

A SAFETY PLAN

(For Individuals Who Are Being Victimized In An Abusive Relationship)

The goal of this plan is help you take care of yourself and take responsibility for your safety in situations where domestic abuse may potentially occur. We know from research and experience that domestic abuse often repeats itself and generally gets worse, and that emotional and verbal abuse have the potential to escalate to physical and sexual abuse. A *Safety Plan* gives you some concrete and practical way to protect yourself (and your children, if you have any) both by becoming aware of signs that usually precede your partner's abusive and violent actions and by becoming familiar with and actually using personal and community resources that are available to you. Your need to be aware of your partner's cues and triggers in this plan does not imply in any way that you are responsible for the abuse or violence that your partner perpetrates with you.

1. What warning signals (cues) do you sense or notice in my partner that tell you that you might be in danger (e.g. your partner's actions, things your partner says to you, how your partner appears physically when they are escalating)?
2. What are some of your own internal warning signs (cues) that tell you that you might be afraid, tense, or in danger (e.g. your behaviors, your thoughts, your physical or emotional responses to your partner)?
3. What are some of the other external circumstances or stressors that could lead to explosive or volatile situations (e.g. your own or your partner's alcohol or drug use, financial pressures, issues with the children, times of the day/week/month/year, specific location in the house or elsewhere, problems with relatives, your own or your partner's work issues, your partner's jealousy/possessiveness)?

4) How have you attempted to protect yourself (and your children if you have any) from being hurt in the past? How effective do you think these efforts have been? How have you survived in this relationship up to the present? This is an opportunity to give yourself some credit for efforts you have attempted to make in the past to address your situation.

5) Identify below some people and organizations to whom you can turn for help if this is necessary:

PERSONAL:

FRIENDS:

RELATIVES/EXTENDED FAMILY:

NEIGHBORS/CO-WORKERS:

COUNSELOR/SPIRITUAL ADVISOR:

OTHERS:

CRISIS LINES:

SHELTERS (SAFE HOUSING):

MEDICAL RESOURCES (HEALTH CARE PROVIDER(S), MEDICAL CLINICS, HOSPITALS)

LEGAL RESOURCES (POLICE, LEGAL ADVOCATES, ATTORNEY, WHERE TO GET AN ORDER FOR PROTECTION)

6. Some other issues to consider in thinking about your safety:

- **Keep your *Safety Plan* in a private and secure location**
- **Be aware of escape routes from your residence (e.g. doors, windows) and think about the best time to leave if you have the flexibility to leave when you wish**
- **Get an extra set of keys (car, house, work) and keep them in a safe place (for a woman, not in your purse)**
- **Pack a small night bag (with extra clothing, medication, toiletries, important documents like Social Security cards, birth certificates, and restraining orders) that can be taken on short notice; be sure to include your children's needs (if you have kids) and keep the bag somewhere safe (at work; at a relative's, friend's, or neighbor's home)**
- **Think about and plan for how you will get around if you are not able to use the family car (bus schedules, rides from friends, neighbors, and relatives)**
- **Hide some easily-accessible cash and a credit card (if possible) for necessary expenses if you decide to leave (e.g. for food, housing)**
- **Arrange for a place to stay (e.g. at a friend's or relative's home) in advance in case you need to leave your residence quickly**
- **Try to remove firearms and/or ammunition from your residence (store them elsewhere or get rid of them completely)**