

Responding Well to Domestic Abuse Practice Guidance

Appendix 6: Draft Safety and Exit plan¹

Step 1: I CAN USE SOME OR ALL OF THE FOLLOWING STRATEGIES:

- A. If I decide to leave, I will _____. (Practice how to get out safely. What doors, windows, stairwells or fire escapes would you use?)
- B. I can keep my purse and car keys ready and put them _____ (place) in order to leave quickly.
- C. I can tell _____ about the violence and request they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my house.
- D. I can teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the police and the fire department.
- E. I will use _____ as my code for my children or my friends so they can call for help.
- F. If I have to leave my home, I will go _____ (Decide this even if you don't think there will be a next time). If I cannot go to the location above, then I can go to _____ or _____.
- G. I can also teach some of these strategies to some/all of my children.
- H. When I expect we are going to have an argument, I will try to move to a space that is lowest risk, such as _____. (Try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, kitchen, near weapons or in rooms without access to an outside door).
- I. I will use my judgment and intuition. If the situation is very serious, I can give my partner what he/she wants to calm him/her down. I have to protect myself until I/we are out of danger.

Step 2: SAFETY WHEN PREPARING TO LEAVE

Leaving must be done with a careful plan in order to increase safety. Perpetrators often strike back when they believe that the person they are abusing is leaving the relationship. I can use some or all the following safety strategies:

- A. I will leave money and an extra set of keys with _____ so that I can leave quickly.
- B. I will keep copies of important papers and documents or an extra set of keys at _____.
- C. I will open a savings account by _____, to increase my independence.
- D. Other things I can do to increase my independence include:

¹ Source: Elaine Rose, DSA, Diocese of Canterbury

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- E. The domestic violence program's hot line telephone number is _____ and I can seek shelter by calling this hot line.
- F. I can keep change for phone calls on me at all times. I understand that if I use my mobile, the following month the telephone bill will tell my perpetrator the numbers that I called after I left. I could get a 'pay as you go' phone. There are no bills and all communication would be confidential.
- G. I will check with _____ and _____ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money in an emergency.
- H. I can leave extra clothes with _____.
- I. I will sit down and review my safety plan every _____ in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence.
_____ (domestic violence advocate or friend) has agreed to help me review this plan.
- J. I will rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.

Step 3: SAFETY IN MY OWN RESIDENCE

There are many things that a person can do to increase her safety in her own residence. It may be impossible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step by step.

Safety measures I can use include:

- A. I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible.
- B. I can replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors.
- C. I can install security systems including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, an electronic system, etc.
- D. I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows.
- E. I can install smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor in my house/apartment.
- F. I can install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to my house.
- G. I will teach my children how to use the telephone to make a reverse charge call to me and to _____ (friend/ other) or get them a mobile phone in the event that my partner takes the children.
- H. I will tell people who take care of my children which people have permission to pick up my children and that my partner is not permitted to do so. The people I will inform about pick-up permission include:

_____ (school)
_____ (day care staff)
_____ (Sunday School teacher)