

Safety & Wellness in Conflictual Relationships

Creating a Safety Plan

If you feel threatened (physically, emotionally, or in any other way), or if you believe that your relationship is abusive or toxic, it can be helpful to have a safety plan.

Partners who have been abusive in anyway can become physically abusive, especially if they feel that they are losing control. This is why the end of an abusive relationship is the most dangerous time in the relationship.

A safety plan might be created as an “escape” plan – a way for you to leave your domestic violence relationship.

You might choose to have a safety plan, even if you plan to stay with your partner, to keep yourself and your children safe. Safety includes emotional, psychological, legal, and financial safety as well as physical.

On the following pages you will find some things that you might want to consider put into your safety plan. You might like to get some support from a counsellor, social worker, lawyer, or any other trusted professional to put your safety plan together.

The link below is a great resource for preparing a safety plan:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/criminal-justice/victims-of-crime/vs-info-for-professionals/training/creating-safety-plan.pdf>

In an Emergency:

Crisis Services Canada: 833-456-4566

Victim Link: 800-563-0808

Victim Link website: www.victimlinkbc.ca

Battered Woman’s Support Services: 604-697-1867 or 855-687-1868 or text 604-652-1867

Battered Woman’s Support Services website: <https://www.bwss.org/>

BC Society of Transition Houses: <https://bcsth.ca/get-help-now/safe-shelters/>

Emergency services: 911

Emergency Plan

1. Contacting Someone to Help

Do you have access to a phone?

If not, how will you reach emergency contacts?

If you do, can you put emergency contacts into your phone?

It's good to also have a list of contacts separate to your phone in case you cannot get to your phone or use your phone in an emergency.

Some people keep a separate phone in case of emergencies. Is that an option for you?

If possible have at least 3 emergency social contacts.

- Social contacts are friends, family, work colleges, neighbors' people that you feel are safe for you to call. Having more than one contact is helpful as people are not always available when you need them.

It's a good idea to have their contact information somewhere easily accessible an emergency. Ideally have their:

- Name
- Phone number(s)
- Email address
- Home address
- Work address

It can be helpful to let these people know that they are your emergency contact and to have a plan of how they might be able to help you in an emergency.

You might also choose to have the information of professional supports, such as:

- RCMP (police)
- Crisis Support Lines
- Social workers
- Family counsellors
- Lawyers
- Support groups
- Shelters

2. Having Access to Money

When you leave (even if you only plan to leave for a short time) you will need some money. Consider the things that you might need money for:

- Transport (gas, public transport, taxi, Uber)
- Accommodation
- Food
- Children or baby's needs (formula, diapers, clothes)
- Phone credit
- Medications
- Legal advice

Do you have access to a bank account?

What happens if your partner freezes your account or withdraws all the money?

Do you have a bank account that is just in your name?

Do you have some cash that you can access in an emergency?

- The amount of money that you will need will depend on things such as where you plan to stay, how you plan to get there, what things you might need. Take some time to decide how much money you will need and how you will access that money in an emergency.

3. Things You Might Need to Take

If you leave quickly you might have to leave with nothing. If you do have some time to pack, or, if you are able to gain access to the house again after leaving, here are some items that are important:

- Medications that you take
- Wallet/purse + bank cards and ID
- Passport
- Legal documents (for example PR card)
- Mobile phone
- Phone charger
- Reading/eyeglasses
- Clothes for a couple of days
- Clothes for kids for a couple of days
- Kids favorite toy(s)/ book

4. Extra Items

If you can grab these great, if not, you can buy them later.

- Toiletries (toothbrush, shampoo, conditioner, soap, razer, deodorant)
- Diapers/ Nappies
- Baby bottles
- Baby formula
- Baby and kids' clothes

It could be helpful to have a list of essential items that you need to grab in an emergency with your emergency contact list. It can be hard to think of things that are important in a crisis.

5. Where Will You Go?

Knowing in advance of a couple of places that you can go in an emergency can be very helpful. You might plan to stay:

- With friends or family
- In a hotel or Airbnb
- In a shelter
- In a safe house

6. Questions to ask yourself

- What is the address of where you will stay?
- How will you contact these people/get access to this accommodation?
- If there is a cost, do you have the money for it?
- How will you get there?
- Is this accommodation safe and appropriate for you and your children?
- What facilities do they have?
- What items do they provide?
- Is this accommodation always accessible?
- What is my back-up plan if this accommodation is not accessible?