

Name: _____

Date: _____

SOME NOTES BEFORE BEGINNING

There is no right or wrong way to construct a safety plan.

Support workers are available for assistance and to talk over your safety plan.

Keep this document in a safe place unknown to the potential abuser.

This document is intended to increase your safety. Although you do not have control over your partner's violence, you can brainstorm how to respond and best protect yourself and your children.

THE CYCLE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence exists in a cycle. Understanding the stages can aid in your safety and that of your children's. The 4 phases are outlined below:

Build-up: Stress builds up in the abuse

- Stress results from a job, financial issues, or any other thing that affects the abuser;
- The abuser may act out by engaging in name-calling, accusations, or insults;
- Tension builds as the victim may attempt to calm the abuser and meet their impossible needs;
- The tension becomes unbearable. The victim feels like they must walk on eggshells and be especially alert and careful around the abuser.

Act Out: Tension leads to violence

- The tension that has built up in the abuser leads to severe abuse, threats, or a violent physical or sexual attack.
- This often happens over and over.
- Abuse is always on purpose and never accidental. Abusers behave this way in order to feel powerful and exert control.

Rationalize/Justify: Abusers blame others and rationalize their actions

- After committing violence, abusers often blame others or use excuses to justify their behaviour. They may blame the victim and/or minimize the violence they inflicted.
- These defenses turn the blame away from the abuser and makes them feel better.
- An abuser may try to convince the victim that their version of the story is the truth. Victims may doubt their own experience as a result.

Pretend Normal: Acceptance of abuse

- After the abuser has justified their actions and the victim has accepted the abuser's version of events, the pretend normal stage happens.
- Both partners try to make the relationship continue as normal by pretending everything is alright. However, the cycle will continue if the abuse is not dealt with.
- The cycle of abuse can happen over a short or long time.
- Often as the cycle continues, the violence grows and the assaults worsen.
- Victims caught up in the cycle of abuse often become isolated from family and friends. They may also feel ashamed or told by the abuser not to talk to anyone about it. This leads to increased dependence on the abuser.

HELPFUL CONTACT INFO

Name	Phone Number
RCMP/Emergency Services	911
Agape House 24 hr Crisis Line	204-346-0028
Provincial Crisis Line	1-877-977-0007
Friend/Family Member:	
Friend/Family Member:	

Name: _____ Date: _____

Review Date(s): _____

Names & Ages of Children: _____

SAFETY DURING EVERY SITUATION

Section 1: Safety During a Violent Incident

- Call 911 immediately.
- Yell “fire” as loudly as possible.
- Bang on neighboring walls, make as much physical noise as you can.
- Try to position yourself near an escape route, such as a door or window.
- If possible, use your safety code word with a trusted friend/family member.

Section 2: Safety when Preparing to Leave

- If I decide to leave, I will practice how to get out safely.
 - o Which doors, windows, elevators, stairwells or fire escapes I would use:

- I will turn off Location Services on any devices like smartphones, laptops, iPads, etc.

- If I can do so without alerting the abuser, I will change the passwords to important sites.
 - o Ex: email, banking information, other sites.
 - o These are the passwords I will change: _____

- I can keep my purse/wallet, phone and phone charger, and vehicle keys ready and put them _____ in order to ensure I can leave quickly.

- I can tell _____ about the violence and ask that they call the police if they hear suspicious noises from my home.
 - o I can also ask them to call the police if they have not heard from/seen me in a certain number of hours/days that we agree on.

- A second person I can ask to call the police if they hear suspicious noises is _____

- I can teach my children how to call the police and fire department.
 - o I can also teach them to find a safe hiding place in case of a violent or dangerous incident.

- I will use _____ as my code word for my children and family/friends so they can call for help if needed.

- If I have to leave my home, I will go to _____
 - o If I cannot go there, then I can go to _____ or _____

- If I suspect my partner will behave violently/abusively, I will try to move to the space that is lowest risk, such as _____
 - o Try to avoid the bathroom, telephone area, garage, kitchen or near weapons.
 - o Also try to avoid rooms without access to an outside door or window.
- These are possible options for places I could go when I leave: _____

- I will leave on these possible days and times: _____

- I will tell these trusted people about my decision and whereabouts: _____

- My safety strategies:
 - o I will leave money and an extra set of keys with _____ in case I need to leave quickly.
 - o I will keep copies of important documents or keys at _____
 - o I will go to the bank and open a savings account by _____ to increase my independence.
 - o I can get legal advice from a lawyer or Legal Aid who understands domestic abuse.
- Other things I can do to increase my safety are:
 - o The 24hr crisis line of my local family violence shelter is _____
 - o I will check with this person/people to see if they would let me stay with them temporarily or lend me money: _____
 - o I can leave extra clothes with or get some from _____

- I will review my safety plan every (day/month/week) in order to plan the safest way to leave my residence.
 - o This person has agreed to help me review this plan: _____

- Depending on their age, I will rehearse my safety plan and practice it with my children.
 - o This is to be done with caution and discretion, as you do not want your children to mention it to the abuser. Therefore rehearsing the safety plan with your children is optional.

