

All About Safety Planning

Safety plans are intended to optimize victim/survivor safety at every stage. Safety plans will change as situations change. The changes may be big, such as going to confidential shelter or changing schools. Or smaller changes can include changing your e-mail passwords or the route you take to work. Proactive planning on how to safely escape, protect your children, and get assistance and support can enhance your safety if a violent incident occurs.

Safety plans detail plans in case of dangerous situations or changes in the relationship, such as breaking up. Identify safe friends and safe places. Identify the essential items to take should one need or decide to leave home. Include information about local relationship abuse resources and legal rights. Build on what a survivor is already doing to survive.

Safety plans should start from the assumption that an abuser is dangerous and try to help the survivor identify the circumstances under which the abuser typically becomes violent and how the abuser may react to help seeking strategies.

These are possible steps victims/survivors can take to increase their safety.

- During an argument, move to a room with easy access to an exit (avoid the kitchen or bathroom).
- Tell trustworthy neighbors about the violence. Ask them to call the police if they hear or see any disturbance.
- Devise a code word or signal to use with your children, family, friends, and trustworthy neighbors when you need the police.
- Keep an extra set of car and house keys in a secret, safe place
- Have an overnight bag ready if you need to leave quickly and know where it is located.
- Have a plan for where you could go if you needed to leave. Be prepared even if you think you will never have to leave.
- Take pictures of bruises, sign and date them; record dates and times of threatening phone calls or confrontations; and save threatening texts or voicemails.

For more information on safety planning call APG FAP at 410-278-1305. Also, the Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-866-331-9474.