

SAFETY PLANNING TOOL

ASK SOME OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AS YOU DISCUSS SAFETY.

- In what way can I (and others) help you?
- What do you feel you need to be safe?
- What particular concerns do you have about your children's safety?
- What have you tried in the past to protect yourself and your children (e.g. left for a few days, sought help from family or friends, fought back, got an order for protection)? Did any of these strategies help? Will any of them help you now?

IF THE CLIENT HAS HAD THE PERPETRATOR EVICTED OR IS NOW LIVING ALONE, EVALUATE THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS WITH HER:

- Changing locks on doors and windows.
- Installing a better security system – window bars, locks, better lighting, smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.
- Teaching the children to call the police or family and friends if they are snatched.
- Talking to schools and childcare providers about who has permission to pick up the children and developing other special provisions to protect the children.
- Finding a lawyer knowledgeable about family violence to explore custody, visitation and divorce provisions that protect the children and the victim.
- In rural areas where only the mailbox may be visible from the street, covering the box with bright colored paper so that police can more easily locate the home.
- Obtaining an order of protection.

IF THE CLIENT IS LEAVING THE PERPETRATOR, REVIEW THE FOLLOWING WITH HER:

- How and when can she most safely leave? Does she have transportation? Money? A place to go?
- Is the place she is fleeing to safe?
- Is she comfortable calling the police if she needs them?
- Who will she tell or not tell about leaving?
- What can she and others do so that her partner will not find her?
- Who in her support network does she trust to protect her?
- How will she travel safely to and from work or school or to pick up children?
- What community/legal resources will help her feel safer? Write down their addresses and phone numbers.

- Does she know the number to the local shelter?
- What custody and visitation provisions would keep her and the children safe?
- Would an order of protection be a viable option?

IF YOUR CLIENT IS STAYING WITH THE PERPETRATOR, REVIEW THE FOLLOWING WITH HER:

- In an emergency what works best to keep her safe?
- Who can she call in a crisis?
- Would she call the police if the violence starts again? Is there a phone in the house or can she work out a signal with the children or the neighbors to call the police or get help?
- If she needs to flee temporarily, where can she go? Help her think through several places where she can go in a crisis. Write down the addresses and phone numbers.
- If she needs to flee, where are the escape routes from the house?
- Identify dangerous locations in the house and advise her to try not to be trapped in them.
- If there are weapons in the house, explore ways to have them removed.
- Advise her to make an extra set of car keys and to hide some money in case of an emergency.
- Remind her that in the middle of a violent assault, it is always best for her to trust her judgment about what is best – sometimes it is best to flee, sometimes to placate the assailant, anything that works to protect herself.
- Advise your client to have the following available in case she must flee.
 - ✓ Birth certificates
 - ✓ Social Security cards
 - ✓ Marriage and driver's licenses and ATM cards, savings passbooks
 - ✓ Lease/rental agreements, house deed, mortgage papers
 - ✓ Insurance information and forms
 - ✓ School and health records
 - ✓ Welfare and immigration documents
 - ✓ Medications and prescriptions
 - ✓ Divorce papers or other court documents
 - ✓ Phone numbers and addresses for family, friends and community agencies.
 - ✓ Clothing and comfort items for her and the children
 - ✓ Keys