

Appendix A

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 and how to best get myself and my children to safety.

STEP 1: Identify your partner's use and level of violence so that you can assess danger to you and your children prior to a violent incident.

A. My alarm system tells me that violence is about to occur when (i.e., clenched fists, "the look in his eye", yelling, etc.):

B. The following issues seem to cause disagreements or situations which normally lead to violence:

C. I have determined that I/children are most vulnerable when (i.e., time of day, day in week, holidays, around pay day, after work, before school, when dinner is late, etc.):

D. There are no clues. Abuse happens when I least expect it. My alarm system is always on when my partner is at home. This means that I need to:

STEP 2: Safety during a violent incident.

A. The area of the house where violence most often takes place is:

B. If we are going to have an argument, I will try to move to a space that is lowest risk, such as:

(Note: Try to avoid the bathroom, kitchen, rooms without access to an outside door, or near weapons or objects that can be used as weapons)

C. If it is safe, I will get rid of all weapons in our home if my partner is nearing a violent stage or is in a violent state of the cycle.

D. I may need to leave or escape from my home. In preparation for this, I need to think about the following:

TELEPHONE - GETTING HELP

- _____ I have a phone.
- _____ I know where the nearest phone is and how long it takes to get there.
- _____ I have a cordless phone which is taken with me from room to room.
- _____ My telephone is programmed directly to police/significant other.
- _____ I know emergency telephone numbers:
 Police # _____
 Spouse Abuse Center # _____
 DSS/Adult Protective Services # _____
 DSS/Child Protective Services # _____
 Nurse/Doctor/Hospital # _____
 Friend/Relative # _____
- _____ I know what and how to say what I need in order to get help immediately.

NEIGHBORS/RELATIVES

- _____ My neighbors/relatives know of the violence in my home and I have asked them to get help, call me, etc.
- _____ I have developed a code word/signal to alarm my neighbors relatives of violence and to call for help.
- _____ My code word/signal is _____.
- _____ I have told my neighbors/relatives of times when I feel I am the most vulnerable.

CHILDREN

- _____ I have taught the children emergency numbers and given instructions that they call when there is violence.
- _____ I have rehearsed with them the information they need to give to the police.
- _____ I have developed a signal to alarm them when to make the telephone call for help.
- _____ They have been instructed not to get involved in the violence between me and my partner.
- _____ I have told the children that violence is not okay, even when a person they love is being violent.
- _____ I have told the children that neither they nor I cause the violence, even if we are accused of causing it.
- _____ I have told the children that when my partner is violent we need to take care of ourselves.

D. I realize that I am taking a risk when I tell the children about our plan because one of them may tell my partner. If this occurs, I will:

E. If it's not safe to stay I will: _____

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

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

G. If I have to leave my home, I will go _____.

If I cannot go to the location above, then I can go to _____
_____ or _____.

(Decide this even if you don't think there will be a next time.)

H. 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 until I/we are out of danger.

STEP 3: Safety when preparing to leave.

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

A. I will have money and an extra set of keys with _____ so I can leave quickly.

B. I will keep copies of important documents at _____.

C. I will open a savings account by _____ to increase my independence.

D. Other things I can do to increase my independence include:

E. The domestic violence program's hotline number is: _____. I can seek shelter by calling this hotline.

F. I can keep change for phone calls on me at all times. I understand that if I use my telephone credit card, the following month the telephone bill will tell my batterer those numbers that I called after I left. To keep my telephone communications confidential, I must either use coins or I might get a friend to permit me to use the telephone credit card for a limited time when I first leave.

G. I will check with _____ and _____ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.

H. I can leave extra clothes with _____.

I. I will sit down and review my safety plan every _____ in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence.

_____ (domestic violence advocate/social worker 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.

K. Important documents/duplicates I need to set outside the house in a safe place for when I leave are: (Note: Items with ** are the most important to take. If there is time, the other items might be taken, or stored outside the home.)

- _____ Personal identification for myself**
- _____ Birth Certificates (children's and mine)**
- _____ Social Security Cards/Numbers (including the abuser's)**
- _____ School and vaccination records of children**
- _____ Money**
- _____ Checkbook, ATM Card, bank account numbers**
- _____ Credit cards/numbers**

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- _____ Keys - house / car / office / post office box**
- _____ Pay stubs (mine and the abuser's)**
- _____ Driver's license and registration (mine and a copy of the abuser's)**
- _____ Medications**
- _____ Copies of income tax returns
- _____ Any ownership papers of mutual ownership
- _____ Marriage license/divorce papers
- _____ Insurance policies
- _____ Welfare identification
- _____ Passport/Work permit/green card
- _____ Address book
- _____ Valuable jewelry
- _____ Pictures
- _____ Children's favorite toys/extra set of clothing for couple of days
- _____ Items of special sentimental value

STEP 4: Safety in my own residence.

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, etc.
- 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 to make a collect call to me and to _____ (friend/relative/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 permissions include:

- _____ (school)
- _____ (day-care staff)
- _____ babysitter)
- _____ (teacher)
- _____ (Sunday School teacher), 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 5: Safety with a protective order.

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

- A. I will keep my protective order _____ (location). I will always keep copies of it on or near my person. If I change purses, that's the first thing that will go in it.
- B. I will inform my employer, my closest friend, and _____ that I have a protective order in effect.
- C. If my partner destroys my protective order, I can get another copy from the District Court in the Clerk's office located at _____.
- D. If my partner violates the protective order, I can call the police and report a violation, contact the county attorney and report the violation, contact my attorney, call my advocate/social worker, and/or advise the court of the violation.
- E. I can also file a criminal complaint with the county attorney.
- F. If the police or the courts do not help, I can contact my advocate/social worker or my attorney. If necessary, I can also file a complaint with the appropriate agency/person who is responsible for ensuring accountability of a respective service provider.

STEP 6: Safety on the job and in public.

I must decide if and when I will tell others that my partner has battered me and that I may be at continued risk. Friends, family and co-workers can help to protect me and I must consider carefully which people to invite to help secure my safety and that of my children. 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 7: Safety and drug and alcohol consumption.

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 8: Safety and my emotional health.

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 my self and to be assertive with others.

D. I can tell myself - " _____ " whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me.

E. I can read _____ to help me feel stronger.

F. I can call _____ , _____ , and other resources to be of support to me.

G. Other things I can do to help me feel stronger are _____ , _____ , and _____

H. I can attend workshops and support groups at the Spouse Abuse Center or _____ , or _____ to gain support and strengthen my relationships with other people.

*Developed 1992 and Adapted from:
San Diego City Attorney's Office, "Personalized Safety Plan" - Appendix 7.
Transitions: The Center for Treatment of Physical and Sexual Abuse - "Protection Plan Worksheet"
Colorado Treatment Standards Manual - Appendix 6
"Developing a Safety Plan for Domestic Violence Victims" Handout, Dr. Anne Ganley, Seattle, WA.
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IMPORTANT NUMBERS

- Emergency 911
- National Domestic Violence Hotline (24-Hours) 1-800-799 SAFE (7233) or 1-800-787-3224 (TDD)
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Thoughts To Come Home To

- Expect change, turmoil, confusion, loneliness, and exhaustion. This is the toughest time and it will get better.
- Don't see just an ending of a dream - see the beginning of a new life for you and your children!
- YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO BE SAFE AND LIVE YOUR LIFE FREE FROM ABUSE!