

# **SAFETY PLAN**

Making a safety plan involves identifying the steps you can take to increase your safety and helps to prepare you and your children in advance for the possibility of further violence.

## **My Personal Safety Plan**

While I do not have control over my abuser's violence, I can make myself and my children safer by planning actions that will help us deal with the abuse.

I will use this plan as a guide and reminder to help me find ways to be safe. If I am concerned that my abuser will find a printout, I will write the points I believe apply to me on a separate piece of paper and hide it in a safe place.

I will review and update this plan on a regular basis so that I will be ready in case my situation changes.

## **What I Can Do Before A Violent Incident**

If I believe my partner will be violent, there are a number of things I can think about in advance. I can prepare to leave by doing some of the following things,

I will keep a suitcase, box or bag \_\_\_\_\_ where I can get to it quickly and easily. In it, I will keep as many of the following items as I can:

- An extra set of keys for the apartment or house and vehicle
- Small bills and change for taxis and telephone call
- Identification papers - passport, social insurance card, birth certificates, immigration papers, citizenship card, aboriginal status card
- Driver's licence and registration
- Health cards and children's immunization records for myself and my children
- Divorce and custody papers
- Restraining orders, peace bonds, any other court orders
- Bank books, cheque book, credit cards, mortgage or loan papers
- Lease/rental agreement, property deed, business or partnership agreements, rent or mortgage payment receipts
- Address book
- Photograph of my (ex) partner to help identify her/him
- A list of other items I can pick up later

I can keep my purse, wallet, personal identification, keys and other emergency items \_\_\_\_\_ in case I have to leave suddenly.

I can open a separate bank account in my name at \_\_\_\_\_. I will request that any statements be sent to \_\_\_\_\_ so that my abuser doesn't see them.

I can also check to see how much money is in our joint account in case I need to remove half the money quickly. If my abuser knows my account or PIN number, I will \_\_\_\_\_.

I can help my children escape by telling them \_\_\_\_\_. I will teach them the number of the local police \_\_\_\_\_ and other emergency numbers such as \_\_\_\_\_.

I will review and revise my safety plan every \_\_\_\_\_.

### **What I Can Do During a Violent Incident**

I must be able to think and act quickly in order to keep myself and my children safe during a violent episode. Here are some things I can do to increase my safety.

I can make sure I can grab my clothes and/or my children's clothes quickly by \_\_\_\_\_. If my abuser asks me what I'm doing, I will tell her/him \_\_\_\_\_.

I trust \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to tell them about my situation. I will use the code word \_\_\_\_\_ to let them know I am in danger and to contact police immediately.

I can use the code word \_\_\_\_\_ with my children so that they can protect themselves during a violent incident.

I will look in each room and figure out the best way to escape. I will try to stay out of places such as the bathroom and kitchen if there is no outside exit. I will also try to avoid places where weapons such as knives or guns are kept.

On the main floor, the best way to get out is \_\_\_\_\_  
On the second floor, the best way to get out is \_\_\_\_\_  
In the basement, the best way to get out is \_\_\_\_\_

I will use my judgment and intuition. If the situation is very dangerous, I should consider \_\_\_\_\_ to calm down my abuser. I will remember that my first priority is to keep myself and my children safe.

I will review and revise this safety plan every \_\_\_\_\_

## My Child(ren)'s Safety

I know that the best thing my children can do for me during a violent episode is to get away and protect themselves. I can tell them to \_\_\_\_\_ if they see me being abused.

I can teach them to pick a safe room like \_\_\_\_\_, preferably with a lock and access to a telephone. It is important to me and to them that they get out of the room where the abuse is occurring as soon as possible.

I can tell them their most important job is to keep themselves safe. I will explain it using these words \_\_\_\_\_

I will teach them how to call for help. If they cannot safely get to a telephone in my home, I will talk to them about using our neighbour's \_\_\_\_\_ phone or the nearest payphone, which is located at \_\_\_\_\_.

I will make sure they know they don't need money to dial an emergency number. If I have a cell phone, I will teach them how to dial 9-1-1 or other emergency number.

I will make sure they know their name and address if they need help. If we live in the country, I will teach them their address, including concession and lot number.

I can rehearse what my children will say when they call for help. For instance, we can practise how to contact the police like this:  
Dial 911.

An operator will answer:

"Police, Fire, Ambulance."

Your child says:

Police.

Then your child says:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

I am \_\_\_\_ years old.

I need help. Send the police.

Someone is hurting my mom.

The address here is \_\_\_\_\_.

The phone number here is \_\_\_\_\_.

I will teach my children to leave the phone off the hook after they are done talking. The police may call the number back if they hang up, which could create a dangerous situation for me and my child/children.

I can also tell my children about Neighbourhood Block Parents program and how to use it. The nearest Block Parent lives at \_\_\_\_\_.

I will pick a safe place such as \_\_\_\_\_ to meet my children outside our home after the situation is safe for me and for them (so we can easily find each other). I will teach my children the safest route to the planned place of safety for them.

We will review and revise our safety plan every \_\_\_\_\_.

### **What I Can Do When I Am Living in a New Place**

I can increase security by \_\_\_\_\_.

I may want to change the locks and put bars on the windows if I think my (ex) partner has a key.

I will talk to my children and tell them to \_\_\_\_\_ if my (ex) partner shows up.

I will teach my children how to dial police or ambulance numbers. In my area, the number for police is \_\_\_\_\_.

