

Personalized Safety Plan

I am the expert in my situation.

I know the person I'm dealing with better than anyone else, and I can use that to keep myself and my children safer.

Whether I choose to stay in the relationship or plan on leaving I can take steps to keep myself and my children safer.

I get to decide what safety looks like for me, and which safety steps will work best for me. I get to choose which tools fit my needs.

Although I cannot control my partner's violence, I can choose how to respond.

I can utilize the services in my community to help me weigh the practical, financial and emotional costs of each idea, and create a personalized plan that works for me.

I can practice listening to my intuition,

I can trust my gut instinct to get out, whether it makes sense or not.

What is a safety plan anyway?

A safety plan is a personalized, practical plan that can help you avoid dangerous situations and have better ways to react when danger escalates. This plan includes ways to remain safe while in the relationship, while planning to leave, and after leaving. Safety planning involves coping with sometimes confusing emotions, building a safety network of people and resources, and perhaps taking legal action also.

Preparing an emergency bag:

Knowing that you have a bag ready can make it easier to leave... whether you think you will ever need it or not.
(and, having an emergency bag can help you prepare for other types of emergencies, not just relationship violence or stalking.)

I can have the items I need ready, even if I don't think I will ever need them.

What do I want to have with me if I need to leave quickly (either during an argument or permanently)?

- Keys
- Cash/Prepaid credit card
- Copies of Driver's License/Vehicle Registration
- Insurance card – both vehicle insurance and any health insurance information
- Immigration papers, such as Visa, Green Card, application for visa, etc.
- Copy of Protection Order (if applicable)
- List of important phone numbers (in case my cell phone is lost/damaged)
- Birth certificate, social security card, passport (copies if original not available)
- Children's birth certificates, passports, immunization records, etc.
- Medications/glasses/contacts & solutions
- Children's medications, formula, diapers, a toy or blanket, etc.
- Change of clothes for myself and children
- Copies of marriage or divorce certificates, legal documents (divorce, custody, etc.)
- Copy of lease or information on home mortgage
- Other valuable pictures, jewelry, bank books, etc.
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Ideas for My Personalized Safety Plan

The following steps represent my plan for increasing my safety and preparing in case there is further violence. I can take action to help keep myself (and my children) safer. I get to use my intuition and my own judgment. If the situation is very serious.

REMINDER: I can give the abuser what he/she wants in order to calm him/her down. Protecting myself until I/we are out of danger is the priority.

First, I am my own best resource. I am familiar with the abuser and can begin noticing if there are any patterns or behaviors that tell me a violent incident is likely. I can begin to think about escape routes, people that might be able to help, and things to take with me if I decide to leave the relationship.

This is an ongoing process, I will need to update my plan as my situation changes. I can work on these steps as I am able, and use the ideas that work best for me. **I can begin working on these steps, even if I do not think there will be a next time.**

Safety During a Violent Incident:

Done	ToDo	Safety Idea	Important Names/Locations/Information:
		If I decide to leave during the violence, I will use (what doors, windows, elevators, stairwells, or fire escapes would you use?)	Notes about my route(s):
		I can keep my purse and keys ready, and keep them where I can get them quickly.	Location:
		If I have to leave, the first place I will go to is _____. Think of police or fire stations, public places, a friend or neighbor, a campus office, etc. Also, consider choosing a location near home, one near school, and one near work.	Location(s):
		Which room(s) can I try to move to that are lower risk? (If possible, move to a room with an outside door. Try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, kitchen, or other areas where there are items that can be used as weapons.)	Best room location(s):
		I can teach my children how to use the telephone, and contact police or fire department, by calling 911.	
		I will use _____ as my code with my roommate, family, and friends so they know to call for help.	Word or Phrase:
		I can teach my children a safe place to go in an emergency, such as a neighbor's or police/fire dept.:	Location:
		I can tell (a neighbor, friend, relative) about what is happening.	Name(s) and phone/email:

Staying Safe at Work and/or School:

