

Personalized Safety Plan

Family Violence is never the survivor's fault. Safety can be a concern for survivors of family violence, and the following questions and prompts offer you strategies to increase your safety in different situations.

Consider keeping a copy of this document to help you remember safety steps you have outlined, but take care to keep it in a safe place where your partner is not likely to find it. If your partner becomes aware of this information, create a new safety plan.



TEXAS COUNCIL ON FAMILY VIOLENCE

www.tcfv.org

Safety During a Violent Incident

Choosing the actions now that you would take if something happens may help you make quicker decisions in the moment.

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If you think there is going to be an argument or a violent incident, where can you move that is safer (a room with a door or window to the outside)?

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Think about how to get out of each room in advance. What is the safest way to leave (which specific door, window, stairwell, etc.)?

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If you need to leave, where would you go?

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If you can't go there, where else might you go?

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Where can you keep your keys and wallet so that you will be able to find them?

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What might you tell your children about what they should do?

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Is there a neighbor or trusted person who you could talk to about calling the police? How would you alert them (call, text, if they hear suspicious noises)?

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Is there a code word you can use with children, family, or friends so they know to call for help?

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Remember: You know your partner best and can judge the situation. If it is very serious, trust your instincts on how to calm the situation down.

Safety When Preparing to Leave

If you decide to leave your partner, plans and preparation can be critical. Abusive partners too often escalate their violent behavior if they believe their partner is leaving the relationship.

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Do you have someone or somewhere, besides your house, you can leave some money, an extra set of keys, extra clothes, and copies of important documents?

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Can you open a separate bank account to increase your independence?

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Can you get an alternative/prepaid cell phone to make phone calls without your partner knowing?

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Who can you talk to about staying with them when you leave?

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What are some other steps you can take when preparing to leave?

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Items to think about taking or keeping with a trusted person:

- Cell phone/tablets
- ID card
- Birth certificates for you and your children
- Social Security cards
- School records
- Medical records
- Car title/registration
- Credit/debit cards
- Lease/rental agreement or deeds
- Work permits
- Passport
- Insurance papers
- Jewelry
- Medications
- Financial documents
- Sentimental items
- _____
- _____
- _____

Review and rehearse your safety plan often, and, as appropriate, practice it with your children. If it is safe, keep a journal/log of all violent incidents, noting dates, events, and threats made—including those made online or through text messages and phone calls. Take screenshots or forward any threatening social media posts or messages, emails, voicemails, etc., to a safe account or to someone you trust.

Staying Safe After Leaving

If you live away from your abusive partner, there are steps you can take to increase your safety. Some of them might work well for you and others may not. Think about other factors specific to your location and situation that will help you stay safe.

Consider the following ways to increase your safety:

- Change locks
- Change passwords on all accounts and social media
- Turn off GPS on all devices
- Make sure all windows are secure
- Have an outside lighting system with motion sensors
- Install a security system
- If available, give your workplace security a photo of your abuser
- Change store locations or public places (coffee shops, restaurants, etc.) that you frequently visit
- Talk to an advocate about how to keep your address confidential, including enrolling in the Address Confidentiality Program, if necessary



What are some other steps you can take to stay safe after leaving?



Protecting Your Children's Safety

Sometimes it is important to restrict who has permission to pick up your children, including your partner. This can require a court order in some instances. If applicable, you can inform the following about pick-up permission:

- School and/or teacher
- Day Care staff and/or babysitter
- Place of worship
- Other: _____

Other things to consider about safety and your children:

- As appropriate, teach your children when and how to call 911.
- You can plan with your children when and how to leave if violence escalates, or that they might go to a specific place at home if they feel afraid.
- If you are worried about your partner finding your current location, talk to an advocate about how to protect your children's school or place of activity from publishing personal information and from posting pictures of your children.



Where can you meet for visitation or exchanges that feels safe?



Sometimes abusers use family phone plans or gifts to children as a way to track your whereabouts. How can you screen gifts or talk to your children about this?



Staying Safe with a Protective Order

Abusers may obey Protective Orders, but one can never be sure which partner will obey and which will not. The following are some steps that you can take to help the enforcement of the Protective Order.



Keep a copy of your Protective Order with you at all times. Where are some other places that you can keep copies?



Make sure that your Protective Order is filed with either the District or County Clerk and you know the process of how to get a certified copy if needed. If you move to a different county in Texas, you can register your Protective Order with the county and local law enforcement. If you are worried about filing your Protective Order with your address information, talk to the Court Clerk or an advocate about how to avoid that.



District or County Clerk





Local Law Enforcement



Local Family Violence Program

You can inform your employer, close friends, children's schools, and others that you have a Protective Order in effect and can give them copies if needed.



- Employer
- Close friends
- Children's schools
- Other _____

The local family violence program can help if issues come up with your Protective Order.

If your partner violates the Protective Order, call the police to report the violation, contact your attorney and advocate, and document all violations.

If law enforcement does not help, you can contact your advocate or attorney to file a complaint.



My Advocate



My Attorney

Protecting Your Emotional Safety

The experience of being abused physically and/or verbally is exhausting, scary, and emotionally draining. The process of building a new life for yourself takes much energy and incredible courage. Write down some options to help you during this difficult time.

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When you have to communicate with your partner in person or over the phone, what positive things can you do before and/or after to feel better?

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What can you do if you feel upset?

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What is one phrase that you can use to remind yourself of all your strengths?

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How can you create a peaceful space for yourself?

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What is one thing you can tell yourself when you feel like others are trying to control or abuse you?

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What are some other things that make you feel stronger?

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Understanding Your Technology Safety

Some things to consider about cell phones:

- Do you know how to turn off the GPS on your phone?
 - Do you have a shared family plan where your partner could track you or monitor who you call?
 - Is it safer for you to have a separate alternative or prepaid phone?
 - Do you know how to check your list of apps to make sure something was not downloaded on your phone?
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What are some other ways to increase safety with your cell phone?

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Some things to consider about online safety:

- Can you create a private email account?
 - Is it safe for you to change account passwords that your abuser knows?
 - Is there a public computer or a computer of a trusted friend you can use if you're worried about your online activities being monitored?
 - Do you know how to delete history on your computer and how that can be unsafe in certain situations?
 - If you are trying to keep your location confidential from your partner, try Googling your name to see if your location is easily found. Keep in mind to not Google your name often.
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What are some other ways to increase safety with your computer and/or online accounts?

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Other Strategies to Feel Safer

Telephone Numbers to Remember



National Domestic Violence Hotline



Family Violence Program



Counselor / Advocate



Local Police Department



Victim Services



Your Workplace



Attorney



School / Daycare



Doctor / Health Care Provider



Local Hospital



Friend



Friend



Family Member



Family Member



Other



Other