

# YOUR PERSONAL SAFETY PLAN

## **Safety While Preparing to Leave**

- Practice getting out of your home safely. Identify the best doors, windows, elevators, or stairwells to use.
- Pack an overnight bag and keep it at a relative's or friend's home.
- Tell one or more neighbors about the violence and ask them to call the police if they hear a disturbance coming from your home.
- Devise a code word to alert your children, family, friends, and neighbors to the need for police intervention.
- Decide where you will go if you have to leave home. Make a plan even if you don't think you will need to get out.
- Open a savings or credit card account in your own name to increase your independence.
- Leave money, an extra set of keys, copies of important documents, extra medicines, and clothes with someone you trust, so that you can leave quickly.
- Determine where you can stay and who might be able to lend you some money.
- Keep close at hand the shelter or hotline phone number.
- Review your safety plan often so that when it comes time to leave, you will know exactly what to do. Remember, *leaving is the most dangerous time of all.*

## **Safety During an Explosive Incident**

- If an argument seems unavoidable, try to have it in a room that can be easily exited. Stay away from the bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or any other room likely to contain a weapon.
- Use instincts and judgment. If the situation is very dangerous, consider giving the abuser whatever they want to help calm them down. You have the right to protect yourself until you are out of danger. Always remember, you don't deserve to be hit or threatened.

## **Safety in Your Own Home**

- After the batterer has left, change the locks on your doors and secure your windows with additional locks and safety devices.
- Discuss a safety plan your children can use when you are not with them.
- Let your children's school and daycare know who has permission to pick them up.
- Tell your neighbors and building manager that your partner no longer lives with you and they should call the police if they are seen near your home.

## **Safety with a Protection Order**

- Keep your protective order on you at all times. Give a copy to a trusted neighbor or family member.
- Call the police if your partner breaks the protective order.
- Think of alternative ways to find protection if the police do not respond right away.
- Inform family, friends, neighbors, and your healthcare provider that you have a protective order in effect.

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

- Let someone at work know of your situation, including security personnel. Provide a picture of your batterer if possible.
- Arrange to have an answering machine, caller ID, or a trusted friend or relative screen your telephone calls at home.
- Each time you leave work, have someone escort you to your car or bus and wait with you until you are safely en route. Vary the ways you travel from work to home.

## **Emotional Safety**

- If you are thinking of returning to a potentially abusive situation, discuss your options with someone you trust.
- If you must communicate with your partner, determine the safest way to do so.
- Maintain positive thoughts about yourself, and assert your needs with others.
- Read books, articles, and poems to help you feel stronger.
- Decide who you can call if you need to—someone you can talk to freely and count on for support.
- Plan to attend a support group for at least two weeks to learn more about yourself and the relationship.

## **Items to take when leaving**

- Identification (driver's license, etc).
- Birth certificates for yourself and your children
- Social Security cards for yourself and your children
- Money, checkbook, ATM card
- Keys—house, car, office
- Car registration and title
- Medications
- Passport(s), green card or visa
- Divorce papers
- Clothes