

## **SAFETY PLANNING**

**IF YOU ARE IN DANGER, CALL 911**  
or your local police emergency number.

There are things you can do to protect yourself from the perpetrator.

### **IN AN EMERGENCY**

#### **If you are at home and you are being threatened or attacked:**

- Stay away from the kitchen, where the perpetrator could find knives and other weapons.
- Stay away from bathrooms, closets, or small spaces where the perpetrator could trap you.
- Get to a room with a door or window to escape.
- Get to a room with a phone to call for help. Lock the perpetrator out if possible.
- Call 911 (or your local emergency number) right away. Get the dispatcher's name.
- Think about a neighbor or friend you can run to for help.
- If a police officer comes, tell him/her what happened and get his/her name and badge number. Record any complaint or report numbers that you can.
- Get medical help if you are hurt.
- Take pictures of bruises or injuries.
- Call a rape crisis center and ask them to help you make a safety plan.

### **HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AT HOME**

- Learn where to get help and memorize emergency phone numbers.
- Keep a phone in a room you can lock from the inside. If you can, get a cellular phone that you keep charged and with you at all times.
- If the perpetrator has moved out of a shared residence, change the locks on your door. Get locks on the windows.
- Plan an escape route out of your home and teach it to your children.
- Think about where you would go if you need to escape.
- Ask your neighbors to call the police if they see the perpetrator at your house. Develop a signal for them to call the police. A signal could be when the phone rings twice, a shade is pulled down, or a light is on.
- Pack a bag with important things you would need if you had to leave quickly. Put it in a safe place or give it to a friend or relative you trust.
- Include cash, car keys, and important information, including court papers, passports or birth certificates, medical records, medicines, and immigration papers.
- Get an unlisted phone number.
- Block caller ID.
- Use an answering machine to screen calls.
- Take a good self-defense course.

### **HOW TO MAKE YOUR CHILDREN SAFER**

- Teach them not to get in the middle of a fight, even if they want to help.
- Teach them how to get to safety, call 911, and give your address and phone number to the police.
- Teach them who to call for help.
- Tell them to stay out of the kitchen.
- Give the principal at their school or daycare center a copy of your court order and tell them not to release your children to anyone without talking to you first. Use a password so they can be sure it is you on the phone and give them a photo of the perpetrator.
- Make sure the children know who to tell if they see the perpetrator at school.
- Make sure that the school knows not to give your address or phone number to anyone.

### **HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF OUTSIDE THE HOME**

- Change your regular travel habits.
- Try to get rides with different people.
- Shop and bank in a different place.
- Cancel any bank accounts or credit cards you shared with the perpetrator. Open new accounts at a different bank.
- Keep your court order and emergency numbers with you at all times.
- Keep a cell phone and program it to 911 (or other emergency number).

### **HOW TO MAKE YOURSELF SAFER AT WORK**

- Keep a copy of your court order at work.
- Give a picture of the perpetrator to security and friends at work.
- Tell your supervisors and see what they can do to make it more difficult for the perpetrator to find you.
- Do not go to lunch alone.
- Ask a security guard to walk you to your car or the bus.
- If the perpetrator calls you at work, save the voicemail.
- Your employer may be able to help you find community resources.

### **USING THE LAW TO HELP YOU**

- Call SALI at 301-565-2277 or 877-496-SALI or ask your local rape crisis center for help.

#### **Protective or Peace Orders:**

- Courts may grant a peace or protective order when you have experienced assault in any degree, an act causing serious bodily harm, threat of imminent serious bodily harm, rape or sexual offense, attempted rape or sexual offense, false imprisonment, or stalking.
- Protective orders are available if you are a vulnerable adult unable to care for yourself or if you have one of the following relationships with the perpetrator: married or formerly married, child in common, lived together and had a sexual relationship for a cumulative total of 90 days in the past year, or related by blood or adoption.

