Domestic Violence Personalized Safety Plan

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

The following steps represent my plan for increasing my safety and preparing in advance for the possibility for further violence. Although I do not have control over my partner's violence, I do have a choice about how to respond to him/her and how to best get myself and my children to safety.

STEP 1: Safety during a violent incident. *Women cannot always avoid violent incidents. In order to increase safety, battered women may use a variety of strategies.*

I can use some of the following strategies:

A. If I decide to leave, I will _____.
(Practice how to get out safely. What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells, or fire escapes would you use?)

B. I can keep my purse and car keys ready and put them *(location)* _____ _____ in order to leave quickly.

C. I can tell _____ about the violence and request that she or he call the police if she or he hears suspicious noises coming from my house.

D. I can teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the police, the fire department, and 911.

E. I will use _____ as my code with my children or my friends so they can call for help.

F. If I have to leave my home, I will go to _____.
(Decide this even if you don't think there will be a next time.)

G. I can also teach some of these strategies to some or all of my children.

H. When I expect we're going to have an argument, I'll try to move to a place that is low risk, such as _____. *(Try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, kitchen, near weapons, or in rooms without access to an outside door.)*

I. I will use my judgment and intuition. If the situation is very serious, I can give my partner what he/she wants to calm him/her down. I have to protect myself until I/we

STEP 2: Safety when preparing to leave. *Battered women frequently leave the residence they share with the battering partner. Leaving must be done with a careful plan in order to increase safety. Batterers often strike back when they believe that a battered woman is leaving a relationship.*

I can use some or all of the following strategies:

A. I will leave money and an extra set of keys with _____ so I can leave quickly.

B. I will keep copies of important documents or keys at _____.

C. I will open a savings account by _____, to increase my independence.

D. Other things I can do to increase my independence include: _____ _____.

E. I can keep change for phone calls on me at all times. I understand that if I use my telephone credit card, the following month's phone bill will show my batterer those numbers I called after I left. To keep my phone communications confidential, I must either use coins, or I might ask to use a friend's phone card for a limited time when I first leave.

F. I will check with _____ and _____ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.

G. I can leave extra clothes or money with _____.

H. I will sit down and review my safety plan every _____ in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence. _____ (domestic violence advocate or friend's name) has agreed to help me review this plan.

I. I will rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.

STEP 3: Safety in my own residence. *There are many things that a woman can do to increase her safety in her own residence. It may be impossible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step by step.*

Safety measures I can use:

A. I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible.

B. I can replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors.

C. I can install security systems including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, an electronic system, etc.

D. I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second oor windows.

E. I can install smoke detectors and fire extinguishers for each oor of my house/apartment.

F. I can install an outside lighting system that activates when a person is close to the house.

G. I will teach my children how to make a collect call to me and to _____ (name of friend, etc.) in the event that my partner takes the children.

H. I will tell the people who take care of my children which people have permission to pick up my children and that my partner is not permitted to do so. The people I will inform about pick-up permission include:

_____ (name of school)
_____ (name of babysitter)
_____ (name of teacher)
_____ (name of Sunday-school teacher)
_____ (name[s] of others)

I. I can inform _____ (neighbor) and _____ (friend) that my partner no longer resides with me and that they should call the police if he is observed near my residence.

STEP 4: Safety with an Order of Protection. *Many batterers obey protection orders, but one can never be sure which violent partner will obey and which will violate protective orders.* I recognize that I may need to ask the police and the courts to enforce my protective order.

The following are some steps I can take to help the enforcement of my protection order:

A. I will keep my protection order _____ (location). *Always keep it on or near your person. If you change purses, that's the first thing that should go in the new purse.*

B. I will give my protection order to police departments in the community where I work, in those communities where I visit friends or family, and in the community where I live.

C. *There should be county and state registries of protection orders that all police departments can call to confirm a protection order.* I can check to make sure that my order is on the registry. The telephone numbers for the county and state registries of protection orders are: _____ (county) and _____ (state).

D. I will inform my employer; my minister, rabbi, etc.; my closest friend; and _____ that I have a protection order in effect.

