



**true north**

a safe place for those impacted by abuse

## **SAFETY PLANNING TIPS**

In the event that you find yourself in a situation that could become dangerous, these tips are designed to assist you in how to plan moving forward. It is important to remember that you are not responsible for the abusive behaviours of other people.

The information here is not designed to replace the advice from EMS, Police, Fire Department etc., but rather to give you the ability to make informed choices over things which you have some control.



# SAFETY AT HOME

Remember, you are the expert on your own life, and your own knowledge and insights are the most vital part of a safety plan.

- Park in a well-lit place facing the exit in the event you need to leave quickly. Always check your backseat before getting into a vehicle.
- Keep your purse and car keys accessible to leave quickly.
- Trust your instincts and judgments when feeling unsafe.
- Avoid wearing scarves or long necklaces that could be used to choke you.
- Have several reasons why you might need to leave the house at different times of the day and night.
- After calling a shelter or a safe alternative on a landline, immediately call another number (such as 411 or a friend) to avoid having your call traced or redialed. On a cell phone, delete your call from your list of recent calls. Familiarize yourself with your phone provider's itemized billing, if your partner has access to your phone bills.
- Screen your calls using voicemail or have the abuser's number blocked. If necessary, change your phone number and have it unlisted.
- If the abuser moves out of the home, change the locks as soon as possible. Have a security system installed, if possible.
- Inform your landlord and/or neighbors that your partner no longer lives with you and they should call the police if they are seen near your home.
- If you need to meet your partner for any reason (visitation with the kids), do so in a public place with camera surveillance like a restaurant or police station.
- Be careful whom you tell about your location. Sometimes arguments end in violence. Some places in the home are less safe than others, such as the kitchen or bathroom. If there is an argument, move to a safer room with softer furniture and no sharp or dangerous items.
- If you can get away during a conflict, go to a room with a phone and alternate exit and lock the door.
- If necessary, to protect yourself, consider avoiding hot topics during an incident to calm things down until you can get to safety; this does not imply consent but is being agreeable to pacify the abuser as much as is reasonable until you can reach safety.



## TECHNOLOGY

Double check who has access to Find My Phone and location tracking in your apps. Change the passwords to your phone & Apple ID. Get your own, unshared Apple ID, if necessary.

# PREPARING TO LEAVE

People planning to leave an abusive situation must keep their safety in mind. Leaving a violent relationship can be the most dangerous time for an abused person. Abusive individuals can often become more abusive and controlling when they sense their partner is about to leave.

## **PREPARE A BAG AND LEAVE IT IN A SAFE PLACE WITH A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER. KEEP A COPY OF ALL IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS INCLUDING:**

- ID for yourself & children
- Children's comfort items
- Bank/credit cards, financial documents, passwords for online banking
- Lease/rental agreements, divorce documents
- Immigration/citizenship documents & passports
- Parenting and/or protection orders
- Prescriptions
- Cell phone & charger



Have an extra set of keys and keep them in your emergency bag. Be sure to include House, Car, Mailbox, and Safety Deposit box keys.

- Have your mail forwarded to P.O. Box at a safe location so you do not need to return to the home.
- Open a bank account and credit card in your name only at a new bank and have the PO box listed as the address.
- Change passwords regularly for online banking, bills, accounts, social media, email and others. Turn OFF location services on your cell phone and other devices (iPad).
- Keep a journal of details, dates and times of violent incidents and visits with the doctor/hospital. Record any violent incidents the abuser has with other people along with dates and times. Keep this somewhere they would never be able to find it.

## **SAFETY AT WORK**

Many companies have domestic violence policies. Consult with a trusted HR professional about your situation so that they can assist in keeping you safe. When leaving work or school, walk out with a safe person to your car or transit stop.



# PRACTICING SAFETY WITH YOUR CHILDREN

Develop an age-appropriate safety plan with each of your children.

Review the safety plan regularly in order to plan the safest way to leave home. Children can be told it is a fire escape plan.

Teach children to use the phone to make a call in the event your partner takes them. Teach them family and emergency numbers.

Tell children violence is never right, even when someone they love is being violent. Explain to them it is not your or their fault that the abuse is happening.

Make a plan on what you will do if your children find out you are leaving and tell your partner.

Consider having ID with fingerprints made for your child.



Always keep a copy of your protection order with you.

## PROTECTION ORDERS

Protection orders help protect you and your child(ren) from unwanted contact. There are various types of protection orders for different situations. Talk to a True North staff member to help you through the application process.

- Keep a copy of any orders with a relative, friend, or safety deposit box
- Let friends, family, and neighbors know that you have an order and they should contact the police if your partner contacts them to try to find you
- Keep protection orders with you at all times
- Call the police if your partner breaches the order in any way
- If you need to serve your partner with legal papers, ask someone you trust to do it or look online for “process servers”

## SAFETY IN PUBLIC

- Pay attention to your surroundings. Know where exits, fire alarms, and phones are.
- If you have to be alone in public, carry a personal alarm. Most cell phones have the ability to install an alarm app.
- Use different driving routes, grocery stores, malls, and banks to vary your routine to be less predictable.



## WHO WE ARE

True North provides programs and services to all people who are affected by family abuse.

Our mission is to make sure individuals and families impacted by abuse are supported through shelter, counselling, resources and prevention services. We are committed to a vision of a safe and secure community without abuse.

## CONTACT US

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