

Developing a 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.

Are you currently living in an abusive relationship?

Are you thinking about leaving because of an abusive relationship?

Have you recently left because of an abusive relationship?

There are steps you can take to increase your safety.

This document outlines the things you can do to help insure the safety of you and your child/children. We recommend that you print a copy, fill it out, and hide it in a safe place that your abuser will not be able to find.

And Always Remember

You do not deserve to be abused.

Safety Plan if currently with abusive partner

(page 1 of 2)

Your safety and the safety of your child(ren) is the most important thing.

Women cannot always avoid violent incidents. In order to increase safety, battered women may use a variety of strategies.

The following steps represent my plan for increasing my safety and preparing in advance for the possibility of further violence. Although I do not have control over my partner's violence, I do have a choice about how I respond to him/her and how to best get my children and myself to safety.

I can use some or all of the following strategies:

I can become consciously aware of my partner's triggers. I know that it is becoming unsafe when my partner is/does/says the following: _____

(i.e. drinking, using drugs, picking a fight, criticizing me, angry etc).

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

(i.e. isolated, knots in my stomach, increased anxiety, like I am "walking on egg shells" etc).

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 keep my purse and spare car keys ready and put them _____ (place) in order to leave quickly.

I trust _____ and can tell that person about the violence and request that they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my home.

I can teach my children how to use the phone to contact the police or fire departments.

I will use _____ (word) as a code for my children or my friends so they can call for help.

If I decide to leave my home, then I will go _____ (decide this even if you don't think there will be a next time). If I cannot go to the location above, then I can go to _____ or _____.

When I expect we are going to have an argument, I will try to move to a space that is low risk, such as _____.

(Try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, kitchen, near weapons or in rooms without access to an outside door.)

I can also go to a room with a phone where I can lock the door from the inside.

If I call someone (friend, family, shelter etc) and I do not want my partner to know, I will dial another number such as _____ immediately afterwards so that my call cannot be traced by redialing.

Safety Plan if currently with abusive partner

(page 2 of 2)

I will keep my car parked in a way that will be easiest to leave quickly.
(not in a garage, facing out towards the road etc.)

I will use my judgment and intuition. If a situation is very serious, 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 will review and revise my safety plan every _____ (time frame) to make sure I am on track.

If I have children I will also consider the following options:

I will ensure my children have phone numbers in case of an emergency and know how to contact them.

I can rehearse what my children will say if they need to call for help.

For instance, we can practice 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 pick _____ (place) as a safe place to meet my children outside our home after the situation is safe for me and for them. This will help us to easily find each other should we become separated.

I will teach my children the safest route to the planned place.

I can teach my safety plan and strategies to some/all of my children. I will tell them that it is a disaster plan so as to not alert my partner that we might leave.

I will be aware of my children's ability to keep information confidential and will be careful to not share or have them over hear information that I do not want other people to know.

This would include information such as _____
and _____.

I will keep this document in a safe place and out of reach of my potential abuser.

Review date: _____

Safety Plan If Thinking About Leaving

(page 1 of 2)

Battered women frequently leave the residence they share with the battering partner. Leaving must be done in a careful plan in order to increase safety. Batterers often strike back when they believe that a battered woman is leaving the relationship.

I can use some/all of the following safety strategies:

I will leave money and an extra set of keys with _____ (person) so I can leave quickly if needed.

I will keep copies of important documents/keys at _____ (place).

I will open a savings account by _____ (date) to increase my independence. I will keep my records with _____ (person) or hidden in _____ (place).

I can keep change for phone calls on me at all times. I understand that if I use my telephone credit card, the following month the phone bill will tell my partner those numbers that I called after I left. To keep my telephone communications confidential, I must either use coins, call collect or I might ask a friend to permit me to use their telephone credit card for a limited time when I first leave.

I will check with _____ (person) to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me money.

I can leave extra clothes with _____ (person).

I will review and revise my safety plan every _____ (time frame) to make sure I am on track.

I will rehearse my escape plan and practice it with my children.

I will choose the code word _____ and tell _____ (my children, neighbour/friend, family members) so they will know to call the police if I use that word.

I will be aware of my children's ability to keep information confidential and will be careful to not share or have them overhear information that I do not want other people to know.

This would include information such as _____.

When you leave, it is important to take certain items with you.

