



Working Against Violence, Inc.

## PERSONALIZED SAFETY PLAN

*This form is a guide to help me develop a plan that will prepare me to be safe in the case of a violent event. Some of the preparations for a safety plan might seem obvious, but it can be hard to think clearly or make logical decisions during moments of crisis. Having a safety plan laid out in advance can help me protect myself and others in high-stress situations. 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/or my children to safety. An advocate can help me create my safety plan, but I know my situation better than anyone else. I will use this knowledge to fill out my safety plan. I will try to think of multiple options to be able to prepare in case the plan needs to be changed or one option is not possible.*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE FORM COMPLETED: \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEW DATES: \_\_\_\_\_

**Safety during a violent incident in our shared home:** *I realize that I cannot always avoid violent incidents. However, to increase my safety, I may use a variety of the following strategies:*

- A. I will practice how to get out safely by determining which doors, windows, elevators, stairwells, fire escapes, etc. will be most accessible.
- B. I will keep my purse/wallet and car keys easily available in order to leave quickly. When at home, I will keep them: (place) \_\_\_\_\_
- C. I can tell (who) \_\_\_\_\_ about the violence and request that they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my home.
- D. My code word will be "\_\_\_\_\_"; and I will tell my family and my friends that if they hear me use that word, they should call the police for help.
- E. If I have to leave my home, I will go (where) \_\_\_\_\_.
- F. When I expect we are going to have an argument, I will try to move to a low risk space, such as \_\_\_\_\_. I know bathrooms, garages, kitchens, or any places near weapons are dangerous; and it is best to be in a room with an outside door.
- G. I can keep my phone close in case I need to call for help \_\_\_\_\_.
- H. If the situation is very serious, I will use my judgment and intuition and may give my partner what he/she wants to calm him/her down until I can protect myself or until I can get out of danger.

**Safety when preparing to leave:** *I realize victims frequently leave the residence they share with their battering partner, when their safety is at risk. Leaving must be done with a careful plan in order to increase safety. Batterers often strike back when they believe that a victim is leaving the relationship. Therefore I may use some or all of the following safety strategies:*

- A. In case I need to leave without my purse/wallet, etc., I will leave money, an extra set of keys, important documents, and extra clothing with (who or where) \_\_\_\_\_.
- B. I will open a savings account in my own name to increase my independence.
- C. I will keep the local domestic violence program's hotline number in a safe available place. I know I can seek shelter by calling the hotline.
- D. I will keep my cell phone charged and on me at all times. I understand that a telephone bill may show numbers that I have called and my batterer may have access to them. I will have important numbers memorized so I can use a different phone if needed.
- E. I will check with friends and family members to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me money.
- F. I will review my safety plan every (how often?) \_\_\_\_\_ with (an advocate or friend) \_\_\_\_\_.

**Creating a go-bag - items to take when leaving:** *I know when victims leave their battering partners, it is important to take certain items with them. These items might be best to place in one location, so that if I have to leave in a hurry, I can grab them quickly.*

- \* Identification for myself
- \* My and my children's birth certificates
- \* My and my children's social security cards
- \* My children's school and vaccination records
- \* Marriage license
- \* Divorce papers
- \* Medical records for all family members
- \* Money
- \* Checkbook, ATM card, credit cards
- \* Bank books
- \* Keys to house, car, work, etc.
- \* Driver's license, proof of insurance and registration
- \* Medications
- \* Welfare identification
- \* Work permits, identification cards, etc
- \* Green card
- \* Passports
- \* Lease/rental agreement, house deed, mortgage payment book
- \* Insurance papers and cards
- \* Small sellable objects
- \* Address book
- \* Pictures
- \* Jewelry
- \* Children's favorite toys and/or blankets
- \* Items of special sentimental value

Telephone numbers I need to know:

- \* Police Department: 394-4131 or 911
- \* Domestic violence services program: 341-4808 or 1-888-716-9284
- \* Work: \_\_\_\_\_
- \* Clergy: \_\_\_\_\_
- \* Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- \* National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 (TTY): 1-800-787-3224

