

Making a Safety Plan

Take some time to look through this checklist and think through the steps you could take to keep yourself safe if things escalate or you need to escape quickly.

Planning ahead like this is a way to increase your safety and the safety of your children, if you have them. Take your time to go through the different sections and take breaks if things feel overwhelming - you don't need to do this all in one go. If possible, you could ask a trusted friend to sit with you or help you work things out.

When considering the questions, try and think as widely as possible, perhaps outside of your immediate home and family. Abusers can make it seem like no help is available or that you're completely on your own, but there are people and services on hand to help you, and you are capable of taking steps towards safety and freedom.

Remember to consider safety and access when printing or storing this document.

Safety during a violent incident

Action to consider	Your notes
What are the possible escape route(s) from my home? What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells, or fire escapes could I use?	My possible escape routes:
I will take the time to practice getting out safely.	Yes / No
I can keep my purse/wallet and keys handy, and always store them in the same place so that I can locate them easily if I need to leave in a hurry. I can also have a second set of keys made in case my partner/ex takes the first set.	I will keep my purse/wallet and keys in the following place: I will have a second set of keys made: Yes / No
If it is safe for me, I could tell the one or two trusted people about the violence/potential violence.	The people I will tell are:
Children's safety in abuse situations is central to a safety plan. I may be able to teach my children a safety plan specifically for them in these circumstances.	Some key things I'll tell my children to keep them safe:

It may be helpful to have a code word to use with my children or other family members if I should need to call them for help.	My code word is: I have told my children: Yes / No I have told a trusted friend/family member: Yes / No
I can identify some safe places I can go if I need to leave my home.	A place to use the phone: A place I could stay for a couple of hours: A place I could stay for a couple of days:
During an abusive incident, it's best to try to avoid places in the house where I may be trapped or where weapons are readily available e.g. the bathroom or kitchen. Bigger rooms with more than one exit may be safer.	The rooms/places I would try to avoid are: The rooms/places I would try to move to/stay in are:
In abusive situations, I may need to say or do things that I wouldn't need to do in an equal non-abusive relationship. This might involve survival skills such as claiming to agree with the abuser even when what they're saying isn't true.. <i>On some occasions, women may retaliate against the abuser with violence; however be aware that such actions could lead you to be charged with a criminal offence.</i>	Given my knowledge of the abuse, the abuser and any past situations, in a situation of danger I expect I may need to:
If I'm worried about my immediate safety, I should call the police.	The phone number for the police is:
Past experience has shown me what actions help increase my safety.	Other protective actions that I have considered or employed are:

Safety when preparing to leave

Some women leave the residence they share with the abusive partner. Below are some protective actions you may wish to consider if you are thinking about leaving. Even if you're not planning to leave your partner, thinking about the steps you would take is important in case the abuse or violence escalates and you end up needing to leave quickly.

Question to consider	Your notes
It may not be safe to inform my partner that I am leaving.	
Should I need to leave quickly, it will be helpful for me to leave some emergency cash, an extra set of house/car keys and extra clothes with someone who I can go to for help.	I will leave spare keys, clothes and cash with:
I can keep copies of important documents such as immigration papers or birth certificates at someone else's house.	I will keep important documents at this persons house:
I can open a savings account to increase my freedom to leave. I should make sure to alert the bank not to send any correspondence to my home address.	I have opened a savings account: Yes / No I have told my bank not to send correspondence to my home address: Yes / No
I can get legal advice from a solicitor who understands domestic abuse. But, as with the bank, I should make certain the solicitor knows not to send any correspondence to my home address. <i>If you have children, it's critical to consult with a family solicitor if you have children. Your local Domestic Abuse service may be able to recommend a suitable solicitor.</i>	I have children, so will need to consult a family solicitor: Yes / No I have contacted a solicitor and made sure they have a good understanding of domestic abuse: Yes / No I have asked by local DA service for help in finding a solicitor: Yes / No
I can seek support and safe shelter by calling the local domestic abuse helpline.	My local domestic abuse helpline number is: The National Domestic Abuse Helpline number is: 0808 2000 247
I can keep a spare, hidden phone with a pay as you go SIM to use without being traced by my partner. If there's a payphone near me, I can keep change on me at all times in case I need to use it to make calls.	I could use a phone at the following locations or friends houses:

I can also use a phone at my friend's house or another safe, neutral location. I must be careful if I am using my mobile or home number because my partner or ex could see the numbers I have called on next month's telephone bill.	
There are friends, family members or people in my church/faith community that I can call for help.	These are people that I could ask for assistance with the following. Money: Childcare: Support attending appointments: Transportation: Other:
If my partner can see my location using a Find My Friends or similar app, I will need to turn this off or leave the tracked device at home before leaving.	I know which devices my partner/ex can track: I know how to disable location sharing: Yes / No
I might need to return home to get personal belongings. In some countries, it is possible to call the police for an escort to stand by and keep the peace. I'll need to check if my local police offer this service. If they do, the police will meet me somewhere close to my home. They will stay while I pick up my own and my children's personal belongings.	I have checked whether the police would be able to escort me to retrieve personal belongings: Yes / No I know how to contact the police to arrange this: Yes / No
Other protective actions I have considered in regards to leaving are:	
If I need to leave my home, it will be important to take certain items with me. Items with asterisks on the following list are the most important, but if there is time, the other items might be taken, or stored outside the home. Keeping them all together in one location makes it much easier if I need to leave in a hurry.	<i>Indicate whether the item is relevant to you, that you know where to find it, and/or if you've stored it in a safe and accessible place:</i> ☐ Identification for myself* ☐ Children's birth certificates* ☐ Any papers relating to legal proceedings* ☐ My birth certificate*

	☐ Passport and Immigration papers* ☐ School records ☐ Money ☐ Cheque book, bank book/cards ☐ Credit cards ☐ Keys - house/car/office ☐ Driver's license and car ownership details ☐ Medications and medical records* ☐ Divorce/separation papers ☐ House lease/mortgage/insurance documents ☐ Address book ☐ Pictures/photos ☐ Children's favourite toys/blankets ☐ Jewellery ☐ Items of special sentimental value Other items I want/need to take with me if possible are:
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Telephone numbers I need to know

Police department	
Domestic abuse helpline - national	
Domestic abuse helpline - local	
Solicitor	
My workplace	
My faith community leader (Pastor, Priest, Rabbi, Imam)	

After leaving: Safety in my home

Sadly, abuse doesn't end after leaving a house or relationship, but there are safety measures you can take to continue to protect yourself. *Note that some of these measures cost money.*

If financially possible, I could make security enhancements to my home.	If financially possible, I could: ☐ Change the locks on my doors and windows <i>(you may need to inform the landlord if you are renting or your solicitor if you own your home before taking this action)</i> ☐ Install a peep hole in the door ☐ Install a Ring video doorbell or similar ☐ Replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors ☐ Install window bars and poles to wedge against doors ☐ Install an electronic alarm system ☐ Purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows ☐ Install smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor in my house/apartment ☐ Install a motion sensitive lighting system outside that lights up when a person is coming close to my home ☐ Leave the lights on at night and when I am away from home
If I have custody and access issues, I can inform all the people who provide childcare for my children about who has permission to pick up my children and who does not. I can give these people copies of the custody and access order to keep with them and a picture of the abusive partner.	The people I will inform about pick up permission include... School: Teacher: Nursery staff: Before/after school club: Babysitters: Childminder: Sunday school teacher: Relatives:

	Other:
I could inform the following people that I am separated and ask that they call the police if my partner or ex is seen near my residence.	Neighbour: Landlord: Friend: Other
Other strategies that I am already using or that I might use include:	

Safety with an Injunction

Injunctions are protection orders that a person can apply for in the court (Magistrates Family Court, County Court).

