

VICTIM SAFETY PLAN

Precautions

Make sure you understand your partner's use of violence. Recognize situations when he/she is becoming increasingly agitated, and be aware of how the violence escalates over time. It is crucial to quickly determine when your partner is becoming dangerous, and when you are at risk for being harmed.

Pre-arrange a safe place to stay—with a trusted friend or family member. While your partner is out, remove any weapons that may be in the house. If you don't feel comfortable removing weapons, call the police and ask them to assist you. Then make your escape to the safe place and stay there. If you have children, bring them with you.

Train the eldest and most responsible child to be aware of your partner's cycle of violence, and how to call the police in an emergency. Also see to it that the same safe place, or an alternative, is available for them. Make sure they understand the importance of secrecy. Very young children can talk without meaning to.

Inform anyone about your situation whom your partner might contact. Ask the people who are providing the safe place to not disclose your location. Alert your employer about the situation and ask that they not speak to your partner without your permission.

Inform children not to disclose safe place to anyone.

What to do During a Violent Incident

Escape from the abuse at the earliest opportunity.

Take a survival kit with you.

A survival kit includes items you will need after leaving. These should be kept in an easily accessible location, such as the trunk of your car, or somewhere close at hand. You may have more than one kit in several locations. Your kit should include:

Money

If you don't have time to bring a checkbook and credit card with you, it is important to put aside cash, enough for you to pay for lodging and food for a few days. You will need cash even if you have a credit card, because your partner could cancel your credit card. Cash may be necessary if you do not have a cell phone and need to use a pay phone.

Clothing:

The kit should include a small, portable bag with enough clothes for you and your children, including warm clothes in case of cold weather.

Keys:

You should have an extra set of keys to your vehicles, your house, or anything else you will need access to (e.g., place of business.)

Important phone numbers:

Police (911)
Local shelter
County victim/witness programs
County social services
County probation
Legal assistance
Your therapist, and the phone number of your partner's therapist
Any friends or family members who can help you

Crisis and information lines:

National Domestic Violence Hotline 800-799-7233

General information line for victims of domestic violence (primarily women), including referrals to nearby shelters.

Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men 888-743-5754

Provide resources for male victims, and female perpetrators, throughout the United States.

Vital Documents: Your kit should contain necessary documents. If you are unable to secure the originals in advance, then have copies available, or a plan on how to retrieve the originals when you need them. Important documents to have include:

Driver's license (for both yourself and your partner, or copies)
Bank account numbers and paperwork
Social security numbers for you, your partner, and your children
Birth certificates for you, your partner and your children
Recent pay stubs for you and your partner
Mortgage papers and other documents for jointly-owned properties
Marriage license
Various insurance policies

If time allows, after securing your physical safety, secure valuables, such as jewelry, and anything else that may be of importance to you.