

MY PERSONAL SAFETY PLAN

Safety during a Violent Incident/Preparing to Leave

Victims cannot always avoid violent incidents. In order to increase safety, victims should consider some or all of these strategies.

- The doors or windows I could exit from are _____.
- I will keep my checklist of items at _____.
- I can call (list two trusted people) _____ & _____.
- I will teach my children how to dial 911 to contact the Police and provide quick and accurate information including our address.
- I will use _____ as my code word with my children or my friends so they can go for help.
- When I leave my home, I will go to _____.

- My alternate location will be _____.
- I will open a savings account by (date) _____ in order to increase my independence.
- I will contact _____ and _____ for a temporary place to stay and for emergency financial assistance.
- I can leave extra clothes with _____.
- I will sit down and review my safety plan every _____ (week? 2 weeks? month?) In order to plan the safest way to leave the residence.
- I will rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.

Safety with a Court Order

Only some abusers obey court orders such as peace bonds. Here are some steps that a person can take to help enforce her partner's court order:

- I will report to the Police when my partner breaches any conditions of the court order.
- I will get a copy of my partner's court order from the court office located at _____ and keep it with me at all times, providing my employer and a friend with a copy.
- If my partner destroys my copy of his/her court order, I will get another copy from the court.
- If I relocate to another city/town, I will notify the Police Service in that city/town, of my new address/work location AND of my partner's history.

Notes:

Safety in My Own Residence

There are many things that a victim 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 consider include:

- Can I change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible?
- Can I replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors?
- Can I install security systems including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, an electronic system with "panic button", etc.?
- Can I purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows?
- Can I install motion lights outside of my home?
- I will teach my children how to use the telephone to dial 911.
- I will teach my children a code word that grants them permission to leave with a person other than myself only when that person uses that code word in direct communication with my children.
- I will remember to give my code word to the person(s) I instruct to collect my children in an emergency.
- 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) _____
(baby-sitter) _____
(teacher) _____
(coach/instructor) _____
(others) _____

Safety on the Job

Each victim must decide if and when they will tell others that their partner can become violent and that they may be at continued risk. Friends, family and co-workers can help to protect the victim. Each victim should consider carefully which people to invite to help secure her safety. A victim could do some or all of the following:

- I will inform my boss, the security supervisor, secretary, co-workers, etc.), at work of my situation.
- I will ask that someone can help screen my telephone calls at work. I can also make use of telephone voice messaging to screen my calls.
- When leaving work, I can request that security or a co worker accompanies me to ensure my safety.

Notes:

Safety in Public

- If problems occur while I am driving, I can use my cellular telephone, personal sound-alarm; honk my horn continuously, drive directly to a well-lit public place that is open and heavily populated, drive directly to the local Police Service.
- If I use public transit, I can sit close to the front by the driver; arrange to have someone meet me at my bus stop and walk me home; once I arrive home, call a friend or relative to let them know I arrived safely.
- I can use different grocery stores and shopping malls to conduct my business and shop at hours that are different from those I used when living with my partner.

Safety and My Emotional Health

The experience of being abused and/or verbally degraded by partners is usually exhausting and emotionally draining. The process of building a new life for you takes much courage and incredible energy. Here are some things a person can do to conserve emotional energy and resources, and to avoid hard emotional times:

- If I start to contemplate returning to a potentially abusive situation, I will call a friend, relative or shelter worker for support.
- When I have to communicate with my partner in person or by telephone, I will (advise him I am recording what he is telling me and then I will do so, I will arrange to have a trusted friend or close adult relative present during these meetings/communications, or make arrangements for all communication to go through a lawyer or another unbiased third party).
- I will use "I can" statements with myself and be assertive with others.
- I will tell myself, "I'm in charge of my life and confident in my decision-making abilities or (other positive statements about my abilities).
- I will read my spiritual teachings, poetry, self-help resources to help me feel stronger.
- I will call friends, family, other support people

Notes:

Social Networking Risks, Privacy and Safety Planning

Abusers can use social networks to stalk, harass and gain information about victims. Someone can monitor your page without your knowledge, impersonate or hijack a victim's page. They can gain victim's personal information through friends and family.

