

Safety Planning with Children



If you have children, be sure your safety plan includes ways to keep them safe when violence occurs and important details to remember while preparing to leave and after.

Physical safety at home

- Teach your children when, how, and who to contact during an emergency.
- This can include trusted friends, family members, neighbors, local service providers, and more.
- If possible, instruct them to leave the home when situations begin to escalate and establish where they can

go. Create a plan ahead of time with trusted people who your children can turn to during a moment of crisis.

- Come up with a code word for when to leave the house in an emergency and make sure they know not to tell others what the secret word means.
- Identify a room in the house that they can go to when they're afraid, and something calming they can focus on for comfort.
- Instruct them to stay out of areas containing items that could be used to harm them, including kitchens and bathrooms.
- Teach them that they shouldn't try to intervene in moments of violence, even though they may want to protect their parents.
- Plan for what you will do if your children tell your partner of your plan, and remember never to blame them for their responses to your partner's abusive behavior

Planning for unsupervised visits

- Create a separate safety plan for situations in which your children may spend unsupervised time with your abusive

partner.

- If your children are old enough, brainstorm **with** them to come up with ways that they can stay safe using the same model as you would for your own home. Help them identify where they can get to a phone, who they can contact, how they can leave the house, and where they can go.
- If possible, give your children a cell phone to be used in emergency situations.

Planning for safe custody exchanges

- Avoid exchanging custody at your home or your partner's home. Meet in a safe, public place like a restaurant, store, or other area with visibility.
- Bring a trusted friend or family member with you to make custody exchanges, or have them make the exchange on your behalf.
- Find ways to schedule custody exchanges without interacting with your partner. One way of doing this is to arrange for your partner to pick your children up from school at the end of the day after you drop them off in

the morning, or vice versa, to eliminate the chances of seeing each other.

- Emotional safety plan for yourself and your children. Figure out something to do before the exchange to calm any nerves you might be feeling, and something to focus on afterwards for yourself or your children, like going to a park or doing a fun activity.

Answers shouldn't be hard to find.



Preparing to Leave



After You Leave



Contact

National Domestic Violence Hotline
PO Box 90249
Austin, Texas 78709
Administrative Line: 737-225-3150

Follow



The Hotline®

National Domestic Violence Hotline

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