

PLANNING FOR YOUR SAFETY

a resource on safety planning

WHAT IS SAFETY PLANNING?

Safety planning is thinking and acting in a way that can increase your safety and the safety of your loved ones. You can safety plan whether you decide to leave or stay in an abusive relationship.

Safety planning is something you do to help yourself be safe, physically and/or emotionally, when you are being hurt or afraid of being hurt. If you are being abused by a spouse, family member, dating partner, or anyone else, there are things you can do that may help keep you safe.

EXAMPLES

You are probably already doing things to make you and your loved ones more safe. Here are some examples:

- You may ask someone for help.
- You may call a domestic violence hotline or the police.
- You may try to end the relationship.
- You may avoid things that might “upset” the abusive person.
- You may teach your children how to call for help.
- You may change your job or school.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

It is easier to safety plan if you have someone to help you. Try contacting someone who can help you think about all your different options. Contact the Virginia Statewide Hotline (call 1.800.838.8238 or text 804.793.9999) for information about programs in your area.

You are the expert on your life. Your own experience is the best tool in planning for your safety.

Planning often involves thinking about many choices and factors. If Plan A doesn't work...what is Plan B? There are many kinds of dangers and risks in abusive situations. When planning, try to consider all of the risks.



TO GET STARTED, THINK ABOUT...

Where and when you might be in danger:

- Are you living with the person who hurts you?
- Do you work or go to school in the same place?
- Do you have children with this person?
- Do you need them to help you bathe, use the bathroom, eat, or obtain medication?

- Do you know or visit the same people?

What will you need if you decide to leave?

- money and credit cards?
- medications?
- birth certificates and other ID?
- adaptive equipment?
- items for your children?

WHAT CAN I DO TO BE SAFE?

- If you sense the person is about to become violent, try to get to a place where there is an exit or a phone. Think about what calms down the person—this might give you time to think.
- Tell people what's going on and let them know how to help.
- Consider changing your routines. Try to get rides with friends or take someone along with you when you go out. Consider changing your phone number and locks.
- Be careful when you use a computer or other device. Be aware that they might be tracking your phone use. If you have a cell phone, change the number to one they don't know. Consider changing your passwords and making your accounts secure. Be sure to delete your browsing history, call history, and anything else that might make it easy for your abuser to know your plans.

SAFETY PLANNING WORKS.

Every day, people who live with violence take the first steps to change their lives. There are advocates trained to help you develop a plan that can increase your safety. Contact the Virginia Statewide Hotline (call 1.800.838.8238 or text 804.793.9999), or a resource below, and ask for help with making a Safety Plan.