



Onslow Victims Center

Serving All Survivors of Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence

Safety Strategies

*Safety Planning for Survivors of Domestic
Violence and their Children*

PERSONALIZED SAFETY PLAN

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.

This safety plan is designed for:

Name: _____ Date: _____

Who helped me fill out my safety plan?

Name/Title: _____

Who to call:

You may be able to call on friends and/or family; make sure these contacts are safe, and will not pass on information about your plan and/or whereabouts. Sometimes the safest people may be those who do not know you or your abuser.

Counselor/support group contact: _____

Phone: _____

Advocate: _____

Phone: _____

Shelter/crisis support: _____

Phone: _____

Doctor/health care provider: _____

Phone: _____

Other: _____

Phone: _____

Phone: _____

Phone: _____

Where to go to be safe:

Practice how to get out safely. What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells, or what fire escapes would you use? Practice how you are going to get to the safe places that are listed below.

Safe place #1: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Contact: _____

Safe place #2: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Contact: _____

Safe place #3: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Contact: _____

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

A. I can leave money and an extra set of keys with _____ so that I can leave quickly.

B. I can keep copies of important documents or an extra set of keys at _____.

C. I can leave extra clothes with _____.

D. I can open a savings account by _____, to increase my independence.

E. I can tell _____ about the violence and request that they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my home.

_____ F. I understand that if I use my telephone/cell phone, the following month the telephone bill will let my batterer know which calls I have made. To keep my telephone communications confidential, I can get a friend to let me use their telephone/cell phone for a limited time when I first leave or use a prepaid cell phone.

G. I can check with _____ to see if I would be able to stay with them or lend me some money in case of an emergency.

H. I will sit down and review my safety plan every _____ in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence.

_____ I. I will rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice this with my children.

J. I can use _____ as my code with my children or my friends so they can call for help.

_____ K. I can also teach some of these strategies to some or all of my children.

L. If I decide to leave, I will: _____

(Try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, kitchen, near weapons, or in rooms without access to an outside door).

_____ M. I will use my judgment and intuition. I have to protect myself until I/we are out of danger.

Safety at home

_____ Develop a safety plan and discuss it with your children. Review the plan as often as possible. Change the locks and install devices to secure your windows.

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_____ Make sure your children's school, day-care center, after-school program(s) or camp know who is authorized to pick up your children. Tell your neighbors and landlord that your abuser no longer lives there and ask them to call the police if they see him/her/they near your home.

_____ Before you resume a potentially abusive relationship, discuss alternatives with someone you trust. You can always call us on our hotline at DV crisis line is 910-347-4000. Please be assured that we are here to assist you. We are here to help ensure your safety. We are not here to judge your decisions.

_____ If you have an order of protection, keep it with you at ALL TIMES. Make copies of your order and place one in your purse/bag, in your car or anywhere you may stay. Inform building security and coworkers you trust of your situation.

_____ If possible, provide a photograph of your abuser to building security. Vary your routes to and from work and arrange for someone to escort you to your car, bus, or train. Plan what to do in various situations if your abuser confronts you. Change store locations you frequently shop at (instead of going to the food store you usually go to, go to another).

Safety during volatile domestic violence incidents:

_____ If an argument seems unavoidable, move to a room or area with easy access to an exit, NOT a bathroom, kitchen, or anywhere near weapons. Identify which door, window, stairwell or elevator offers the quickest way out of the home and practice your route. Have a bag packed and ready. Keep it in an undisclosed but accessible place where you can retrieve it quickly. Find neighbors you can tell about the violence and ask that they call the police if they hear a disturbance.

_____ You have a right to protect yourself when you are in danger. You do not deserve to be battered or threatened.

- Avoid rooms without an easy escape.
- Avoid areas where weapons are easily accessible. (Kitchens are dangerous because of access to knives and bathrooms are dangerous because of the risk of having your head hit against the tub or sink).
- Mentally plan how you might escape from each room in advance.
- Consider safe places you might go after escaping.

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- Choose a code word or signal that would let your children or neighbors know they should call 911.
- Hide spare keys and money in a safe place or ask a safe person to hold onto them for you in case you need to flee unexpectedly.

Technology and Safety:

- _____ • Abusers often use technology to keep track of and control survivors. Use this information to create a plan around technology usage.
- _____ • Computers can store a lot of private information about websites, emails, instant messages, calls you make, etc... Be very cautious about your computer usage and use a computer your abuser does not have access to when searching or reaching out for assistance, such as the public library, if possible. It is impossible to completely clear all of the sites you have visited.
- _____ • Be cautious on what you use a computer for. Computer monitoring software can easily be placed on a computer, allowing the abuser to view all of your computer activity. Be cautious of accessing bank and email accounts on any computer that you fear may be monitored.
- _____ • Text messages and cell phone calls may be logged into your cell phone bill. Avoid using personal phones for safety planning, if possible.
- _____ • GPS, a location tracking device, is now installed in many cell phones and in cars. Contact your cell phone carrier to see if the GPS in your phone has been activated and can be located.
- _____ • If you think your activities are being monitored or you are being followed, you probably are. Trust your instincts.

Safety Plan with Your Children:

_____ Being in an abusive situation can feel incredibly scary and isolating, and if children are involved – even indirectly witnessing the abusive – it can become a lot more complicated and dangerous. A parent's instinct is to make sure their child is safe – but how can you do this best if your abusive partner is unpredictable, or manipulative?