- Protective orders can provide a stay away order, an order to vacate, temporary custody and visitation, emergency family maintenance (if a duty of support exists from child in common or marriage), counseling, use and possession of home and car, and removal of firearms.
- Peace orders are available to victims who do not meet the requirements for a protective order. Peace orders can include a stay away order and counseling.
- For a court to grant a peace order, the abuse must have occurred within the last 30 days. There is no limitation on the amount of time between the abuse and application for a protective order, but you could need to explain a delay to the court.
- When courts are closed, you can obtain an interim protective or peace order at a court's commissioner's office. Interim orders are valid until a hearing for a temporary order is held or until the end of the second business day that the court's clerk's office is open.
- If courts are open, you can apply for a temporary protective order at either a district court or circuit court or for a temporary peace order at a district court.

**Make sure you:**

- Show the judge any pictures of your injuries.
- Tell the judge that you do not feel safe if the perpetrator comes to your home to pick up the children to visit with them.
- Ask the judge to order the perpetrator to pick up and return the children at the police station or some other safe place.
- Ask that any visits the perpetrator is permitted are at very specific times so the police will know by reading the court order if the perpetrator is there at the wrong time.
- Tell the judge if the perpetrator has harmed or threatened your children in common. Ask that visits be supervised. Think about who could supervise for you.
- Get a certified copy of the court order.
- Keep the court order with you at all times.

**CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS**

- Show the prosecutor your court orders.
- Show the prosecutor medical records about your injuries or pictures if you have them.
- Tell the prosecutor the name of anyone who is helping you, such as a victim advocate or lawyer.
- Tell the prosecutor about any witnesses to injuries or abuse.
- Ask the prosecutor to notify you in advance if the perpetrator is getting out of jail.
- Speak with the prosecutor about getting a stay away order. A court can order a perpetrator to stay away from you if it is readily apparent some act that has been performed or threatened would produce injury. The court should order the perpetrator to stay away from you as a condition of release.
- VINE (Victim Information and Notification Everyday) is an automated system that can notify you about court dates related to your case via email or the phone. To register for VINE, call 1-866-MD4VINE and follow the prompts.

**BE SAFE AT THE COURTHOUSE**

- Sit as far away from the perpetrator as you can. You do not have to look at or talk to the perpetrator or the perpetrator's family or friends.
- Bring a friend or relative with you to wait until your case is heard.
- Tell a bailiff or sheriff that you fear the perpetrator and to look out for you.
- Make sure you have your court order before you leave.
- Ask the judge or sheriff to keep the perpetrator for a while after court ends. Leave quickly.
- If you think the perpetrator is following you, call the police immediately.
- If you have to travel to another state for work, to get away from the perpetrator, or for any other reason, take your peace or protective order with you. It is valid everywhere.

### **PRESERVE YOUR PRIVACY**

- Utilize a search engine like Google or Yahoo to familiarize yourself with the information about you that is available over the Internet.
- Make sure to keep track of unwanted phone calls and text messages and to save voicemail from the perpetrator.
- Check your computer for signs of tampering or spyware by using updated spyware detection and antivirus software. Do not open suspicious emails.
- Change your passwords periodically. Do not use the same password more than once.
- Discuss your interest in preserving your privacy with friends and family.
- Disable the transmission of geolocation information on any smartphone or digital camera.

### **If you have ever used a social networking site:**

- Do not share information about your home, work place, school, child care, preferred shopping venues, prospective social plans, method of transportation, or any aspect of your location or habits.
- Consider removing your picture from your profile or creating a new account without any picture whatsoever or which utilizes a nondescript image in place of your personal photograph.
- Review your security settings for each account on every site and think carefully about the information that you allow your friends and the public to access. Take the time to review your profile as it appears to you, your friends, and the public, but assume that any information online is permanently accessible by everyone.
- Delete old accounts.
- Do not accept requests to connect with anyone you do not already know. If possible on the particular site, consider restricting requests so that users must know your name or other information about you.
- Review your friends list on a monthly basis and remove individuals with whom you do not maintain meaningful contact.
- Consider detagging yourself from pictures that appear on others' accounts.

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