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Safety Planning Booklet

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WHAT IS SAFETY PLANNING?

Safety planning is to assist you and your children and pets to feel safer. Safety plans may help you anticipate dangers and plan things you can do to improve your safety while you are in an unsafe relationship. Safety planning is also important when you plan to leave an unsafe relationship. The suggestions in this booklet can assist you with your own personal safety plan.



PREPARING TO LEAVE

- Pack an emergency bag with essential items such as spare car and house keys, medication, a change of clothing, nappies, emergency money and important documentation. Consider storing this bag at your work or a trusted friend's house, rather than at home with the person using violence.
- Plan how you will leave. Will you be driving, being picked up by a safe friend or family member, or taking a taxi?
- Have somewhere planned for where you can go when you leave. This might be a safe friend or family's house, your local police station or domestic violence service.
- You can contact DVConnect 24/7 on 1800 811 811 if you need to access emergency accommodation once you have left the unsafe property. This is a free call from any payphone if you don't have credit on your mobile phone.
- Consider when would be the safest time to leave. When the person using violence is at work or out of the house?
- You might consider requesting attendance of police (keep the peace job) to assist you to leave if the person using violence is rarely away from the home.
- Only tell people that you trust about your plan to leave.
- Make sure the location settings on your phone are switched off, including in apps that share your location such as Find My Phone or Snap Chat.
- Ensure you delete things such as messages, emails or internet history that could give away your intention to leave or indicate where you might be going.
- Consider opening your own bank account and try to save a small amount of emergency money. This will increase your independence.
- Consider important documents or identification to bring with you. You may consider making copies of these documents in advance:
 - Driver's license
 - Medicare or healthcare cards
 - Birth certificates
 - Marriage certificates
 - Citizenship documents (passport, immigration papers, residency)
 - Domestic Violence Orders
 - Family Court Orders
 - Property documents (property titles, deeds, rental agreements etc)

Checklist- WHAT TO TAKE WHEN YOU LEAVE

These items might best be placed in one location so that if you have to leave in a hurry, you can take them quickly. Remember most of the following items can be replaced, so in an emergency situation your priority is to get **yourself and your children to safety**.

- ☐ Identification for myself
- ☐ My and my children's birth certificates
- ☐ My wallet including bank card, credit cards, driver's license and money
- ☐ My keys (house, car, office)
- ☐ Required medication for myself and my children
- ☐ A copy of my DVO
- ☐ My mobile phone and charger
- ☐ Important paperwork. For example, divorce papers, lease/rental agreement, mortgage deed or property deed, bank details/statement, insurance papers
- ☐ Passports
- ☐ Medical records
- ☐ Changes of clothing, including nappies
- ☐ Small saleable items. For example, jewellery or electronics
- ☐ Items of sentimental value. For example, photographs.
- ☐ Children's favorite toys and/or blankets



SAFETY PLANNING FOR AN EMERGENCY

- Identify a safe area of the house. Ideally this should be somewhere with an exit (door or window) and a door that you can lock.
- Where possible, avoid areas in the house with no exit and with items that can be used as weapons, such as the kitchen or a shed.
- Avoid wearing scarves or long jewellery that could be used as a weapon against you.
- Give your trusted neighbours, friends and family permission to contact the police if they can see or hear a situation escalating.
- Try to keep your keys, purse and charged mobile phone with you at all times.
- Consider having a code word or emoji that you can say or send to trusted friends or family if you are unsafe and need them to come and collect you or contact the police.
- Consider reverse parking your car if you need to leave in a hurry. Park in a position where the person using violence cannot block you in.
- Plan where you will go and how you might get there. Do you have a neighbour's home you could go to? Or is there a public space such as a hospital or shopping centre close by?



SAFETY PLANNING WITH CHILDREN

- Decide on a safe place the children and pets can go in case of an emergency. Plan an escape route to get there.
- Discuss a code word or phrase with your children, so they know when they need to leave the house immediately.
- Teach your children how and when to contact 000, including what they would need to say (their name, phone number and address).
- Teach your children that they only need to keep themselves safe in an incident. They do not need to try and stop the person using violence or rescue you.

SAFETY AFTER LEAVING

If you are staying at home

Post separation can be a time of increased danger for people experiencing domestic and family violence. Safety planning during this time is crucial.

