

Right to Be Safe

Personal Safety Plan

No one has the right to hurt you or your child. It is important to reach out. The decision to leave can be hard. It may take time for you to feel ready.

Remember, when you leave can be the most dangerous time. Review your safety plan often.

Abuse is never okay. A person does not “ask for it.” Alcohol, drugs, financial pressure, depression or jealousy are no excuse for abuse.

Getting ready to leave

- Practice getting out of your home safely.
- Picture in your mind your escape route.
- Plan for a safe place to go if you have to leave suddenly.
- Practice a code word or signal with your neighbor, children and family for when you need them to call the police.
- Open a savings account or credit card in your own name or have money stored in a secret place. Keep change for phone calls with you at all times.

If you leave, bring these items

- Identification (ID)
- Work permits
- Divorce papers
- Welfare ID
- Birth certificates
- Restraining order
- Social Security card
- Money, credit cards, ATM card, bank books
- Keys (house, car, office)
- Lease/rent agreement, house deed, any unpaid bills
- Passports/Green card
- Insurance papers
- Driver’s license, car title
- Medicines or second prescription if you leave without medicines
- Address and telephone book
- Toys, blankets, diapers, underwear
- Items of sentimental value

Safety of children

As violence increases toward you around the time of leaving, it will also increase toward the children. The risk for kidnapping, suicide and homicide increases.

Teach your children

- **Do not** open the door.
- How to call 911 and give address or location.
- To leave home and get help if the abuser shows up.
- **Some signals of increasing danger**
 - Obsession over you; the abuser says they can’t live without you.
 - Depression and talk of suicide.
 - Threats to kill you, your children or your relatives.
 - Attempts to kidnap you or your children.
 - Fantasies of homicide or suicide.
 - Violence gets worse or happens more often.
 - Possession of weapons or threats to use them.

How to increase your safety in the relationship

- Write down important telephone numbers for your children and yourself.
- Find a person or place where you can leave extra money, car keys, clothes and copies of documents.
- List four places you can go if you leave home because of violence.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

After you leave

Think about getting caller ID, an unlisted phone number or a cell phone. Know and be cautious of the ways cell phones, cordless phones and Internet use can be tracked. Many domestic abuse programs can help with 911 cell phones. Do these things:

- Make your home safe and secure. This may mean installing a security system, smoke detectors and outside lighting system.
- Change locks and reinforce doors.
- Tell your neighbors that your partner no longer lives with you. Ask them to call the police if he is seen near your residence.
- Tell teachers, childcare providers and family members who does and does not have permission to pick up your children.
- Tell your boss about your situation. Ask that your calls be screened and that no information be given out about you.
- Rent a Post Office Box for your mail.
- Avoid places and social situations where your abuser could find you.
- Call the local courthouse if you need a restraining order. Keep a copy of the restraining order with you at all times. The local police department will also have a copy.

Safety and emotional health

- If you are thinking of going back, discuss your plan with someone you trust.
- If you have to communicate with your abuser, be sure to do so in the way that you feel safest.
- Plan to attend a support group or call the domestic abuse program hotline.

Important telephone numbers

- Police _____
- Restraining Orders _____
- Family _____
- Friend _____
- Hotline _____
- Shelter _____
- Support Group _____
- National Domestic Violence hotline:
(800) 799-SAFE
TTY (800) 787-3224