When I leave, I should have:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Identification for myself
(SIN, Driver's license, Birth Certificate) | <input type="checkbox"/> Lease/rental agreement papers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children's Birth Certificates/Immunization Records | <input type="checkbox"/> Address Book |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare Insurance | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical records |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration papers | <input type="checkbox"/> Credit cards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cheque book | <input type="checkbox"/> Bank books |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money | <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance papers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keys to house/car/office | <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce/separation papers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle registration/insurance | <input type="checkbox"/> Custody agreement papers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Passport | <input type="checkbox"/> Medication/Prescriptions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mortgage papers | <input type="checkbox"/> Child's favourite toy/blanket etc. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Items of sentimental value |

Safety Plan If Thinking About Leaving
(page 2 of 2)

TELEPHONE NUMBERS I NEED TO KNOW:

POLICE 911

PHOENIX SAFE HOUSE (Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society) 529-1091

Work _____

School _____

Children's School _____

Doctor _____

Lawyer _____

Others:

I will keep this document in a safe place and out of reach of my potential abuser.

Review date: _____

Safety Plan If You Have Recently Separated

(page 1 of 2)

Sometimes abusive partners will continue abusive and controlling behaviours even after you separate. There are many things a woman can do to increase her safety in her own residence. It may be impossible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step by step.

I can use some or all of the following safety strategies:

I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible.

I can replace wooden doors with steel or metal doors.

I can install security systems including additional locks, window bar poles to wedge against doors, an electronic security system, etc.

I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second story windows.

I can install smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor of my home.

I can install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person comes close to my house.

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

I can have an unlisted phone number and I will only give my new number to those people I trust.

These people include: _____.

I will not leave my name on my answering machine and can use the electronic voice message to increase my anonymity.

I will teach my children how to use the phone to make collect calls to me and to _____
(person) in the event my partner takes the children.

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 safety features installed on my phone such as call Block, caller ID, voice mail, etc.

I will tell people who take care of my children which people have permission to pick up my children and that my partner is not permitted to do so. The people I will inform about this include:

_____ (School/Teacher)

_____ (Daycare staff)

_____ (Babysitter)

_____ (Friend/neighbour)

_____ (Friend/neighbour)

Safety Plan If You Have Recently Separated

(page 1 of 2)

Safety on the job and in Public

Each battered woman must decide if she will tell others that her partner has battered her and that she may be at continued risk. Friends, family and co-workers can help protect you. Each battered woman should carefully consider which people to invite to help secure her safety.

I might do some or all of the following:

I can inform my boss and _____ (person) at work of my situation.

I can ask _____ (person) to help screen my phone calls at work.

When leaving work, I can _____.

When driving home, if problems arise, I can _____.

If I use public transit, I can _____.

I will go to a different grocery store and shopping mall to conduct my business and shop at hours that are different than those when residing with my battering partner.

I can use a different bank and take care of my banking at hours different from those I used when residing with my battering partner.

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.

I can also _____

I will review and revise my safety plan every _____ (time frame) to make sure I am on track.

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 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, counselor) about the order, including all conditions.

I will provide a copy of the order to relevant people including my children's school, daycare, and police. I will give these people a photograph of my abuser so that they can recognize him/her.

I will keep this document in a safe place and out of reach of my potential abuser.

Review Date: _____

Safety Plan for you Emotional Health and Wellbeing

No matter what types of abuse you have experienced, it will have an impact on your emotional wellbeing. The experience of being battered and verbally degraded by your partner is exhausting and emotionally draining.

To conserve my emotional energy and resources and to avoid hard emotional times, I can do some or all of the following:

The process of building a new life for myself takes a great deal of courage and requires a lot of energy. I will be gentle with myself and give myself permission to take the time I need to begin healing.

If I feel down and ready to return to a potentially abusive situation, I can: _____
_____.

When I have to communicate with my partner in person or by telephone, I can prepare myself ahead of time. I can use positive self talk by saying: _____ or having _____ (person) come with me for support.

I can try to use "I can" statements with myself and to be assertive with others.

I can tell myself _____ whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me.

I can read _____ to help me feel stronger.

I can talk to _____ and _____ as resources to be of support to me.

I can attend workshops and support groups at a family violence centre to gain support and strengthen my relationships with other people.

I can join _____ (group, club, sports team) to become involved in a healthy activity and to reduce my isolation.

I can keep a personal journal to write/draw about my feelings, especially when I am feeling low or vulnerable. I will keep it in a safe place or burn it.

I know that I will feel many emotions during this time. It is okay to feel angry but I will find positive and constructive ways to express my anger.

I will remember that I am the most important person to take care of right now.

I will find time to do things I enjoy and to help take care of myself. I enjoy or used to enjoy _____ (activity) and _____ (activity) and will do these things _____ (how often).

In the past I have used _____ (drugs, alcohol, food, impulse shopping, etc) as a way to deal with stressful situations. I recognize there are healthier ways to deal with stress and will make a commitment to find alternatives to help me.

I will review and revise my safety plan every _____ (time frame) to make sure I am on track. I will keep this document in a safe place and out of reach of my potential abuser.

Review Date: _____