

Planning for Safety

Phone Numbers:

- ✓ List names and numbers of friends, relatives, battered women's shelter, hospital, churches, etc. where you can go for help
- ✓ Find a safe place to keep the list: in the freezer, in a tampon box, at a neighbor's house
- ✓ Post phone numbers for a battered women's shelter under a fictitious name (first name only) so abuser does not know you have it.
- ✓ Keep police phone numbers posted close to the phone
- ✓ Memorize all important phone numbers

Telephones:

- ✓ Get a phone if you don't have one, preferably a cell phone that you can keep with you. Some domestic abuse agencies can help with this if you can't afford it.
- ✓ Change phone numbers and make it an unpublished number.
- ✓ Refuse to argue with an abuser on the phone.
- ✓ It is legal to tape your own conversations on the phone. You can tape a phone call from the abuser to document his abuse in case of legal action.
- ✓ Hide a phone so an abuser cannot disconnect it.

Keys:

- ✓ The number one rule is: keep all keys out of sight of the abuser.
- ✓ Have extra car and house keys made.
- ✓ Give extra keys to a trusted neighbor or relative
- ✓ Tape or hide extra keys somewhere safe such as under a desk drawer, wheel well, or outside the house
- ✓ If the abuser has a set of your house keys then change your locks
- ✓ Try to obtain a set of the abuser's keys to a vehicle, especially if it belongs to you or if he/she does not use it often.

Preventing an abuser from immobilizing your car:

- ✓ Get a lock for the hood and gas cap
- ✓ If your hood needs to be opened from the inside, keep doors locked at all times. Try to make sure the abuser does not have a key
- ✓ Try to get your keys before an abuser does. Always keep your keys out of sight or hidden.
- ✓ Keep your car parked somewhere where he/she would not look for it.
- ✓ If you need eyeglasses to drive, keep an extra pair in the car in case the abuser destroys your glasses

Preventing an abuser from entering your home:

- ✓ Get locks on doors and windows. Get double keyed deadbolts for doors.
- ✓ If the abuser has a set of keys then change the locks.
- ✓ Reinforce/repair windows and doors
- ✓ Install alarms or get a dog
- ✓ Move to another residence
- ✓ Install peepholes
- ✓ Install outdoor lights
- ✓ Never let the abuser enter your home
- ✓ Keep windows and doors locked at all times

Neighbors/Friends/Relatives:

- ✓ Give them permission to call the police whenever they are concerned
- ✓ Set up signals that you need help and tell them what to watch for:
 - Flicking the lights on and off
 - Set up a password or sentence for a phone call to alert them that you need help
 - Set up a password for a safe person to enter
 - Set up a sign you need help such as a certain curtain is open/closed
 - SCREAM for fire
 - Knock on the wall
 - Don't give information to people who you do not trust, or to those who may be friends of your abuser
 - Get the OK to come to neighbors, friends, relatives even in the middle of the night
 - Teach children how to dial the police. Set up a signal with them.

Money:

- ✓ Open your own bank account separate from your abuser
- ✓ Get some money for emergencies:
 - When buying groceries write a check over the amount and put the money in your account.
 - Borrow money from friends, relatives and put it into your account for emergencies.
- ✓ Hide money where you can have access to it- inside or outside your home or at neighbors.
- ✓ Put rings or other valuables in a safe deposit box at the bank and hide the key
- ✓ Sell unwanted items so you have cash to put in your account
- ✓ Get travelers checks and hide them.

Personal items:

- ✓ Keep a small bag prepared with clothing, medications, baby needs, valuables, personal items, addresses and phone numbers, important papers, glasses, driver's license, etc. in case you need to leave in a hurry
- ✓ Rent a locker at the YMCA, bus station, airport and keep some items there.
- ✓ Keep items with neighbors or relatives.

Important papers/ documents:

- ✓ Keep important papers prepared in case you need to leave in a hurry. These could include birth certificates, marriage license, divorce decree, social security cards, insurance policies, bank papers or other financial documents, car title, pay check stubs, driver's license and other identification.
- ✓ Try to keep important papers in a safe deposit box at the bank
- ✓ Always have access to important papers and copies of them. Keep them with neighbors; hide them in the freezer, etc.
- ✓ Always keep your restraining order with you.

Children:

- ✓ Even small children are affected by violence, explain it to them
- ✓ Inform babysitters, schools, medical facilities, the parents of your child's friends that your child is not to leave with the abuser
- ✓ Develop a safety plan with your children to use when they are scared or when you give them the signal. Help them decide where they will hide, when to leave and go to a trusted neighbors, when to call police.

Weapons:

- ✓ If there are weapons in the home that belong to the abuser, hide or throw away all the ammunition
- ✓ Hide weapons or lock them in the trunk of a car provided the abuser does not have a key.
- ✓ Put knives in inaccessible places and out of sight
- ✓ If the police are called ask them to take away the weapons

Hiding Places:

- ✓ Be aware of your surroundings
- ✓ Know of good places in your home to hide, preferably close to an escape route.
- ✓ Make an escape plan from each room. Get rope ladders hidden in upper story rooms so you can escape.
- ✓ Make a safe room in your home that has a lock on the door, access to the phone, and a way for you to escape.
- ✓ Do not lock yourself into a small space such as a car or a small room where your abuser can get in and you can't escape
- ✓ Be aware of your physical capabilities or limitations. Can you really outrun your abuser?
- ✓ Hide under a car, in a ravine, or a shed, provided you have an escape route
- ✓ Don't count on a stranger to help you.
- ✓ Know in advance where you will go if you need to leave your house.

Protecting yourself when being attacked:

- ✓ Be aware of your abuser's cues (physical behaviors, circumstances). Try to leave before the assault.
- ✓ Know ahead of time what you are capable of doing such as gauging eyes, kick to the knee or crotch, run, etc.
- ✓ Never pick up a weapon unless you are sure you can use it. The danger is that it will be used against you instead.
- ✓ Black pepper, salt, chili powder or hair spray in the eyes of the attacker can be effective.
- ✓ If all else fails roll up in a ball and protect your head.
- ✓ Find a self-defense class in your area and enroll if you think it might help. It generally takes quite a bit of practice and time commitment for this to actually work.

*Adapted from the Dane County District Attorney's Office Family Violence Program
Protection Plan by Beverly Bickford, 1992*