- Items I will take with me when I leave:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| • Items of special sentimental value | • Identification for myself and children | • Lease/rental agreement, deed, mortgage |
| • Children’s favorite toys and/or blankets | • Protection Order papers/documents | • Insurance papers |
| • Birth certificates | • Social insurance cards | • Required prescription medication – get refilled if safely possible |
| • Immigration papers | • School and vaccination records | • Divorce/separation papers |
| • Money | • Chequebook, bankcards | • Phone and phone charger |
| • Credit cards | • Keys - house/vehicle/office | • Medical records |
| • Driver’s license and ownership | • Passport | • Address book |

- Create a getaway bag and put it somewhere the abuser will not find it (neighbor, friend or workplace).
 - o Include items such as identification papers and as many of the above items as is practical.
 - o Potential places where I will/can stash a getaway bag:

- I know my partner best, as well as their abusive tactics.

- o I know they are likely to use the following tactics to control me and prevent me from leaving:

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

Section 3: Safety After Leaving

- These are some things you can do after leaving to ensure your safety:
 - o Become familiar with your new surroundings as well as the local emergency and domestic violence shelter phone numbers.
 - o Research and sign up for self-defense classes in your area.

- Some structural safety options to consider adding to your home:
 - o If you keep spare keys outside, put them in a lock box rather than under a doormat or flower pot.
 - o Ensure patio doors and windows close and that the locks work (if applicable).

- If affordable, these are some more structural safety options:
 - o Replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors.
 - o Install security systems including additional locks, window bars, alarm systems, etc.
 - o Purchase rope ladders to be used in case of escape from a second-floor window (if able).
 - o Install smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.
 - o Install outdoor motion-detector lights.

- I will do the following things to ensure my safety at home after leaving:

- I can contact _____
_____ to help with purchasing these items.

- I can contact _____
_____ to help with installation.

- I will teach my children to avoid disclosing their address and phone number to the abuser and abuser’s friends/family, including these people: _____

- I will inform people that take care of my children who has my permission to pick them up and who does not. The people I will inform are: _____

- If my child goes missing I will call the police. I can also contact MissingKids.ca to help me.

- I can inform my neighbors and friends that my partner no longer lives with me and to call the police if they are observed near my residence.

- If I need to call the police, I will give them the following information about the abuser:

o Birth date: _____

o Physical description: _____

o Weight & Height: _____

o Hair color: _____

o Facial hair: _____

o Tattoos/scars: _____

o Vehicle type: _____

o License plate number: _____

- I can ensure the confidentiality of important documents by using a PO box, alternate address, password with certain institutions to make sure only I can access my personal information.

o Documents I will change include (bills, utilities, car registration, taxes, bank accounts)

Section 4: Safety with a Protection Order

- I may need to ask the police and courts to enforce my Protection Order.
 - o The Sections below are actions I can take to help the enforcement of my Protection Order.
- If I have questions about a Protection Order and how to get one, I will contact _____

- The location I will keep my Protection Order is _____
 - o Always keep it near you or on you. For example, in your purse.
- I will inform these people that I have a Protection Order in effect (employer, close friends/family)

- I will provide a copy of my Protection Order to the following people that have contact with my children (school, babysitter, daycare, teacher, etc.) _____

- If my Protection Order is destroyed, I can get another copy from a local courthouse at this address:

- If my partner violates the Protection Order, I can call the police to report it. I can also contact my lawyer and support worker.
- If the partner is involved in the criminal justice system, I can register with the provincial Victim Services (VSU) to get information about their status, including their jail status, potential community of residence, and what conditions they have to follow.
 - o To register contact this number: Manitoba VS at 1-866-484-2846 or Winnipeg VS at 204-945-6851

Section 5: Safety and Drug or Alcohol Use

- The use of drugs, alcohol or other drugs can reduce awareness and ability to act quickly to protect yourself or your children from the abuser.
- If I am going to use drugs or alcohol, I can enhance my safety by using the strategies below:
- When I use, I will try do so in a safe place with people who understand the risk of violence and are committed to my safety. For example: _____

- If my partner is using, I can do the following to ensure my safety: _____

- To keep my children safe in the event that I or the abuser are using drugs or alcohol, I will:

Section 6: Safety in Public and at Work

- Carefully consider which people are supportive and helpful that you could inform of your situation.
- I can inform my boss and/or supervisor of my situation. The names of people I will inform are:

- I can ask _____ to help me screen phone calls at work.

- I can take these steps to leave work safely: _____

- If I have a problem while driving home from work, I can _____

- If I use public transit, some safety strategies I can use are _____

- Other strategies I can use are:
 - o Using a different grocery store and shopping mall at hours different than when I was with the abuser.
 - o Using a different bank and do my banking at hours different than when I was with the abuser.

Section 7: Safety and My Emotional Health

- Being abused and verbally degraded by a partner is exhausting and emotionally difficult. The process of building a new life for myself and my children requires courage and strength.

- To conserve my emotional energy and gain strength in hard times, I can do some of the following:
 - o When I feel down and tempted to return to a potentially abusive situation, I can do/call/talk to:

 - o If I have to speak with my ex-partner in person or over the phone, I can take these steps to ensure I have adequate support: _____

- Use "I can," statements with myself and others to practice being assertive.

- I can tell myself/encourage myself like this whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me:

- I can call the following people for resources and support: _____

- I can call Agape House for information on workshops and support groups in my community that I can attend.

