

A guide to safety planning

GDASS

Supporting victims of domestic abuse

Free and confidential service

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Why do I need a safety plan?

Everyone deserves a relationship that is healthy, safe and supportive. If you are in a relationship that is hurting you, it is important for you to know that the abuse is not your fault. It is also important for you to start thinking of ways to keep yourself safe from the abuse, whether you decide to end the relationship or not. While you can't control your partner's abusive behaviour, you can take action to keep yourself as safe as possible.

What is a safety plan?

A safety plan is a practical guide that helps lower your risk of being hurt by your abuser. It includes information specific to you and your life that will help keep you safe. A good safety plan helps you think through lifestyle changes that will help keep you and your family as safe as possible at home and other places you go on a daily basis.

How do I make a safety plan?

Take some time for yourself to go through each section of this safety planning workbook. You can complete this on your own or you can work through it with a friend or professional you trust.

Keep in mind:

- In order for this safety plan to work for you, you'll need to fill in personalised answers, so you can use the information when you most need it.
- Once you complete your safety plan, be sure to keep it in an accessible but secure location. You might also consider giving a copy of your safety plan to someone that you trust.
- Getting support from someone who has experience working with people who experience abuse can be very useful.
- It is important not to show this safety plan to your abusive partner as it can make your plan unsafe.

MY SAFETY PLAN PART 1

Staying safe at home

I can tell these family members/friends/neighbours about what is going on:

.....

There may be times when I don't want to be at home alone, I can have people stay with me. I can ask:

.....

The safest way for me to leave my house in an emergency is:

.....

If I have to leave in an emergency, I should try to go to a place that is public, safe and unknown by my abuser. I could go here:

.....

and/or here:

I can use a code word to alert my family, friends and neighbours to call for help without my abuser knowing about it. I can teach this code word to my children as well.

My code word is:

Staying safe at work and in my community

I can inform my boss, the security supervisor, and

.....

at work to make them aware and talk about safety planning.

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

When leaving work, I can

.....

If I have a problem when driving home or using public transport, I can

.....

I can ask security/a colleague to escort me to my car or to public transport.

I can look into alternate hours or work locations.

I can take a different route home from work.

I can ask
to be my 'buddy'. I can check in with them when leaving work and when I get home.

When I feel afraid, I can go to a shop and ask the staff to help me call the police. Some places I feel comfortable in my community are

.....

If I live with my abuser, I will have a bag ready with these important items in case I need to leave quickly (check all that apply):

- Mobile phone and charger
- Spare money
- Keys
- Driver's license/ other form of ID
- Copy of restraining order
- Birth certificate
- National Insurance Card
- Immigration papers and other important documents
- Change of clothes
- Medications
- Special photos/valuable items
- If I have children, anything they may need (important papers, formula, nappies)

During an emergency, I can call the following friends or family members at any time of day or night:

Name:

Phone:

Name:

Phone:

Name:

Phone:

Name:

Phone:

USEFUL NUMBERS:

Emergency **999**

National Domestic Violence Helpline **0808 2000 247**

Police non-emergency **101**

GDASS **0845 602 9035**

MY SAFETY PLAN PART 2

Safety with my children

I can tell the people who take care of my children who has permission to pick them up and that my partner is not permitted to do so. The people I will inform about pick-up permission include:

School /Teacher

Childminder

Others

I can teach my children how to use the phone to contact 999 and explain how and when to use the code word to call for help.

I can tell my children to leave home if possible when things escalate and where they can go.

When in the house, I can help them identify a room they can go to when they're afraid and something they can think about when they are scared.

Staying safe emotionally

My (ex)partner often tries to make me feel bad about myself by saying or doing this:

.....
.....

When they do this, I can think of these things I like about myself:

..... and
.....

I can do things I enjoy, like:

..... and
.....

I can join clubs or organisations that interest me, like:

..... or
.....

Staying safe with drug and alcohol use

It can be common for people experiencing abuse to use drugs or alcohol, but being under the influence can alter awareness and ability to act quickly to protect myself. If drugs or alcohol use has occurred in my relationship with my abusive partner, I can enhance my safety by some or all of the following:

If I am going to use, I can do so in a safe place and with people who understand the risk of violence and are committed to my safety.

If my (ex)partner is using, I can
and/or

When talking to my children I can:

Let them know what's happening is not their fault.

Tell them how much I love them and that I support them no matter what and I want to protect them no matter what.

Tell them I want everyone to be safe, so we have a plan to use in case of emergencies.

My children may tell this to their other parent, so I can use phrases such as "We're practicing what to do in an emergency", instead of "We're planning what to do when an adult becomes becomes violent or angry".

Teach them that although they want to protect me, they should never intervene.

For child contact:

I can avoid meeting at either mine or my (ex)partner's home.

I can meet in a safe, public place such as:

.....
.....

or

I can bring a friend or relative with me. I will ask:

.....
.....
.....

I may want to use a notebook to share information between me and my (ex)partner about my children.

I can create a schedule for contact to keep a routine and plan ahead.

MY SAFETY PLAN PART 3

These are things I can do to help keep myself safe every day:

- Carry my mobile phone and important telephone numbers with me at all times.
- Keep in touch with someone I trust about where I am or what I am doing.
- Stay out of isolated places and try to never walk around alone.
- Avoid places where my abuser or his/her friends and family are likely to be.
- Keep the doors and windows locked when I am at home, especially if I am alone.
- Avoid speaking to my abuser. If it is unavoidable, I will make sure there are people around in case the situation becomes dangerous.
- Call 999 if I feel my safety is at risk.
- Look into getting a protective order so that I'll have legal support in keeping my abuser away.
- Remember that the abuse is not my fault and that I deserve a safe and healthy relationship.

These are things I can do to help keep myself safe in my social life:

- Ask my friends to keep their mobile phones with them while they are with me in case we get separated and I need help.
- If possible, go to different shopping centres, banks, supermarkets, cinema, etc than the ones my abuser goes to or knows about.
- Not go out alone, especially at night.
- No matter where I go, I will be aware of how to leave safely in case of an emergency.
- Leave if I feel uncomfortable in a situation, no matter what my friends are doing.
- Spend time with people who make me feel safe, supported and good about myself.

These are things I can do to stay safe online and with my mobile phone:

- Not say or do anything online that I wouldn't in person.
- Set all my online profiles to be as private as they can be.
- Save and keep track of any abusive, threatening or harassing comments, posts, or texts.
- Never give my password to anyone other than my parents or guardians.
- If the abuse and harassment does not stop, I will change my usernames, email addresses, and/or mobile phone number.
- Not answer calls from unknown, blocked or private numbers.
- See if my phone company can block my abuser's phone number from calling my phone.
- Not communicate with my abuser using any type of technology if unnecessary, since any form of communication can be recorded and possibly used against me in the future.