

END THE SILENCE:

SAFETY SUGGESTIONS¹

These suggestions may be helpful to managing safety within your relationship or ending an abusive relationship. Carefully consider what best suits your personal circumstances.

PERSONAL SAFETY:

- ☐ Consider community intimate partner abuse resources for assistance in safety planning.
- ☐ If the abuser resides elsewhere, never agree to meet them alone.
- ☐ Arrange child exchanges in public, such as a convenience store or open restaurant.
- ☐ Arrange for a friend or family member to do child exchanges.
- ☐ Avoid isolated locations for meeting/child exchanges; check that it is staffed before using a police department.
- ☐ Maintain a charged cell phone. You can call 911 even if there are no minutes or active service.
- ☐ If you call 911 but cannot talk, leave the line open. Dispatch may be able to monitor and locate you. You can also text 911 in most places. They will ask if can call you because it's harder for them to get your location with text.
- ☐ Consider obtaining a restraining order (TRO) and injunction.
- ☐ Report violations of restraining order or injunction to the police.
- ☐ Seek medical care if you are injured. Take photos of any bruising, swelling, etc.
- ☐ If you return home and suspect your abuser has broken in, call 911. DO NOT GO IN.
- ☐ Never open the door if you cannot see who is there
- ☐ Plan a code word with a friend to make a 911 call for you if you cannot safely call for help yourself but can contact the friend by phone or social media.
- ☐ Hide a bag or store it with a trusted friend in case you need to leave home quickly.

Suggested contents include

- clothes and shoes
- personal hygiene products
- cash
- medications
- keys
- important documents
- extra phone
- children's and pet's items

¹ Adapted from Dane County WI Sheriff's Office Safety Suggestions and CADA HOUSE "Protection Plan Options."

- ☐ Make family/friends aware of your concerns, daily routines, routes, or travel and work schedules.
- ☐ Set up signals with people such as:
 - flick the lights on and off
 - set up a password or sentence to let you know it's someone you trust at the door or to let them know you need help
 - open or shut a curtain in a certain window
 - remove a plant that usually hangs in a window
 - SCREAM fire
 - Knock on the wall
- ☐ Take care of yourself with sleep, nutrition, health, fitness as much as you're able. Consider joining a support group and/or self-defense class.
- ☐ Get the OK with friends, neighbors, etc. to come to them in the middle of the night.
- ☐ Keep the items with a friend or relative.
- ☐ Hide items somewhere like: under spare tires, wrapped in freezer paper in freezer, in an out-building, or rent a locker somewhere.
- ☐ Always carry your restraining order/injunction with you.
- ☐ Put knives in inaccessible places.
- ☐ If law enforcement is called, ask them to take away the weapons.
- ☐ Know good places in your house to hide (preferably close to windows or doors for easy escape if necessary)
- ☐ Make an escape plan from each room in your house or apartment. You may want to hide a rope ladder in upper story rooms for escape
- ☐ Make a safe room in your house which has a lock on the door, a phone, and from which you can escape
- ☐ Know in advance where you will go if you need to leave your house

HOUSEHOLD SAFETY:

- ☐ Move to safer rooms in your home that provide a better exit if an argument is escalating, or you do not feel safe.
- ☐ Consider removing weapons from the home or separate ammunition from the weapons.
- ☐ Keep all keys out of sight of the abuser.
- ☐ Have extra keys made and give to friends, neighbors, relatives—those who can be trusted.
- ☐ Hide extra keys somewhere safe, out of the house if possible. (e.g. in the wheel-well of a car, buried by a plant, under a desk)
- ☐ If not living together, try to obtain the abuser's set of keys to your vehicle.

- ☐ Change/repair door locks; secure/repair windows and patios. Contact landlord for repairs if you rent.
- ☐ Be cautious of unexpected deliveries or unknown persons at your door or on your property.
- ☐ Keep doors and windows locked, garage doors shut.
- ☐ Keep outdoor lighting on at night, consider installing motion/flood lighting.
- ☐ Keep windows and shades closed at night.
- ☐ Get a peephole installed or ask landlord to install this safety feature.
- ☐ Change codes to your garage doors, pin pads, and remotes if your abuser has them.
- ☐ Notify landlord or neighbors of persons and vehicles not wanted around your property.
- ☐ Plan an escape route out of your home and identify where you can go for help.
- ☐ Consider obtaining an alarm system, security camera, outdoor lights, and/or dog.
- ☐ Move to another residence.
- ☐ Don't give information to untrustworthy people or those who like and trust the abuser.
- ☐ Change land line number and make it unpublished.
- ☐ Hide an extra phone in your home in case abuser takes or destroys yours. Check to see if you can obtain one free from the police or domestic abuse program.

