

SAFETY PLAN

It is better to plan for the worst and not have it happen, than to be unprepared if it does. The following information is designed for different situations, therefore all ideas may not work for you. It may be helpful to develop a specific plan for what you will do if you encounter your abuser based upon their specific violent tactics. You have the right to protect yourself when you are in danger. You do not deserve to be abused or threatened.

Because of the amount of suggestions contained in this safety plan, you may find it helpful to go over the plan with a trusted friend or relative. During this time it is not unusual to feel overwhelmed. It is your decision to employ any of the following ideas.

PLAN AHEAD

Tell as many people about the abuse if you feel comfortable doing so. If others are aware of your safety risks, it will be easier for you to stay safe. This includes friends, neighbors, co-workers, supervisors and relatives.

Develop a safety plan with your children. Often children feel they need to intervene in the violence to protect their parents. Many times children end up getting hurt because of this. Dependent on your child's age, these suggestions may work for you:

- Teach your children how to dial 911 or who to run to for help.
- Give your children a "job", previously decided upon, that encourages them to move away from the argument/violence (hide under the bed or in the closet; run to a neighbor's house).
- Teach your children a "code word" that the abuser does not know, signaling them to go for help.
- Purchase rope ladders for easy exit from 2nd or 3rd story windows.
- Let children know it is not wrong to seek help or call 911 if they feel scared.
- Let daycare/school know who may pick up your children.

Make copies of important papers. Although most papers can be replaced, it may take weeks to months. It is not suggested that you risk your safety for these items, however it may be helpful to gather specific paperwork and records. Give the copies to a friend or keep them at work. If you need to leave your home in a hurry, you may not have time to gather these items.

Pack an overnight bag for yourself and your children. Keep this in an undisclosed place for easy access if you must leave in a hurry. Include a change of clothing, important papers, phone numbers, cash, copies of credit cards, keys, medical information, important identification cards/papers.

Carry a current picture of your abuser, if possible. This will help officials, neighbors, co-workers, etc. identify your abuser. It can be kept in an envelope in your purse if you don't want it in plain view.

Open your own savings account/credit card account, separate from your abuser, increasing independence.

Open a Post Office box in an effort to secure your mail to help increase your independence.

Follow your instincts and "gut feelings" - they will most likely be right and keep you the safest.

Carry a cell phone for safety reasons. Usually a cell phone will still call 911 if the battery is charged, even if it is not hooked up to service. This is a great back-up plan for safety. The Salem Police Department has

free emergency 911 cell phones. You can contact them at (503) 588-6499 or call the Mid Valley Women's Crisis at 1-866-399-7722.

The "Redial Trick": Some batterers may press redial to see what # you have called. If you have called a crisis center or a victim advocate, you may want to dial another number after the call to prevent your abuser from knowing the last call you made. Also, think about what numbers may show up on any cell phone logs.

Internet Activity: Choose a password your abuser will not be able to guess and change your password often. If you think your abuser might know how to read your computer's history/cache file, the web pages that you have recently viewed may be disclosed. You can clear your history or empty your cache file in your browser settings.

DURING A VIOLENT INCIDENT

Call for help. When abuse or the threat of abuse occurs, do not hesitate to call for help.

Make noise to alert neighbors.

Try to leave the house and go to a safe place (a trusted friend, relative, safe-house).

Try to avoid rooms with only one exit or that contain weapons.

Try to avoid the bathroom (many hard surfaces) and kitchen (many things to use as weapons).

Try to get to a room with more than one exit.

If it is not safe for you to talk to a 911 operator for a long period of time, call 911 and hang up. 911 will immediately call back and may send an officer to your house to make sure you are alright.

Call 911 and leave the phone off the cradle so the operator can hear what is happening.

IF YOU MAY BE INJURED

Obtain medical attention as soon as possible. Nothing is more important than your health.

If a police report has or will be filed, Crime Victim's Compensation at (503) 378-5348 is an option for assisting with medical/counseling costs.

If your abuser insists on accompanying you to the doctor, try to get a moment alone with a staff member to discuss your situation and options.

IF YOU PLAN TO LEAVE, OR ONCE YOUR ABUSER IS OUT OF THE RESIDENCE

Leaving your abuser may be the most dangerous time, therefore, extra safety planning may be necessary.

- Secure your home.
- Have your locks re-tumbled or changed (if you are not financially able, Adult and Family Services may be able to assist you).
- Reinforce doors/windows, even if it is done with a piece of furniture.

