

Personalized Safety Plan

If you are in an abusive relationship, think about...

1. Having important phone numbers nearby for you and your children. Numbers to have are the police, hotlines, friends and the local shelter.
2. Friends or neighbors you could tell about the abuse. Ask them to call the police if they hear angry or violent noises. If you have children, teach them how to dial 911. Make up a code word that you can use when you need help.
3. How to get out of your home safely. Practice ways to get out.
4. Safer places in your home where there are exits and no weapons. If you feel abuse is going to happen try to get your abuser to one of these safer places.
5. Any weapons in the house. Think about ways that you could get them out of the house.
6. Even if you do not plan to leave, think of where you could go. Think of how you might leave. Try doing things that get you out of the house - taking out the trash, walking the pet or going to the store. Put together a bag of things you use every day (see the checklist below). Hide it where it is easy for you to get.
7. Going over your safety plan often.

If you consider leaving your abuser, think about...

1. Four places you could go if you leave your home.
2. People who might help you if you left. Think about people who will keep a bag for you. Think about people who might lend you money. Make plans for your pets.
3. Keeping change for phone calls or getting a cell phone.
4. Opening a bank account or getting a credit card in your name.
5. How you might leave. Try doing things that get you out of the house - taking out the trash, walking the family pet, or going to the store. Practice how you would leave.
6. How you could take your children with you safely. There are times when taking your children with you may put all of your lives in danger. You need to protect yourself to be able to protect your children.
7. Putting together a bag of things you use every day. Hide it where it is easy for you to get.

ITEMS TO TAKE, IF POSSIBLE

- Children (if it is safe)
- Money
- Keys to car, house, work
- Extra clothes
- Medicine
- Important papers for you and your children
- Birth certificates
- Social security cards
- School and medical records
- Bankbooks, credit cards

- Driver's license
- Car registration
- Welfare identification
- Passports, green cards, work permits
- Lease/rental agreement
- Mortgage payment book, unpaid bills
- Insurance papers
- PPO, divorce papers, custody orders
- Address book
- Pictures, jewelry, things that mean a lot to you
- Items for your children (toys, blankets, etc.)

If you have left your abuser, think about...

1. Your safety - you still need to.
2. Getting a PPO from the court. Keep a copy with you all the time. Give a copy to the police, people who take care of your children, their schools and your boss.
3. Changing the locks. Consider putting in stronger doors, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, a security system and outside lights.
4. Telling friends and neighbors that your abuser no longer lives with you. Ask them to call the police if they see your abuser near your home or children.
5. Telling people who take care of your children the names of people who are allowed to pick them up. If you have a PPO protecting your children, give their teachers and babysitters a copy of it.
6. Telling someone at work about what has happened. Ask that person to screen your calls. If you have a PPO that includes where you work, consider giving your boss a copy of it and a picture of the abuser. Think about and practice a safety plan for your workplace. This should include going to and from work.
7. Not using the same stores or businesses that you did when you were with your abuser.
8. Someone that you can call if you feel down. Call that person if you are thinking about going to a support group or workshop.
9. Safe way to speak with your abuser if you must.
10. Going over your safety plan often.

WARNING: Abusers try to control their victim's lives. When abusers feel a loss of control - like when victims try to leave them - the abuse often gets worse. Take special care when you leave. Keep being careful even after you have left.

This section on personalized safety planning adapted from the Metro Nashville Police Department's personalized safety plan.