

## PERSONALIZED SAFETY PLAN

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

**Step 1: Safety during a violent incident:** Violent incidents cannot be avoided; therefore, to increase safety, a variety of strategies can be set in place.

I can use some or all of the following strategies:

A. If I decide to leave, I will \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

(Practice how you will get out safely. What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells, or fire escapes would you use?)

B. I can keep my purse and car keys ready and put them (place) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ in order to leave quickly.

C. I can tell \_\_\_\_\_ about the violence and request they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my house.

D. I can teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the police and the fire department.

E. I will use \_\_\_\_\_ as my code word with my children, friends, or relatives so they can call for help.

F. If I have to leave my home, 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 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.

G. I can also teach some of these strategies to my children.

H. When I expect we are going to have an argument, I will try to move to a space that is lowest risk, such as \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, kitchen, near weapons, or in rooms without access to an outside door).

- I. I will use my judgment and intuition. If the situation is very serious, I can give my partner what he/she wants to calm him/her down. I have to protect myself/children until I/we are out of danger.

**Step 2: Safety when preparing to leave:** Battered women frequently leave the residence they share with the battering partner. Leaving must be done with a careful plan in order to increase safety. Batterers often strike back when they believe their partner is leaving a relationship.

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

- A. I will leave money and an extra set of keys with \_\_\_\_\_ so I can leave quickly.
- B. I will keep copies of important documents or keys at \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. I will open a savings account solely in my name by \_\_\_\_\_, to increase my independence.
- D. Other things I can do to increase my independence include:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- E. The COPELINE phone number is 1-888-285-5665. I can seek shelter by calling this hotline.
- F. I can keep change for phone calls with me at all times. I understand that if I use my telephone calling card, the following month the telephone bill will tell my partner the numbers I called after I left. To keep my telephone communications confidential, I must either use coins or use a friend/relatives telephone or calling card.
- G. I will check with \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ to see who would allow me to stay with them or lend me some money.
- H. I can leave extra clothes with \_\_\_\_\_.
- I. I will review my safety plan every \_\_\_\_\_ day in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence. \_\_\_\_\_ (domestic violence advocate or friend) has agreed to help me review this plan.
- J. I will rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.

**Step 3: Safety in my own residence:** There are many things that 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.

Safety measures I can use include:

- A. I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible.
- B. I can replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors
- C. I can install security systems including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, an electronic system, ect.
- D. I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows.
- E. I can install smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor in my house/apartment.

- F. I can install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to my house.
- G. I will teach my children how to use the telephone or make a collect call to me and to \_\_\_\_\_ (friend/minister/other) in the event that my partner abducts the children.
- H. 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 pick-up permission include:
  - a. School \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Daycare Staff \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Babysitter \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Sunday School Teacher \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. And others \_\_\_\_\_
- I. I can inform neighbor \_\_\_\_\_, pastor \_\_\_\_\_ and friend \_\_\_\_\_ that my partner no longer resides with me and they should call the police if he is observed near my residence.

**Step 4: Safety with a protection order:** Many batterers obey protection orders, but no one can ever be sure which violent partner will obey and which will violate protection orders. I recognize that I may need to ask the police and the courts to enforce my protection order.

The following are some steps that I can take to help the enforcement of my protection order:

- A. I will keep my protection order \_\_\_\_\_(location). (Always keep it on or near your person. If you change a purse, that's the first thing that should go in).
- B. I will give my protection order to the police departments in the community where I work, in those communities where I usually visit my family or friends, and in the community where I live.
- C. I can call the local domestic violence program if I am not sure about B above or if I have some problem with my protection order.
- D. I will inform my employer, my minister, my closet friend and \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ that I have a protection order in effect.
- E. If my partner destroys my protection order, I can get another copy from the courthouse by going to the Clerk or Courts located at \_\_\_\_\_.
- F. If my partner violates the protection order, I can call the police and report a violation, contact my attorney, and/or advise the court of the violation.
- G. If the people do not help, I can contact my advocate or attorney and will file a complaint with the chief of the police department.
- H. I can also file a criminal complaint with the prosecutor in the jurisdiction where the violation occurred. I can charge my battering partner with a violation of the protection order and all the crimes that he commits in violating the order. I can call the domestic violence advocate to help me with this.

**Step 5: Safety on the job and in public:** Each battered woman must decide if and when 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 to protect women. Each woman should consider carefully which people to invite to help secure her safety.

I might do any or all of the following:

- A. I can inform my boss, the security supervisor and \_\_\_\_\_ at work of my situation.
- B. I can ask \_\_\_\_\_ to help screen my telephone calls at work.
- C. When leaving work, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- D. When driving home, if problems occur, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- E. If I use public transit, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- F. I can use different grocery stores and shopping malls to conduct my business and shop at hours that are different than those when residing with my battering partner.
- G. I can also \_\_\_\_\_.

