



Personalized Safety Plan

How to Use a Safety Plan

Regardless of if you plan on leaving or staying in your relationship, safety planning is a tool to use when protecting yourself when you are threatened. It is important to recognize the skills you have already acquired. Many people in abusive relationships have already developed effective safety mechanisms; you likely know more than you realize about protecting yourself. Spend some time thinking about strategies you have been using to protect yourself. This is an opportunity to put these skills into a conscious process. No person in an abusive relationship has the control over their partner's potential for violence, but each person can find ways to reduce their risk of harm. There is no right or wrong way to develop a safety plan. Use what applies and is comfortable for your situation. Make this your own, review it regularly, and make changes as you develop what will work for you. Be sure to keep it in a safe place where your abuser won't find it.

Plan Ahead:

You don't have to wait for an emergency to ask for help. It can be a good idea to talk to people about your situation ahead of time to see if they would be a good support person in a crisis. Find out what they are willing to do and how they are willing to help. This way you will know where to go in an emergency. Establishing a safe place to stay, people who may be able to offer some financial assistance, and someone to hold copies of your important papers will make the decisions made in crisis safer and more conscious. Only you can judge who is a safe person to tell about your situation. It may be helpful to sit down and make a list of your support people and their phone numbers and attach it to your safety plan for easy reference.

It can be difficult to make a safety plan alone. You may find it helpful to ask a friend to assist you in creating your plan. The advocates available in Colorado State University's Women and Gender Advocacy Center are available to work with you to help form ideas about how to keep you safe. Services are free and confidential for CSU students. We understand the complexities involved with abusive relationships and are trained to understand the emotional, medical, legal, and physical issues involved with intimate partner violence.

We are located at 112 Student Services Building on CSU's campus and our phone number is 970-491-6384.

If you are planning on leaving the relationship:

Be aware that people who are violent often escalate during times of separation. This escalation can increase your risk of harm to serious, even life threatening levels. Making a safety plan ahead of time can help reduce the risks you may encounter in the separation process.



When you are still in the relationship:

- The signs of increasing tensions in my relationships are: _____
- If we have an argument on a date and I feel unsafe, I will ... _____.
(Who could you call to get a safe ride home? What would you do if left in an isolated area?)
- If we have an argument at my residence and I feel unsafe, I will try to have us discuss it in the... _____.
(Try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, kitchen near weapons, or in rooms without access to a door. If possible, it is a good idea to do this in a place where another person is in the next room in case you need help.)
- I will... _____ if my abuser comes over and I'm alone and feeling unsafe.
(Who can you call to come over? Who can you call if you need help?)
- If I see my abuser standing outside, I will... _____, so that I can be safe.
(Who can help you? Can you take pictures, or document in writing, how many times it happens, in order to file a stalking report?)
- If I need to escape in a crisis I will: _____ (rehearse it!)
- I have practiced exiting each space in my residence. (climbing through windows, out fire escapes, etc. Note: If you are living on campus you may want to talk to your Residence Director about safe ways to exit your space, practicing exiting a window of a residence hall may result in a documentation.)
- My list of safe people to contact is: (with phone numbers in case you do not have access to your cell phone).

- The money I keep with me at all times is located _____.
- If I use a computer to access information and resources, I will clear my browser history and cookies when I am done.
- The established code word or sign for help is _____. I have spoken to family, friends, roommates/hallmates, teachers and/or co-workers about this and they know when to call for help.
- I have programmed emergency numbers into my cell phone.
- I keep copies of important documents at _____.
- I will keep my purse/wallet and keys _____ (specific location in residence) so that I can leave quickly if needed.
- If I need to leave my residence I will go to: _____.
- If I cannot go to the above location I will go to: _____.
- The domestic violence hotline number is _____. (I can call it if I need shelter)

If you are planning on leaving your relationship:

- I will leave extra money, keys, and clothes at _____.
- I will use friends' phones, pay phones, etc. to make calls associated with my planning process.
(Abusers may have access to your personal phone records, texts, etc., especially if you are on the same cell phone plan.)
- I will keep change with me at all times for necessary phone calls. (While pay phones may not be your first choice, it is important to know how to use one in case your cell phone is compromised. Practice this ahead of time and be aware of pay phones that are in areas you frequent.)
- I will attempt to memorize phone numbers that I might need in a crisis.



