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## **Tool - Kit**

### **Basic Safety Planning**

#### **Safety during an Explosive Argument**

- If an argument is unavoidable, stay in an area where you have access to an exit.
- Practice getting out of your home safely.
- Keep a packed bag at a trusted relative's or friend's home.
- Tell trustworthy neighbors about the violence. Ask them to call the police if they hear or see any disturbance.
- Devise a code word or signal to use with your children, family, friends, and trustworthy neighbors when you need the police.
- Plan where you will go if you have to leave.
- Trust your instincts and judgment. You have the right to protect yourself until you are out of danger.

#### **Safety When Preparing to Leave**

- Establish your independence. Open savings and credit card accounts in your name only.
- Leave money, extra keys, copies of important documents, extra medicine and clothes with someone you trust so you can leave quickly.
- Determine safe people you can stay with or borrow money from.
- Keep hotline phone numbers and change, a calling card, or a safety cell phone on you at all times for emergency phone calls. Most crisis lines do accept collect calls and 911 is free.
- Review and rehearse your safety plan.

#### **Safety in Your Own Home**

- If possible, obtain a restraining order.
- Change the locks on your doors. (Landlords are legally obligated to change locks within 24 hrs. if you are experiencing DV).
- Install locks on your windows. (Renters check with your landlord first.)
- Discuss and practice a safety plan with your children for when you are not with them.
- Inform your children's schools or caregivers who has permission to pick up your children.
- Inform neighbors and landlord that your partner no longer lives with you and to call the police if they see him or her near your home.



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## **Safety with a Restraining Order**

- Keep your protective order on you at all times, and give a copy to a trusted neighbor, friend or family member.
- Call the police if your abuser violates the protective order.
- Think of alternative ways to keep safe if the police do not respond right away.
- Inform family, friends, neighbors and health care providers that you have a restraining order in effect.

## **Safety on the Job and in Public**

- Decide who at work you will inform of your situation, including building security.
- Provide a photo of your abuser for quick identification.
- Screen your telephone calls.
- Devise a safety plan for leaving work.
- Have someone escort you when leaving and wait with you until you are safely en route.
- Use a variety of routes to go home.
- Rehearse what you would do if something happened while going home.
- Create a safety routine when you arrive home: checking your house and property, checking in with someone to let them know you are safe, etc.

## **Your Safety and Emotional Health**

- If you are still in or thinking of returning to a potentially abusive situation, please discuss alternatives with someone you trust or call our Centre or 911
- If you have to communicate with your abuser, determine the safest way to do so and avoid being alone with him or her.
- Advocate for yourself and your needs. Find people and resources you can safely and openly talk to and ask for help. You are not alone, and you do not have to go through this by yourself.
- Look into counseling and support groups that directly address your experiences and needs.
- Find ways to care for yourself: exercise, make time to relax, create a safe environment, do things you enjoy, get as much support as you can.



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## Internet and Computer Safety

Remember that all computer and online activity may be monitored. Abusers may monitor your emails and internet activity. This may include more than just websites like ours; if you are planning to flee to a particular location, don't look at classified ads for jobs and apartments, bus tickets, etc. for that place. It is safer to use a computer in a public library, at a trusted friend's house, at an internet cafe, or any other public terminals. Abusers may also track your activity and whereabouts through your cell phone; if you think there is a chance this may be happening, take your phone to your service provider and have it thoroughly checked.

## Checklist: What You Should Take When You Leave

### Legal Papers

- Lease, rental agreement, house deed
- Immigration Documents
- Passport
- Health card
- SIN Card
- Children Birth Certificates
- Marriage Certificate
- Driver's License

### Other Items

- House and car keys
- Medications
- Valuables, photos, etc.
- Address book
- Phone card/safety cell phone
- Clothes, blankets, small toys for children and for yourself



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## Safety Planning

You deserve to be free from violence.

If you are in an emergency situation, call 911 – even if you can't talk, if you leave the phone off the hook, the police will come.