Done	To Do	Safety Idea	Important Names/Locations/Information:
		I can make a mental or written note of the safer places along my routes from home to work or school – places where I can pause if I feel that something is not right, or that someone may be following me. These can include convenience stores, grocery stores, gas stations, urgent care or hospitals, fire or police stations, etc.	Think of places that are open extended hours, and that are likely to have security cameras and people that may be able to help.
		I can share at least some of my concerns about my relationship with a few people I see often. I can share as much or as little detail as I choose. (such as: co-workers, supervisors, Human Resources manager, Security Dept, instructors, classmates)	Name(s) and Phone #'s/Email address(es):
		If I feel unsafe at work, I can ask _____ to walk with me to go to lunch, walk to my car after work, (co-worker, classmate, security officer).	Name(s) and Phone #'s/Email address(es):
		The safest ways to leave my building in an emergency are:	Note the route(s) here:
		If I have to leave work or school in an emergency, I can go to a public place that is safe and unknown to my abuser.	I will go here first: Or here:
		I will use a code word/phrase to alert my co-workers, classmates, friends, or supervisor to call for help without my abuser knowing about it.	My code word/phrase is:
		I can consider varying my routes and times for going to work or school, taking children to school/daycare, child exchange for visitation, etc. ALTERNATIVELY: I can build a routine of people I see on my daily routes (neighbors, store clerks, co-workers) so that these people will be able to alert someone if I do not show up.	Consider having an “A” route and “B” route and noting these on your calendar to avoid creating obvious travel patterns. If keeping the same routes, let people know if they should notify police, a friend, etc. if you don’t show up when expected.
		If available, I will use my workplace Security officer, or campus security to escort me to my car or bus stop	Contact Info:
		If I need to rearrange my schedule or transfer to a different department in order to feel safe and avoid my abuser I can talk to _____ (Supervisor, Human Resources, School Advisor, etc.):	Contact Info:

Safety when preparing to leave.

Remember to guard your plans about leaving very carefully. You do not have to tell the person who is abusing you about your plans. Pretending you are not leaving is okay. Sometimes the abuser will become more violent after their victim leaves – it is important to be extra careful after you leave, and while you see how the situation progresses. **Trust your intuition. If you feel your life is in danger, it is important to leave --whether you have made plans or not**

Done	To Do	Safety Idea	Important Names/Locations/Information:
		If the violence starts to get worse, I can trust my intuition and know when to leave, whether I am prepared or not, and whether it “makes sense” or not	A way that I can remind myself to trust my intuition:
		If I need to leave quickly, I have the most important items packed & stored in a safe place	
		If I have left, and don’t know what to do next, I can call _____ from a safe phone for help with next steps (think of a 24-hour helpline, such as SafeHouse Denver, The Blue Bench, National DV Hotline, etc.)	Name(s) and contact info:
		I can ask an advocate about the Address Confidentiality Program, laws that allow me to break my leas, and other resources to help me and my children stay safer after we leave.	
		I can use a library or campus computer to make plans for leaving, confirm plans, discuss details, etc. so that my abuser has no way to track/find the information.	
		I can use a new email or messaging account for all plans – accounts that the abuser doesn’t know about. Also, I can be careful to keep these accounts completely separate from any existing accounts.	
		I can pay attention to the abuser’s behaviors and patterns to help me decide the best time(s) to leave.	Best day(s)/time(s):
		I can begin to “smuggle” important documents and other items out of the house, as I prepare to leave, and hide them or store them with a safe person.	
		I can check with _____ to see if I can stay with them for awhile (friends, co-workers, classmates -- unknown to abuser). NOTE: Even 1 or 2 days may give me time to plan next steps.	Names & contact info:
		I can begin saving some money to help me when I leave. I can talk with an advocate to come up with some ideas such as opening a savings account, hiding cash, etc.	Bank/credit union location (avoid using the abuser’s bank) NOTE: Ask about extra password protection.
		I can keep some cash or a prepaid credit card to use when I leave so the abuser can’t track purchases.	
		If I have a Protection Order, I can make sure that my workplace, roommates, Police Dept, children’s schools, etc. have copies of it. I can talk with an advocate to help me decide who should have a copy. NOTE: If I have a photo of the abuser, I can attach that to the Protection Order.	Who should have copies of my protection order?
		If I have children that I will need to remove from school when I leave, I know who to talk to at their school	Name(s) & contact info (also consider having an alternate contact):

