances, 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 myself and my children, I might .....

**Step 7 : Safety and my emotional health.**

The experience of being abused is traumatizing and emotionally draining, but with a well formed plan you can start planning a new life.

- A. If I feel down and think about returning to a potentially abusive situation, I can always .....
- B. When I have to communicate with my partner in person or by telephone, I can.....
- C. I will try to use “I can .....” statements with myself and learn to be assertive with others.
- D. I can call ..... and ..... for support.

**Step 8 : How to be protected from technology – facilitated abuse.**

Online and other technologies (mobile phones, spyware cameras, GPS, hacked computers, social media accounts, etc.) may be used by the perpetrators to control, stalk, and abuse women in the context of domestic violence and following separation. While you go through each one of the following safety considerations

explore what will increase your own safety. Some survivors/victims want to stop the abusive behaviour by getting rid of the devices, but in some cases this might increase the abuse. This is because some abusers will become worse when they realise that their access to control you is being limited. When planning for your safety you should be aware of this. Some survivors decide to use a safer computer, email, mobile phone for example, rather than disabling the existing monitoring device(s) which might be hacked/bugged.

- A. I need to change all computer, mobile, social media login passwords to something that the perpetrator won't be able to guess.
- B. I need to contact my mobile phone provider to enquire whether any location services have been enabled. Also, settings such as "show all/hidden applications" might find some hidden harmful applications. This is because most phones have GPS chips and location tracking abilities which can be used to track someone's location or additional programs might be added.
- C. I need to use an alternative phone when making calls related to the violence / abuse I am facing, if I think that my current or former partner is monitoring my landline or mobile telephone calls. I should not use a cordless phone as it is easier to be intercepted.
- D. I should not use my mobile for taking notes or recording information that are sensitive in nature in case the perpetrator access them.
- E. I should turn off the location services of my mobile, such as Find my iPhone and block location sharing of my social media account.
- F. I need to regularly delete my computer history files.
- G. I need to log out of a computer when done so the abuser won't have access to my emails etc.
- H. I need to be aware about the dangers of opening email attachments from the perpetrator when using my personal computer. I should avoid opening them as such attachments could contain viruses and/or spyware (a monitoring software which can be installed remotely through an email attachment). If a spyware device is installed this will monitor my computer activities.

- I. I need to find out if any of the appliances/devices/gadgets in the home are internet connected.
- J. I should find out how they are set up, how they work and shut down. Possibly learn how to (re)set them to factory settings on my own, preferably manually.
- K. I should check the house for hidden cameras or microphones that might be have been installed by the abuser.
- L. I should regularly delete all history files regarding communication in my mobile or computer.
- M. If possible, I should change my SIM card and my mobile, and keep it secret from the perpetrator. I need to make sure, I delete all linked web clouds- storage spaces, that could give him access to my new location.

When the survivor is a mother and the children live with her, the electronic surveillance of the perpetrator might be done through children so it is important for survivors to be aware of this.

- A. If my children use social media I need to make sure that they do not post my new addresses/ location as this could be accessed by a perpetrator.
- B. I need to ensure that my kids mobiles, social media accounts and ipads have disabled tracking or sharing location possibilities.
- C. I need to make sure that my children change their passwords on email and other social media accounts in order to reduce the possibility of the perpetrator accessing them.
- D. If my children receive gifts from the father who is a perpetrator I need to check if these are bugged and or offer possibilities of surveillance.
- E. If my kids use face time to talk to their father it is important to discuss how the location won't be exposed.

### **Step 9: What to take with you when leaving**

Try to keep those items stored outside the house, all together in one location, so you can access them quickly.

- Money. You are still entitled to money from jointly held savings and checking accounts;
- Your ID, Birth Certificate;
- Children's Birth Certificates;
- School and vaccination records;
- ATM cards, Checkbooks;
- Keys –house, office, car;
- Medications;
- Immigration documents, work permits;
- Social Security Cards;
- Credit Cards;
- Driver's License and registration;
- Protection Order (in a number of copies) ;
- Passports;
- Jewelry;
- Children favorite toys and/ or blankets;

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