

Creating a Domestic Violence Safety Plan

Safety planning is about helping the victim to identify her options to minimize the danger to herself and her children.

It is an “immediate response” that will ensure safety for the victim and the children.

This handout contains basic information that you need to gather and explore with the adult survivor in domestic violence cases to create a plan for her safety and to promote the safety of the children.

1. Identify any cues that precipitated past domestic violence incidents (e.g., alcohol, drugs, stress, arguments, weekends, nights, etc.)

Example: Worker identifies with the survivor that most incidents of physical abuse occur on the weekends when her partner is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

2. Discuss with the survivor the abusive partner’s work schedule and location, her work schedule and location, his social network, her social network, and any identified patterns of interaction between his employment, her employment or their social networks that might contribute to her safety

Example: Worker and survivor identify that her abusive partner, whom she is currently separated from, knows the usual route she takes home from work. They identify an alternate route to promote her safety, as he has stalked her in the past.

3. Assess with the survivor what has worked in the past to protect her and the children.

Example: In the past, she has left him and went into hiding in a shelter. This worked until he found her after a relative she disclosed her location to then disclosed it to him.

4. Discuss the safest way to contact the family for future visits

Example: The worker and survivor agree that the worker should only contact her via phone at her place of employment, and not at the survivor’s home.

5. Help identify who the survivor can call or go to for help in an emergency (i.e., number, address).

Example: The worker and survivor identify her sister who lives out of state as a resource she can go to if necessary. They also identify a crisis intervention hotline.

6. Help identify where the survivor can go for help if there is an emergency.

Example: The worker and survivor identify that she can contact the NYPD and also go to a local hospital if necessary. The worker provides her with the numbers and addresses for these resources and they discuss how she will get there (such as having money set aside for a taxi or calling for a police escort or an ambulance).

7. Discuss what can be done legally to protect the survivor and children from violence.

Example: The worker provides the survivor with information about gaining an Order of Protection, calling police and or the abusive partner's parole/probation officer, meeting with District Attorney, if charges are pending).

8. Discuss with the survivor the need to share the existence of or even a copy of any current Order of Protection with the children's school, day care, neighbors, babysitters, etc. are aware/have a copy. Have the survivor ask neighbors to call police if the abusive partner is seen. Also suggest that the survivor contact the local Domestic Violence Prevention Office to discuss other strategies to promote her safety and that of her children.

9. Discuss the survivor's access to important items for herself and the children (keys, birth certificates, social security, medication, money, etc.). Plan with the survivor to hide a bag with these important items in it in case she needs to leave urgently.

10. Offer to help the survivor obtain a cell-phone programmed to dial 911.

Example: The worker contacts the Deputy Director of Administration for his field office to obtain a phone for the survivor.

11. Discuss available services for the survivor.

Example: The worker discusses the Family Violence Prevention Program, PPRS, Alternatives to Shelter Program, Non-Residential DV Programs, community shelters, etc., with the survivor and assesses her readiness to utilize these services.

1-800-621-HOPE