

Safety Planning – Living with a Person Who Uses Abusive Behaviour

1. Watch for Warning Signs

I will pay attention to change in mood and behaviour and take action.

I can become consciously aware of my partner's triggers. (Drinking, using drugs, picking a fight, criticizing me, etc.) I know that it is becoming unsafe when my partner is doing or saying:

I will know that I am becoming unsafe when I feel:

In the past, when I saw those things happening I would:

Now, I could:

2. How to Set Up an Escape Plan

I will look in each room in my home to figure out the best way to escape. I will try to stay out of places such as bathrooms and the kitchen if there is no outside exit. I will also try to avoid places where there are weapons such as knives or guns. I will practice these escape routes until I feel confident I can do them in an emergency.

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 give my partner what he/she wants to calm him/her down. I have to protect myself until I/we are out of danger.

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

- 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 will use _____ as my code word with my children or my friends so they can go for help.

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I can tell (list two trusted friends/neighbours and their phone numbers) about the violence and request they call the Police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my house or if they cannot locate me:

- If I call someone (friend, family, shelter, etc.) and I do not want my partner to know, I will dial another number such as _____ (example; pizza restaurant, weather report) immediately so that my call cannot be traced by redialling.

If I decide to leave my home, I will go to: (Decide this even if you don't think there will be another violent incident)

- I will rehearse my escape plan and practice it with my children. I will teach my children not to intervene in the violence.
- I will back the car into the driveway when I arrive home so I can escape quickly if I need to.
- I will keep a list of emergency numbers in an accessible place. List emergency numbers could include: Shelter, Crisis Line, neighbours, friends and family members.
Shelter Number: _____
- I will review and revise my safety plan every _____ in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence.
- I will use my judgement and intuition. If the situation is very serious, I should consider doing what I know will calm my partner down. I must remember that I have to protect myself and the children until we are out of danger.
- Make arrangements with friends or family so that you can stay with them if necessary – make arrangements to have your pet stay somewhere, if pet is unable to stay with you. The local SPCA may be able to assist.
- Try to predict the next likely violent episode and make plans for the children to be sent to friends family etc. (Try to anticipate your abuser's "cycle")
- Make as much noise as possible (set off the fire alarm, break things, turn up the stereo or TV) so that neighbours can call the police for you.

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Important: It is a good idea to talk to MHWSS staff or police officers about additional safety planning to meet the needs of your particular situation.

