

QUESTIONS TO HELP WITH SAFETY PLANNING – DOMESTIC ABUSE

Safety planning involves a whole network approach including perpetrators, people who are subject to violence and abuse (typically women), children, wider family members, friends and community resources. These questions are designed to be asked from a number of different people's perspectives and are given as examples of the kind of questions that could be asked to help people to reflect and think about what they can do differently so that violence and abuse doesn't happen, or if it does, women (usually) and children can be kept safe in future. Many of these questions are aimed at the perpetrator and the wider family network so that we are not holding victims of violence and abuse responsible for the safety of their children, especially given the issue of power and control in the relationship.

Reducing violent / controlling behaviour:

- On a scale of 0 – 10, if 10 is that you get that there are things that you need to do differently in your relationship for your partner and your kids to feel safe and at ease and 0 is you feel like everything is your partners fault and there is nothing that you need to do differently, where would you rate things? Where do you think your partner would rate it? What about the kids? If there was one thing that you could do differently so that home life was a nicer place for your partner and kids, what would that be? What do you think your partner would want you to do differently? What do you think your kids would want you to do differently?
- Can you tell me about a time that you've wanted to raise your hands to your partner or kids but you've been able to do something different so that your partner or kids didn't end up feeling scared or getting hurt? What did you do instead? What else helped you to do this?
- What for you are the best things about being in control of what is going on with your partner and kids? What do you get out of it? What about the downsides – what are some of the worst things about feeling like you need to be the one making decisions for everyone or knowing about who does what all of the time? When do you find it easiest to let go a little bit? What would your partner say if I was to ask them? What would your best mate say makes it easier for you to let go?
- If I asked the kids, what would they say are the best ways that you are dealing with things that would normally stress you out? What difference is this making to them? What difference is this making to your relationship with the kids?
- You've said that the reason you don't like your partner talking to her family is because they don't like you, but your partner has said that her family is really important to her. What ideas do you have that would mean that your partner could still talk to her family, even if you aren't always comfortable with this? What could her family do differently that could make things better between you? What do you think they would want you to do differently that would make things better with them?

Triggers:

- If I were to ask the kids what was happening in the lead up to you hurting your partner, what do you think they would they say? What would your partner say? What would you say happened?
- What kind of thoughts go through your head before you've ended up doing something to hurt or scare your partner or the kids / before you've done something that has led to them feeling on edge?

- If I was to ask someone close to you what are the things that could lead to a kick off, to the point where someone could get hurt, what would they say?
- When you feel like you're not in control as much as you'd like, what makes these feelings stronger? Where do you think these feelings of needing or wanting to be in control come from? What would your partner / mam / dad/ best friend say about this if I was to ask them?
- Thinking about life over the next few months what are the things that we need to think about and plan for to make sure that everyone is safe and the kids don't get hurt or feel scared?

Warning signs

- What would be the first thing that would warn you that the people that you care about, like your partner and kids, were starting to feel scared or like they are walking on eggshells around you? What would the kids say if I asked them?
- What would be the first sign for you that you're about to do something that could scare your kids? What do you think the kids would say if we were to ask them?
- Safety network: what would be the first sign that you would notice that would tell you that things weren't going well again in x and y's relationship? What would make you really worried for mam or the kids? If you noticed these signs, how might you try to step in to help? Is there anything that would get in the way of you stepping in to help?

Keeping the children safe

- When you are thinking X thoughts or doing X behaviour (link back to triggers), what ideas do you have to stop things from getting worse? Who else could help you at these times? Where else could you go if you needed some time out?
- If you did end up shouting and yelling, to the point where you're feeling like you could end up hitting someone or something, what is the one thing that you could do or say to yourself that would stop this from happening so that no one gets hurt?
- If I was to ask the kids, what do you think they would say that you should do instead when all you feel like doing is yelling, screaming, or smashing things up, so that they don't get scared or hurt? What do you think needs to happen to stop things from even getting to this point? What would your partner say needs to happen to stop them or the kids feeling scared?
- What is the one thing that you think your partner would want you to do differently that would make them feel happier / more relaxed / more trusting etc around you?
- Of all the people that you know, who would be the first to notice / who could you tell if you were feeling scared? Who would be the most likely person to step in and make sure that you and the kids are kept safe? What would they do?
- What are all of the ways that you have tried to keep yourself and the kids safe when your partner has been behaving in scary or threatening ways towards you?
- Who could you get in touch with if you needed help for you and the kids straight away? Who else knows about the violence and the abuse? Out of all of these people, who believes you? Who has been there for you and the kids in the past when you've needed them?
- If the worst did happen and you ended up getting hurt, who would help to look after you and the kids? How would this work? Who would go where?
- Who would be the first person that the kids would want to help if they were feeling scared or worried? How could this person help?

- Kids, what would be the best way for you to let people know if you have any worries (could think about a safety object or word here)? Who would you feel most comfortable telling? Who would be the first person that you could tell (or show) if you feel scared?