If granted by the court, an injunction is not active until it is served to the respondent. An applicant can apply for an emergency order (without notice to the respondent – however this is dependent on specific factors inclusive of the time line of the last incident), however the respondent (perpetrator) will be given notice of another hearing whereby they have the right to 'respond'/'object' to the order.

Injunctions are under Civil Law. It will **only** become a criminal matter if the perpetrator breaks an injunction. It is Important that applicants request from the court that the order has 'a Power of Arrest' attached to it.

Injunction	Description
Non molestation Order	These can have varying characteristics attached to them, but all would stipulate that the perpetrator is not to threaten or cause physical harm, or incite a third party to cause or threaten harm. They are not to pester, harass or contact the applicant. (Sometimes courts will stipulate that the perpetrator is not to attend the street or property, if they don't have a legal right to reside there). These are usually granted for 6 months, although they can go up to 12 months. Once expired an applicant can reapply if there is still risk of harm to them.
Occupation Orders	Deals with the "property" (home), in the instance that the perpetrator has a legal right to abide in the property.

	The order can prohibit the perpetrator from attending the entire property, OR can make restrictions to how the two parties live in the dwelling by dividing the rooms up and/or by times. Eg. Person A can go in rooms 1, 2,3 between the hours of 9-5, but is restricted from attending these rooms outside of these hours, or A can dwell in rooms 1,2 and B can dwell in rooms 3,4. Occupation Orders can be difficult to obtain as the court does not like to intentionally make a party homeless. If the perpetrator has another place to reside (re: family, friends,) ensure the court is aware of this.
Prohibited Steps Order	These are orders involving the children, if the perpetrator has Parental Rights. They are primarily granted if there is a risk that the perpetrator will attempt to remove the children from the home, area or country. There are Resident Orders and Child Contact Orders that can also be obtained from the courts to offer protection regarding the children. Without one of these specific orders it is not possible for a school to withhold giving the child to the perpetrator as they would have Parental Responsibility re: a legal right to take them – exceptions are if Children Services have a Child Protection Plan open.
Undertaking	This is essentially a 'promise' to the court by the perpetrator that they won't do anything bad. This happens when either there is not enough evidence to grant a non-molestation order (NMO), and/or the perpetrator objects to a NMO. There is no power of arrest with this, however if the perpetrator 'breaks' their promise to the court they are in 'contempt of court'. The applicant (ie. victim/survivor) must inform the court if an undertaking is broken and likely a non-molestation order will then be granted.
The rest of this table will help you think through the actions you can take relating to court orders.	
I can take steps to help support the enforcement of the legal orders.	Some steps I can take are: <i>For example, keeping record of conversations with the perpetrator.</i>
It is important to know the specifics and limitations of my protection order.	I will find out the conditions and what they mean for my safety:

If my partner or ex violates the protection order, I can call the police and report the violation. Depending on the type of protection order, I can also contact my partner's or ex's parole/probation officer, contact my solicitor and/or my advocate. (It is important to report to the police every violation of the order).	Contact details fo the police: Contact details for my partner/ex's parole or probation officer: Contact details for my solicitor or advocate:
If the police do not help, I can call the Duty Sergeant immediately at the police station and express my concern. If I have one I can also contact my advocate, my partner's or ex's parole officer, or my solicitor, as well as filing a complaint with the police.	Contact details for the Duty Sergeant: I know how to file a complaint with the police: Yes / No
It's important to keep any documents relating to my protection order in a safe and accessible place.	I will keep my protection order document(s) (originals, if possible) in this location: If my partner destroys my protection order, I can get another copy from the courthouse, my lawyer, or:
If it is safe to do so, I can inform other people that I have a protection order in effect.	I will inform... My employer: My friend(s): My family member(s): Other:

Safety at work and in public

You can decide if and/or when you will tell others that your partner has abused you and that you may be at continued risk. Friends, family and coworkers may be able to help protect you. You should consider carefully which people to recruit to help secure your safety. I might do any or all of the following:

