

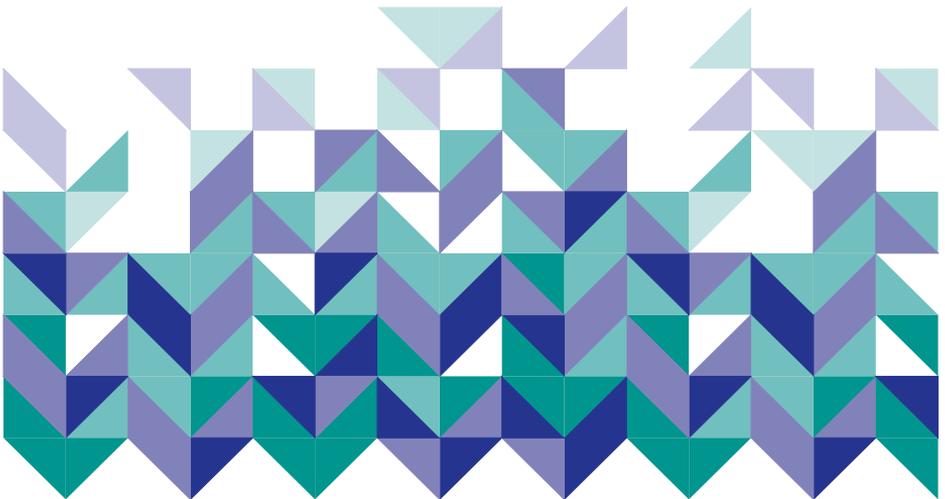


VICTIM
SERVICES

INITIATIVES

Personalized Safety Plan

**Guidelines for Persons in
Abusive Relationships**



Personalized Safety Plan

What is a safety plan? A safety plan represents possible strategies that can increase your safety and prepare you to take action if you face violence from a spouse or intimate partner.

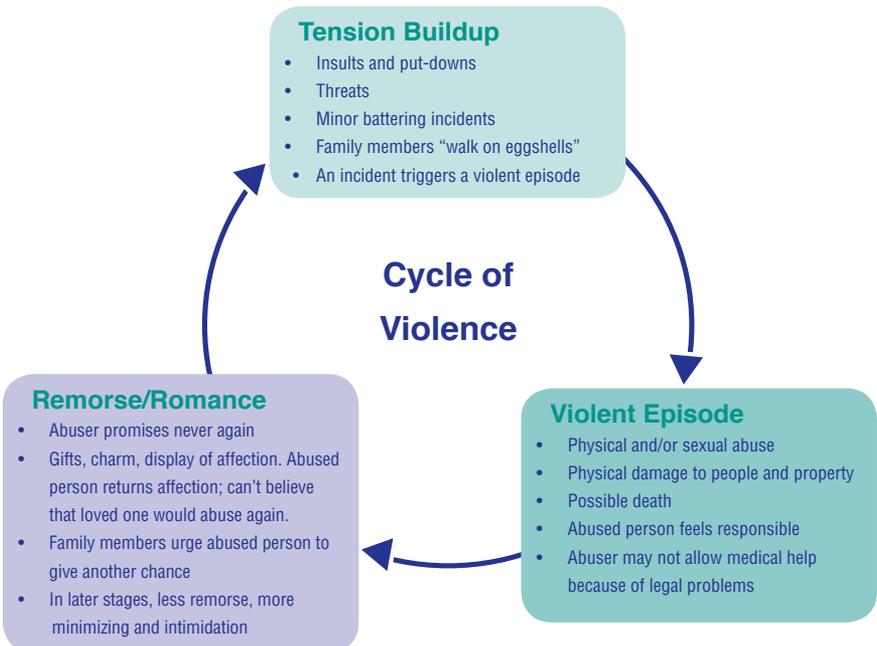
Read the plans carefully and when filling in the blanks, give thought to each answer. When providing answers that involve someone else, remember to let that person know of your plan. You are neither responsible for nor able to control your partner's violence; however, there are choices and decisions you can make when planning for your safety and that of your child or children.



What Is Abuse?

Abuse concerns us all. While some kinds of abuse are more dangerous, ANY form of assault or abuse is serious and needs to be taken seriously. Violent relationships are not a private family matter.

- Abuse can take many forms:
 - Physical – shoving, slapping, punching, beating
 - Sexual – forced intercourse/sexual activities
 - Emotional – insults, name-calling, threats
- Abuse can start at any time. It may begin soon after co-habitation. It may start during pregnancy or after the first child is born, and sometimes abuse begins after years of a relationship.
- Abuse can happen at any time. It may happen daily, every weekend, or once in awhile.



Step 1: Safety During an Explosive Incident

- During an abusive incident it is best to try to avoid places in the house where I may be trapped or where weapons are readily available such as the bathroom or kitchen. Bigger rooms with more than one exit may be safer. The places I would try to avoid would be _____
_____. The places I would try to move to are _____
_____.
- If it is not safe to stay, I can _____ (Practice how to get out safely. What doors, windows, elevators or stairwells would you use?)
- I can keep my bag and car keys ready and keep them _____ in order to leave quickly.
- I can tell _____ about the violence and request that they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my house.
- I can use _____ as my code word with my children or my friends so they can call for help.
- I can teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the police and the fire department.
- If I have to leave my home, I can go _____.
(Decide this even if you don't think there will be a next time).

