

# Safety Plan

## Step 1: Prepare

**Collect evidence.** If your situation allows it, keep a journal of abusive incidents (date, time, details), including threats, as well as copies of threatening or abusive emails and text messages, police reports, doctor or hospital records for help if and when you file for an order of protection or press charges against an abuser. Keep this evidence outside of your home, like a workplace, a trustworthy friend's house or a safety deposit box.

*I can keep the evidence I've collected or will collect, which includes:*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

At \_\_\_\_\_ (safe place the abuser won't find).

**Have a getaway bag.** This bag should be kept somewhere the abuser can't find it like a friend's house or workplace. It should contain important documents such as: your driver's license, passport, birth certificate, Social Security cards, copies of financial records, your lease or deed, health insurance information, prescriptions, marriage license or divorce papers, and all similar paperwork for your children, if

applicable. Other items your bag should include, if possible, is cash in case the abuser cancels credit cards or blocks you from accessing bank accounts.

*I will make sure to pack the following in my getaway bag:*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

And will hide it at \_\_\_\_\_ (safe place the abuser won't find).

## **Step 2: Plan**

**Decide where to go.** When the time comes to leave you need to have a plan of where to go. Consider an emergency shelter, like SafePlace, a friend or family member's house (which the location is unknown to the abuser), or if affordable, a hotel or apartment that allows you to pay in cash so the abuser cannot track you there. Consider getting a prepaid or pay-as-you-go cell phone in case the abuser can trace your cell phone.

*I will be leaving \_\_\_\_\_ (approximate date/time) and going to \_\_\_\_\_ . I will only tell \_\_\_\_\_ (trusted friend/family member/advocate) of my whereabouts.*

**Plan for all possibilities.** You know your partner best and what abusive tactics he or she is most likely to use. The abuser may start to feel like something is different in your demeanor and become more controlling. The most dangerous time for a survivor is often when the abuser feels like he or she is losing control. Prepare for all possibilities by thinking out different scenarios that could happen to you and what you will do. For example, if an abuser always shuts the bedroom door before, he or she becomes violent, can you unlock a window ahead of time, given you're on the ground floor, and exit through it when this starts? If an abuser threatens to keep or harm your children or pets if you leave, can you make sure they're in a safe place before you leave, such as taking them to a trusted relative's house? Can you create a code word that, if you say it in front of your children, they'll know to run next door to the neighbor's house and call 911?

*I know my partner is likely to use the following tactics to control me and keep me from leaving:*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

*To counteract these things, I will prepare by doing the following:*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### **Step 3: After you leave**

**Stay vigilant.** After you leave an abuser, or after an abuser is forced to leave your situation, you'll want to have safety precautions to keep you and your family safe. This might include an order of protection, alerting your place of employment and your children's school what is going on and giving them a photo of the abuser so they can alert you if he or she comes around, using a different route to get to and from work or school, changing your schedule, taking a break from social media so the abuser is less likely to track you, and changing your phone number and making it unlisted.

*After I leave, I will do the following actions to help keep myself safe:*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_