If you are staying at home:

- Where possible, have a trusted friend or family member stay with you after a recent separation.
- Advise your neighbours that the person using violence no longer resides with you and they should contact police if they see them or their vehicle near your home.
- Consider installing a security camera and sensor lights on your property.
- Have trusted friends or family check in with you regularly and have a plan of what they should do if they are unable to make contact with you.
- Consider changing the locks on your home. You can speak with your local domestic violence service to see if they can support you with this.
- Assess if your home is able to be secured. Consider placing dowel in window runners and sliding doors to stop them being forced open.
- If possible, keep gates and sheds padlocked.
- If your letter box is unable to be locked, consider having your mail redirected to a PO box or a safe friend or family member's home.
- If you have a garage, keep your garage door locked at all times and reverse park your car in the garage.

Safety in public or at your workplace

- Decide who you might advise of your situation and what you would like them to do if the person using violence presents to your workplace.
- Consider your safety when leaving work. Can a colleague or security walk you to your car? Can you park somewhere that is well-lit with cameras? If using public transport, can you walk to the bus stop or train station with a colleague?
- Consider using different routes to drive home, doing your grocery shopping on different days, or using a different shopping centre. Avoid frequently visited places.
- If there is an emergency when you are in a public place, request that someone contact police. This may be security, a shop assistant, or a member of the public.
- If you are being followed when driving, ensure you don't stop and, if possible, drive straight to a police station.

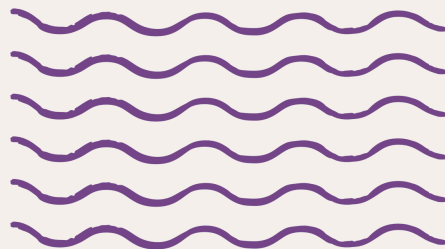
Safety and Technology - phone and internet

- Change all of your passwords on your phone, social media accounts, phone apps, email accounts and online banking. Do not create new passwords on devices you believe may be monitored.
- Consider creating a new email account and use a non-identifying username.
- Consider changing your mobile number and ensure your number is set to private. Only provide your new mobile number to people you trust.
- Make sure you use different passwords for different log-ins.
- Ensure location settings on your smart phone are turned off.
- Check apps on your phone to ensure their location settings are also turned off (e.g. Snapchat or Uber).
- Consider completing a 'Factory Reset' on your smart phone.
- Avoid posting about your location online, including events or venues you attend. This includes asking friends or family not to tag you in posts.

Further technology-specific safety planning can be accessed through WESNET (www.techsafety.org.au)

Domestic and Family Violence Orders (DVO)

- If you have a DVO, consider if the conditions are relevant to your current situation, or if you need to apply for them to be varied.
- Keep a copy of your DVO on you at all times, in your purse, scanned to a safe email address, or a copy provided to a trusted friend or family member.
- If you have a DVO and the person using violence is breaching the order, report these instances to the police.
- Keep a record of all breaches of the DVO, including details such as dates, times and photos where possible. Keep all text messages, emails, social media messages, missed calls and voice messages that are breaches of the DVO. Consider using a phone app to help you record incidents of abuse (Arc App).
- If you would like to apply for a DVO, you can contact your local domestic violence service to discuss your options, or you can seek support from legal services such as Legal Aid or Women's Legal Service.





OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

If you still need to have contact with the person using violence, consider keeping all of your communication in writing (text messages or emails). If you do need to meet the person using violence, make sure this is done in a public place.

Schools or Childcare

Advise your children's school or childcare who has permission to collect your children and what they should do if the person using violence tries to collect them. If you have a DVO or a FLCO, you may provide a copy to the school or childcare.

You might consider collecting your children from an alternate pick up point if the person using violence is likely to be waiting close by.

Australia Post

Organise to have your mail redirected to your new address or consider a post-office box. You may be able to access free mail redirection for up to 22 months here: Free 12-month mail redirection for special circumstances - Australia Post (auspost.com.au)

Australian Electoral Commission

Register to have 'Silent Elector Status' by completing the form which can be accessed here: Silent electors (aec.gov.au)

Queensland Statewide Tenancy Advice and Referral Service (QSTARS)

If you are experiencing domestic and family violence, you have the right to provide 7 days' notice to end your tenancy. Tenants are able to use 'Notice Ending Tenancies' which will also require evidence of domestic and family violence. For more information, visit QSTARS (<https://qstars.org.au>)

PERSONAL SAFETY PLAN



The following steps represent my plan for increasing my safety and preparing for the possibility of further violence. While I do not have control over my partner's violence, I do have control over how I respond and how to best get myself and my children and pets to safety.

