

## PERSONALIZED SAFETY PLAN

The following steps represent my plan for increasing my safety and preparing in advance for the possibility of further violence. Although I do not have control over my partner's violence, I do have a choice about how to respond to him/her and how to best get my children and myself to safety.

### STEP 1: SAFETY DURING A VIOLENT INCIDENT

- A. If we are going to have an argument, I can try to move to a space that holds the lowest level of risk, such as \_\_\_\_\_.  
Try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, and kitchens, near weapons, or in rooms without access to an outside door.
- B. If it is not safe to stay, I can go to \_\_\_\_\_.  
Practice how to get out safely. What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells, or fire escapes would you use?
- C. I can keep my purse and car keys ready and put them \_\_\_\_\_  
so that I can leave quickly.
- D. I can tell \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
about the violence and ask them to call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my home.
- E. I can use \_\_\_\_\_ as my code word with my children or my friends so they can call for help.
- F. I can teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the police and fire department.
- G. If I have to leave my home, I can go to \_\_\_\_\_,  
or \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_.  
Decide this even if you don't think there will be a next time.
- **Use your judgment.** If the situation is very serious, give him/her what he/she wants to calm him/her down. You have to protect yourself until you (and your children) are out of danger.
  - Always remember: **YOU DESERVE BETTER THAN THIS!**

## STEP 2: SAFETY WHEN PREPARING TO LEAVE

Leaving an abusive relationship must be done strategically in order to increase safety. This is a time when violence may escalate.

- A. I can leave money and an extra set of keys with \_\_\_\_\_ so that I can leave quickly.
- B. I can keep copies of important documents or keys and some extra clothes with \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. I can open a savings account to increase my independence. (Preferably opened in a different bank than one you and your spouse use jointly.)
- D. Other things I can do to increase my independence include:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- E. **Children's Inn Crisis Hotline** number is **1-888-378-7398**. Another safe resource I could call is \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.  
I understand that if I use my phone on an account I share with my abuser, the phone bill will identify any numbers that I called. To keep my telephone communications confidential, I can either keep coins on hand to use a payphone or I might get a friend to permit me to use his/her phone.
- F. I can check with \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.
- G. I can sit down and review my safety plan every \_\_\_\_\_ so I am familiar with the safest way to leave my home.
- H. I can rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.
- **Remember:** If you tell your partner that you'll leave if he ever hits you again, think about whether you're giving him permission to hit you "just one more time."

### STEP 3: SAFETY IN MY OWN RESIDENCE

A. If my partner no longer lives with me, I can take action to ensure my safety and my children's safety in my home. Safety measures I can use include:

1. I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible.
2. I can replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors.
3. I can install security systems including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, an electronic system, etc.
4. I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows.
5. I can install smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor in my home.
6. I can install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to my home.

B. I can teach my children to \_\_\_\_\_  
when I am not available.

C. I can inform \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_,  
and \_\_\_\_\_ about who has permission to pick up my children.

D. I can teach my children how to use the telephone to make a collect call to me and to \_\_\_\_\_ in the event that my partner abducts them.

E. I can inform \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_,  
and \_\_\_\_\_ that my partner no longer resides with me and that they should call the police if he is observed near my home.

**STEP 4: SAFETY WITH A PROTECTIVE ORDER**

- A. I can keep my protective order \_\_\_\_\_.  
Always keep it on or near your person. If you change purses, that is the first thing that should go in.
- B. If my partner breaks the protective order, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. If the police are not responsive, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- D. I can inform \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
that I have a protective order in effect.
- E. If my partner destroys my protective order, I can get another copy from the \_\_\_\_\_ Court.

**STEP 5: SAFETY ON THE JOB AND IN PUBLIC**

- A. I can inform \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_,  
and \_\_\_\_\_ at work of my situation.
- B. I can use voice mail, the receptionist, or a co-worker to help screen my telephone calls at work.
- C. When leaving work, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- D. If problems occur when I am driving home, I can \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- E. If I use public transportation, I can \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- F. I can also \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

## **STEP 6: SAFETY AND DRUG OR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION**

The use of any alcohol or other drugs can reduce a woman's awareness and ability to act quickly to protect herself from her battering partner. Furthermore, the batterer's use of alcohol or other drugs may give him/her an excuse to use violence. Therefore, in the context of alcohol or other drug consumption, a woman needs to make specific safety plans.

- A. If I am going to consume alcohol or other drugs, I can do so in a safe place with people who understand the risk of violence and are committed to my safety.
- B. I can also \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. If my partner is consuming, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- D. To protect my children, I might \_\_\_\_\_  
or \_\_\_\_\_.

\* The legal outcomes of using illegal drugs can be very hard on an individual in an abusive relation, may hurt your relationship with your children, and put you at a disadvantage in other legal actions with your perpetrator. Therefore carefully consider the potential cost of the use of illegal drugs.

## **STEP 7: SAFETY AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH**

- A. If I feel down and ready to return to a potentially abusive situation, I can
- B. When I have to communicate with my partner in person or by telephone, I can
- C. I can try to use positive self-talk with myself and be assertive with others. I can tell myself that I don't deserve to be beaten whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me.
- D. I can read \_\_\_\_\_ to help me feel stronger.
- E. I can call \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_,  
and \_\_\_\_\_ as additional resources to support me.

**WHAT I NEED TO TAKE WHEN I LEAVE:**

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Identification for myself          | Address book                             |
| Driver's license                   | Pictures                                 |
| Children's birth certificates      | Medical records - for all family members |
| My birth certificate               | Social Security cards                    |
| Money                              | Welfare identification                   |
| Lease/Rental Agreement/House deed  | School records                           |
| Mortgage payment book              | Work permits                             |
| Bank books                         | Green Card                               |
| Check books                        | Passport(s)                              |
| Credit Cards                       | Divorce papers                           |
| Insurance papers                   | Jewelry                                  |
| Keys - House/Car/Office            | Children's favorite toys and/or blankets |
| Medications for me and my children | Items of special sentimental value       |
| Small saleable objects             |  |

I can keep the items concerning me in one location. If I have to leave in a hurry, I can grab those items quickly.

**IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS:**

Police department: 911

Attorney (name & number): \_\_\_\_\_

Victims Witness Assistant: \_\_\_\_\_

Courthouse/Clerk of Courts: \_\_\_\_\_

Children's Inn Crisis Hotline: 605-338-4880

Children's Inn Toll-Free Hotline: 1-888-378-7398

SD Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-430-SAFE

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*Adapted from "Personalized Safety Plan," Office of the City Attorney, City of San Diego, CA*