

A Teen's Safety Plan

If you're in an abusive situation and are not able or ready to leave it, it's important to think about how to keep yourself safe. If you do want to leave, it's a good idea to plan your escape well. Printing and filling out this safety plan can help you feel safe whether you're staying in your current situation or getting ready to leave. Be sure to review it every so often with someone you trust, to keep the information useful and up-to-date.

I will tell (name): _____ and (name): _____
about the abuse and ask them to help me if I use the code word or phrase:

_____ ,
or if they learn I'm being hurt by any other means.

I will buy a small address book and carry it with me at all times. I will list the following people, agencies, shelters, hotlines, or other services in the book:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

I will make a habit of leaving as often as possible, to:

_____ ,
I will use this excuse when I'm able or ready to leave the situation.

I will leave before I think a situation will get violent. I usually know things are getting violent when: _____

My abuser may try to persuade me not to leave by: _____

I can get around this by: _____

If I decide to leave, I will go to either of the following places that are unknown to my abuser:

1. _____
2. _____

I will keep the following items in a bag that is ready to go (circle those that apply):

keys	check book
address book	spare clothes
driver's license or other identification	pager
social security card	restraining/protection orders
school records	rent papers
passport	current unpaid bills
resident card	insurance papers
immigration papers	Medi-cal stickers
bus tokens	prescriptions/medicines
spare change	special photos
small amount of cash	personal items

(For teens with children: formula and bottle, diapers, birth certificate, child's medical records, spare clothes for child, child's favorite toys)

If I leave, I will bring this bag, as well as: _____
_____ with me.

I will keep spare items, supplies, copies of important papers, and: _____
with (name): _____ in case I am unable to get my bag before leaving.

I will review my safety plan on (date): _____ with (name): _____

Safety Planning: Tips for Safety and Confidence

- Stand up for yourself. If the abuse is just starting, tell the abuser that his/her behavior is not acceptable and that you won't put up with it. Talk to a trusted adult or peer about what's happening.
- Be careful. If the abuse is ongoing and the abuser is accustomed to getting his/her own way, you may risk more violence if you stand up for yourself. If you're afraid this might happen, try to get support from an adult or friend before you make a stand. Don't try it when you're alone with the abuser, and be prepared to take the step of leaving in order to escape the abuse.
- Remember that the abuse isn't your fault. Don't be ashamed to tell someone about the abuse. It's not your fault, it's the abuser's problem. Encourage him/her to get help.
- Hurting yourself isn't the answer. It's normal to feel down when you're being hurt. Some people who are being abused feel like suicide is the only real option. If you feel this way, it might be because you believe the abuser's put-downs or because you're turning your anger on yourself. Use your anger instead to take care of yourself. There really are options and steps you can take to make things better for yourself. Praise yourself for what you do well, and have faith in your future. If you are feeling suicidal, it may help to talk to someone about your feelings and you can call the 24 hour Hopeline at 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433).
- Tell someone about the abuse. Sometimes just talking about the abuse can make you feel better. At other times, an adult or friend might have useful advice or be able to offer help.
- Be careful with alcohol and drugs. Many people use alcohol and drugs to deal with tension or pain. Unfortunately, they'll only drain your energy, keep you helpless, and affect your ability to think clearly. Try to drink or use only in moderation or avoid substances altogether.
- Relax and play. Relieving stress can improve your ability to communicate and make decisions. Physical activity can increase your sense of well-being. Regular exercise done with others can be fun, too.
- Try to eat well. Your physical health affects the way you feel as well as your ability to cope with stress.
- Save money and get some job skills. Knowing you have an emergency fund can help reduce your anxiety. If you have job skills, it'll be easier to avoid depending on others to get by. Even if you can't get a job or don't need one, you can do volunteer work to gain skills and meet new people.
- Know your local resources. To learn about domestic violence agencies in your area, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline 24 hours, 1-800-799-SAFE (7233), 1-800-787-3224 (TTY).
- Look after yourself. You are a strong person, and you can grow stronger when you know you can make it on your own. When you're ready to leave an abusive situation, know that help is there!