**Safety in my own residence:** *Once I am living separate from my batterer, I know there are many things I can do to increase safety in my home. I realize it may be impossible to do everything at once, but I can implement safety measures step by step. Safety measures I can use include:*

- A. I can change the locks on my doors and windows.
- 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 home.
- F. I can install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to my home.
- G. If I live in an apartment I can speak with the renter to see what safety measures exist and what we can add.
- H. I can keep my phone close in case I need to call for help.
- I. I can inform neighbors, clergy, family, friends, etc. that my partner no longer resides with me and they should call the police if my partner is observed near my residence.
- J. Other things I can do: \_\_\_\_\_

**Safety with a protection order:** *I know some batterers do not obey protection orders. I recognize that I may need to ask the police and the courts to enforce my protection order. The following are some steps that I can take to help the enforcement of my protection order:*

- A. I can file for a protection order if there has been violence or threat of violence. I can ask for an immediate temporary protection order to protect me until my hearing. The permanent protection order can be granted up to 5 years and may be renewed. A protection order states that the abuser cannot come within 100 feet of me, other protected parties, and protected locations. I understand a protection order protects me in any state.
- B. I will keep my protection order on or near my person at all times.
- C. I will give a copy of my protection order to law enforcement in the community where I live, where I work, and in those communities where I visit regularly.
- D. I can check with the county clerk of courts office to be sure that my court order is registered. That phone number is: 394-2575
- E. I can call the local domestic violence program to assist me with any problems I may face with the protection order. 605-341-4808 800-716-9284
- F. I can inform the following people that I have a protection order: \_\_employer; \_\_religious leader; \_\_friends; \_\_family; \_\_others: \_\_\_\_\_.

- G. If my partner violates the protection order, I can call the police and report a violation, contact my attorney, call my advocate, and/or advise the court of the violation. Violation is a mandatory arrest, but I am responsible for reporting violations.

**Safety in Public:** *I understand that even after leaving an abusive situation abusers may continue to seek power and control. This can be in the form of stalking and I can use any of the following strategies to keep myself safe:*

- A. I can consult with a locksmith about enhancing lock mechanisms on the car.
- B. I can peer inside and underneath the car before entering.
- C. If problems occur when I'm driving home, I can: \_\_\_\_\_
- D. I can leave room between my car and the car in front of me to quickly change lanes.
- E. I can tell \_\_\_\_\_ where I am going and stay in contact with them when I get there.
- F. If I use public transportation, I can: \_\_\_\_\_
- G. I can vary the routes I take to places of frequent travel.
- H. I can use different grocery stores and shopping malls to conduct my business and shop at hours that are different than those that I used when residing with my battering partner.
- I. I can use a different bank, medical clinic, etc. and/or go different hours from those I used when residing with my battering partner.
- J. I can determine a safe exit plan from a public building and get help from staff if needed.
- K. Other things I can do: \_\_\_\_\_

**Safety on the job:** *I know friends, family, and co-workers can help to protect victims; and I know I should consider carefully which people to invite to help secure safety. I might do any or all of the following:*

- A. I can inform my boss, the security supervisor, or other co-workers at work of my situation.
- B. I can ask my boss, security, or coworkers to call the police if they see the abuser on the property.
- C. I can ask the person who answers the phone to help screen my telephone calls at work.
- D. I can ask my co-workers to refuse to disclose information about me.
- E. I can make arrangements to take time off, change my hours, or change my position if needed.
- F. I can ask to eliminate times I work alone.
- G. When leaving work, I can ask someone to walk with me to the car, or other:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- H. If there is harassment at work I can go through appropriate channels to have the situation addressed.

