

# Safety Plan

*A safety plan is unique for each individual and may need to be revised as your situation changes. A safety plan is a tool. Below are suggestions others have found helpful. You are the best expert on your own situation. Some suggestions here may be useful for you while others may not meet your needs. Feel free to add your own ideas. Take what you like and leave the rest!*

The following steps will help you to prepare in advance for the possibility of future violence and will keep you safer. Although you are not responsible for, nor do you have control over an abuser's violence, you do have a choice about how you respond to the abuser, and how best to get yourself (and your children) to safety.

## Step 1: Safety During a Violent Incident

- If I feel the abuser is about to be violent, I will try to move to the \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Try to avoid the bathroom, garage, kitchen, and places near weapons or rooms without access to the front door).
- If it's not safe to stay, I will \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Practice how to get out safely. What doors, windows, elevators or stairwells will you use?)
- I will keep my bag ready and keep it in \_\_\_\_\_ in order to leave quickly.
- I will tell \_\_\_\_\_ about the violence and ask them to call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my home.
- I will use \_\_\_\_\_ as my code word/phrase with my children or my friends so they can call for help.
- If I leave my home, I will go to \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Keep a list of emergency numbers in your purse or wallet.)
- I will remember that if I call 911 and leave the phone off the hook, the domestic violence incident will be tape-recorded and an officer should respond to the scene. **If I use my cell phone to dial 911 I must give them my location information, then leave the phone on.**
- Remember, you know your abusive partner best. You know how to protect yourself and your children better than anyone else.

## Step 2: Safety When Preparing To Leave

- I will not give out escape plans on a cordless phone because my conversation can be intercepted.
- I will leave money and an extra set of keys with \_\_\_\_\_ so I can leave quickly.
- If I own a car I will try to make sure that I keep a set of car keys with \_\_\_\_\_ and adequate gas in the car. **If I have On-Star activated on my vehicle, I may need to use another method of transportation.**
- I can also begin to \_\_\_\_\_ as a way of increasing my safety and independence.
- I will memorize the 24-hour crisis line of the agency closest to me. That number is \_\_\_\_\_. I will keep it in my wallet along with change for a pay phone (if possible).
- I will check with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to see if I could stay with them in an emergency. (It is best if the abuser does not know them or where they live).
- **I will use a “safer computer” one the abuser does not have access to research information about leaving on the Internet.**
- **I will not use my home computer to email my escape plans to family and friends because my computer activities might be monitored.**
- **I may need to leave my cell phone behind so that I cannot be tracked.**
- I will review and update my safety plan regularly.

## Step 3: Safety In My Own Home

- I will find a safe place to keep this plan.
- **I will change the passwords on all my banking, voicemail, computer and email accounts and I will not use passwords that may be familiar to my abuser. (Letters, numbers & symbols are best)**
- If my abuser has recently left, I will change the locks (**add a deadbolt**) on my doors and secure locks on my windows as soon as possible.
- I will tell school and/or childcare who has permission to pick up my children.
- I will tell my neighbors if my abusive partner no longer lives with me and ask them to call 911 if he/she is seen near my home.

If there are weapons (guns, knives, etc.) in my house, I will try to remember:

- To make sure that the gun remains unloaded at all times (I will only unload the gun myself if I know how to do so safely!!!).
- To encourage my partner to get rid of the gun if it is safe for me to do so.
- To stay out of rooms where weapons are kept, especially during an explosive situation.
- To move the knives out of their usual location so that my partner will have trouble finding a knife quickly.
- That almost anything can be used as a weapon.
- That cleaning a gun or knife in front of me is a threat and may imply that my partner is capable of taking my life or hurting my children.

If I have a technology smart abuser I will:

- **Trust my instincts. If I feel I am being monitored too closely I may check for spy ware on my computer or GPS in my car.**
- **Check all gifts for hidden cameras.**
- **Set up a separate email accounts for visitation.**
- **If I am being stalked or harassed by electronic means it's a crime in WA State. Work with local advocates and police to preserve evidence of Cyber stalking.**
- **Check my cell phone settings and understand how my phone is programmed. Cancel AT&T find friends or switch to another service with a new number.**

#### Step 4: Safety With A Protection Order (or other court order)

- I will keep an emergency copy \_\_\_\_\_.
- My children's teachers, daycare and babysitters will have a copy of this order.
- If my partner violates the order I will call the police.
- If the police are not responsive I will \_\_\_\_\_.
- I will tell \_\_\_\_\_ that I have a valid Protection Order.
- **If my abuser is in the military, I will ask his commander to also issue a Military Protection Order (MPO) as well. All civilian protection orders are enforceable on military installations.** (DOD Directive – November, 2003)
- Remember that in the State of Washington, if your partner assaults you when you have a valid Protection Order, your partner can be charged with a felony.

#### Step 5: Safety On The Job And In Public

- I will inform \_\_\_\_\_ at work of my situation, if I feel safe with this person. I will ask \_\_\_\_\_ to help screen my calls at work.
- **Will check to see if my desk or workstation can be moved to a different or safer location.**
- When leaving work, I will \_\_\_\_\_ to help keep myself safe.
- If problems occur while I am driving home, I will \_\_\_\_\_.
- If I ride the bus and see my abuser, I will \_\_\_\_\_.

## STEP 6: Safety and My Emotional Health

- When I have to talk to my (ex) partner, I will \_\_\_\_\_ to keep myself safe and take care of myself.
- I will read \_\_\_\_\_.
- I will call \_\_\_\_\_ for support.
- I will call my local crisis line or other support system if I need immediate help. That number is: \_\_\_\_\_.
- I know that community support groups are available to help me take care of myself.

## STEP 7: Safety and Sobriety

- I will remember it is easier to keep safe when I am sober.
- I know that alcohol and drug use can impair my judgment and make it harder for me to choose safe options and access services.
- I will call the Alcohol Drug Help Line for support when I feel like drinking or drugging. That number is **1-800-562-1240**. (WA Only)