

Prevention Pathways

Online Courses

Step 1: Safety During a Violent Incident

You may not be able to avoid all violence, but there are some things that may help you avoid being hurt and help you get away.

- If possible, plan a way of getting out of the house or room where the abuser is.
- If you think an argument may happen, do not stay in rooms that may contain possible weapons, such as the kitchen, bathroom, and garage. Go to a room that has an exit.
- Practice getting out safely. What doors, windows, stairwells, and elevators will you use?
- Keep your purse and car keys close by. Have an extra copy of your car key hidden in a safe place.
- As hard as it may be, you need to tell trusted neighbors, friends, or family so that they may be able to call the police if they hear suspicious noise from your house. Be careful not to tell someone who would tell your partner of the conversation.
- If you have children, teach them how to call 911. Choose a code word that your children and neighbors know to alert them to call the police.
- Decide on alternative places to stay after you leave, even if you don't think you'll need them.
- If your children are old enough, involve them in the plan for escaping.

Step 2: Safety If You Are Planning To Leave

- Some women decide that they need to leave to make sure they and their children are safe. Because men often become more violent when they suspect a woman is leaving (therefore, he is losing his control), it is important to prepare carefully.
- Leave money, an extra set of keys, and copies of important papers (see list below) with someone you trust.
- Leave extra clothes with someone you trust.
- Open a bank account in your name only if you do not already have one.
- Contact your local domestic violence program for help and advice.
- Determine who might be able to loan you money or give you a place to stay.
- Keep change for the phone with you at all times. Remember, if you use a credit card for phone calls, the numbers will appear on the next phone bill.
- Rehearse your escape plan with your children and practice your safety plan often.

Items To Take When Leaving (leave the items with someone you trust)

- Personal ID, licenses, Social Security cards,
- Birth certificates of all children and yourself,
- Keys (house, car, office, etc.),

- All bank cards, credit cards, savings and checking account information,
- Lease, rental agreements, house deed, mortgage papers,
- Insurance forms and information,
- School forms/records of children's shots,
- Medicine for your children and yourself and prescriptions needed,
- Immigration documents/green card/visa,
- Welfare documents,
- Clothing and comfort items for the children,
- Marriage license and divorce papers or other court documents (protective orders, etc.), and
- Phone numbers and addresses of family, friends, and community resources.

Step 3: Safety in Your Own Residence

You will need to change things around the house or apartment after your abuser has left.

- Obtain an ex parte, civil protection order, or peace order (see [Module 11](#)). Generally, they are all court documents that provide relief to women who are experiencing abuse. All protective orders require an abuser to stop threatening or committing abuse and make an abuser end all contact with the victim.
- Change locks on all doors and windows.
- Install or improve your security system to include window bars, locks, better outside lighting, movement detectors, fire extinguishers, and smoke detectors.
- Purchase rope or chain ladders to escape from a second story window.
- Talk to all schools and child care providers about who has permission to pick up the children.
- Contact the local domestic violence center to get advice from a lawyer who knows about family violence.
- In rural areas where only the mailbox can be seen from the street, cover the mailbox with brightly colored paper to make it easier for the police to find the house.
- Keep the ex parte, civil protection order, or peace order with you at all times.
- Tell neighbors and/or your landlord that your partner no longer lives there and ask them to call the police if they see him at your home.

Step 4: Safety on the Job

At some point, victims may need to tell their boss, workmates, or Employee Assistance Program professionals about the abuse. The more people who know of your situation, the safer you may be.

- Make sure you list your workplace on the ex parte, civil protective order, or peace order. Give copies to your boss and security people at your job.
- Provide a picture of the abuser to your boss, coworkers, and security.
- Give out the name of a person to contact in an emergency should your boss be unable to contact you or should something happen at your job.
- Review the safety of the parking lot or garage. If possible, arrange for somebody to walk with you to and from the parking lot and the office.

- If your desk is located in a public area or can be seen from the street, try to switch work areas to a less visible spot.
- Try to change your schedule so that you arrive and leave work at different times. This may discourage a potential stalker or abuser from confronting you.
- Have caller ID put on your work phone and save all faxes and e-mails that may give legal proof that the man is disobeying the no-contact rule of the protective order.
- Review the safety of your child care plan. Make sure you have included all addresses on the protective order that the abuser has to stay away from. This would also include your child's school and/or day care address.

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