Safety Planning for an Emergency

I can use some or all of the following strategies:

- A. If I decide to leave, I will _____
(practice how to get out safely- what doors, windows, elevators, stairwells or fire escapes would you use?)
- B. To leave quickly, I can keep my purse and car keys ready and put them
(place) _____.
- C. I can tell _____ about the violence and request they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my house.
- D. I can teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the police.
- E. I will use _____ as my code word with my children or my friends and family so they can call for help if needed.
- F. If I have to leave my home, I will go _____ (decide this even if you don't think there will be a next time). If I cannot go to the location above, I can go to _____.
- G. I can teach some of these strategies to some/all of my children.
- H. I can teach my children to call 000 in an emergency and what they would need to say. For example: their full name, address and telephone number.
- I. When I think we are going to have an argument, I will try to move to a space that is lowest risk, such as _____.
(try to avoid the bathroom or kitchens, near weapons or in rooms without access to an outside door.)
- J. I will use my judgement and intuition. If the situation is very serious, I can give my partner what they want to help calm them down. I have to protect myself until I/we are out of danger.

Safety when preparing to leave

I can use some or all of the following safety strategies:

- A. I will leave money and an extra set of keys with _____ or _____ 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.

Other things I can do to increase my independence include:

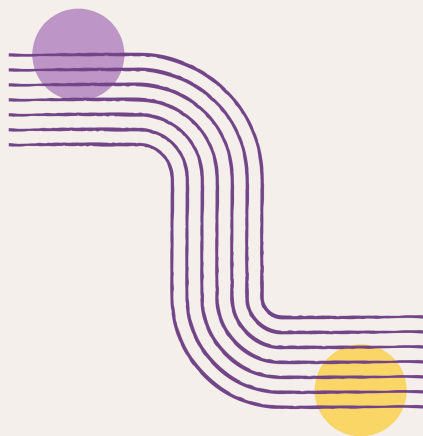
- A. The domestic violence crisis service number is 1800 811 811. I can seek safe accommodation 24/7 by calling this number.
- B. I will keep my mobile phone charged and with me at all times.
- C. I will check with _____ to see if I would be able to stay with them or if they would be able to lend me some money.
- D. I can leave extra clothes with _____.
- E. I will sit down and review my safety plan every _____ in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence. The following people have agreed to help me review this plan (for example, a domestic violence support worker, friend, family member):
_____.
- F. I will rehearse my escape plan and practice it with my children.
- G. I can pack an emergency bag for myself and my children and hide it somewhere safe. For example, I can hide it in the car, at a neighbour's house or friend's house (try to avoid mutual friends or family).
- H. I can try and keep a small amount of money and a travel card with me at all times for bus fares, fuel etc.

Safety in the home

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 such as additional locks, poles to place between sliding doors or windows, security cameras, a gate alarm, sensor lights etc.
- D. I can install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to my house.
- E. I will tell people who take care of my children who has permission to pick up my children and that my partner is not permitted to do so. For example schools, childcare, babysitter, neighbours etc). The people I will inform about pick-up permission include:

- F. I will tell the following people that the person using violence no longer lives with me and they should contact the police if they are seen at or near my home:



Safety with a Domestic Violence Order (DVO).

The following are some steps that I can take to help the enforcement of my DVO:

A. I will keep my DVO (for example: in my wallet, or keep a copy with my closest friend): _____.

B. I will inform the following people that I have a DVO in place (for example: my employer, my closest friend and my children's school):
_____.

C. If my partner breaches the DVO I can call the police and report a breach. I will keep a written record of any breaches (for example: time, date, the incident, photos).

Safety in public or at your workplace

I may do any or all of the following:

A. I can inform my manager 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 transport, I can _____.

F. I can use different shopping centres and shop on differing hours and days than I did when living with my violent partner.

Safety and my emotional health

The process of building a new life for myself takes 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 am considering returning to a potentially abusive situation, I can _____.

B. When I have to communicate with the person using violence (in person or by telephone) I can _____.

C. I can tell myself, '_____' whenever I feel others are trying to control, manipulate, or abuse me.

D. I can read or listen to _____ to help me feel stronger.

E. I can call _____ or _____.

F. Other things I can do to help myself feel stronger are:

_____.

I can contact my local domestic violence organisation, who can help me access counselling and support groups to gain support and strengthen my relationships with other people.





Useful Contacts

- CADA Caboolture- 07 5498 9533
- CADA Redcliffe- 07 3283 6930
- CADA Strathpine- 07 3205 5457
- DVConnect Womensline (24/7)- 1800 811 811
- DVConnect Mensline (24/7) - 1800 600 636
- 13 YARN - (24/7) - 13 92 76
- 1800-RESPECT (24/7)- 1800 737 732
- In an emergency dial: 000

NOTES

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