_____ All of our advocates at The Hotline are equipped to help you safety plan for you and your children during any stage in your relationship. Based on what you're going through, we can help assess the best plans of action and brainstorm different options with you – even when you're feeling out of options.

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Planning for Violence in the Home:

If you are in an abusive relationship, a safety plan should include ways that your children can stay safe when violence is happening in your home. It's key to remember that if the violence is escalating, you should avoid running to the children because your partner may hurt them as well.

- _____ • Teach your children when and how to call 911.
- _____ • Instruct them to leave the home if possible when things begin to escalate, and where they can go.
- _____ • Come up with a code word that you can say when they need to leave the home in case of an emergency — make sure that they know not to tell others what the secret word means.
- _____ • In the house: Identify a room they can go to when they're afraid and something they can think about when they're scared.
- _____ • Instruct them to stay out of the kitchen, bathroom and other areas where there are items that could be used as weapons.
- _____ • Teach them that although they want to protect their parent that they should never intervene.
- _____ • Help them to make a list of people that they are comfortable talking and expressing themselves to.
- _____ • Enroll them in counseling.

Safety After Leaving:

- _____ • If possible, change your locks, get a security system, a large dog, or motion-detector lights.
- _____ • Changing your name and social security number are options. If you change your name, you may want to change your name, you may want to change it to something common that will make it difficult to locate you (such as "Mary Smith").
- _____ • If your neighbors are safe, let them know about your situation and ask that they call the police if necessary.
- _____ • Inform your employer of the situation and ask for workplace accommodations and support to ensure your safety. Ask them to not give you any of your personal information. Vary your work schedule if possible.

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- _____ • Don't hesitate to call 911 if you are in danger.
- _____ • Consider safe transportation options.
- _____ • You may want to vary your daily routines so that your abuser can't easily find you.
- _____ • If you need to communicate with your abuser, consider the safest way of doing it.
- _____ • Consider getting a post office box to keep your address confidential
- _____ • Consider getting an unlisted number.
- _____ • Impress upon friends and family your need for confidentiality.
- _____ • Lock your car doors and park in well-lit areas.
- _____ • Put important documents in a safe deposit box at a bank, if you can.
- _____ • Screen incoming calls and save threatening messages if you want to report violations or threats to police CALL 911 if your abuser violates your protective order and make sure you have a copy on you at ALL times.
- _____ • Consider all possible ways to protect your privacy. Examples of places that may have personal information about you include: utility companies, creditors, banks, schools, daycare centers, fitness centers, churches, tax records, insurance companies, magazine subscriptions, online social media sites.
- _____ • Change passwords to computers and personal accounts. Use passwords that your abuser won't be able to guess (for instance, don't use the names of pets or children).
- _____ • If possible, get a cell phone for 911 purposes. Ask one of our advocates for one, we occasionally receive donated cell phones for this purpose.
- _____ • Abuser in Jail? Sign up with Victim Information & Notification Everyday (VINE):
VINE is an automated service that lets you track the custody status of offenders in jail or prison. By calling the toll-free number or visiting www.vinelink.com, you can find out the custody status of an offender. You can also register to be notified by phone and email if the custody status of an offender changes.
Please remember, do not solely rely on VINE for your safety. If you feel you may be at risk, take precautions as if the offender has been released.

Preparing to Leave

Because violence could escalate when someone tries to leave, here are some things to keep in mind before you leave:

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- _____ • Keep any evidence of physical abuse, such as pictures of injuries.
- _____ • Keep a journal of all violent incidences, noting dates, events and threats made, if possible. Keep your journal in a safe place.
- _____ • Know where you can go to get help. Tell someone what is happening to you.
- _____ • If you are injured, go to a doctor or an emergency room and report what happened to you. Ask that they document your visit.
- _____ • Plan with your children and identify a safe place for them, like a room with a lock or a friend's house where they can go for help. Reassure them that their job is to stay safe, not to protect you.
- _____ • Contact your local shelter and find out about laws and other resources available to you before you have to use them during a crisis. WomensLaw.org has state by state legal information.
- _____ • Acquire job skills or take courses at a community college as you can.
- _____ • Try to set money aside or ask friends or family members to hold money for you.

Things you may want to take with you:

If you can, make copies of important documents, such as the ones listed below and place them somewhere safe in your "ready-to-go" prepped bag of clothes. You can pack all of this in advance and leave them with someone safe you know in case you need to leave immediately.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Driver's license and registration | <input type="checkbox"/> Copies of protective orders (restraining/stalking) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birth certificates for you and your children Social security cards for you and your children | <input type="checkbox"/> Lease/rental agreements House deed/mortgage payment book |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School and medical records | <input type="checkbox"/> Current unpaid bills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money, bank cards (keep in mind that use of credit cards may enable someone to trace you) | <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance papers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keys (office, car, home) | <input type="checkbox"/> Address book |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medications | <input type="checkbox"/> Safe numbers (crisis lines, shelters, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Photos/jewelry/sentimental items | <input type="checkbox"/> Children's favorite toys/blankets Change of clothes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Welfare identification | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Passport/green card/work permit | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce papers | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

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Telephone numbers I need to know:

Jacksonville Police Non- emergency department (910) 455-1472

Police/sheriff's department (work) (910) 455-3113

Onslow County Magistrates Office (910) 478-3619

Onslow Women's Center Crisis Line (910) 347-4000

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-SAFE (7233) 800-787-3224 (TTY) www.ndvh.org