- GPS and other Location-Based Social Networking: programs that run through cell phones on Facebook, etc. allow a person to "check in" at locations; this reveals current location information; privacy settings can be customized to prevent this.
- Geotagging and other location based social networking; pictures taken on smartphones may have location information automatically embedded in the data of the photo based on the phone's GPS. This can be turned off all phones.
- Spyware can be installed on a computer either physically or from a remotely through email. This can give abusers information about passwords for social networks and other accounts.

Risks--- nothing posted online through a social networking site or blog is going to be completely private. However, privacy settings can be made more secure.

- Print step by step instructions to change Facebook privacy settings to notify the user of account activity from a new or unknown computer or mobile device, block profile accessibility for creators of applications and games, disable search options and more.

Awareness is key:

- Google yourself.
- On Facebook, view 'photos of me' to see what is there.
- Talk to your kids about internet use; including social networking sites.
- Be thoughtful about what you're posting, privacy settings and whose "friendship" you accept/who you connect with online.
- Set unique passwords and security questions.
- Periodically check your settings.

Notes:

Items to Take With Me When Leaving

When victims leave partners, it is important to take certain items with them. Beyond this, victims sometimes give an extra copy of papers and an extra set of clothing to a friend, just in case the victim has to leave quickly. Items with asterisks on the following list are the most important to take.

1. Children's birth certificates *
2. Social Insurance Cards *
3. My partner's Social Insurance Number *
4. My health card *
5. My children's health cards *
6. School and vaccination records *
7. Money *
8. Cheque book, ATM card *
9. Credit cards *
10. Bank / income statements *
11. Keys - house, car, office *
12. Medications / prescriptions *
13. Custody Orders *
14. Ontario Works identification *
15. Work permits *
16. Lease / Rental agreements, property deed(s) *
17. Mortgage payment documents *
18. Photographs
19. Jewellery
20. Small salvable objects
21. Immigration papers *
22. Passports *
23. Divorce documentation *
24. Medical records for all family members *
25. Insurance papers
26. Address book
27. Children's favourite toys and/or blankets *
28. Items of special sentimental value
29. Vehicle ownership documents *
30. Government of Ontario Senior's Card *
31. Native Person Status Card / documentation *
32. Employment / pension documentation *

Notes:

Telephone Numbers I Need to Know

Police, Fire, Ambulance: 911

Victim Support Line: 1-888-579-2888

Victim Support Line (Internet): www.sgcs.gov.on.ca/english/victim/victim_sl.html

Victim Services: 519.723.2711

Hiatus House: 519.252.7781

Doctor: _____.

Religious Leader: _____.

Lawyer: _____.

Work: _____.

Work Supervisor's Home: _____.

Children's School: _____.

Children's Daycare: _____.

Social Worker: _____.

Other Important Number: _____.

Contact Police Officer: _____.

Notes:

CHILDREN'S SAFETY PLAN

Children require a safe environment in which to live. As the caregiver, you need to develop a safety and escape plan with your children. This plan provides safeguards for your children and a means for them to alert immediate emergency assistance for you. The children need to understand that the violence is not their fault, nor is it their responsibility to try to intervene in an attempt to protect you from your abusive partner.

I will provide the following for my children:

- I will set up a safe room in our home for the children to go to in the event that my partner becomes abusive. This room will be (if possible), on ground level so the children can leave through a window, if necessary.
- The safe room will have a lock on the door and a cellular/cordless phone in a location known only by the children and I, with 911 pre-programmed on speed dial.
- The children will become familiar with the telephone and the location of the emergency speed dial key. We will practice saying, someone is hurting my mommy (or daddy) just in case one of the children has to call the Police.
- I will teach my children our home phone number and complete address.
- The children and I will have a predetermined code word to alert the children to go immediately to the safe room.
- We will have an additional code word to alert the children to immediately leave our home and to run to our pre-arranged emergency friend: (our neighbour's house, or the corner store, or a Block Parent house, etc.) and to have an adult call the Police.
- The children will stay with the emergency friend at their home where I will meet them as soon as I am able.
- We have discussed the Block Parent Program. The children are familiar with the Block Parent red-and-white sign and when they see it in the window of a house or a store they know it is a safe place where adults will be present and willing to help.

Notes:
