

STEP 1: Safety during a violent incident

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 escapes would you use?)

B I can keep my purse/wallet and car keys ready so I can leave quickly, and put them *(location)* _____

C I can tell _____ about the violence and request that 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, 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 _____

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 will use my judgment and intuition. If the situation is very serious, I can give my partner what they want to calm them down.

Step 2: Safety when preparing to leave

Victims frequently leave the residence they share with the battering partner. A careful exit plan increases safety. Batterers often strike back when they believe their partner is leaving a relationship.

To promote my safety I can use some or all of the following strategies:

A I will leave money, an extra set of keys, and clothes with _____

B I will keep copies of important documents or keys at _____

C If possible I will open a savings account by _____ to increase my independence.

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

_____,
_____,

(some ideas include: spending time with friends outside the home, getting a job if possible, seeking out support services in the area)

E I can keep change for phone calls on me at all times. I understand that if I use my telephone, the following month's phone bill will show my batterer the numbers I called after I left. To keep my phone communications confidential, I must either use a pay phone or use a cheap burner phone kept in a secure place.

F I will check with _____ and _____ to determine who might let me stay with them and/or lend finances.

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

Step 3: Safety in my own residence

There are many things someone can do to increase 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 safety ladders for escape from second-floor windows.
- E** I can install smoke detectors and fire extinguishers for each floor of my house/apartment.
- F** I can install a motion-activated outside lighting system.
- G** I will teach my children how to make a collect call to me and/or to _____ (name or friend, etc.) in case my partner kidnaps them.
- H** 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:
 - (school) _____ ,
 - (babysitter) _____ ,
 - (teacher) _____ ,
 - (others) _____
- I** I can inform _____ (neighbor) and _____ (friend) that my partner no longer resides with me and tell them to call the police if he/she is observed near my residence.

Step 4: Safety with an Order of Protection

Many batterers obey protection orders, but one can never be sure which violent partners will obey and which will not. I recognize I may need to ask the police and the courts to enforce my protective order.

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

- 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 to go into the new purse.

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

- C** There should be county and state registries of protection orders that all police departments can call to confirm. 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:

Country: _____ State: _____

- D** I will inform support persons such as my employer, friends, family, religious leaders and/or _____, that I have a protection order in effect.

- E** If my partner destroys my protection order, I will get another copy from the clerk's office.

- F** If the police do not help, I can contact an advocate or an attorney and leave a complaint with the chief of the police or the sheriff.

- G** 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

Everyone must decide if and when they will tell others that their partner has battered them and that they may be at continued risk. Friends, family, and co-workers can help to protect you. Each person should carefully consider which people to invite to help secure their safety.

To ensure my safety on the job 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 transit, I can _____

- F** I will go to different grocery stores and shopping malls to conduct my business and shop at hours different from those I kept when residing with my battering partner.

- G** I can use a different bank and go at hours different from those kept when residing with my battering partner.

STEP 6: Safety and my emotional health

The experience of being battered and verbally degraded by a partner 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, I can do some of the following:

A If I feel down and am tempted 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 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, support groups, or social gatherings such as _____
to gain support and strengthen relationships

STEP 7: Items to take when leaving

When leaving partners, it is important to take certain items such as **money**: even if I have never worked, I can take money from jointly held savings and checking accounts. If I do not, my abuser can legally take the money and close the accounts.

Here is a list of other items to take with you. If there is time, these items might be taken, or stored outside the home. It is advisable to put all these in a single location in case you have to leave in a hurry.

When I leave, I should take:

- Identification
- My birth certificate
- School and vaccination records
- Checkbook, ATM card
- Keys for house, car, office
- Medications
- Welfare identification, work permits, green cards
- Children's birth certificate
- Social Security cards
- Money
- Credit cards
- Driver's license and auto registration
- Copy of protection order
- Passport(s), divorce papers
- Medical records - for all family members
- Lease/rental agreement, house deed, mortgage payment book, bank books, Insurance papers
- 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 close to home) _____

(Police/sheriff's department close to work) _____

(Police/sheriff's department close to school) _____

(Prosecutor's office) _____

(Local battered women's program) _____

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

www.ndvh.org

Creating a safety plan can be very taxing, and it may bring up emotions and anxieties that you have potentially been trying to avoid. The plan itself is an enormous effort in self-care. Other forms of self-care are also essential for your safety plan. This is a time to be gentle with yourself and to find one thing, no matter how small, that you can do as an expression of kindness and self-love. Sometimes in the midst of chaos and stress we forget these important skills. For now, take a moment and breathe. Your breath is something that can anchor you at all times. You cannot breathe in the past; you cannot breathe in the future. Your breath only happens right here, right now.