

Safety Planning with a Domestic Violence Victim

I. SAFETY DURING AN EXPLOSIVE INCIDENT

- A. If an argument seems unavoidable, try to have it in a room or area that has access to an exit and not in a bathroom, kitchen, or anywhere near weapons.
- B. Practice how to get out of your home safely. Identify which doors, windows, elevator, or stairwell would be best.
- C. Have a packed bag ready and keep it in an undisclosed but accessible place in order to leave quickly.
- D. Identify a neighbor you can tell about the violence and ask that they call the police if they hear a disturbance coming from your home.
- E. Devise a code word to use with your children, family, friends, and neighbors when you need the police.
- F. Decide and plan for where you will go if you have to leave home (even if you don't think you will need to).
- G. Use your own instincts and judgment. If the situation is very dangerous, consider giving the abuser what they want to calm them down. You have the right to protect yourself until you are out of danger.

II. SAFETY WHEN PREPARING TO LEAVE

- A. Open a savings account in your own name to start to establish or increase your independence. Think of other ways in which you can increase your independence.
- B. Leave money, an extra set of keys, copies of important documents and extra clothes with someone you trust so you can leave quickly.
- C. Determine who would be able to let you stay with them or lend you some money.
- D. Keep the shelter phone number close at hand and keep someone changer or a calling card on you at all times for emergency phone calls.
- E. Review your safety plan as often as possible in order to plan the safest way to leave your abuser. Remember- leaving is the most dangerous time.

III. SAFETY IN YOUR OWN HOME

- A. Change the locks on your doors as soon as possible. Buy additional locks and safety devices to secure your windows.

- B. Discuss a safety plan with your children for when you are not with them.
- C. Inform your child's school, daycare, etc, about who has permission to pick up your child.
- D. Inform neighbors and landlord that your partner no longer lives with you and that they should call the police if they see the abuser near your home.
- E. Never call the abuser from your home. If they have caller ID, they may be able to locate your residence.

IV. SAFETY WITH A PROTECTIVE ORDER

- A. Keep a copy of your protective order on you at all times.
- B. Call the police if your partner violates the protective order.
- C. Be aware of your surroundings when arriving and leaving work, home, and school.
- D. Provide a copy of the protective order to your employer, children's schools, and landlord.
- E. Talk to neighbors and ask them to call you if they see the abuser in the area.
- F. Inform family, friends and neighbors that you have a protective order in effect.

V. SAFETY ON THE JOB AND IN PUBLIC

- A. Decide who at work you will inform of your situation. This should include office or building security.
- B. Arrange to have someone screen your phone calls if possible.
- C. Devise a safety plan for when you leave work. Have someone escort you to your car. Vary your route.