

The following represents my plan for increasing my safety and preparing in advance for the possibility of further abuse or violence.

Although I do not have control over my abuser's behavior, I do have a choice about how to respond to him/her and how to best get myself to safety. Some of the things I can do are:

1. **INCREASING MY OVERALL SAFETY**. I may not always be able to avoid violent incidents. In order to increase my safety, I may use a variety of strategies. I can use some or all of the following strategies:

- a. If I decide to leave, I will ...

- b. I can keep my personal belongings ready, so that I may leave quickly, and put them ...

- c. I can tell the following neighbors about the violence and request they call 911 (civilian or military police) if they hear suspicious noises coming from my house.

- d. When I expect we are going to have an incident, I will try to move to a space that is lowest risk such as ...

- e. I will use my judgment and intuition. If the situation is very serious, I can give my abuser what he/she wants to calm him/her down. I have to protect myself until I/we are out of danger.

- f. If I have to leave my home, I will go to the following locations ...

- g. I can practice getting out safely and look for which doors, windows, or stairwells would be best.

- h. I will use a code word with my children, family, or friends if I need the police.

- i. I will TRUST my instincts. I have the right to seek protection until I am out of danger.

[WITH MY CHILDREN]

- j. I can teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the police and the fire department, and how to report violence or other problems.

 - k. I can also teach some of these strategies to some/all of my children.
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2. **PROTECTING MYSELF DURING AN INCIDENT OR IF PLANNING TO LEAVE.** If I am planning to leave, I should do so without telling my abuser face-to-face. If I have to leave quickly (during an incident), I WILL JUST LEAVE. I will not talk with my abuser about it. If I am going to leave at another time, I will leave when my abuser is not home and communicate with him/her later by phone or other communication from a safe place.

3. **SAFETY WHEN PREPARING TO LEAVE.** I may decide to leave the residence I share with my abuser. I must have a careful plan for leaving in order to increase my safety. My abuser might strike out and become more violent if he/she believes that I am leaving the relationship. I can use some or all of the following safety strategies:

- a. I will leave money and an extra set of keys/clothes with _____ so I can leave quickly.
- b. I will keep copies of important documents or keys at:
- c. I will open a savings account by (date) _____, to increase my independence. I will use _____ as the mailing address so that the monthly statement is not sent to my home.
- d. Other things I can do to increase my independence include: _____
- e. The domestic violence program's hotline number is: _____. I can seek shelter by calling this hotline.
- f. I can keep change for phone calls on me at all times. I understand that if I use my telephone credit card, the following month the telephone bill will tell my abuser those numbers that I called before or after I left. To keep my telephone communication confidential, I must either use coins or a pre-paid phone card or I might get a friend to permit me to use his/her telephone credit card for a limited time when I first leave.
- g. I will check with _____ and _____ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.
- h. I can leave extra clothes with: _____

i. I will not tell my abuser face-to-face that I am leaving, or I will leave without talking with my abuser.

j. I will sit down and review my safety plan every ____ in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence. (Domestic violence advocate or friend) ____ has agreed to help me review this plan.

[WITH MY CHILDREN]

k. I will rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.

4. **ITEMS TO TAKE WHEN LEAVING.** If I decide to leave my abuser, it is important to take certain items with me. I may also want to give an extra copy of papers and an extra set of clothing to a friend just in case I have to leave quickly. Items on the following list are the most important to take. If there is time, I might take other items or store them somewhere outside my home so I can get to them easily. These items might best be placed in one location, so that if we have to leave in a hurry, I can grab them quickly. When I leave, I should take:

Items:(select all that apply)

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|--|---|
| Identification for myself | Military Identification Card |
| Birth certificates for myself and my children | Green Card |
| Passports | Divorce papers / custody papers |
| Social Security numbers for myself, DoD sponsor, and my children | Medical records |
| Money | Lease/rental agreements |
| Checkbook | Bank books, login information |
| ATM (Automated Teller Machine) Card | School and vaccination records |
| Credit Cards | Insurance papers |
| Keys - house, car, office | Address book |
| Driver's license and registration | Pictures |
| Medications for myself, my children | Jewelry |
| Work permits | Children's favorite toys and/or blankets |
| | Small saleable items (not abuser's property.) |

Other Items to take include:

5. **SAFETY IN MY OWN RESIDENCE.** If I no longer reside with my abuser or if I have my own residence, there are many things that I can do to increase my safety in my own residence. Depending on my residence, it may not be possible to do all the measures that are listed here or to do them all at once, but I will take all of them into consideration to protect my safety. Safety measures I can use include:

- a. I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible.
- b. I can replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors.
- c. I can install security systems including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, an electronic system, etc.
- d. I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows.
- e. I can install smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor in my house/ apartment.
- f. I can install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to my house.
- g. I will teach my children how to use the telephone to make a telephone call to me and to a trusted adult such as _____ in the event that my abuser takes the children.

h. I will tell people who take care of my children which people have permission to pick up my children. The people I will inform about pick-up permission include:

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|--|----------------|
| School | Day Care Staff |
| Babysitter | Teacher |
| Sunday School / Religious School Teacher | Others |

i. I can inform the following people that my abuser no longer resides with me and they should call the military or civilian police if he/she is observed near my residence:

- | | |
|----------|---------------------------|
| Neighbor | Pastor / religious leader |
| Friend | Others |

6. **SAFETY WITH A PROTECTION ORDER.** My abuser should obey protection orders, but I can never be sure. I recognize that I may need to ask the military or civilian police, the courts, and the military commanding officer to enforce my protection order. The following are some steps that I can take to help the enforcement of my protection order:

a. I will keep my protection order at:

b. I will always keep a copy of my protection order with me. If I change purses/wallets, that's the first thing that should go in.

c. I will give a copy of my protection order to military and civilian police departments in the community where I work, in those communities where I usually visit family or friends, and in the community where I live.

d. There may be a county registry of protection orders that all police departments can call to confirm a protection order. I will check to make sure that my order is in the registry. The telephone number for the county registry of protection orders is:

e. For further safety, if I often visit other counties, I might file my protection order with the court in those counties. I will register my protection order in the following counties:

f. I can call the domestic violence program if I am not sure about b., c., or d. above or if I have some problem with my protection order.

g. I will inform my employer, my clergy person, my closest friends, and _____ that I have a protection order in effect.

h. If my abuser destroys my protection order I can get another copy by:

i. If my abuser violates my protection order, I can call the police and report a violation, contact my attorney, call my advocate, and/or advise the court of the violation

j. If law enforcement does not help, I can contact my advocate or attorney and will file a complaint with the chief of the law enforcement department.

k. I can also file a private civil complaint in the jurisdiction in the U.S. where the violation occurred. I can charge my abuser with a violation of the protection order. (I can also ask if the jurisdiction where the violation occurred permits the filing of private criminal complaints.) I can call the domestic violence advocate to help me with this.

7. **SAFETY ON THE JOB AND IN PUBLIC.** I must decide if and when I will tell others that my abuser is abusive and that I may be at continued risk. Friends, family and co-workers can all offer protection. I should carefully consider which people to invite to help secure my safety. I might do any or all of the following:

- a. I can inform my boss, the security supervisor, military commanding officer, senior enlisted advisor, and _____ at work of my situation.

- b. I can ask _____ to help screen my telephone calls at work.

- c. When leaving work, I can:

- d. When driving home, if problems occur, I can:

- e. If I use public transit, I can:

- f. I can use different grocery stores and shopping malls to conduct my business and shop at hours that are different than those when I was residing with my abuser.

- g. I can use a different bank and take care of my banking at hours different from those I used when residing with my abuser.

- h. I can also: _____

8. **SAFETY AND DRUG OR ALCOHOL USE.** Many people use alcohol. Many use mood-altering drugs. Some drugs are legal, others are not. The Department of Defense has a zero-tolerance policy for active duty members with regard to the use of illegal drugs, and there are Federal and State criminal laws addressing the use of illegal substances. Therefore, I should carefully consider the potential costs to my family and me if someone in my family is using illegal drugs. But beyond this, the use of any alcohol or other drugs can reduce my awareness and ability to act quickly to protect myself from my abuser. Alcohol or drug use may also affect the way my abuser responds to different situations. Therefore, in the context of drug or alcohol use, I need to make specific safety plans. If drug or alcohol use has occurred in my relationship with my abuser, I can enhance my safety by some or all of the following:

- a. If I am going to use alcohol, I can do so in a safe place and with people who understand the risk of violence and are committed to my safety.

- b. I can also:

- c. If my abuser is using, I can:

- d. I might also:

- e. To safeguard my children, I might:

9. **SAFETY AND MY EMOTIONAL HEALTH.** The experience of being battered and verbally degraded by abusers is usually exhausting and emotionally draining. The process of building a new life for myself takes much courage and incredible energy. To conserve my emotional energy and resources and to avoid hard emotional times, I can do some of the following:

- a. If I feel down and ready to return to a potentially abusive situation, I can:

 - b. When I have to communicate with my abuser in person or by telephone, I can:

 - c. I can try to use "I can ..." statements with myself and to be assertive with others.
 - d. I can tell myself: "____" whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me.

 - e. I can read ____ to help me feel stronger.

 - f. I can call ____, ____, and ____ as resources to be of support to me.

 - g. Other things I can do to help me feel stronger are:

 - h. I can attend workshops and support groups at the domestic violence program or ____ or ____ to gain support and strengthen my relationships with other people.
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10. **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SAFETY:**

- a. Internet, social media, and tech safety – I can update/change all of my account passwords so that my abuser does not have access to my social media accounts.
 - b. I can take pictures of important paperwork and email copies to a secure password protected email address of my choice.
 - c. I can keep a printed list of important phone numbers available and in my personal belongings in case my cell phone is lost, stolen, or broken.
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I SHOULD NOT KEEP THIS PLAN WITH ME.

I SHOULD DISCUSS WITH MY VICTIM ADVOCATE WHERE AND WITH WHOM THIS PLAN WILL BE KEPT.

VICTIM ADVOCACY SERVICES MAY BE REQUESTED AT YOUR LOCAL FLEET AND FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER.