

Safety on the job and in public

Only you can decide if and when you will tell others about the abuse and violence. Friends, family and co-workers may help support you. Decide carefully which people to invite to help secure your safety.

Inform your boss, the security supervisor and anyone else you think should know about your situation. Ask co-workers to help screen your telephone calls at work.

Consider taking a different route to work and/or parking in a different area than before.

Use different grocery stores and shopping malls and shop at hours that are different from when living with your partner. Use a different bank and bank at different hours than before. Keep car doors locked at all times even when you are in the vehicle.

Safety and your emotional health

Living with physical and emotional abuse is exhausting and emotionally draining. The process of building a new life for yourself takes much courage and incredible energy. To take care of yourself, you can do some of the following:

Plan ahead for what you can do if you feel down and ready to return to a potentially abusive situation.

Develop a plan that best protects your safety for when / if you have to communicate with your partner in person or by telephone.

Find friends or family members you can call to be of support to you.

Attend workshops and/or support groups at a domestic violence program or elsewhere in your community to gain support and strengthen your relationships with other people.

Items to take when leaving

Items in bold are the most important to take. If there is time, the other items might be taken or stored outside the home. These items might best be placed in one location, so if you have to leave in a hurry you can grab them quickly.

Most Important

Personal identification
Marriage Licence/Divorce Papers
Children's birth certificates
Your birth certificate
Social insurance number
Money and credit cards
ATM card, checkbook, bank statements
Keys: house, car, office
Children's favourite toy / blanket
Income tax statements

Important

Passport / Immigration Papers
Medical records / medications
School & vaccination records
Lease / house deed
Bank books
Address book
Jewelry, photo albums, etc.
Income assistant information
Work permits
Items of sentimental value

Resources

If you are experiencing abuse your health concerns should be taken seriously. Talk to a health professional that you trust.

Crisis/Support Line – 24 Hours:

Prince George	563-1214	Surrounding Area	1-888-562-1214
Teen Crisis Line	564-8336	Toll Free	1-888-564-8336

(4-11pm)

Counselling/Support Services:

Elizabeth Fry Society	563-1113
Sexual Assault Centre	564-8302

Transitions Houses:

Phoenix Transition Society	563-7305
Elizabeth Fry Safe House	563-1113
Quebec St. Emergency Shelter (AWAC)	562-6262

Other Services:

Children Who Witness Abuse	563-7315
Immigrant & Multicultural Society	562-2900
Intersect Family Services	562-6639
Legal Information Line	1-800-663-1919
Legal Services Society	564-9717
Parenting After Separation Program	562-9217
RCMP	561-3300
PG Regional Hospital	565-2000
John Howard Society	561-7343
ASAP (Active Support Against Poverty)	563-6112
Native Friendship Centre (Healing Centre)	564-4324



Adapted by the Prince George Northern Family Health Society with permission from The Woman Abuse Response Program at BC Women's Hospital

November 2001

If you are experiencing abuse in your relationship the following guide is a plan for increasing your safety and preparing in advance for the possibility of further abuse. Although you do not have control over your partner's abuse, you have probably developed many ways to keep you and your children safe. Here are some more ideas that may be helpful.

Safety during a violent incident

You cannot always avoid abusive incidents. In order to increase your safety, you may use a variety of strategies.

- Practice getting out safely; what doors, windows, elevators, stairwells or fire escapes would you use?
- Leave a packed overnight bag with essentials in a safe place.
- Keep purse and car keys in a place where you can get to them in order to leave quickly.
- Tell neighbours that you trust about the violence and ask that they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from your house.
- Teach your children to use the phone to contact the police and fire department.
- Use a code word with your children or friends so they can call for help.
- Decide where you will go if you have to leave home (i.e., transition house, friend, neighbour), even if you don't think there will be a next time.
- Do you have a second place if your first choice doesn't work out?
- When you expect there is going to be an argument, avoid the bathroom, garage, kitchen and other areas near weapons or rooms without access to an outside door.
- Use your judgement and intuition. If the situation is very serious, you may decide to give your partner what he/she wants to calm him/her down. Do that you need to do to protect yourself until you are out of danger.

Safety when preparing to leave

Leaving must be done with a careful plan in order to increase your safety. Your partner may strike back when he believes you will be leaving the relationship.

- Keep copies of important documents or keys, clothes and money with a friend or family member.
- Consider opening a savings account in your own name only to increase independence.
- Keep the Transition House emergency phone number with you or memorize it if it is not safe for you to keep it in writing.
- Try to keep change for phone calls available or on you at all times. Numbers you can use using your telephone credit card will appear on the following month's bill and may tell you partner the numbers you called after you left. To keep telephone communications confidential, use coins or consider asking a friend to permit you to use their telephone credit card for a limited time after you leave.
- Consider contacting Transition House or check in advance with friends or family members to see who would be able to let you stay with them or lend you money.
- Review your safety plan routinely in order to plan the safest way to leave your residence. Find a friend or support worker to help you review this plan.
- Rehearse your escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with your children.
- Decide on a safe way to include your children in your plans.

This pamphlet was adapted from the Safety Planning Guide provided by AWARE, Barnes-Jewish Hospital, St. Louis, Missouri for the Woman Abuse Response Program at BC Women's Hospital (July 1998).

Safety with a restraining order

Many men obey restraining orders, but you can never be sure which abusive partner will obey and which will violate the order. Recognize that you may need to ask the police and the courts to enforce your restraining order.

- Keep your restraining order on or near you. If you change purses, that's the first thing that should go in.
- Give a copy of your restraining order to police departments in the community where you work, where you visit friends or family, and where you live. Inform your employer, minister, closest friend that you have a restraining order in effect.
- Call a local domestic violence program if you have any problems with your restraining order.
- If your partner violates the order, call the police and report the violation. You may also contact your lawyer or an advocate with a domestic violence program. If the police do not help, contact a domestic violence program or your lawyer.

Safety at home when living apart

- Change the locks on doors and windows and replace wooden doors with metal/steel doors. Install additional locks, window bars, or poles to wedge against doors.
- Teach your children how to use the telephone to make a collect call to you in the event your partner takes the children.
- Tell people who take care of your children and who has permission to pick up your children that your partner is not permitted to do so.
- Inform neighbours and friends that your partner no longer resides with you and they should call the police if he is seen near your home.