**Step 6: safety and drug or alcohol consumption:** Most people in this culture consume alcohol. Many consume mood-altering drugs. Much of this consumption is legal and some are not. The legal outcomes of using illegal drugs can be very hard on a battered woman, may hurt her relationship with her children and put her at a disadvantage in other legal actions with her battering partner. Therefore, women should carefully consider the potential cost of the use of illegal drugs. But beyond this, the use of any alcohol or other drugs can reduce a woman's awareness and ability to act quickly to protect herself from her battering partner. Furthermore, the use of alcohol or other drugs by the batterer may give him/her an excuse to use the violence. Therefore, in the context of drug or alcohol consumption a woman needs to make specific safety plans.

If drug or alcohol consumption has occurred in my relationship with the battering partner, I can enhance my safety by some or all of the following:

- A. If I am going to consume, I can do so in a safe place and with people who understand the risk of violence and are committed to my safety.
- B. I can also \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. If my partner is consuming, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- D. I might also \_\_\_\_\_.
- E. To safeguard my children, I might \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

**Step 7: Safety and my emotional health:** The experience of being battered and verbally degraded by a partner is usually exhausting and emotionally draining. The process of building a new life for myself takes much courage and incredible energy.

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

- A. If I feel down and ready to return to a potentially abusive situation, I can \_\_\_\_\_.

- B. When I have to communicate with my partner in person or by telephone, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. I can try to use “I can...” statements with myself and to be assertive with others.
- D. I can tell myself “\_\_\_\_\_”.
- E. I can read \_\_\_\_\_ to help me feel stronger.
- F. I can call \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ as other resources to be of support of me.
- G. Other things I can do to help me feel stronger are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- H. I can attend workshops and support groups at the domestic violence program or \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ to gain support and strengthen my relationship with other people.

**Step 8: Items to take when leaving:** When women leave partners, it is important to take certain items with them. Beyond this, woman sometimes give an extra copy of papers and an extra set of clothing to a friend just in case they have to leave quickly.

Items with asterisks on the following list are the most important to take. If there is time, the other items might be taken, or stored outside the home. These items might best be placed in one location, so that if we have to leave in a hurry, I can grab them quickly.

When I leave, I should take:

- \* \_\_\_ Identification
- \* \_\_\_ Children’s birth certificate
- \* \_\_\_ My birth certificate
- \* \_\_\_ Social Security cards
- \* \_\_\_ School and vaccination records
- \* \_\_\_ Money
- \* \_\_\_ Checkbook, ATM card
- \* \_\_\_ Credit cards
- \* \_\_\_ Keys – house/car/office
- \* \_\_\_ Driver’s license and registration
- \* \_\_\_ Medications
- \_\_\_ Welfare Identification
- \_\_\_ Work permits
- \_\_\_ Green card
- \_\_\_ passport(s)
- \_\_\_ Divorce papers
- \_\_\_ Medical records- for all family members
- \_\_\_ Lease/rental agreement, house deed, mortgage payment book
- \_\_\_ Bank books
- \_\_\_ Insurance papers
- \_\_\_ Small saleable objects
- \_\_\_ Address book
- \_\_\_ Pictures

- \_\_\_ Jewelry
- \_\_\_ Children's favorite toys and/or blankets
- \_\_\_ Items or special sentimental value

TELEPHONE NUMBERS I NEED TO KNOW:

- Police department - home \_\_\_\_\_
- Police department - school \_\_\_\_\_
- Police department - work \_\_\_\_\_
- WomenSafe/COPEline 1-888-285-5665 \_\_\_\_\_
- Legal Advocate \_\_\_\_\_
- County registry or protection orders \_\_\_\_\_
- Work number \_\_\_\_\_
- Supervisor's home number \_\_\_\_\_
- Minister \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## **SAFETY PLAN**

Have the following items hidden in one central location:

- About \$50.00 in cash
- A small bag with extra clothing for you and your children
- Extra house and car keys
- Important documents:
  - Bank accounts
  - Insurance policies
  - Marriage license
  - Social security numbers (his, yours & children)
  - His date of birth
  - Birth certificates (yours and children's)
  - List of important phone numbers (family & friends)
  - Sentimental valuables

Safety Plan:

- Know a safe place to go in case of an emergency.
- Have important documents stored in one place.
- Hide extra keys (car, house, ect.) outside the house.
- Open a checking account in your name only.
- Have an overnight bag packed.
- List phone numbers, joint account numbers, ect. in a small address book.
- If you are afraid...LEAVE to your safe place!!