

# LEAVING AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

## *Safety Planning*



**Family Justice Center**  
CENTRAL LOUISIANA

## YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Leaving an abusive relationship can be one of the most dangerous times for a survivor. Every situation is different, and there is no single “right way” to leave. The safest plan is the one designed around your individual needs and circumstances.

A safety plan is a personalized strategy to help increase safety for you and your children while preparing to leave, during a crisis, or after leaving an abusive relationship.

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

## WHY SAFETY PLANNING MATTERS

Leaving an abusive relationship is often the most dangerous time for a survivor. As an abusive person loses control, the risk of threats, stalking, intimidation, and violence may increase.

### *Important Facts*

- Domestic violence experts report that approximately 75% of domestic violence-related homicides occur during or shortly after separation from an abusive partner. This is why having a personalized safety plan is so important.
- The presence of a firearm in a domestic violence situation increases the risk of homicide by approximately 500%.

### *A Message of Hope*

These statistics are not meant to create fear. They are a reminder that planning ahead can save lives. Many survivors safely leave abusive relationships every day with the support of advocates, family members, community partners, and safety planning resources.

## IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

### *Plan Ahead for Safety*

If violence escalates, try to move toward rooms with exits and away from places where weapons may be present, such as kitchens, garages, or workshops.

### *Consider:*

- Positioning yourself near a door or exit when arguments begin.
- Identifying safe neighbors or trusted individuals who can help.
- Creating a code word that alerts family or friends you need help.
- Teaching children how to call 911 during emergencies.
- Practicing an escape route when it is safe to do so.
- If possible, park your vehicle facing outward with enough fuel in the tank so you can leave quickly in an emergency.
- Keep your keys in a safe and accessible location.

# LEAVING AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

## *Safety Planning*



**Family Justice Center**  
CENTRAL LOUISIANA

### PREPARING TO LEAVE

#### *Create an escape plan:*

Think through:

- Where you would go
- How you would leave safely
- Who you can call for help
- What transportation is available
- What has helped keep you safe in the past

#### *Abusive behavior may escalate around:*

- Separation or breakups
- Holidays or special events
- Financial stress
- Drug or alcohol use
- Custody disagreements

Trust your instincts and prioritize your safety.

### PACK AN EMERGENCY BAG

If possible, keep a bag in a safe place outside the home with a trusted friend, family member, or advocate.

#### *Include:*

- Identification and important documents
- Birth certificates and Social Security cards
- Medications and medical information
- Car keys and house keys
- Phone charger
- Emergency cash or prepaid cards
- Clothing for yourself and your children
- Copies of protective orders
- Insurance information
- Important phone numbers
- School and immunization records
- Comfort items for children

### SAFETY PLANNING WITH CHILDREN

Children should never be responsible for stopping abuse or protecting a parent during violence.

#### *Teach Children:*

- How to call 911
- Their full name and address
- A safe place to go during an emergency
- A trusted adult they can contact
- A family code word that means "go get help"

#### *Remind Children:*

- The abuse is not their fault
- Their job is to stay safe
- Adults are responsible for keeping children safe

#### *Talk with schools and childcare providers about:*

- Approved pickup individuals
- Protective orders or custody concerns
- Emergency contacts and safety procedures

# LEAVING AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

## *Safety Planning*



**Family Justice Center**  
CENTRAL LOUISIANA

### TECHNOLOGY & DIGITAL SAFETY

#### *Abusive partners may monitor:*

- Phones and text messages
- Social media accounts
- GPS locations
- Shared devices or computers
- Email accounts

#### *Consider:*

- Using a safer computer or phone
- Changing passwords on important accounts
- Turning off location sharing
- Checking privacy settings regularly
- Limiting who knows your plans
- If possible, use devices the abusive person cannot access.

### SAFETY PLANNING WHEN GUNS ARE PRESENT

The presence of a firearm can increase danger in abusive situations.

#### *Consider additional precautions if the abusive person:*

- Has threatened you with a weapon
- Has threatened suicide or violence
- Has access to firearms
- Has become increasingly controlling or unpredictable

#### *If violence escalates:*

- Move away from areas where weapons may be accessible
- Leave immediately if it is safe to do so
- Call 911 if you believe your life is in danger

The Family Justice Center may help explain options related to protective orders.

### AFTER YOU LEAVE

Continue prioritizing safety.

#### *You may consider:*

- Changing locks and security measures
- Changing routines and travel routes
- Obtaining a P.O. Box
- Informing trusted employers, schools, & neighbors
- Keeping copies of threatening messages or emails
- Documenting harassment or stalking incidents
- Meeting in public places if contact is unavoidable

If you believe you are being followed while driving:

- Drive to a police station, hospital, or fire station
- Stay in your locked vehicle and call for help

# LEAVING AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

## *Safety Planning*



**Family Justice Center**  
CENTRAL LOUISIANA

### HELP IS HERE LOCALLY

Safety planning works best when it is personalized to your unique situation. What works for one person may not be safe for another. Let us help you create a safety plan.



## Family Justice Center of Central Louisiana

Providing compassionate, confidential support for survivors and families impacted by violence and abuse.

*The Family Justice Center of Central Louisiana can help you:*

- Create a personalized safety plan
- Connect with emergency resources
- Access counseling and legal support
- Explore housing and financial assistance
- Navigate protective orders and community services

**All services are FREE and confidential**

*220 Hospital Blvd, Pineville, LA 71360*

Walk-ins welcome.

- **Office:** 318-448-0884
- **24-Hour Crisis Line:** 888-411-1333

[www.familyjusticecenterla.com](http://www.familyjusticecenterla.com)



*View this document online.*