I will keep copies of any court orders with me at all times. I will give copies of these orders to (school, day care, police) \_\_\_\_\_ and tell them to call me if they see my partner. I will give these people copies of my partner's photograph so they can recognize her/him.

I can install a peephole my children can use. I will tell them to \_\_\_\_\_ if my abuser shows up.

I can get these features installed on my telephone (call blocking, call display, unpublished number, speed dial) \_\_\_\_\_ to increase my safety.

I can block email messages from my partner or switch Internet service providers. If my abuser can access my email password, I can \_\_\_\_\_.

I can have the emergency numbers in my area ready by writing them out.

Police \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital \_\_\_\_\_

Women's Shelter \_\_\_\_\_

Crisis Line \_\_\_\_\_

Children's Services \_\_\_\_\_

Other services \_\_\_\_\_

I can install fire detectors and extinguishers on each floor. I will put them \_\_\_\_\_.

Here are some other things I can do to increase my safety \_\_\_\_\_

### **Safety in My Neighbourhood**

I will tell \_\_\_\_\_ to call police if they hear a fight in my home.

I will tell \_\_\_\_\_ who can and cannot pick up my child(ren).

I can ask \_\_\_\_\_ to look after my children in an emergency situation.

I can ask \_\_\_\_\_ to keep my emergency escape plan items at their house.

I can switch banks, grocery stores and other services so that I can avoid running into my abuser. I can go to \_\_\_\_\_ at different times than I did when I was with my partner.

I may want to change my doctor, dentist or other professional services if I think my partner may track me down there. I will explain my situation to \_\_\_\_\_.

I can make sure my name is not on my mailbox or in an apartment directory.

### **How I Can Increase My Safety at Work**

I can tell (my boss, co-workers, human resource personnel) \_\_\_\_\_ of my situation.

I can ask \_\_\_\_\_ to help screen my telephone calls at work. I can also use voice mail to screen calls.

I can block unwanted emails or send them to a folder where I do not have to read them.

When I leave, I can ask \_\_\_\_\_ to walk me to my car/the bus/the train to ensure my safety.

I can get a "call police" banner for my car to alert other drivers.

If I run into problems on my way home I can \_\_\_\_\_.

If I agree to see my abuser, I can go to a public place such as \_\_\_\_\_ so that we will not be in an isolated place.

Some other safety precautions I can take are \_\_\_\_\_

### **Safety with A Court Order**

I can report to the police any violations of the conditions of a court order. If the police officer will not help me, I can report the breach to the [RCMP or Local Police] Detachment Commander or the Chief of Police in the area where the court order was violated. I can get a copy of my partner's court order from the court offices located at \_\_\_\_\_ and keep it with me at all times.

If my partner destroys the order, I can get another copy at \_\_\_\_\_

If I move to another town or district, I will notify the local police of the court order, my new location and my partner's history of violent behaviour. I will do the same thing if I often visit other cities/towns/countries. The numbers I need to call are \_\_\_\_\_.

I will tell the following people (boss, religious leader, close friend, counsellor \_\_\_\_\_) about the order, including all conditions.

### **Taking Care of My Emotional Well-Being**

I realize that I have been through a lot and I may be feeling exhausted and emotionally drained. I know that building a new life free of violence takes a great deal of courage and requires a lot of energy. Here are some things I can do to take care of my health. I may choose as many of these options as I feel comfortable doing.

- Attend as many Crisis Counselling group sessions as I can.
- Become involved in community activities to reduce feeling isolated.
- Take a part-time job to reduce isolation and to improve my finances.
- Enrol in school to increase my skills.
- Join support groups of other women to gain support and strengthen my relationships with other people.
- Take time for myself to read, meditate, play music, etc.

- Spend time with people who make me feel good and provide support.
- Take part in social activities, e.g. movie, dinner, exercise.
- Take care of my sleep and nutritional needs.
- Keep a personal journal to write about my feelings, especially when I am feeling low or vulnerable. I will keep it in a safe place or burn it.
- Take time to prepare myself emotionally before entering stressful situations like talking with my partner, meeting with lawyers, or attending court.
- Try not to overbook myself - limit myself to one appointment per day to reduce stress.
- Be creative and do whatever makes me feel good.
- Write something positive about myself everyday - my own personal affirmations.
- I will not find my comfort in excessive use of alcohol or food - it only serves to increase my depression.
- Avoid excessive shopping and impulse buying.
- Join a health club or start an exercise program. It will increase my energy level and sense of well being.
- It's OK to feel angry, but find positive and constructive ways to express my anger.
- Remember that I am the most important person to take care of right now.

I will review and revise the sections of the safety plan that apply to me every \_\_\_\_\_ to make sure I am on track.

**Safety for Women in Special Circumstances (Rural Women, Women with Disabilities, Immigrant Women)**

If I am concerned my partner will track me down by long-distance telephone records, I will find out the toll-free number of the closest shelter. That number is \_\_\_\_\_.

If I cannot leave my home because of disabilities, I will contact \_\_\_\_\_ to make arrangements for transportation when my partner is not there.

I do not feel comfortable speaking English, so I will ask \_\_\_\_\_ to translate or help me find someone to talk to me in another language.

I can ask \_\_\_\_\_ if I am concerned about my animals' welfare should I leave.

Here are some other things I can do to feel safer

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This plan was adapted from information provided in several Domestic Violence/Woman Abuse Safety Plans. In particular, we have referred to plans developed by the Peel Committee Against Woman Abuse, Kathy Cawthon, Metropolitan Nashville Police Department and Women's Community House.