**Safety at school (for children, adolescents, and college students):**

- A. The safest way for me to get to and from school is \_\_\_\_\_.
- B. If I need to leave school in an emergency I can get home safely by: \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. I can alert school staff, security, and friends about the abuse. \_\_\_\_\_.
- D. I can make sure that a friend or school staff member can walk with me between classes. I will ask \_\_\_\_\_.
- E. I will eat lunch and spend free periods in an area where there is school staff nearby. Areas I feel safe: \_\_\_\_\_.

- F. I can ask the school counselor, principle, teacher, or coach if I need to rearrange my schedule or take off time for my safety \_\_\_\_\_.
- G. I will ask school staff if I can have my phone on in class so that I can receive or make a call in a dangerous situation.
- H. I will avoid speaking to my abuser. If it is unavoidable, I will make sure there are people around in case the situation becomes dangerous.
- I. I will stay out of isolated places in or around the school and try to never walk alone.
- J. I will have a code word " \_\_\_\_\_ " with friends and staff that informs them I feel uncomfortable and need to leave class.
- K. I will have a code word " \_\_\_\_\_ " with friends and staff that informs them that I am in danger and need an escort or the police called.
- L. If I am having trouble with my mental and emotional health I can talk to the school counselor, \_\_\_\_\_, a teacher \_\_\_\_\_, or a friend \_\_\_\_\_.

**Safety and my emotional health:** *I realize the process of building a new life for myself takes much courage and incredible energy. To conserve my emotional energy and resources and to avoid hard emotional times, I can do some of the following:*

- A. When I feel down or feel like returning to a potentially abusive relationship, I can: \_\_\_\_\_
- B. To feel self-confident if I have to communicate with my partner in person or by phone, I can: \_\_\_\_\_
- C. I can use "I can" statements with myself to be positive and assertive with others. \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me, I can tell myself: \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Books, poems, phrases, and lyrics I can read to help me feel stronger: \_\_\_\_\_
- F. Safe activities I can do to help take my mind off the problem/trauma when needed: \_\_\_\_\_
- G. I can use sites like [unconsentingmedia.org](http://unconsentingmedia.org) and [doesthedogdie.com](http://doesthedogdie.com) to avoid/be aware of triggers in media.
- H. I can take days for myself without feeling bad for taking time away from other things. My emotional health and safety is the most important thing.
- I. People I can call as resources to be supportive to me: \_\_\_\_\_
- J. I can attend support groups at the domestic violence program to gain support and strengthen my relationships with other people.
- K. I can talk to a professional counselor/psychologist for help with my emotional health
- L. Other things I can do to help me feel stronger: \_\_\_\_\_

**Safety with technology:** *I understand technology is part of daily life and that this can be exploited by abusers. Technology can help protect me if I use safety precautions.*

- A. I can create a new email address that does not include my name and my partner does not have access to. I can use this email for setting up new bank accounts, contacting government agencies, or using local resources. If I need to use another email to verify my identity, I can use an email of a trusted friend or family member to avoid any emails or phone numbers my partner may have access to. I can keep using old email accounts for day-to-day communication that will not upset my partner or make them suspicious.
- B. I can use a device my partner does not have access to for seeking out resources. If this is not possible, I can use private or incognito mode so my partner cannot see sites I have visited. I can use the quick exit button on online DV resources.
- C. If it is safe to do so I can keep track of abusive and stalking behaviors using apps like DocuSAFE collecting date/time information, description, photos, screenshots, etc. that can be used to detect escalation and for evidence if I decide to pursue legal action.
- D. I can disable location tracking on my device. If I believe my device is being tracked I can leave it at home as often as possible. I can get another device.
- E. I can read the information on apps before I install them to know what information is being used and if they use location tracking.
- F. I can keep my phone with me and charged at all times. I understand that a telephone bill may show numbers that I have called and my batterer may have access to them. I will have important numbers memorized so I can use a different phone if needed.
- G. I can set my phone to auto-lock and open with a password, preferably a fingerprint or facial recognition.
- H. I can change the passwords and email address associated with my accounts.
- I. I can use different passwords, never save passwords, and always log out of my accounts.
- J. I can block unsafe contacts from my phone and social media and ask others to do the same.
- K. I can set my social media accounts to private and ask others to do the same.
- L. I can be careful about any personal information I post and ask others not to post about me or tag me in anything.
- M. I can delay posting photos or social updates until I am in a different location and ask others to do the same.

