



## Creating a Safety Plan: Whether you choose to leave or stay in your relationship, there's a path for you.



**If you are in immediate danger, contact 911 in Canada or your local authorities for OUTCAN.**

A safety plan will help guide you if you experience violence from your partner/spouse. Start by reviewing these suggestions and use the form at the end to capture key information for your plan.

### Here are some things to consider:

- Carry your cell phone and a spare charger at all times.
- Ask your friends to keep an eye out for phone calls from you in case you need help.
- Do not answer calls from unknown, blocked or private numbers.
- Set all your online profiles to be as private as possible.
- Set up a code word that you can use with friends to alert them if your (ex) partner/spouse is near you. Be sure to let your friends know what you want them to do if you use the code word.
- Find out about resources before you have to use them during a crisis. Contact the Family Information Line, your local Chaplain, Military Family Resource Centre or Military Family Services provider. You may be eligible for an emergency financial grant through Support our Troops and SISIP.
- Get legal advice about your rights.
- When searching for available resources online, do so in incognito mode or a private window or delete your browsing data afterwards. Alternatively, you could use a trusted friend's computer or a computer at a public library.
- If you have children, identify a safe place for them. It could be a room with a lock or a friend's house where they can go for help. Reassure them that their job is to stay safe, not to protect you. Go over the quickest escape route in the house and practice it with them (it could be in the form of a game).

- Teach your children to use a phone to contact the police.
- Have your children practice their full name and address to make it easier to communicate in an emergency. Teach them how to call for help in an emergency.
- If possible, make copies of all important documents. Ask someone you trust to hold on to them.
- Keep detailed notes about the violence and any incidents, including dates, times, and any witnesses. Photograph any injuries. Hide these notes/photographs.
- Consider making a plan for your pets. Think about making arrangements with friends or family to care for them. Some transition houses accept pets or can make arrangements for them. Some local humane societies will take your pets temporarily.
- Park your car by reversing into the driveway, in case you need to exit quickly. Keep the fuel tank full.
- Make sure all weapons and ammunition are removed from your home. Be aware if your (ex) partner/spouse has access to weapons through their workplace.

### Preparing in case you leave:

- Create a separate bank account, especially if you only have access to a joint account.
- Clear your browsing data on your computer.
- Clear your call history on your phone.
- In case you need to leave quickly, have a bag ready with these important items:
  - Cell phone and charger.
  - Cash, credit and debit cards plus account information.
  - Extra set of keys (car and house).
  - Your driver's license, military identification, health card or other forms of identification.
  - Copy of any protective or restraining order.
  - Passport, birth certificate, social security card, or immigration papers.
  - Car registration and insurance papers.
  - Lease or rental agreements or deed to your home.
  - Marriage or divorce papers, custody papers.
  - Medications and list of medications.
  - If you have children, bring their birth certificates, school records and anything they may need like medications, items of emotional significance like an extra blankie, teddy bear, or toys.
  - If you have pets, take their vaccination records, toys, food, medications, etc.
  - Extra clothes appropriate for the weather.

### As you leave:

- Request a trusted person to accompany you while you leave.
- Do not tell your partner that you are leaving or where you are going.
- Leave quickly. Do not worry about your belongings – police can escort you back to the home later to remove additional personal belongings.
- Have a back-up plan if your partner/spouse finds out where you are going.

### **In an emergency situation:**

- If you feel your partner/spouse is becoming violent, move to a room with a clear exit, such as near the front door. Avoid rooms where you could be trapped, or rooms containing weapons, for example, a kitchen usually contains knives, and a garage or workshop usually contains dangerous tools.
- If you are injured, seek medical attention. Tell them what happened to you and ask them to document your visit.
- If you are actively being physically hurt, protect your face with your arms around each side of your head. When someone becomes physically violent, they may grab at jewellery, scarves, or ponytails/hair.
- Do not go to your children, tell your children to go to their safe place and (if possible) alert the police or a trusted person.

### **After you leave:**

- Avoid telling your partner/spouse where you have gone.
- This can be a very difficult period for you. You can get 24-7 support by contacting Family Information Line.
- If you have a protective or restraining order, keep a certified copy of it with you at all times. Inform friends, neighbours, and employers that you have one in effect. You may want to provide a picture of your (ex) partner/spouse too, so they can easily identify them.
- Explore with your employer the possibility of working from home or another safe location.
- Reschedule appointments that the (ex) partner/spouse may be aware of.
- Shop at different stores and do not go to your common social spots.
- Change your passwords for your cell phone, computer and social media. Consider changing your cell phone number too.
- If you have children, alert school authorities of the situation.
- Consider not visiting friends' or family's homes where the (ex) partner/spouse may look for you.

### **If you are thinking of returning to your (ex) partner/spouse:**

- Talk to someone about your safety. You may also consider joining a support group or attend counselling.
- Abusive situations can change quickly, and external and unforeseen circumstances can arise rapidly. Remember to review your safety plan regularly.
- Recognize that the violence is not your fault. There are resources available in the military and civilian communities to provide support in many ways.
- Do not return home alone if you feel unsafe.

**Do you have questions about your relationship or are concerned about a friend? We have resources to support you.**

The Family Information Line is available 24/7. The service is free, bilingual and confidential.

➤ 1-800-866-4546 (North America)

➤ 00-800-771-17722 (International)



**Consider taking the time to review and fill out this form.**

Make sure to keep it somewhere safe. You may even want a friend to keep a copy for you.

**Telephone numbers I need to know:**

➤ Emergency contact: \_\_\_\_\_

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➤ Emergency contact: \_\_\_\_\_

➤ Work: \_\_\_\_\_

➤ Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

➤ School: \_\_\_\_\_

➤ Safety shelter: \_\_\_\_\_

➤ Local police department: \_\_\_\_\_