SAFETY AT WORK:

- ☐ Tell employers or co-workers not to give out your phone, address, or work schedule.
- ☐ Give a photo of your abuser to security, supervisor, and friends at work.
- ☐ Talk to your supervisor or Human Resources about your safety concerns.
- ☐ Establish a response plan/escape route for your workplace if your abuser causes issues.
- ☐ Ask about relocating your workspace to a secure area if needed.
- ☐ Walk with others to lunch, to and from your parking area, or to public transportation.
- ☐ Notify your payroll department to change payroll distribution or set up direct deposit.
- ☐ Park your car in different locations or carpool with a co-worker.

CHILD SAFETY:

- ☐ Teach your children how to call 911 and give your address and phone number for help.
- ☐ Teach children where to go for help outside the house and the names of safe people and places.
- ☐ Plan an escape route out of the house with your children.
- ☐ Develop a safety plan with children to use when they are scared or when you give the signal. Where to hide, when to leave or call 911.
- ☐ Notify your child's school or daycare of your safety concerns, provide a photo of your abuser.

- ☐ Inform babysitter, schools, medical facilities, the parents of your child's friends, etc. that the child should not leave with abuser.
- ☐ Give your children a code word that will be used if someone else needs to pick them up.
- ☐ To report child abuse/neglect call your county Child Protective Services.

COMPUTER/PHONE/MAIL:

- ☐ Set all social networking sites to the most private security settings.
- ☐ Make sure your text content can only be read on your phone/devices. Check for shared apps/accounts.
- ☐ Save all voicemails, text messages, emails from an abuser for documentation.
- ☐ It is legal in some states to tape record your own phone conversations with another party; find out if it is in yours.
- ☐ Change all passwords/PIN codes to bank accounts, ATM cards, online accounts, etc.
- ☐ Change all phone and voicemail security codes.
- ☐ Consider getting a PO box if your personal mailbox or online accounts are not secure.
- ☐ If you suspect there is spyware installed on your computer, have it inspected.
- ☐ Monitor your children's phone and computer use for contact with the abuser.
- ☐ Be careful of pictures that tell where you are living.

FINANCIAL SAFETY:

- ☐ Monitor your bank accounts and change passwords to your ATM cards and bank accounts.
- ☐ Gather important documents (Social Security cards, birth certificates, custody/court paperwork, leases/deeds, liens, insurance documents, etc.) Make copies and store at safe location away from home.
- ☐ If you do not have a secure mailbox, consider a post office box to avoid mail theft.
- ☐ Obtain a credit report and account for all your bank cards and accounts.
- ☐ Remove your name from any shared accounts or try to close them.
- ☐ Consider opening separate checking/savings and credit card accounts in your own name even if you're still living with an abuser.
- ☐ Do not bank by using your computer or phone if you live with the abuser.
- ☐ Obtain money for emergencies by writing a check or using debit for over the amount and putting the overage in your separate account.
- ☐ Borrow money from relatives, friends, banks and hide it or put it into your account.
- ☐ Use direct deposit through your work if available.
- ☐ Hide money where it is easily accessible to you—inside or outside your home.
- ☐ Put rings or other valuables in a safe deposit box and hide the key in a safe place.

- ☐ Consider if there are items of value you can sell so you have cash.

VEHICLE SAFETY:

- ☐ Keep a charged cell phone in your vehicle.
- ☐ Lock your doors as soon as you get in your car.
- ☐ If you need glasses to drive, keep an extra pair in your vehicle.
- ☐ Keep distance between the vehicles in front of you to avoid being blocked in.
- ☐ Park in well-lit areas. Consider parking in areas where the abuser wouldn't search.
- ☐ If you think you are being followed, drive to a lighted public place.
- ☐ When pulling in your garage, wait until your garage door is secure before exiting vehicle.
- ☐ Be aware of your surroundings in parking garages, lots.
- ☐ Change your regular travel habits, take different routes at different times.
- ☐ Get a lock for the hood and gas cap to prevent abuser immobilizing your vehicle. If hood can only be opened from the inside, keep the doors locked at all times.
- ☐ Always keep your set of keys hidden from the abuser.

NUMBERS TO CALL FOR HELP:

- ☐ List names and numbers of friends, relatives, domestic abuse shelter, hospital, churches, and anywhere you can go for help.
- ☐ Find a safe place to hide these numbers, such as a neighbor, in the freezer, a plant, or tampon box.
- ☐ Post the number for a domestic abuse program under a fictitious name so the abuser doesn't know you have it.
- ☐ Keep law enforcement non-emergency numbers under fictitious name.
- ☐ Memorize all important numbers.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF WHEN BEING ATTACKED:

- ☐ Be aware of abuser's cues (physical behaviors, circumstances) before an assault. Try to leave before assault happens.
- ☐ Know ahead of time what you are capable of doing such as gauging eyes, kick to knee or crotch, elbow in eye, stomp on foot, heel of palm to nose, run, etc.
- ☐ Never pick up a weapon unless you are sure you will use it in self-defense. If you hesitate, the abuser may take it and use it against you.
- ☐ Black pepper, salt, chili powder, hair spray in the eyes of your attacker might be effective.
- ☐ If all else fails, roll up in a ball and protect your head.