Digital Privacy and Safety

Done	To Do	Safety Idea	Important Names/Locations/Information
		I can change my passwords, and use strong passwords, to lock my cell phone and computer from unwanted access.	Password(s) hints:
		Any time I'm online, I can avoid giving more information than necessary. Sharing my age, gender, location or address, employer, and other specific data can make me more vulnerable to the abuser or other predatory people.	Sites I may be able to remove information from:
		If I have profile pages on social media sites, I can adjust the privacy settings to limit unwanted access.	Where can I check my profile security settings?
		I can practice logging out of email, social media, and any other apps when I'm not using them, to avoid the abuser or others having access.	
		I can consider getting a different phone, and different phone number, which the abuser has not had access to so there is less chance of my phone being tracked or monitored. NOTE: Ask your advocate about laws that may help you separate your phone from the abuser's account in some situations.	Cell phone providers to check with.
		If I think my phone is being tracked, I can temporarily block the signal using several layers of aluminum foil or by using a signal-blocking pouch when necessary.	
		I can shut off GPS location information in instagram and other apps, except when I'm specifically using mapping apps.	
		If the abuser has had access to my computer, or if I suspect that that my computer may not be secure, I can have it checked for spyware/keylogging/tracking software by a reliable provider.	Resources for checking my computer:
		If I have concerns that my email or phone communication is being monitored, I can consider using more secure, encrypted messaging with people in my safety network.	
		If I am thinking about leaving the abusive relationship, I can do all of my online research from a public computer or a friend's computer to make sure the abuser cannot learn about my plans.	Public computer access near me (campus computer labs, libraries, etc.):
		I can ask my friends to not "tag" me in photos, and to take screenshots & let me know if they see strange postings, threats, or information connected with my name and accounts online.	
		I can ask my employer, school registrar, and other places to not publish my email and/or to change my email address to a more secure format that does not include my full name	Contact info for: Employer, Human Resources office, school registrar, etc.

Staying Safe Emotionally:

Being in an abusive situation is physically and emotionally exhausting. In addition, abusers may have deliberately made you doubt your mental health, intelligence, or ability to make sound decisions. Your emotional health is very important! Finding ways to care for yourself, and build support systems, are essential as you build a new life.

Done	To Do	Safety Idea	Important Names/Locations/Information:
		The abuser often makes me feel badly about myself by putting me down, but I know that what they say is wrong because _____(write down 1 or 2 of your accomplishments, such as reaching out for help, finding resources, going to school, achievements at work, caring for your children, etc.)	Statements to counter what the abuser says/said:
		If I need a reminder that I am a good person, and that I can make good decisions, I can call/text/email _____ (Think of friends, classmates, roommates, co-workers that can offer support). Remember that helplines can also offer support and encouragement.	Name(s) & contact info:
		I can plan at least one activity today that I enjoy in order to give myself a break (listening to my favorite song, stopping to notice my breathing, taking a walk, watching something funny, hanging out with a friend, taking a bubble bath, etc.) Check out the back of this safety plan for more ideas!	My top three ideas for relaxation:
		I can check with _____ to find support groups or counseling to help me work through the effects of the abusive situation (Remember that humans were not designed to deal with these types of situations on our own – even a few counseling or support sessions can be helpful).	Resources for support/counseling:
		When I feel ready, I can think about joining a club, volunteering, or joining an organization, such as _____, in the community, on campus., or as part of my faith community.	Groups or clubs I might enjoy:
		If I need to continue contact with the abuser, I can contact _____ before or after to get support (helpline advocate, friend, roommate, counselor, etc.)	Name(s) & contact info:
		If I feel overwhelmed , anxious, afraid, or have questions about my options, I can call a local or national hotline and speak to an advocate	

50 Ways to Take a Break

- Take a Bath
- Listen to Music
- Take a Nap
- Go to a body of water
- Watch the clouds
- Light a candle
- REST your legs up on a wall
- Let out a sigh
- Fly a Kite
- Watch the stars
- Write a Letter
- Learn something NEW
- Listen to a guided relaxation
- Read a book
- sit in NATURE
- 2x Move twice as slowly
- Take Deep Belly Breaths
- MEDITATE
- Call a Friend
- Meander around Town
- Notice your Body
- Buy some Flowers
- Find a relaxing scent
- Walk Outside
- Go for a run
- Take a bike ride
- View some ART
- Turn off all electronics
- Go to a park
- pet a furry creature
- Create your own coffee break
- Read or watch something FUNNY
- Examine an everyday object with Fresh Eyes
- Drive somewhere NEW
- Go to a Farmer's Market
- Forgive Someone
- Engage in small acts of KINDNESS
- Make some MUSIC
- Climb a tree
- Let go of something
- Put on some music and DANCE
- Give Thanks
- Write a quick poem
- Read poetry
- Do some gentle stretches
- Print on a surface other than paper
- Write a quick poem
- Read poetry
- Put on some music and DANCE
- Give Thanks