

### Protecting yourself after you have left

If you leave an abusive relationship it is your decision whether or not you tell people that you have experienced the abuse. However if you feel you may still be at risk, it might increase your safety if you tell family, friends, school, employer etc., so they don't inadvertently give out any information to your ex-partner. They will also be better equipped to help you in an emergency. You may also want to change your mobile number. When you leave home you still need to stay safe and aware.

### If you are thinking of moving away

- \* You can get support to move to another town
- \* You may want to change your mobile phone as it may be tracked if your partner knows your details and your passwords.
- \* Try to avoid using any shared credit cards or bank accounts.
- \* Make sure your address does not appear on any court papers.
- \* If you need to contact the abuser, make sure you use a phone with a 'number withheld' service. Failing this you can dial 141 before ringing which will withhold your number.
- \* Talk to your children about the need to keep your location, address and phone number confidential.
- \* Be careful with any correspondence with the abuser. Some solicitors and refuges have facilities to send letters from other towns to avoid recognition of postmarks.

### If you have left your home

- \* Try not to put yourself in vulnerable positions or in isolated places.
- \* Avoid places where you went together.
- \* Try to alter your routines as much as possible.
- \* Change any regular appointments that your partner may know about - try to change the times/days and the location if possible.
- \* Try to choose safe routes and safe forms of transport.
- \* Be aware and vigilant when leaving or approaching unavoidable places such as doctors, work, schools etc.
- \* Let the school know you will be picking the children up. (Sometimes schools will allow you to pick up or drop off children early to avoid confrontation with partners.) You may want to set up pass-words or give them court papers. Make sure they have any new numbers to contact you.
- \* Get into a routine of telling someone where you are going and when you will be expected back.
- \* Let your employer know – especially if your partner may turn up at work.

Finally .....  
in an emergency always call **999**

# DOMESTIC ABUSE SAFETY PLANNING

Support and advice for anyone  
experiencing abuse in their own home

Information for anyone;

- \* who wants to stay safe in their home
- \* who wants to plan to leave the relationship
- \* who is not sure what they can do

A **personal safety plan** is a way of helping you to protect yourself and your children. It helps you plan in advance for the possibility of future violence and abuse. It also helps you to think about how you can increase your safety either within the relationship or if you decide to leave.

You can't stop your partners violence or abuse - only they can do that. However you can do some things to increase your own and your children's safety. There may be a pattern to the violence and you may already be doing things to keep yourself safe.

Sometimes abusers will increase their violence if they suspect you are thinking of leaving, and will continue to do so after you have left. This can be a particularly dangerous time for you - it is important to plan this well. It is important you understand that ending the relationship does not always mean the end of the abuse.

Plan mentally how you might respond to different situations - including a crisis situation when you may need to get out. Take your time to think through Safety Planning and if you want help with your plan and/or your options there is plenty of support available.

If it is not a crisis and you are planning to leave always remember;

*Is there time ?*

*Is it possible / appropriate ?*

*Will it make me or the children more unsafe ?*

*Who can I ring to get support ?*

## Suggestions for planning

- \* Before planning to do anything it is advisable to talk to Support Workers on numbers below to help plan before a crisis.
- \* Carry a list of relevant phone numbers to call in an emergency, for example friends, family, Police, Solicitor, Women's Aid.  
Numbers can easily be forgotten in a crisis.

## Police - 999

### Police Domestic Violence Unit - 204571

#### Womens Aid - 575757 (Daytime)

(Emergency reverse charges accepted)

Emergency (evening) 07 754 754 754

Email: support@womensaidnel.org

- \* Identify the nearest phone.
- \* If you have a mobile phone - keep it with you at all times.
- \* Identify an immediate place of safety (friend/family) - stay there until the Police arrive. Talk to them before, about what is going on - talk to them about what to do if they hear anything or are concerned.
- \* Rehearse your escape plan, so you can all get out safely.
- \* Try to put some money (inc small change) aside for bus/taxi fares etc. You may want to save some money in a separate bank account.
- \* Make up an emergency overnight bag with clothes, money, bank details, benefits books, telephone numbers etc. Hide the bag at a friend or family members who you can trust.
- \* Keep a diary of events as they happen to ensure you don't forget and for evidence if necessary. Record incidents including dates, times, evidence, witnesses etc.
- \* Wherever possible, always take the children; whatever the long-term plans or arrangements are going to be.
- \* If possible and if the children are old enough you may want to talk to them about safety and the possibility of having to leave in a hurry. They probably know what is happening and will need explanations.
- \* Show your children how to call 999 - including the information they will need - name, address, phone number etc.
- \* Where possible speak to the children's school - they may be able to help in an emergency - you may need to take them out of school
- \* Where possible, plan to leave when your partner will be out of the house for a long time.
- \* Keep important documents including identification in a safe place to take when you leave.
- \* Take identification of your partner including photos, car details, etc., it may help others to protect you.

## Other items you might want to pack

*(Packing items may not be possible if you leave in an emergency)*

- \*Birth Certificate; Driving Licence; Passport
- \*Bank Books; cheque books
- \*Keys to house, car and work
- \*Prescribed Medication
- \*Paperwork about your tenancy/mortgage
- \*Paperwork for Police / Court Orders etc
- \*Insurance documents
- \*Address Book / Diary
- \*Photos, jewellery, sentimental items that cannot be replaced
- \*Children's toys, school books etc
- \*Clothes for you and the children

## What if you don't have time to plan/ pack

Do not worry if you have not had time to plan - help is available no matter what you remember to pack or even if you do not have time to pack - these can be sorted after the crisis.

## If you suspect that your partner is about to attack you

Try to work your way towards safer rooms in the house where you have access to a phone or so you are near a door. Avoid rooms like kitchen or garage where there may be easier access to knives/weapons. Avoid places where you might get trapped - upstairs rooms, bathrooms, cupboards etc

## If you don't want to leave your home but need someone to talk to

Support workers are available to speak to. There are many ways to help you to stay in your home and still help you to feel safe.

### Safety items that may be available to keep you safe

Changing locks on doors; installing locks on windows

Installing smoke detectors

Installing outside lights

Mobile phones and/or panic alarms for emergencies

If you stay or return to your home after your partner has left, then you will probably have an occupation order or a protection order. If the injunction has powers of arrest attached, then you must make sure that your local police station has a copy. It is important - even with or without an injunction and with or without safety features - if you still feel unsafe - you *can* leave.

## A 'Drop In' session is available for male/female victims

Victim Support, 10 Town Hall Street, Grimsby

Tuesday 1pm - 3pm (confidential support)