

### Safety Planning While Living with an Abusive Partner:

- Know your partner's use and level of force and assess the risk of physical danger to you and your children before it occurs.
- Identify safe areas of the house where there are no weapons and there are ways to escape. If arguments occur, try to move to those areas.
- Don't run to where the children are, as your partner may hurt them as well. Teach your children to go to their safe place with a phone.
- If violence is unavoidable, make yourself a small target. Dive into a corner and curl up into a ball with your face protected and arms around each side of your head, fingers entwined.
- If possible, have a phone accessible at all times and know what numbers to call for help for you and your children.
- Let trusted friends and neighbors know of your situation and develop a plan and visual signal for when you need help.
- Teach your children how to get help. Instruct them not to get involved in the violence between you and your partner. Plan a code word to signal to them that they should get help or leave the house.
- Tell your children that violence is never right, even when someone they love is being violent. Tell them that neither you, nor they, are at fault or are the cause of the violence, and that when anyone is being violent, it is important to stay safe.
- Practice how to get out safely. Practice with your children.
- Plan for what you will do if your children tells your partner of your plan or if your partner otherwise finds out about your plan.
- Keep weapons like guns and knives locked away and as inaccessible as possible.
- Make a habit of backing the car into the driveway and keeping it fueled.

- **NOTE:** THIS IS NOT TO ENCOURAGE VICTIMS TO STAY IN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS BUT TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON HOW TO SURVIVE THEM. IF YOU ARE BEING ABUSED, PLEASE SEEK HELP AND STOP THE CYCLE.

#### NATIONAL, STATE & LOCAL RESOURCES:

- National Domestic Violence Hotline
  - (800) 799-7233
- Community Resources
  - 2-1-1
- TDCJ Victim Services Division
  - (800) 848-4284
- Rape, Abuse and Incest National Hotline
  - (800) 656-4673
- Human Trafficking Resource Center
  - (888) 373-7888
- Southwest Family Life Center
  - (830) 278-1067
- Bluebonnet Children's Advocacy Center
  - (830) 278-7733
- Department of Family & Protective Services
  - (830) 591-4335
- If it is an emergency, please call 9-1-1.

District Attorney:  
Christina Mitchell Busbee  
District Attorney Criminal Investigator:  
Shayne Gilland  
Victim Assistance Coordinator:  
Amanda Fuentes

\*\*Safety planning information provided by the National Domestic Violence Hotline.

# Safety Planning for Victims of Family Violence



PROVIDED BY: THE  
38<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT  
ATTORNEY'S OFFICE AND THE  
CRIME VICTIMS ASSISTANCE  
LIAISON

COURTHOUSE SQUARE BOX 5  
UVALDE, TX, 78801  
(830) 278-2916

**What is a Safety Plan?**

- A safety plan is a personalized, practical plan that includes ways to remain safe while in a relationship, planning to leave, or after you leave. Safety planning involves how to cope with emotions, tell friends and family about the abuse, take legal action and more.
- A good safety plan will have all of the vital information and will help walk you through different scenarios.
- Although some of the things that you outline in your safety plan may seem obvious, it's important to remember that in moments of crisis your brain doesn't function the same way as when you are calm. When adrenaline is pumping during a stressful situation it can be hard to think clearly or make logical decisions about your safety and the safety of your children. Having a safety plan laid out in advance can help you to protect yourself and others in those stressful moments.

**Safety Planning When Leaving the Relationship:**

- Keep any evidence of physical abuse, such as pictures of injuries.
- Keep a journal of all violent incidences, noting dates, events and threats made, if possible. Keep your journal in a safe place.
- Know where you can go to get help. Tell at least one person or more about what is happening to you.
- Plan with your children and identify a safe place for them, like a room with a lock or a friend's house where they can go for help. Reassure them that their job is to stay safe, not to protect you.
- Contact your local shelter and person(s) you may contact.
- Research laws and other resources available to you before you leave.
- Try to set money aside or ask friends or family members to hold money for you.

- You may request a police escort or stand-by when you leave.
- **If you have to leave in a hurry, use the following list of items as a guide to pack an emergency to-go bag.**
- **Identification**
  - Driver's license; passport
  - Birth certificate and children's birth certificates
  - Social security cards
  - Financial information
  - Money and/or credit cards (in your name)
- **Legal Papers**
  - Protective order
  - Copies of any lease or rental agreements, or the deed to your home
  - Car registration and insurance papers
  - Health and life insurance papers
  - Work permits/green Card/visa
  - Divorce and custody papers
- **Emergency Numbers**
  - Your local domestic violence program or shelter
  - Friends, relatives and family members
  - Your local doctor's office and hospital
- **Other Items**
  - Medications
  - Extra set of house and car keys
  - Pay-as-you-go cell phone
  - Address book
  - Several changes of clothes for you and your children
  - Emergency money

**Safety Planning After You Leave the Relationship**

- Change your locks and phone number.
- Call the telephone company to request caller ID. Ask that your phone number be blocked so that if you call anyone, neither your partner nor anyone else will be able to get your new, unlisted phone number.
- Change your work hours if possible and the route you take to work.
- Change the route taken to transport children to school or consider changing your children's schools.
- Alert school authorities of the situation.
- If you have a restraining order or a protective order, keep a certified copy of it with you at all times, and inform friends, neighbors and employers that you have a restraining/protective order in effect.
- Consider renting a post office box or using the address of a friend for your mail (be aware that addresses are on restraining orders and police reports, and be careful to whom you give your new address and phone number).
- Use different stores and social spots.
- Alert neighbors and request that they call the police if they feel you may be in danger.
- Replace wooden doors with steel or metal doors. Install security systems if possible.
- Install a motion sensitive lighting system.
- Tell people you work with about the situation and have your calls screened by the receptionist if possible.
- Tell people who take care of your children or drive them/pick them up from school and activities. Explain your situation to them and provide them with a copy of the restraining order or protective order.