- I will ask _____ to stay with them if necessary.
- I will ask _____ to keep my pets in an emergency.
- I will ask _____ for money if necessary.
- I can open a new bank account and get new credit cards and keep these documents _____.
- I have rehearsed my escape plan.
- I will talk to my landlord to make them aware of my situation. Perhaps there is a way they can help if I need to leave. Be sure to use your best judgment on your landlord, they not be a safe person to involve.
- I can talk to Student Legal Services about options in breaking my lease and other legal support.

After you have left:

- I can change my phone number.
- I can change internet ID info/privacy statements (facebook, twitter, etc)
- I can screen my calls.
- I can change the locks on my new residence. I keep the doors and windows locked.
- I can replace wooden doors with metal ones.
- I can buy rope ladders for escaping from second floor windows.
- I can buy fire detectors and fire extinguishers for my new residence.
- I will save and document all contacts, messages, injuries or other incidents involving the abuser.
- If I am feeling anxious I can ask _____ to stay with me so I am not staying alone.
- If confronted by my abusive partner I will _____ to get away.
- If I have to meet my abuser, I will do it at _____ (public place).
- I can vary my routine and routes I take to classes, work, meals, etc.
- I can vary where I park my car. (Taking special care to look for well-lit parking lots and ones that have access to the campus blue-light system.)

At work, school, and in public:

- I can inform my boss about my situation.
(If you are working with the advocates in the WGAC, we can help in notifying your work.)
- I can inform my professors about my situation.
(If you are working with the advocates in the WGAC, we can help in notifying professors.)
- I can ask _____ to screen my calls at work.
- When leaving places I am frequently at I can, (ex: change the times I leave or exits I use)

(This may include your residence hall, the dining halls, your classes, the rec center, the LSC, etc.)
- I can change where I shop to places my abuser does not normally use.
- I can tell _____ and _____ I am/was in an abusive relationship and ask them to call the police if they feel I am in danger.
- I can use CSU's safe walk program to escort me after dark.
- I can use RamRide when it is in session.



Orders of Protection (restraining orders):

- I will keep my protection order _____. (Always keep it on or near your person).
- I will give a copy of my order to _____. (Bosses, friends, family, etc.)
- If my copy is destroyed or lost I can get another copy at the issuing court.
(For Fort Collins/Larimer County: 201 Laporte Ave # 100, Fort Collins, (970) 498-6100)
- If my perpetrator violates my order, I will _____.
- I can make a report to Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services or to CSU PD if I need assistance in obtaining a Campus Order of Protection. (The advocates at the WGAC can help walk me through the processes involved in obtaining various different legal documents involved with intimate partner violence.)

For my emotional health:

- If I am feeling down or lonely, I can call _____.
(The advocates at the WGAC are a confidential resource for support. CSU's Health network also provides Counseling Services to CSU students.)
- If I have left my partner and I am considering returning, I will call _____ or spend time with _____ before I make my decision.
- I can attend support groups, advocacy, or counseling. These resources can be explored with the WGAC.
- I will look at how I use alcohol and other drugs. If I am going to use these items, I will do it in a place where people are committed to my safety.

Items to take when leaving:

- Social Security Card, Passport, Birth Certificate, other forms of identification.
- Money, checkbook, bank records, credit cards, etc.
- Medication, medical insurance information
- Insurance (car, rental, home), car registration
- Lease/rental agreement, house deed
- Sentimental items, photos
- Emergency contacts, personalized safety plan

This safety plan is not an exhaustive list. Each person's plan will be very different depending on their situation. If the bullet points above do not apply to you, skip them and/or create your own.

WARNING: Abusers try to control their victim's lives. When abusers feel a loss of control - like when victims try to leave them - the abuse often gets worse. Take special care if you leave. Keep being careful even after you have left. And remember you don't have to do this alone. There are many resources on campus and in the community that can help. Please look for a list of campus/community resources on the WGAC's website.

