



Domestic violence: safety planning

Awareness

Research shows that the incidence of domestic violence tends to get more violent and more frequent over time. This means that you need to get out or get help now even though it is not always simple. Here are some suggestions to ensure that you protect yourself.

Safety tips to prevent a violent encounter:

- Practise how to get out of your home safely. Identify which doors, windows, or stairs would be best.
- Have an extra set of keys and a packed bag ready and keep them in an undisclosed, but accessible location in order to leave quickly. Identify a neighbour you can tell about the violence and ask that they call the police if they hear any disturbances coming from your home.
- Devise a code word to use with your children, family, friends, and neighbours when you need the police. Teach your children how to dial the local emergency number.
- Decide and plan for where you will go if you have to leave home (even if you don't think you will need to).
- Teach your children how to get out or find safety.

Safety when preparing to leave:

- Open your own account. Open a cheque or savings account in your own name to begin to establish or increase your independence.
- Rent a post office box to receive mail that may not be safe to receive at home. Think of other ways in which you can increase your independence.
- Leave money, an extra set of keys, copies of important documents, and extra clothes with someone you trust so you can leave quickly.
- Determine who would let you stay with them or lend you money.
- Keep your local domestic violence project's number nearby and have change or a calling card with you at all times for emergency phone calls.
- Review your safety plan as often as possible.

Remember: Leaving may be the most dangerous time.

Keep in mind that you can always call your local domestic violence project or crisis help line to receive help in any of these areas or with other issues related to domestic violence. Someone is there to help you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Always remember: You don't deserve to be hit, threatened, or controlled!