### **Safety planning with children and adolescents:**

- A. I can teach my children any of the above safety planning measures while being mindful of age appropriateness.
- B. I can rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.
- C. I can ensure I have my children's important documents and needed items in my go bag.
- D. I can teach my children how to use the phone and how to contact the police and the fire department.
- E. I can create a code word " \_\_\_\_\_ " with my children to tell them to hide, run, and call the police.
- F. I can teach my children important numbers and how to use the phone to make a call to me or to a friend/ family member, etc. in the event that my partner takes the children.
- G. I can 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. People who need to be informed: \_\_\_school; \_\_\_daycare; \_\_\_babysitter; \_\_\_church; \_\_\_other:\_\_\_\_\_.
- H. If I have a protection order I can give a copy to my child's: \_\_\_ school; \_\_\_ daycare; \_\_\_ babysitter; other \_\_\_\_\_.

- I. I can help my child with their emotional health and get them any resources they may need.
- J. I can ask others for help with child care if I need time to adjust without feeling guilty about caring for myself. I can best help my child when I am healthy and it is okay to ask for help. I can attend parenting classes, support groups, and parent mentor programs if needed.

**Safety co-parenting with an abuser:** *Co-parenting is the requirement that both parents work together in a civil, and respectful manner in order to do what is best for the child. Co-parenting is difficult in any case but a history of abuse makes it even harder to want to find common ground with the abuser. I can use some or all of these methods to stay safe while co-parenting:*

- A. If there is a protection or restraining order courts often do not allow unsupervised visits. Even without a protection order, I can request from the courts that visits are supervised.
- B. I can set up a parenting plan with the help of an experienced lawyer. The parenting plan must be highly specific and spell out exactly what days children will reside with which parent, how holidays and vacations will be handled, how transportation to and from school events will take place, etc. A detailed parenting plan minimizes the need for contact with my abuser.
- C. I can establish a communication process through scheduling tools to minimize direct correspondence that may result in manipulation or aggression. Scheduling tools allow co-parents to coordinate events, set custody schedules, and discuss issues related to their children in a system that is not susceptible to manipulation or alteration.
- D. I can use a co-parenting app like Talking Parents to communicate with my ex. By using this app every conversation between myself and my ex is on-the-record, timestamped and unalterable for the court and lawyers to review. In order to stay calm I can pre-script what I want to say and if my ex tries to manipulate me or threaten me I can hang up and have comfort that any abusive language can be used as evidence.
- E. I can arrange for all exchanges to be done in a public space. I can request police, advocate agencies, or another third party be present during an exchange.
- F. If my ex breaches the custody agreement through consistently showing up late, having the child when not designated, scheduling activities during my designated time, etc. I can request my attorney message them or request mediation, ask the judge to change the arrangement, or file a motion of contempt.
- G. Power and control are the center of abusive behavior. Even after I am out of the situation my ex may try to control me through my children. This may be through relatively small rebellions such as allowing the child to stay up later than I allow. As long as the children are safe from abuse I can allow these small concessions so I am not controlled by my ex's behavior and maintain safety.
- H. I can work to minimize the stress levels of my children and protect their relationship with the co-parent by not negatively discussing their time they had with the co-parent.
- I. I can model behaviors I want my children to learn. I can show them love, stability, and support. My children may have witnessed arguments and violence throughout the abusive relationship which does not need to continue while we are living separately. I may seek out aid from a family counselor or therapist to help myself and my children through the transition.
- J. If there is suspected abuse of the child I can alert the authorities and go through proper legal channels to protect my child and attempt to gain full custody.

**24-Hour WAVI Crisis Lines**  
**(605) 341-4808**  
**In-state Toll-Free (888) 716-WAVI (9284)**