

Appendix 8: Domestic Violence Personalized Safety Plan

Name: _____ Date: _____

The following steps represent my plan for increasing my safety and preparing in advance for the possibility for 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. Women cannot always avoid violent incidents. In order to increase safety, victims 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 doors, windows, lifts, staircase, 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 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 Service, and 999.
- 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 _____
(Decide 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 we're 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.)
- 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 can get out.

STEP 2: Safety when preparing to leave. Abuse victims 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 the victim is leaving a 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 savings account by _____, to increase my independence.
- D. Other things I can do to increase my independence include: _____
_____.

- E. I can keep change for phone calls on me at all times. I understand that if I use my mobile, the following month's phone bill will show my abuser those numbers I called after I left. To keep my phone communications confidential, I must either use coins, or I might ask to use a friend's phone card for a limited time when I first leave.
- 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 sit down and review my safety plan every _____ in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence. _____ (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 many things that victims can do to increase their safety in their 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 possible.
- 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.
- E. I can install smoke detectors and fire extinguishers for each floor of my house/flat.
- F. I can install an outside lighting and recording system that activates when a person is close to the house.
- G. I will teach my children how to make a reverse charge call to me and to _____ (name of friend, etc.) in the event that my partner takes the children.
- H. 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 permitted to do so. The people I will inform about pick-up permission include:
 - _____ (name of school)
 - _____ (name of babysitter)
 - _____ (name of teacher)
 - _____ (name[s] of others)
- I. I can inform _____ (neighbour) and _____ (friend) 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. 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 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, that's the first thing that should go in the new purse.
- B. I will give my protection order to police stations in the community where I work, in those communities where I visit friends or family, and in the community where I live.
- C. I will inform my employer; my minister; my closest friend; 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 advocate or an solicitor and file a complaint.
- F. If my partner violates the protection order, I can call the police and report the violation.

STEP 5: Safety on the job and in public. Survivors of abuse must decide if and when they will tell others that their partner has abused them and that they may be at continued risk. Friends, family, and co-workers can help to protect the victim. Survivors should carefully consider which people to invite to help secure their safety.

I might do any or all of the following:

- A. I can inform my boss, the security supervisor, and _____ at work.
- B. I can ask _____ to help me screen 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 transport, I can _____.
- F. I will go to different supermarkets and shops to conduct my business and shop at hours that are different from those I kept when residing with my abusive partner.
- G. I can use a different bank and go at hours that are different from those kept when residing with my abusive partner.

STEP 6: Safety and my emotional health. The experience of being physically abused and verbally degraded by partners is usually exhausting and emotionally draining. The process of building a new life takes much courage and incredible energy.

To conserve my emotional energy and resources and to avoid hard emotional times, if I feel down and am returning to a potentially abusive situation, I can do some of the following:

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

- B. I will try to use "I can ..." statements with myself and be assertive with others.
- C. I can tell myself, " _____ " whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me.
- D. I can read _____ to help me feel stronger.

E. I can call _____ and _____ for support.

F. I can attend workshops and support groups at the domestic violence program or _____
_____ to gain support and strengthen relationships.

STEP 7: Items to take when leaving. When leaving, it is important 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 have to leave quickly.

Money: Even if I never worked, I can take money from jointly held savings accounts. If I do not take this money, he can legally take the money and close the accounts.

Items on the following lists with asterisks by them are the most important to take 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 have to leave in a hurry, I can grab them quickly. When I leave, I should take:

- *Identification for myself
- *Children's birth certificates
- *My birth certificate
- *Social Security cards
- *School and vaccination records
- *Money
- *Chequebook, ATM card
- *Credit cards
- *Key - house, car, office
- *Driver's license and registration
- *Medications
- *Copy of protection order
- *Welfare identification,
- *Work permit, visa
- Passport(s), divorce papers
- Medical records - for all family members
- Property documents
- Bank books, insurance papers
- Address book
- Pictures, jewellery
- Children's favourite toys and/or blankets
- Items of special sentimental value

Telephone numbers I need to know:

Police/ (local) - 999 or _____
Crown/Magistrates Court _____
Domestic Violence Organisations _____
National Domestic Violence Hotline: _____
Work number _____
Supervisor's home number _____

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

Review date: _____