

# **PERSONALIZED SAFETY PLAN**

Women cannot always avoid violent incidents. In order to increase safety, women may use a variety of strategies. The following steps represent a plan for increasing safety and preparing in advance for the possibility of further abuse. Although women do not have control over their abuser, they do have a choice about how to respond to the abuse and how to get themselves/children to safety.

\*All Emergency phone numbers including women's shelters can be called 24 hours a day and are listed on the first 2 pages of the telephone book.

\*Please check mark each relevant section and complete your personalized plan with as much detail as possible. This form can be reviewed and revised as needed. If your risk situation changes, or escalates, then this document should be revised as soon as possible.

## **SAFETY WHEN LIVING WITH THE ABUSER:**

If you have to leave your home to be safe, you can go to the local Women's Shelter or another safe place. **Local Women's Shelters will often provide free emergency transportation to a shelter.**

I can...

- Go to a safe place such as \_\_\_\_\_.
- Practice and rehearse how to get out safely. What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells or fire escapes would I use?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Keep an extra purse/wallet with money, and an extra set of car keys ready and put them in a safe place (outside of the house if necessary) in order to leave quickly.
- Ensure there is enough gas in the car and/or have taxi numbers or local women's shelter number available.
- Tell a neighbour or someone who I trust about the abuse and request they call the police if they are aware that I am in danger. *Describe:*  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- Be aware of the location of any weapons and any weapon-like objects that could be used during a violent episode and remove them, if possible. *Describe:*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Use a special code word or phrase for family or friends so they can call for help. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

## **SAFETY DURING AN ARGUMENT OR ASSAULT:**

Be aware of your surroundings. Try to avoid arguments in enclosed spaces such as the bathroom, kitchen, garage, near weapons or in rooms without access to an outside door. Use your judgment and intuition. If the situation is very serious, you can give your abuser what they want to calm them down to protect yourself until you are out of danger.

I can...

- Call 911 after an assault and tell them I have been assaulted.
- Leave the phone off the hook (if calling from a landline), so operator can hear what is going on and trace the call.
- Make as much noise as possible (raise my voice etc.) so that neighbours can call police for me.

**SAFETY IF YOU HAVE CHILDREN:**

You can have age appropriate discussions and teach your children strategies about how to keep themselves safe during violent episodes.

I can...

- Practice and rehearse what escapes my children would use to get out safely. What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells or fire escapes. *Describe:*  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Try to make plans for the children to be sent to friends, family, etc. during violent episodes or pre-plan a safe place in the house for the children. *Describe:*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Teach my children how to use the telephone to call 911 from a safe place. Have important phone numbers accessible if possible. Describe where the phone list and the closest safe phone is:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Use a special code word or phrase for my children to seek help. *Describe:*  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- Teach my children their own Safety Plan i.e.) not to answer the doors and how to make a collect call to me or to a trusted family member/friend if they are feeling unsafe. (visitations, home alone etc.)
- Make sure that the school and day care have a copy of all court orders (if any), including restraining orders, custody and access orders, as well as a picture of my abuser. Specify who has permission to pick up my children and ask them to call police if he is observed near me or my children: *Describe:*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**SAFETY WHEN PLANNING TO LEAVE:** *(see escape plan checklist)*

Abused women frequently leave the residence they share with the abuser. Leaving must be done with a careful plan in order to increase safety. Try to maintain normal routines while planning to leave so you don't arouse suspicion. Abusers often become more abusive when they believe that a woman is leaving the relationship. Plan to take the children with you when you leave rather than planning to take them later if possible because the abuser may make it difficult for you to have access to your children after you leave.

I can...

- Leave copies of important documents, an extra set of car and/or house keys, money and extra clothes \_\_\_\_\_.
- Open my own bank account to put money aside for when I leave.
- Be aware that my abuser can trace calls by the last number dialed or by the telephone bill. Find out how to erase the last numbers called on your home phone(s) and/or cell phone(s). If I need to make long distance calls, I will make them collect or call from another phone.
- Hide my internet activities. My abuser may have access to my computer and may be able to read my incoming and outgoing mail. I will consider using a public location such as a library, school, friend's or internet café as a safer option.
- Ask someone I trust if I could stay with them or if they could lend me some money.  
*Describe:* \_\_\_\_\_
- Review my safety plan every \_\_\_\_\_.
- Request a police escort from my home if necessary.
- Call police to tell them I am safe once I have relocated, in case my abuser calls in a missing person's report. My location does not have to be disclosed.

**PROTECTING PETS:**

When there is abuse in the home, it is important to have an emergency plan for sheltering pets. If you have a pet there may be volunteers in the community or friends that will foster them. Local women's shelters do not shelter pets, but they can assist you with information about resources. If possible, gather any pet vaccination/medical records and keep them in a safe place.

**SAFETY WHEN LIVING APART FROM ABUSER:**

There are many things women can do to increase their safety. It may not be possible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step by step. Update trusted family/friends about your safety plan and ensure that they do not disclose your address or contact information etc. to your abuser or his associates. Try to change your routines such as where you shop, bank etc, and the times of your usual errands in order to avoid contact with your abuser.

I can...

- Have my telephone/cell number unlisted and blocked on phones with call display.
- Get a restraining/no trespass order and keep it near me at all times.
- Secure doors/windows at all times and change locks if my abuser has keys
- Also do some of the following to enhance my safety: *Describe:*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\*If I rent, I can speak to my property manager/owner about my situation because they may do some security enhancements for me.

**SAFETY WITH A COURT ORDER (Restraining, Recognizance, Peace Bond, No Trespass):**

One can never be sure if an abuser will obey or violate protection orders. You may need to ask the police and the court to enforce the protection order.

I can...

- Keep a copy of any orders and a record of any breaches (date, time and incident) so that I can immediately report to police.
- Report any violations to my attorney, call my advocate and/or advise the court of the violation.
- Give a copy of the protection order to the police in the community where I live and in the communities where I usually visit family or friends.
- Be aware that I can also be charged if I breach the protection order i.e.) contacting my abuser.

**SAFETY ON THE JOB AND IN PUBLIC:**

Each woman must decide if and when she will tell others that she has been abused and that she may be at risk. Friends, family and co-workers can help to protect her.

I can...

- Inform my employer of my situation.
- Ask my co-workers etc. to escort me to my car when leaving work.
- Ask to have telephone calls screened at work.
- Try to avoid being alone in public places.
- Change my daily routines and places frequented. (grocery stores, banks routes for travel).
- Be aware of my location at all times in the event I have to call 911. When driving, if I'm being followed I will drive to the nearest police station or to the nearest public location. *Describe:* \_\_\_\_\_.
- I can also \_\_\_\_\_.

**SAFETY AND DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE:**

Some women may use drugs or alcohol to cope with their situation. Therefore, women should consider the potential consequences of their substance use i.e.) CAS reports, custody disputes, ability to respond quickly to protect herself and/or her children.

**SAFETY AND WELL-BEING:**

Experiencing abuse is exhausting and emotionally draining. The process of rebuilding a new life requires strength and courage.

I can..

- Increase my self-esteem by \_\_\_\_\_.
- Seek out supports, services and healthy relationships \_\_\_\_\_.
- Get individual counseling, attend workshops and support groups \_\_\_\_\_.
- I can also \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.