

Some things I have already done to increase my safety include:

Sometimes an “incident” is simply the acknowledgement that a specific behavior is not appropriate in the relationship, or that you would choose a different response if a similar situation occurred again. With this in mind here are a few considerations...

You are the expert of your own story and you have a sense of how to keep yourself and your loved ones safe. As it can be difficult to think clearly in times of crisis, it is best to make a plan ahead of time. Together we can work through additional ways to keep you safe.

Physical safety is important:

People’s past behaviours are often a good indicator of future behaviours.

Even though you might hope that this person will not respond again in an abusive way, you can make a plan, *just in case* they do.

- As part of this plan, I can become consciously aware of my partner’s behavioural patterns (e.g. drinking, using drugs, picking a fight, criticizing me, etc.) that may contribute to an escalation of unwanted or unsafe behaviours. I know that it is becoming unsafe when my partner is doing or saying the following:

- I know that I am becoming unsafe (physically or emotionally) when I feel:

- In the past, when I saw those behaviours occurring I would protect myself and resist by:

Additional responses that I believe may be helpful in the future are:

1. Set Up an Escape Plan

Visualize each room in your home to plan the best way to leave in the event conflict escalates. Try to stay out of places such as bathrooms and the kitchen if there is no outside exit. Try to avoid places where there are weapons such as knives or guns. When possible, practice these escape routes until you feel confident that you can do them in an emergency and in the dark.

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 can keep my purse or wallet, identification, passports, car keys, emergency cash and put them:

The safest place to go in my home is _____. If I had to leave my home during these times I can go to _____ or _____.

Recognizing need for Emotional Safety:

I recognize that abuse does not just include physical abuse. It also includes a range of behaviours that can include but is not limited to:

- Abusive expectations, unreasonable demands, demand for constant attention, constant criticism
- Aggressive name calling, accusing, blaming, humiliations, intimidation
- Constant chaos, deliberately starting arguments

- Emotional blackmail, playing on your fears or guilt
- Ignoring and invalidation – minimizing, being unpredictable
- Denial and blame

Living with abuse, mistreatment, or even lots of stress will have an impact on emotional well-being. Even if you do not feel unsafe physically, taking care of yourself emotionally and having the right supports can also set you up for success in the relationship.

These are some things that I do now for self-care:
These are some things that I would like to start doing for self-care:

Decreasing isolation and having a healthy support system is important.

Who already knows about the abuse?	When I need support or someone to talk to I can call:
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If my regular supports are not available, I also know that I can contact the MHWSS Help-line to talk with someone. The 24-hour help-line is **403-529-1091** or **1-800-661-7949**. I know that I can call this number even if I am not seeking residential programming.

Other numbers I can call in an emergency or after hours are:
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I know that I am not able to control another person's behaviours and I know I cannot make anyone else change. With this in mind these are some of the areas that I would like to work on/find more support for:

Note: For more ideas on Emotional Safety see Safety Plan for Emotional Health and Well-being.

Below are some strategies that others have sometimes found to be helpful in increasing safety while still living with someone who has used abusive behaviours. Check off ones that you want to try and discuss with a worker if you need help getting started.

- When/if an argument begins, I will move to a safe room – ideally a room with 2 exits. I will try to avoid arguments in a bathroom, garage or kitchen, near weapons or in rooms without access to an outside door.
- I will use my instincts and trust my judgement. I am more the expert on what to expect; I will use what I know to respond to keep myself and/or my children as safe as possible.
- I can ask _____ and _____ to be part of my safety plan. I can have a signal to let them know to call for help. This signal can be a specific code word, flashing lights, leaving porch light on, hanging something out the window to let them know to call for help. The signal that I choose is:

- I can teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the Police and to provide quick and accurate information including directions to our home and neighbourhood.
- I can ensure the GPS is turned off on all mobile devices and social media accounts. If I am unsure how to do this I can ask _____ for help.
- If searching online for information on leaving the relationship or for supports I will clear my search history or do so from a secure/public computer (i.e. at the library)
- I will make an effort to keep my cell phone on my person so that I can call for help quickly if needed. I can learn if my phone has a "Quick Dial" option for 911. I know that cell phones can make emergency calls, even if I can't afford a plan.
- If abuse is ongoing or continuing, I can keep any evidence of abuse, such as pictures of injuries, texts, emails etc. I may choose to do this by creating a new private email that no one knows about to email all the evidence to for safekeeping.
- I will rehearse my escape plan and practice it with my children (if applicable). I will teach my children not to intervene in the violence so they are not placed at greater risk.
- I will back the car into the driveway or park on the street so I can leave quickly if needed.

- I will keep a list of emergency numbers in an accessible place. List of emergency numbers could include: shelter, help lines, neighbours, friends and family members. The 24-hour Shelter Help-line number is: 403-529-1091.
- I can ask _____ if I can stay with them if necessary- if my pet is unable to stay with me I can ask _____ to have my pet stay with them.

NOTE: If you are worried about a pet, ask for information on our Safety Plan for Pets with additional tips.

One area that I still feel I need support/help in is: _____

NOTE: If you would like additional information on safety plans for other situations such as: If you are thinking about leaving, if you have children, safety in the workplace, if you have a pet, for stalking or harassment concerns or other personalized situations please contact the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter at 403-529-1091.