- Set cans in front of household doors that will make noise if your abuser enters your home.
- Change your phone number or install a second line.
- Call your phone company and block certain incoming numbers your abuser may use.
- Install caller ID.
- Arrange to have someone stay with you, get a roommate.
- Speak to people living in the house about answering the door to your abuser.
- Establish a code word with utility companies, etc. for added security.
- Obtain a PO Box if you originally use your street address in order to secure your mail.
- Leave outside lights on at night.
- Change your daily routine if your abuser is familiar with it.
- Get a dog that does not know your abuser to alert you when someone is outside the house.
- Relocate. It may not be fair, but it may be necessary to lessen your safety risks.

Call for additional resources if needed. Contact the your County Victim Assistance Division, Salem Police Advocate at (503) 588-6499 or Women's Crisis Service at (503) 399-7722 or toll free at 1-866-399-7722.

Obtain a protective court order. This can be an order that demands your abuser not contact you, or have limited contact. This order may be suited to your specific needs and can be obtained quickly at the County Courthouse. If the order gives you temporary custody of your children, alert schools and day care providers of no pick-ups by the abuser. You may also want to provide them with a copy of the order. Violations of this order will result in a mandatory arrest by law. Keep a copy of the papers with you at all times and provide a copy to all protected addresses.

If you choose to move out of the residence you shared with your abuser, you may request a police stand-by while gathering your belongings. A specific time limit may be put on the stand-by, so you may want to be prepared by recruiting additional help and vehicles.

SAFETY AT WORK

Many times abusers will cause problems at the workplace of their victim in an effort to further terrorize their victim. In an effort to further protect yourself and your job, here are some ideas:

- Inform security/supervisors/co-workers of your situation. If possible, provide a photo of the abuser to security.
- Problem solve with your supervisor to have your work-space moved away from windows accessible to your abuser's view, and/or having your phone calls screened.
- Review the safety of parking arrangements.
- Work with a victim advocate. Victim advocate are available to help with problem solving or speaking to employers about safety concerns and possible precautions to take, should you be comfortable with such intervention.

IF YOU THINK YOUR ABUSER MIGHT FOLLOW YOU

Create a false trail away from where you are actually located.

Change your daily routines, make a paper-trail to a different city or state.

Right before you leave, make a few long distance calls to various cities and states that you do not intend to live in (which your abuser will see on the phone bill after you have left). This may throw off your abuser when trying to track you.

Your protective order should cross over county and state lines. However, each area may have a different process for enforcing the order. Check with the county you move to regarding how they handle violations of protective orders.

Notify new neighbors. If you do not want to disclose your entire story, simply show them a picture or give a description of your abuser and ask the neighbor to call police immediately if the person is seen.

IF THE BATTERER HAS VISITING OR CUSTODY RIGHTS OF THE CHILDREN

Arrange for a neutral and safe place/person to drop off and pick up your children for visitations. Have a friend or family member accompany you for extra safety.

Keep a log. Document what occurred at the drop off point and during the visit. Check in with your children about the visit.

Get counseling support for your children. If the child(ren) were present at the time of the abuse, Crime Victim's Compensation at 503-378-5348 may be an option for payment of counseling (a police report must be filed to be eligible for this program).

IF YOUR ABUSER HAS BEEN ARRESTED OR INVOLVED WITH THE CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT

Use VINE (Victim Information and Notification Everyday). You may call the 24-hour service at 1-877-674-8463 to check on the offender's custody status and/or probation status. This number is statewide.

ABUSE IN TEEN DATING RELATIONSHIPS

Decide which friend, teacher, relative or police officer you can trust to tell.

Call any battered women's hotline. They can help teens too. Abuse includes verbal/emotional, sexual and physical. Mid Valley Women's Crisis advocates can be reached at (503) 399-7722 or 1-866-399-7722 (toll free). You can also speak to a victim advocate at Salem Police Department at (503) 588-6499 x7116 or at the District Attorney's office.

IDEAS OF THINGS TO TAKE WITH YOU WHEN YOU LEAVE:

Driver's license; children's birth certificates; your birth certificate; social security card(s); money or credit cards; bank books; checkbooks.

Your restraining order if you have one; lease/rental agreement or house deed; car registration & insurance papers; medical records for you and your children; school records; work permits/green card/visa; passport; divorce papers; custody papers.

House and car keys; medications; small saleable objects; jewelry; address book; phone card; pictures of you/children/abuser; toiletries; change of clothes.

REMEMBER:

You do not deserve to be abused. Abuse that occurs is not your fault! You do not cause the violence. It is the choice of your abuser to become violent and be controlling.

Keep your safety plan and resource information in a place your abuser does not have access to. It will do you less good if your abuser knows your safety plan and the resources you may attempt to access.

To talk to a Victim Advocate, call (you do not have to report a crime to talk to an advocate):

Salem Police Department: (503) 588-6499

Polk County Victim Assistance: (503)623-9268

Marion County Victim Assistance: (503) 588-5253

Sable House: (503) 623-4033

Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Service: (503) 399-7722 or toll free at 1-866-399-7722.