If you are unsure where to get help for services, call 211

If you are experiencing violence, but not in an emergency or crisis situation, it could be a good idea to develop a safety plan to help yourself stay safe. This safety plan could help you prepare for support or leave the abusive situation. Is there anyone that you trust - like a neighbour, friend or family member? Perhaps you have developed a trusting relationship with a service provider, like a settlement worker or your LINC class teacher? Think about telling them what you're going through.

## How to stay safe while living with the person who is abusing you

- Have a plan about how you could get out of your home in an emergency and where you would go – tell your children about it, and if you can, practice
- Talk to your kids – tell them that the abuse isn't your fault or their fault, and teach them what to do if there is violence (for example, a code word that tells them to leave)
- If you can, ask your neighbours, friends and family to call the police if they hear what sounds like abuse or violence, and to watch your kids if there is an emergency. Have a code word you can tell your neighbour, friend or, which indicates that you are in an emergency situation and they should contact the police.
- Have a list of phone numbers to call for help in an emergency or crisis
- Think about the past experience of violence so that you can try to predict the danger you are in, and leave
- Make sure weapons and ammunition are hidden or removed from your home
- If a fight is starting, try to move to a room or area from which you can go outside and avoid any rooms that might have potential weapons (e.g. kitchen, bathroom, garage)
- If you are being hit, you can protect your face by putting your arms around each side of your face and locking your fingers
- Hide your keys, cell phone, and money near the way you would leave in an emergency or crisis



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## **How to prepare for leaving**

1. Do not share that you are planning on leaving
2. Contact a support organization to get help in safety planning (you could call the police or a women's shelter) including finding a shelter you could go to
3. Try to get your important documents together (ID, bank cards, financial paperwork, immigration documents, passports, health cards, personal phone book, legal documents, anything that shows your shared address, etc.) along with keys, medication, pictures of your kids as well as the person abusing you.
4. Set aside cash and also open a bank account in your name
5. If you can make copies of your documents, have someone you trust hold onto the copies for you
6. Talk to your children about the safety planning so that they understand it, and understand that they shouldn't tell the person abusing you
7. Talk to your kids' school and give them a picture of the abuser
8. Talk to social worker/ lawyer/ friend, if you can
9. If you have a car, park it by backing it into the driveway and keep the gas tank full
10. Keep a log of violent incidents and any proof of physical abuse (photographs, notes from doctor or hospital if you have been treated)
11. Put together things that are of personal value (like photographs, jewellery) and some toys or other personal items for your kids – pack them in a way that would be easy to retrieve
12. Let your employer know so that your workplace can have a safety plan also
13. Clear your phone history, change passwords, etc.
14. Know the best time to leave – when the person who is abusing you is not at home

## **When you ready to leave:**

1. Get accompaniment from a friend, family member or neighbour when you leave, or request a police escort
2. Get to a safe place that the person abusing you won't know – like a shelter that you could contact a little in advance
3. Do not say you are leaving
4. Have a back-up plan if your plan of leaving is found out



**ehcW**  
Elspeth Heyworth  
Centre for Women

 Ontario  
Ministry of Community Safety  
and Correctional Services

Ontario  
Trillium  
Foundation  Fondation  
Trillium  
de l'Ontario  
An agency of the Government of Ontario.  
Relève du gouvernement de l'Ontario.

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**After you have left:**

1. Contact support organizations who can help you with applying for a restraining order or peace bond and with getting legal advice to protect you and your children
2. Provide police a copy of any legal orders you have
3. If you get a telephone number, get an unlisted number, caller ID and the option to block your number when you make calls
4. Make sure your kids' school or day care is updated, especially if there are legal orders
5. Carry photos of your kids as well as the person who abused you
6. Ask your neighbours to call the police if they see the person who abused you
7. Think about places and patterns or routes that would be known by your abuser – and try to change them (e.g. go to a different grocery store)
8. If you do not feel comfortable walking alone, try asking a neighbour, friend or family member to join you
9. Do not return to your home alone
10. Do not confront the person who abused you