Use your judgment. If the situation is very serious, give your partner what he/she wants to calm him/her down. You have to protect yourself and your children until you are out of danger.

Step 2: Safety When Preparing to Leave

- I can leave money and an extra set of keys with _____ so I can leave quickly.
- I can keep copies of important documents and some extra clothes with _____.
- I can open a savings account by _____ to increase my freedom to leave. I should make sure to alert the bank not to send any correspondence to my home address.
- I can also begin to _____ as a way of increasing my independence.
- The shelter phone number is _____. I can keep change (for phone calls) on me at all times.
- I can check with _____ and _____ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.
- I can sit down and review my safety plan every _____ in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence.

It may not be safe to inform your partner that you are leaving. You can get legal advice from a family law lawyer who understands abuse. But, as with the bank, you should make certain the lawyer knows not to send any correspondence to your home address. It is critical to consult with a family lawyer if you have children.

Step 3: Safety In My Own Residence

- If my partner no longer lives with me, I can take action to ensure my safety and my children's safety in my home. I can change locks on my doors as soon as possible.
- I can buy _____ to secure my windows.
- I can teach my children to _____ when I am not available.
- I can inform _____ about who has permission to pick up my children.
- I can inform _____ that my partner no longer resides with me and they should call the police if he/she is observed near my residence.
- I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows.
- I can install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to my home.

Step 4: Safety With a Protective Order

- I will always keep my protective order _____ so that it is always with me. If I change bags, I will remember to move it first.
- If my partner breaks the protective order, I can _____.
- If the police are not responsive, I can _____.
- I can inform _____ that I have a protective order in effect.

A protective order can only work well if you have it with you at all times. Make sure to contact the police when the protective order has been violated.

Step 5: Safety On the Job and In Public

- I can inform _____ at work about my situation.
- I can _____ to help screen my telephone calls at work.
- When leaving work, I can _____.
- If problems occur while I am driving home, I can _____.
- If I use public transportation, I can _____.
- I can keep my court order & emergency phone numbers with me in my _____.
- I can shop and bank at _____.
- I can inform my dentist/doctor of my relocation and ask them to contact me at _____.
- I can advise my bank, doctor, dentist, other service providers that they must not give out my phone number, address or appointment times.
- I can let _____ know when I will be home.
- I can purchase a personal alarm device from _____.

Having a trusted co-worker can be helpful. Perhaps you could walk to your vehicles together. Cellular telephones can help you to feel secure when you are alone at work or between work and home.

Step 6: Safety and My Emotional Health

- If I feel down and ready to return to a potentially abusive situation, I can _____
_____.
- When I have to communicate with my ex-partner, I can _____
_____.
- I will try to use positive self-talk with myself and be assertive with others.
- I can tell myself that _____
whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me.
- I can read _____
to help me feel stronger.
- I can call _____
as additional resources to be of support to me.
- I can attend a support group AND learn more about myself and the relationship.

Step 7: Safety and Drug or Alcohol Consumption

Drugs and alcohol can change the way people behave. They can reduce your awareness of what is going on around you. They can reduce your ability to act quickly to protect yourself from an abusive partner. Your partner might use drugs or alcohol as an excuse to be violent. When drugs or alcohol are involved, you need to make specific safety plans.

- If drug or alcohol consumption has occurred in my relationship with my partner, I can enhance my safety in these ways: _____

_____.
- If I am going to consume alcohol or other drugs, I can do so in a safe place and with people who understand the risk of violence and are committed to my safety.
- I can also _____ or _____
_____.
- If my partner is consuming, I can _____
_____.
- To protect my children, I might _____
_____ or _____
_____.

What I Need to Take When I Leave

- Medication for me and my children
- Keys: house/car/office
- Money, credit cards, jewelry
- Driver's license, car registration
- Health cards, vaccination records
- Cheque books/bank books/debit cards
- Children's favourite toys, blankets
- Divorce/separation papers
- Work permits such as green card
- Passport, immigration papers
- Indian Status Cards
- Lease/mortgage/insurance papers
- Medical records for all family members
- Birth certificates
- Family pictures, address book
- Copies of court orders
- Copies of Emergency Protection Orders
- School records
- Social insurance cards
- Social security cards
- Health records of pets
- Welfare identification
- Other

Emergency Numbers

Police Department

Women's Shelter

Women's Centre

Lawyer

Work

Minister/Rabbi/Priest/Elder/Spiritual Leader

Animal Shelters

Other

If you would like more information on spousal/intimate partner violence or safety planning, please contact the Transition House or Outreach Service in your area at

or contact them through the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia

Phone (902) 429-7287

Fax (902) 429-0561

Email admin@trans.ca

Web site www.thans.ca

Victim Services gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia and the London Women Abuse Clinic in the development of this workbook.



Victim Services

www.gov.ns.ca/just/victim_services