

Safety Planning where there is Domestic Abuse

A Safety Plan will depend on if the victim is preparing to leave, wants to remain safe in the home or wants to flee, it will also depend on if they live with the perpetrator or not.

* Plan ahead – how can you contact the victim safely next time? Safe times, safe days, safe words if it’s not good for them to talk etc. (no texts or letters with information to be taken home if it will escalate risk)
* A victim will already have their own safety plans in place to reduce the abuse or the children being exposed to the abuse. As professionals we need to understand, respect, and validate what non-conventional things the victim does to keep the family safe. Praise the victim for their efforts and build on their safety plan, with them, with a plan that will work for them.
* There is no point telling them to call 999 if they won’t do that so what else could they do? The safety plan should work for them and will need to be reviewed if there are any changes.
* As part of the safety plan explore things like identifying trigger points (alcohol, drugs, medication, mental health, gambling, finances, not doing certain things the abuser expects such as household chores etc.) and how these could be explored to reduce risk.
* Always ensure the victim and abusive partner are seen alone – consider an alternative location (school, health appt) to speak to victim due to risk of abusive partner being in home or listening devices etc. at property
* The victim will know how best the abuse can be approached with perpetrator without increasing risk – explore this with them prior to speaking to perpetrator.
* When meeting at family homes be aware of CCTV, Ring doorbells that may alert the abusive partner to agency involvement and increase risk
* Explore barriers they may have in fleeing e.g., financial, control the perpetrator has. Remember to think about the language used E.g., **DON’T** say things like ‘’Mum let him back in the property’’ ‘’Mum has taken him back’’ **DO** put onus on abuser. E.g., ‘’Mum was coerced’’ ‘’Dad breached his non molestation order’’

# REMEMBER: Separation doesn’t mean safety for the victim - the perpetrator has not respected other decisions the victim has made so it is very unlikely they would respect that they want to end the relationship. The perpetrator will have a loss of control of the situation, and risk usually escalates at the time of leaving as the perpetrator will change tactics and escalate abuse to try and gain control again.

**In an emergency situation call 999**

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| **Home safety*****Is the abuser living there? If they are:**** Have a phone accessible to call for help at all times
* Identify safe areas in the home
* Practice how to get out safely e.g., Avoiding places where there may be weapons such as the kitchen or garage where there are likely to be knives or other weapons.
* Talk to neighbours or your children who may be able to call for help if needed
* Look at wider networks of friends and family and how they could support (guided by victim) to reduce isolation
* Create a code word with trusted family/friend who can call for help on your behalf if you alert them
* Create believable reason for leaving the house so you can use this as a reason if you need to leave.
* Speak to work about work arrangements and see if you can return to the office, then you can tell the abuser of work requirement to return to the office as a way to try reducing abuse
* If using online meetings and working from home, you could use discreet hand signal to notify when you are in danger
* Looking after emotional wellbeing and ongoing validation that abuse is not your fault – talk to Helplines such as BSWA via webchat or call 0808 800 0028, Samaritans 116 123, Speak to Social worker, Teachers, Health Visitor, GP, trusted friends or family

***If abuser isn’t living there:**** + Is the property secure?
	+ Change locks
	+ Can you ask neighbours to inform if abuser is near property when you are out?
	+ Do you have smoke alarms or outdoor lighting?
	+ Explore CCTV/ring doorbell sanctuary scheme
	+ Explore Occupation order or Non molestation order
 | **Phone and Digital Safety*** Keep your device charged
* Have you got credit or use of minutes/text in case of emergency?
* Smartphones store sensitive information and can track location and personal information – use a different device if you can
* Check privacy settings and location settings
* Make sure your email, iCloud or any other accounts are not linked to give anyone else access
* Reset your phone
* Change your number
* Uninstall unknown apps
* Check with phone provider if other location settings are being shared
* Cover any webcam or computer camera (when not in use)
* Are there any smart devices such as Alexa or ring doorbell that can be used to monitor you? Any unknown devices?
* Be mindful of social media and what you post
* Any apps to use power and control e.g. fertility/ menstrual cycle apps to monitor ovulation time
* Apps or safety features you could download or use – Bright sky app, Hollie Guard, Samsung SOS, Apple Emergency SOS
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| Preparing to Leave* + Pack an emergency bag for yourself and children, hide it somewhere safe e.g., family, friend, workplace, somewhere abuser won’t have access to. This bag can include I.D documents, passport, birth certificates for you and your children. Visas, work permit, money, keys (cut extra set of keys if needed), medicine, tenancy documents, photographs, clothing, toys, Court Order documents, Police log, evidence you have collated of the abuse.
	+ Speak to professionals e.g., School, Midwife, Women’s Aid, Social Worker about your plans. Access IRIS support through GP.

**If you are preparing to leave, try and do it when the abuser is not around. If you haven’t prepared an emergency bag then try to take everything you will need with you, such as important documents for yourself and children.*** Let the school know of your plans and any future plans around who will be collecting children etc. from school.
* Go to the place you have planned to go and if you the need to call police or access emergency accommodation such as Refuge.
* When you leave – do not register on electoral roll with your new address.
 | Safety in a Crisis & Escape Routes* + Plan in advance how you might respond in different situations, including crisis situations.
	+ Think about the different options that may be available to you.
	+ Keep any important and emergency telephone numbers e.g., 999, Social Worker, Women’s Aid with you
	+ Are there neighbours you could trust. If you can then tell them what is going on, and ask them to call the police if they are alerted or hear anything
	+ Rehearse an escape plan, so in an emergency you and the children can get away safely.
	+ Think of where you could go in an emergency
	+ Use the silent 999 call option - If the operator believes that the caller needs an emergency service or something suspicious is happening the call will be connected to silent solution system and will be asked to press 55 if they want to be connected to police.
	+ Register with Police TEXT service by texting REGISTER to 999. Ask for ANI - Discreet way for victims to signal they need help from their local pharmacy (participating pharmacies list is on DA Champions resource list)
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| **Outdoor Safety*** Plan routes when you are out
* Be vigilant when out and aware of surroundings or anyone following you
* Let someone trusted know if you are going in a risk area
* Send your location to trusted person
* Stay on the phone to someone you trust when you are out
* Keep phone charged
* Let employer or school know and see if you can change the working patterns or school drop off /pick up time
* Consider changing routines i.e., time leaving home/ returning home
* Using different routes
* Exploring if someone else can accompany you on your journey e.g., friend, work colleague
 | **Safety with Children*** Speak to the school
* Explore child arrangement orders, prohibited steps order
* Ensure the child or young person has age-appropriate awareness of how to get help when in danger E.G. Calling ChildLine or 999
* Talk to children about what makes them feel safe and what they can do to be ‘safer’ if an incident was to happen.
* Any child contact when perpetrator is not living with you – try to have a third party involved and have the drop off point be in a neutral public location where abuser won’t be able to identity where you live.
* Consider any items that are given to the child – has perpetrator put any tracking devices in them, check items to ensure they do not compromise safety
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