

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SAFETY INFORMATION

## Overview

If you know someone, or if you are a victim of domestic violence, it is important to develop an emergency safety plan for yourself and your children. Advance planning can prevent serious injury or even death.

The next several paragraphs offer practical suggestions that you can adapt to your situation, but as in any case, recommendations alone cannot protect you from sudden and unprepared violence.

## Safety & Emotional Health

- Have positive thoughts about yourself and be assertive with others about your needs
- Read books, articles, and poems to help you feel stronger.
- Decide who you can trust and to whom you can express your fears.
- Local resource: Focusing Families (979)-551-2152; Phoebe's Home (979)-775-5355
- **Remember: If you won't seek help for yourself, think of your child and get the help you need.**

## Safety at Home

Develop a safety plan and discuss it with your family, friends and children. Decide now where you can go. Know the quickest and most accessible route out of your house. You should devise a code word to use with your children, family, friends, and neighbors when you need the police.

Use your own instincts and judgement. You have the right to be safe.

## Escalation Violence Indicators

- Use of a gun, knife or fire during violence.
- Many threats of death if there is a divorce or separation
- Violence during pregnancy
- Severity of injuries is increasing

## Safety during an Explosive Incident and Planning Ahead

- If possible, stay in a part of the house you can get out of quickly and stay away from weapons that can be used against you.
- Start your own savings or checking account and open a post office box to start your separate identity.
- Have a bag packed and hidden in case you need to leave quickly or have a friend keep a set of clothes and items you would need if you have to leave in a hurry.
- **Remember: This is one of the most dangerous times. Know your escape route and available resources.**

## Checklist of Things to take if you leave Home

- Money, credit cards, checkbook and passbook

- Identification – driver’s license, social security cards, passport, green card, public assistance ID, work permit, etc.
- Order of Protection (PFA)
- Birth Certificates – yours and your children
- Clothing
- Lease, rental agreement, or house deed
- Insurance papers
- Health, life and medical records
- House and car keys
- Medication/ toiletries/ diapers
- Address book
- Divorce papers / temporary orders (certified copies)
- School records
- Saleable objects, if possible
- Toys

### **Safety on the job and in Public**

- If you have an Order for Protection, (PFA) keep it with you at all times
- Make sure coworkers and security are aware of your situation and if possible, provide a photograph of the abuser to security
- Vary your routes to and from work. Know what to do if you are attacked while in your car, on the bus, parking lot, etc.
- Plan what to do in various situations if the abuser confronts you.

### **Protect Your Child**

- **If you won’t seek help for yourself, think of your child and get the help you need.**
- Make sure your child’s school or day care center knows who is authorized to pick up your child
- Your child, if not physically abused, is a secondary victim of crime because of witnessing violence in the home.
- Children will pattern their behavior after what they learn at home.
- Your little girl is more likely to grow up and stay in an abusive relationship because that is what she learned in your home.
- Your little boy is more likely to be a batterer because he learned violence in your home.
- Your children may blame themselves for the violence in your home even though they aren’t the one doing the hitting or the one being hit.
- Your child is learning that violence to others, especially women, is alright.

### **Teens in Violent Dating Relationships**

- Decide which parent, friend, teacher, relative or police officer you can tell.
- Call any battered women’s hotline. They can help teens too.
- Get information about protective orders from your local police, prosecutor or victim advocate.