



# Domestic Violence Safety Planning Guide

## Children & Families of Iowa’s Domestic Violence Services (515) 243-6147

*This is for you, the victim. This is for you, a trusted friend, relative, or co-worker.*

**Not all of the points on this safety plan will apply to your situation. Choose the suggestions that make sense for you. YOU know your situation best!**

### GENERAL SAFETY PLAN

- Plan a variety of ways to get out of your home safely. **Practice using your escape route.**
- **Pack a bag** with medications and important documents (e.g., birth certificates, money, keys, etc.) and hide it. Keep it at a trusted friend’s home or at work, if necessary.
- **Arrange a signal** with neighbors to let them know when you need help (turning on the porch light during the day, pulling down a window shade).
- **Devise a code word.** Share that word with your children, grandchildren, and friends to indicate that you need the police called.
- **Plan for where you will go** if you have to leave (even if you don’t think you will need to).

### SAFETY IN EXPLOSIVE INCIDENTS

- **Try to go to a room or area where there is an exit.** Avoid rooms with potential weapons or no outside exits (e.g. garages, kitchens, bathrooms).
- **Try to stay in a room with a phone** or hide your cell phone in a safe place and have it programmed for 911. Call a friend or neighbor if you can.
- **Visualize your escape route.** If a safe moment arises, be prepared to use it.
- **Use your code word or special signal** to tell your children or neighbors to call 911.
- **Trust your instincts and judgment** to safely decide what to do next.

**Together we can stop family violence. Call (515)243-6147 today.**

### SAFETY WHEN LEAVING

- **Open a savings account** in your name only at a different bank than your abuser. Consider direct deposit of your paycheck or benefit check.
- **Have your abuser’s social security number and license plate number** with you to give to the police.
- **Bring medications,** hearing aids, glasses, etc.
- Keep Children & Families of Iowa’s Domestic Violence Services number with you.
- **Review your safety plan regularly** and change it as circumstances change.

### SAFETY WHEN NO LONGER LIVING WITH YOUR ABUSER

- **Change the locks** on your doors as soon as possible.
- If possible, buy additional locks to secure your windows. Consider more outside lighting.
- If you have children or other dependents living with you, **discuss a safety plan** for when you are not there. Let the school, daycare, etc. know who has permission to pick up children. Give copies of your protection order to anyone with whom your children or dependents may be staying.
- **Inform neighbors and your landlord** that your abuser no longer lives with you. Ask that they call the police if they see your abuser near your home.

### SAFETY IN PUBLIC

- Decide whom to inform of your situation (school, office, building security) and provide them a picture of your abuser. Consider having your phone calls screened.
- Plan for what you will do in public. Have someone walk you to your car, taxi or bus (on the bus, sit near the driver). Always use a variety of routes when going home. Think what you would do if something happened on the way home.

**Remember — YOU know Your situation best!**

### IF YOU ARE A TEEN IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

- Decide which friend, teacher, relative, or police officer you can tell.
- Contact your local domestic violence program or Children & Families of Iowa’s Domestic Violence Services **(515) 243-6147** to learn about making a safety plan.

### IF YOU ARE A PARENT, FRIEND, or CO-WORKER OF A VICTIM

- Listen and validate what the victim is telling you.
- Believe what the victim is saying.
- Provide choices. For example, give the number of the local crisis line or Children & Families of Iowa’s Domestic Violence Services **(515) 243-6147**.
- Gently give this safety plan to the victim. Tell that person that you will be there whenever he or she needs you. Remember, this may not happen on your time schedule. A victim knows his or her situation best!

### KNOW THE SIGNS

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| <p><b>Control</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can’t make decisions without my partner’s approval.</li> <li>• I need my partner’s permission to do things I want to do.</li> <li>• I am not allowed to express my opinion or feelings around my partner.</li> </ul> <p><b>Fear</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am afraid of my partner.</li> <li>• My partner has used violence in the past to get his or her way.</li> <li>• I haven’t left because I am scared of what my partner will do.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Humiliation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My partner embarrasses me and makes fun of me in front of my family and friends.</li> <li>• My partner says horrible things about me, and I am beginning to believe they are true.</li> <li>• I feel I am nothing without my partner.</li> </ul> <p><b>Intimidation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I often give in to my partner out of fear of what his or her reaction will be.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Guilt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My partner says that he or she “just lost control” because of alcohol or drugs or because of something I did.</li> <li>• I make excuses to my friends and family for my partner’s behavior.</li> <li>• Nothing I do will make my partner happy.</li> </ul> |
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### NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

- You have the right to ask the court for the following help on a temporary basis:
1. Keeping your attacker away from you, your home, and your place of work
  2. The right to stay at your home without interference from your attacker.
  3. Getting custody of your children and obtaining support for yourself and your minor children if your attacker is legally required to provide such support.
  4. Professional counseling for you and the children who are members of the household and the defendant.

You have the right to seek help from the court to obtain a protective order with or without the assistance of legal representation. You have the right to seek help from the courts without the payment of court costs if you do not have sufficient funds to pay the costs.

You have the right to file criminal charges for threats, assaults, or other related crimes.

You have the right to seek restitution against your attacker from harm to yourself or your property.

If you are in need of medical treatment, you have the right to request that the officer present assist you in obtaining transportation to the nearest hospital or otherwise assist you.

If you believe that police protection is needed for your physical safety, you have the right to request that the officer present remain at the scene until you and other affected parties can leave or until safety is assured.