Safety Plan

It is important to consider your (and your children's) safety. Creating a safety plan can help you do this. Safety plans are unique to each individual. Below are questions to consider. Some questions may be helpful to you and your situation, others may not. **Remember** you are the expert of your own situation. Use what is helpful for you and skip what is not. **Keep in mind, having a written copy of a safety plan could be dangerous as well. Make sure you keep this plan in a safe location that will not be found.**

SECTION 1

What ways can you stay safe at home?

1.

2.

3.

What ways can you stay safe in the community?

1.

2.

3.

Is there anyone (partner, boyfriend, husband, friend, or trafficker) that may be looking for you?

Yes No

If yes, what is their name? _____

Have you left them in the past?

Yes No

If you left, did they found you?

Yes No

If yes, what happened when they found you? _____

_____.

What are the warning signs you can look for when an individual or situation becomes unsafe?

1.

2.

3.

If my abuser is showing physical aggression warning signs while at home, I will try to move to

_____.

Safety tip it is best to avoid bathroom, garage, kitchen- places that may not have an exit or rooms that may have potential weapons.

Is it possible for you to keep an overnight bag or to-go bag somewhere? (i.e. car, at a friend's home, etc.)

Yes No

If so, what will you keep in that bag? (Circle all that apply) (money, cash, debit card, credit card, keys, ID, proof of abuse such as photos of injuries, medications, or important paperwork such as social security cards, birth certificates, custody papers, bank information, passports, insurance cards, medical records, benefits cards (food stamp or SSD/I information).

Safety tip Use cards with caution. Debit and credit cards can be used to locate you based on your recent purchases.

Where are three places I can go that are safe for me, outside of the home.

1.

2.

3.

Safety tip Turn off location tracking on your cell phone.

A safe person for me to call is _____.

I can create a code word to use with this person, signaling that I need help. The code word is

_____.

Safety tips

- If my abuser has left, I can change the locks on my doors.
- I can talk with my landlord to discuss a ban and bar from the property or to remove my abuser from my lease.
- I can keep my abuser from contacting me by blocking his phone number/social media.
- I can file a protection order, which can stop my abuser from contacting me and keep them away from my home.
- I can make copies of my protection order and keep them in various places in case I need it such as my car, my home, my purse, my desk at work, my school, etc.
- If the order is violated I can: call the police in an emergency or file an Affidavit to start contempt proceedings at the clerk of court.

SECTION 2

Do you work? (If no, skip to the next section.)

Yes No

Does your abuser know where you work and what your work schedule is?

Yes No

Would you be able to take a leave of absence?

Yes No

Safety tips Let your employer know about your situation.

Let other staff know about your situation.

Ask someone to walk you to and from your car.

If working at night, park in a well-lit area, preferably around other cars.

Ask your employer to neither confirm nor deny if you are working, if someone calls.

If you have a protection order, give a copy to your boss.

Never drive/walk to work the same direction twice in a row; vary your routes.

Always keep your car with adequate gas.

If I feel like I am being followed home I can go to _____.

Safety tip Driving to the police station will likely deter the person who is following you. Make sure you do not go to an isolated area or drive down any dead end roads.

SECTION 3

Do you have children in your custody? (if no, skip to the next section)

Yes No

Are they in school/daycare?

Yes No

Are you willing/able to transfer schools/daycares?

Yes No

Do you have court documents such as a Divorce Decree, Temporary Custody Order, or a Protection Order in place?

Yes No

Safety tips If your abuser is the child/children's biological parent, they have the right to take the child from school/daycare or from anywhere else, at will, unless there is a Protection Order or other court order stating otherwise. The school/daycare does not have a legal right to keep the child/children from them if they can prove that they are a legal guardian/parent.

Here are some ways to try and keep the children safe while in school/daycare.

- If there is a Protection Order or other court document in place, make sure the school has a copy of it.
- Let the school officials know about your situation.
- Ask the school to call you immediately if your abuser arrives at the school/daycare.
- If you pick up your children, choose to pick them up from a door that is different than the one you have been using (make sure it is not in an isolated area).
- Never drive or walk the same direction twice in a row; vary your routes.
- Always have your cell phone or 911 phone with you.
- If the children are old enough, give them a cell phone or 911 phone.

SECTION 4

Do you have a presence on social media? (if no, skip this section)

Yes No

Safety tip

- Change your passwords if you think your abuser may have them.
- Customize the audience that can see your posts on social media.
- Make your accounts as private as possible.
- On Facebook, choose to approve all tags before they appear on your timeline.
- Disable location tracking settings.
- Use a generic profile or cover photo as they can always be seen.
- Change your security questions; they do not have to be honest, they just have to be memorable.
- Set up log in notifications.

SECTION 5

If I am feeling depressed, I can safely call and talk to _____.

If I feel like using drinking or substances as a way to cope, I can call _____ for support.

Safety tip In times of great stress it is important to make sure you are practicing self-care. If you are feeling stressed, depressed, lonely, or overwhelmed you can: Watch a movie, listen to music, take a warm bubble bath, meditate, read a book, practice yoga, call a friend or loved one, journal, do a craft, finish a puzzle, draw/color, cook yourself a nice dinner, laugh at your favorite show, dance, get plenty of sleep, drink lots of water, eat healthy, practice positive self-talk, play with your pet, play a game with your children, join a support group, exercise, write 3 things you like about yourself, garden, or focus on your hobbies.

Always remember that in an emergency you can call 911. If you are needing emergency shelter or you are interested in advocacy and case management services from trained individuals you can contact:
Catholic Charities (712)-328-0266 or toll-free at (1)-888-612-0266

Heartland Family Services Sanctuary House (402)-597-1009 or text (402)-672-8608