

Safety & Wellness in Conflictual Relationships

After You Have Left

1. Make sure you keep your children with you.
2. Let your children's school, day care, and activity supervisors know what is happening – fill in any paperwork necessary to make sure that they know not to release your child to your abuser.
3. Some things to consider:
 - A restraining order
 - Getting rid of your old phone and getting a phone with a new sim
 - Using a PO box instead of a home address
 - Getting your own bank account
 - Making sure all usernames and passwords are changed
 - Getting legal advice
 - Getting a video camera or other forms of security for your home. Be aware that bars on windows can be a safety risk in the case of a fire.
4. Search for long term housing
5. You will likely feel many emotions, some of these might include:
 - Relief and elation – a sense of freedom
 - Fear for your safety, your children, your future
 - Guilt for staying as long as you did, or for leaving, or both
 - Uncertainty for the future
 - Overwhelming feelings around:
 - being a single parent, caring for and supporting your children
 - dealing with the legal issues and paperwork related to the separation
 - getting your own home set up
 - protecting yourself and your children

Be kind to yourself * Take time for self-care * Practice self-compassion

6. Seek counselling and support groups

- Westcoast Families runs a Domestic Violence Support Group for Women who have experienced domestic violence.

7. Your children will likely also feel many emotions:

- Guilt for leaving or feeling like they betrayed their other parent
- Grief at the breaking up of their family, leaving their home
- Sadness over items that have been left behind
- Fear about what happens now
- Fear of seeing their other parent

8. Depending on your child's age, maturity, understanding, and personality these emotions could show themselves in many ways:

- Happiness
- Anger
- Crying
- Tantrums
- Nightmares
- Bed wetting
- Anxiety behaviors like nail biting
- Tummy and headaches
- Being clingy
- Separation anxiety
- Difficulty focusing at school
- Physically harming themselves

Whatever your child feels and however they express it, it's OK.

If you're struggling to cope, seek help from family, friends, and professionals such as teachers, childcare workers, and counsellors.