E. If my partner destroys my protection order, I can get another copy from the clerk's office.

F. If the police do not help, I can contact an advocate or an attorney and file a complaint with the chief of the police department or the sheriff.

G. If my partner violates the protection order, I can call the police and report the violation, contact

STEP 5: Safety on the job and in public. *Each battered woman must decide if and when she will tell others that her partner has battered her and that she may be at continued risk. Friends, family, and co-workers can help to protect women. Each woman should carefully consider which people to invite to help secure her safety.*

I might do any or all of the following:

A. I can inform my boss, the security supervisor, and _____ at work.

B. I can ask _____ to help me screen my telephone calls at work.

C. When leaving work, I can _____.

D. If I have a problem while driving home, I can _____.

E. If I use public transit, I can _____.

F. I will go to different grocery stores and shopping malls to conduct my business and shop at hours that are different from those I kept when residing with my battering partner.

G. I can use a different bank and go at hours that are different from those kept when residing with my battering partner.

STEP 6: Safety and drug or alcohol use. *Most people in this culture use alcohol. Many use mood-altering drugs. Much of this is legal, although some is not. The legal outcomes of using illegal drugs can be very hard on battered women, may hurt her relationship with her children, and can put her at a disadvantage in other legal actions with her battering partner. Therefore, women should carefully consider the potential cost of the use of illegal drugs. Beyond this, the use of alcohol or other drugs can reduce a woman's awareness and ability to act quickly to protect herself from her battering partner. Furthermore, the use of alcohol or other drugs by the batterer may give him an excuse to use violence. Specific safety plans must be made concerning drugs or alcohol use.*

If drug or alcohol use has occurred in my relationship with my battering partner, I can enhance my safety by some or all of the following:

A. If I am going to use, I can do so in a safe place and with people who understand the risk of violence and are committed to my safety.

B. If my partner is using, I can _____ and/or _____.

C. To safeguard my children I might _____.

STEP 7: Safety and my emotional health. *The experience of being battered and verbally degraded by partners is usually exhausting and emotionally draining. The process of building a new life takes much courage and incredible energy.*

To conserve my emotional energy and resources and to avoid hard emotional times, I can do some of the following:

A. If I feel down and am returning to a potentially abusive situation, I can _____ _____.

B. When I have to communicate with my partner in person or by telephone, I can _____ _____.

C. I will try to use "I can ... " statements with myself and be assertive with others.

D. I can tell myself, "_____" whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me.

E. I can read _____ to help me feel stronger.

F. I can call _____ and _____ for support.

G. I can attend workshops and support groups at the domestic violence program or _____ _____ to gain support and strengthen relationships.

STEP 8: Items to take when leaving. *When women leave partners, it is important to take certain items. Beyond this, women sometimes give an extra copy of papers and an extra set of clothing to a friend just in case they have to leave quickly.*

Money: Even if I never worked, I can take money from jointly held savings and checking accounts. If I do not take this money, he can legally take the money and close the accounts.

Items on the following lists with asterisks by them are the most important to take with you. If there is time, the other items might be taken, or stored outside the home. These items might best be placed in one location, so that if we have to leave in a hurry, I can grab them quickly. When I leave, I should take:

*Identification for myself
*My birth certificate
*School and vaccination records
*Checkbook, ATM card
*Key - house, car, office
*Medications
*Welfare identification, work permits, green cards
*Children's birth certificate
*Social Security cards
*Money
*Credit cards
*Driver's license and registration
*Copy of protection order

Passport(s), divorce papers
Medical records - for all family members
Lease/rental agreement, house deed, mortgage payment book
Bank books, insurance papers
Address book
Pictures, jewelry
Children's favorite toys and/or blankets
Items of special sentimental value

Telephone numbers I need to know:

Police/sheriff's department (local) - 911 or _____
Police/sheriff's department (work) _____
Police/sheriff's department (school) _____
Prosecutor's office _____
Battered women's program (local) _____
National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-SAFE (7233)
800-787-3224 (TTY)
www.ndvh.org
County registry of protection orders _____
State registry of protection orders _____
Work number _____
Supervisor's home number _____

I will keep this document in a safe place and out of the reach of my potential attacker.

Review date: _____

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