



Safety Plan

A safety plan identifies the steps you can take to increase your safety and help to prepare you, minor children, and any other affected family members to act quickly to protect yourselves in the event of future violence. We encourage you to make a plan while you're living with your abuser at a time when the environment is calm.

Unfortunately, there no way that a safety plan can absolutely guarantee your safety or that of your loved ones. However, following this plan will reduce the chance that your abuser will have the opportunity to hurt you, or his self. Remember that you do not have control over your abuser's actions, but you do have control of your own.

This plan should be used as a guide and reminder of ways all of you can increase your safety. **This plan should be hidden in a safe place where the abuser is unlikely to find it.** It should also be reviewed and updated on a regular basis if the situation or living environment should change.

WHILE THE ENVIRONMENT IS STILL CALM

Prepare an Escape Bag (or box or suitcase or any other portable container). Put in it essential articles or papers you will need if the abuser becomes violent and you need to leave in a hurry. It may be necessary to keep the container in a friend or relative's home, your workplace, your spiritual community home, or any other place where the abuser will not have access to it. Here is a checklist of some items to consider placing in it:

- _____ Identification
- _____ Birth Certificates
- _____ Social Security cards
- _____ Medicare or Medicaid cards
- _____ Extra cash or traveler's checks
- _____ Lease, rental agreement, house deed
- _____ Bank books
- _____ Check books
- _____ Insurance papers
- _____ Extra house and car keys
- _____ Medical records for all family members
- _____ Medications
- _____ Extra eyeglasses
- _____ Photographs of family members (including the abuser)
- _____ Welfare identification papers
- _____ School and college records, including diplomas
- _____ Immigration papers

- _____ Immunization records
- _____ Work permits
- _____ Passports
- _____ Divorce papers
- _____ Copy of Injunction for Protection
- _____ Military discharge papers
- _____ Jewelry and other small saleable objects
- _____ Other (identify) _____
- _____
- _____

Open a separate bank account in your own name and have the statements sent to a post office box or a friend or relative's address so the abuser will not see them. Keep account and PIN (Personal Identification Number) secret.

Identify people who would be able to let you stay with them temporarily or lend you some money in an emergency:

If other family members at risk and living with you are able to walk and talk, complete the following:

Prepare a plan of escape for yourself and other vulnerable family members, such as children and disabled or elderly adults. For example, tell them: "If we are talking on the phone and you hear me say the word ' _____ ', don't come home. Instead go to _____ (place) and call 911. If _____ isn't home, then go to _____ (place) and call 911. If you are in another room and you hear the sounds of fighting, leave the house/apartment by _____ (window, another door), go to _____ (place) and call 911 from there. I want you to keep yourself safe and that will be the best way to help me. Don't try to help me by fighting with _____ because you might get hurt."

If you are still living with the abuser, fill this information out now. If you move, revise it for your new residence immediately after the move.

Look over every room in the house and figure out the best way to escape during a violent incident. Discuss this with vulnerable family members: "If you are in your bedroom, the best way to escape is _____ . If you are in the living room, the best way to escape is _____ ."

If you are in the kitchen, the best way to escape is _____.

If you hear sounds of fighting, you should not go in the _____ (room) because there is no way to escape. You know there are knives, guns, or other things that can be used to hurt you in these rooms: _____, so you will avoid being in them or leading the abuser into them during a violent incident.”

If it is not possible to use any entryways to the house/apartment because of the location of the abuser, pick a safe room that has a lock and access to a telephone (this can be a 911 cell phone, which must be kept charged at all times.) Teach vulnerable family members to call for help by dialing 911. An operator will answer “911 – What is your emergency?” The caller will say “Someone at my house is being hurt. Send the police. My name is _____; The address here is _____; The phone number here is _____. LEAVE THE PHONE LINE OPEN AFTER GIVING THIS INFORMATION. Answer any questions the 911 operator may ask.

If you are concerned about the safety of your pets, contact the SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) and ask for their advice on protecting the pets. The Pinellas County SPCA number is (727) 586-3591.

DURING A VIOLENT INCIDENT

There are weapons in these rooms: _____. I will stay out of those rooms and will try to lead the abuser away from them. Avoid being backed into a corner or into a room with no exits.

If possible, dial 911 from the home phone and hang up or leave the phone off the hook. (The address of the home phone will be displayed to the 911 operator. This will not work from a mobile phone!).

If the abuser already has a weapon or the situation appears very dangerous, take whatever action you believe may calm him/her down. Protect yourself in any way you can (if you’re being beaten or kicked, curl up on the floor and protect your head with your arms).

SAFETY AFTER THE ABUSER IS NO LONGER IN THE HOME

Change the locks on the doors and install safety devices on all windows. (This is not necessary if you have moved to a new location and you are sure the abuser has NEVER had keys to the residence.) If you are in the same or a new residence, check with the police department about the best way to secure doors and windows.

If you have minor children list below the people who have permission to pick up your children from school or daycare. Copy this list to a separate piece of paper and give it to your children's school administrators, teachers, after school caregivers, etc. and ask that they get identification from anyone who attempts to pick up your children from school.

List your landlord and neighbors listed below. Tell them that the abuser no longer lives with you and ask them to call 911 if they see him/her near your home.

If you have an Injunction for Protection against the abuser, make several copies, **keep one with you at all times** and keep copies in the following places:

If you are employed, list trusted coworkers and/or supervisors to whom you can disclose your situation. Tell them the abuser's name so that they will not put phone calls through from him. Provide a picture of the abuser so they will know what he looks like.

If you are employed, list trusted coworkers, supervisors, or security personnel whom you can ask to escort you to your car or bus when you leave work. Remember to vary the time you leave and the route you take to and from work.

If the abuser is entitled to visitation with the children, list the ways in which you'll keep yourself and your children safe before, during and after visitation.

To increase safety, provide your workplace, church, school, etc. with the following description of the abuser and a recent photograph, if available:

Height _____ Weight _____ Age _____ Race _____

Hair Color _____ Eye color _____ Glasses _____

Scars, tattoos, other distinguishing characteristics

Description of abuser's vehicle:

Year _____ Make _____ Model _____

Color _____ Plate # _____

Distinguishing marks/damages _____

EMOTIONAL HEALING

List below the people whom you trust and can turn to for emotional support:

Go to the library and find books, articles and poems that can help you identify your feelings about your situation and feel stronger about your ability to cope.

Call CASA to find out where there are support groups and list them below:

List the places and people who can provide emotional support for your children.
