

Safety from Domestic Violence

Domestic violence can be physical or psychological, and it can affect anyone of any age, race, or sexual orientation. It may include behaviors meant to scare, physically harm, or control a partner. Insults, threats, emotional abuse and sexual coercion all constitute domestic violence.





LET'S

END DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE
TOGETHER

Personal Safety from an Abuser

1. Identify your partner's use and level of force so that you can assess danger to you and your children before it occurs. List the cues that your partner is escalating so you have a way to evaluate when the situation may become dangerous. If an abusive situation seems likely, try to diffuse your partner's anger – think about ways that you have protected yourself in the past, what has worked and what hasn't.
2. Try to avoid an abusive situation by leaving. Go for a walk, hopefully your partner will cool down during that time.
3. Identify safe areas of the house where there are no weapons and there are ways of escape. If arguments occur, try to move to those areas. Install inside locks on a door or plan barricades.
4. Don't run to where the children are as your partner may hurt them as well or use them to threaten you.
5. If violence is unavoidable, make yourself as small a target as you can; dive into a corner and curl up into a ball with your face protected and arms around each side of your head, fingers entwined.
6. If possible, have a phone accessible at all times and know the numbers to call for help. Think about places close by where you could get to a phone, such as a gas station or grocery store. Cell phones, even those that aren't activated with a service, Know your local domestic

violence program's number. Don't be afraid to call the police.

7. Let trusted friends and neighbors know of your situation and develop a plan and visual signal for when you need help. Turning on the front porch light, leaving the garage door open, etc.
8. Teach your children how to get help. Instruct them not to get involved in the violence between you and your partner. Plan a code word to signal to them that they should get help or go to a safe place in their home.
9. Tell your children that violence is never right, even when someone they love is being violent. Tell them that neither you nor they are at fault or cause the violence, and that whenever your partner is being violent, it is important for them to keep themselves safe.
10. Practice how to get out safely. Practice with your children.
11. Plan for what you will do if, for instance, your children somehow tell your partner of your plan or if your partner otherwise finds out about your plan.
12. Keep weapons, like guns and knives, locked up and as inaccessible as possible.
13. Make a habit of backing the car into the driveway and keep it fueled. Keep the driver's door unlocked and others locked for a quick escape.

14. Develop the habit of not wearing scarves or long necklaces that could be used to grab or strangle you.
15. Have several plausible reasons for leaving the house at different times of the day or night.

Getting Ready to Leave

1. Keep any evidence of physical abuse, such as pictures, etc., in a safe place that is accessible for you.
2. Know where you can go to get help; tell someone you trust what is happening to you.
3. If you are injured, go to a doctor or an emergency room and report what happened to you. Ask that they document your visit.
4. Plan with your children and identify a safe place for them (for example, a room within your home that has a lock or a friend's house where they can go for help). Reassure them that their job is to stay safe, not to protect you.
5. Contact your local domestic violence program and find out about laws and other resources available to you before you have to use them during a crisis.
6. Keep a journal of all violent incidences involving your abuser, those aimed at yourself and those aimed at others.
7. Acquire job skills as you can, such as learning computer skills or taking courses at a community college.

Take with you a list of important phone numbers of friends, relatives, doctors, schools, etc., as well as other important items, including:

- Driver's license
- Regularly needed medication
- Checkbooks and information about bank accounts and other assets
- List of credit cards held by self or jointly, or the credit cards themselves if you have access to them; and
- Pay-stubs.

If time is available, also take (or pack copies in a suitcase):

- Copy of marriage license, birth certificates, will and other legal documents
- Verification of social security numbers
- Citizenship documents (passport, green card, etc.)
- Titles, deeds and other property information
- Welfare identification
- Medical records
- Children's school records and immunization records
- Insurance information
- Valued pictures, jewelry, or personal possessions.