Action to consider	My notes
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If I feel safe and comfortable to do so, I can inform people at work of my situation.	I will inform... My boss: The security supervisor: Other:
According to how comfortable and safe I feel, I can ask the relevant person at work to help screen my telephone calls at work.	I will ask the following person to help screen my calls: I will also ask them to document any calls: Yes/No
If it is comfortable to do so, and I feel it would be supportive to me and my situation, I could discuss the possibility of having my employer call the police if I am in danger from my partner or ex.	I will ask my employer to be ready to call the police if I am in danger: Yes / No
There are actions I can take to stay safe when arriving at or leaving work.	I will do the following: ☐ Let someone know when I'll be home ☐ Walk with someone to my car ☐ Scan the car park ☐ If my partner/ex is following my, drive to a place where there are people to support me, e.g. a friend's home, police station ☐ If I am walking, take a route that is well populated ☐ Take different routes home ☐ If I see my partner on the street, try to get to a public place e.g. a shop ☐ I can also call attention to myself and request help ☐ I will purchase a personal alarm device
I can use different supermarkets/shopping centers and shop at different times than I did before to reduce the risk of contact with my partner or ex.	The supermarkets and shops I can use are:

Safety and Drug or Alcohol Consumption

Drinking alcohol is a normal and accepted part of our culture, and many people use mood-altering drugs. However, use of alcohol and/or drugs can reduce your awareness and ability to act quickly to protect yourself from an abusive partner. Use of illegal or legal drugs can also put you at a disadvantage in any legal proceedings. Use of alcohol or drugs by an abuser can also be used as an excuse for violence.

You should carefully consider the potential costs of any significant alcohol or drug use. If you need support, help is available.

Action to consider	My notes
Help is available if I am worried about, or becoming reliant on, my alcohol or drug use.	Helplines I can contact include... My GP: The Frank drugs helpline: 0300 123 6600 My local alcohol/drug support service:

Safety and My Emotional Health

Being subjected to abuse by a partner is exhausting and emotionally draining. The process of surviving requires much courage and incredible energy. To conserve emotional energy and resources and to support myself in hard emotional times, you could try some of the following.

Action to consider	My notes
If I have left the relationship and I am experiencing loneliness or manipulative tactics from my abusive partner, I can take care of myself by speaking to a trusted friend, family member or faith leader, or doing an activity that I enjoy.	People I can talk to are: Some activities that help me handle negative emotions or improve my mood are:
When I have to communicate with my partner in person or by telephone, I can emotionally prepare. I can also take time to re-regulate my emotions and calm my nervous system afterwards.	Ways I can emotionally prepare are: Activities that help me regulate afterwards are:

When I face potentially difficult times like court cases, meetings with solicitors and such, I can prepare beforehand and take time to calm my nervous system afterwards.	Ways I can emotionally prepare are: Activities that help me regulate afterwards are:
There are people I can call as a resource to support me.	People I can ask to support me are:
I can find out about and attend workshops and support groups in the community by calling my local domestic abuse service.	My local domestic abuse service is: Support services and groups on offer are: I know how to access these services: Yes / No

Further support

Well done for making it through this safety planning document. You should be really proud of yourself for taking time to think through the actions you can take to protect yourself and your children. It can feel scary to consider the possibility of abuse escalating, and overwhelming to think about leaving, but completing this plan is a positive step that will empower you to stay safe.

Further help is available in the following places:

The National Domestic Abuse Helpline

Get advice and support by calling the free, 24/7 helpline. Expert advisors will be able to listen to you, explain your options and connect you with further support.

Helpline number: 0808 2000 247

Webchat: www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/chat-to-us-online/

The Restored Survivors Handbook

Get a free copy of our comprehensive guide for female Christian survivors of domestic abuse. Chapters cover: managing the practical realities of leaving an abuser, healing and recovery after leaving an abuser and some key theological and faith-related issues relating to domestic abuse.

Request a free paperback or PDF copy: restored-uk.org/handbook

The Restored Survivors Network

Join our online network for female Christian survivors of domestic abuse. You'll receive regular emails from us about domestic abuse recovery and faith, plus opportunities to join peer support groups and recovery courses.

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