

## ***Safety Planning***

Plan ahead! You don't have to wait for an emergency to ask for help. In fact, it is better to talk to people who can help you before the situation escalates. As well as you know your partner, there is always the risk of the unpredictable.

Safety planning can be done with the help of an advocate and generally is a good idea. Advocates often think of things you have not thought about and together you are most likely to emerge with a thorough plan.

### **Included in a Good Safety Plan:**

- How to get away if there is an emergency
- How to get help if leaving is not a choice
- Where to go if you leave
- How to be safe at a new place
- How to stay in touch with people who can help you
- How to get around car, family, friends
- How to keep your children safe
- Protecting your things & pets
- Safety at work or in public
- Making a calculated guess at what your partner is likely to do and how to be ready & safe when that happens.

### **Put together and hide an escape bag.**

This bag should have items you need the most and are hard to replace.

Hide this bag with someone you trust and won't tell your partner. Make sure you can get to it safely if you have to leave your home in a hurry (a co-worker, friend from church, or person your partner doesn't know).

### **Things you might include:**

Extra money	Birth certificates
Identification	Checkbook, ATM & credit cards
Social security cards	Medicine you need
Extra keys (house, car, storage)	Car, health, life insurance papers
Important phone numbers	School / medical records
Divorce, custody, Injunction papers	Recent photos of children
Car registration	One or more changes of clothes
Lease/rental agreement/mortgage information	
Information on your partners vehicle, workplace, etc.	
license, passport, or green card	

***Please note: If your partner notices these things missing, he may figure out you are planning an escape which can put you in greater danger. You may want to only keep copies.***

### **Ideas you may want to consider:**

- Call an advocate for help
- Keep important phone numbers on hand
- Get a P O Box so mail is private and only retrieve when it is safe
- Open a checking/savings account in your name
- Make an escape plan and practice (including staying out of rooms that I cannot get out of or contain items that can hurt me like the kitchen)
- Teach children to call 9-1-1 and where to go to be safe
- Tell a neighbor to call 9-1-1 if they see or hear fighting
- Have caller ID
- If moving, put utilities, rent, etc., in someone else's name

Give people who care for my children a copy of court orders

Change phone number to an unlisted number

Keep handbag and car keys ready for a quick exit

If possible, change the locks on doors and windows or add additional locks, get poles to wedge against the door, etc.

**Think about:**

What is the best time and day to leave?

Where you can stay to be safe?

How will you get there?

How will you get the children?

Who you can call for help?

How can you change your pattern (stores, banks, and places where the abuser may be looking for you)

**Teach Your Children:**

How to answer the door or phone if it's an emergency

How to call you on the phone

Who they can call if you're not available

**If you have an Injunction for Protection (Restraining Order):**

Always have a copy on you

Make several copies and keep each copy in a different safe place.

Give a copy to your employer, church, friends, child care, etc.

If your partner destroys a certified copy know how to get another one

What to do if your partner violates the order

How to get to HOPE's shelter if the order is not keeping you safe

### **Preparations at work:**

Inform your boss or someone at work

Give the front desk/security person a recent photo of your abuser and a copy of the injunction

Ask to move your office/desk to a more private location

Ask someone to screen your calls at work

Plan an escape route if the abuser shows up at work

Plan the best/safest way to travel to and from work and change the route

Change your routine

Ask someone to walk you to my car

***This list is not meant to cover all the things you need to think about? it's simply a way for you to begin planning ahead. People are here to help you ? please reach out and call.***

***It may save your life.***