## 10 Considerations When Leaving a High Conflict Relationship

Use this as a resource if you are considering leaving a high conflict or abusive relationship to help you gather what you need to leave safely and keep yourself protected once out of the shared home

* Make a plan for leaving
  + Consider two plans – one for if you have time to prepare to leave and one if you need to leave in a hurry
  + Identify where you will go, how you will get there, and what you will take with you
* Document any evidence of abuse or domestic violence and take it with you when you leave
  + For safety reasons, identify where you can keep this evidence that your abuser will not find it, such as a locked drawer, at work if you work outside the home, or with a trusted family member or friend
* Information about your abuser that may be needed for court filings or police reports
  + DOB, Social Security number, license plate number
* Pack a “go bag” that includes as many important items and records as possible
  + Spare car keys
  + Driver’s license
  + Money/credit cards/checkbook
  + You and your children’s legal documents, including Social Security cards, passports, green cards, medical records, insurance cards, birth certificates, marriage license, any existing court orders and/or protective orders
  + Prescription medication for you or your children
  + Available financial documents, including pay stubs, bank account information, individual and shared credit cards
  + Important keepsakes like photographs, jewelry, or other sentimental items
* Hide this bag somewhere your abuser will not find it
  + Leaving an abusive or high conflict relationship can be the most dangerous time for an individual
* Save as much money as you can in a place where only you have access to it
  + Again consider leaving with a trusted friend or family member
  + This is especially important if your abuser controls the household money
* Consult with an attorney prior to leaving if possible, especially if leaving the family home
  + Many attorneys offer free initial consultation calls
* Leave when your abuser least expects it to have the maximum amount of time away from the home before they realize you have left
* Consider obtaining a protective order (sometimes called restraining orders, TRO’s, PFA’s)
  + This can be done at your local courthouse at any time
  + This does not remove the importance of having other safety considerations in place!
* Identify a code word to have with trusted family and friends so that they can call 911 if you are unsafe and unable to leave without help