

Appendix J

Safety plan – patient resource

This safety plan has three parts: safety to avoid serious injury and to escape an incident of violence, preparation for separation, and long-term safety after separation.

(1) Avoiding injury, escaping violence

During an incident of violence at home you will want to do everything you can to avoid serious injury. Think ahead and plan.

- Leave if you can. Know the easiest escape routes – doors, windows, etc. What’s in the way? Are there obstacles to a speedy exit?
- Know where you are running to and have a safe place arranged. You may want to organise this with a neighbour in advance of trouble. You may want to leave a spare set of clothes there.
- Always keep your purse, cash cards, keys, essential medications and important papers together in a place where you can get them quickly or have someone else fetch them.
- If you can’t leave the house, try to move to a place of low risk. Try to keep out of the bathroom, kitchen, and garage, away from weapons, upstairs or rooms without access to outside.
- Talk to your children about getting help. Think of a code word you could say to your children or friends so they can call for help. Depending on age and ability they could:
 - Run to a neighbour and ask them to call the Police.
 - Call 111. Teach them the words to use to get help. (‘This is Jimmy, 99 East Street. Mum’s getting hurt. She needs help now.’)
 - Go to a safe place outside the house to hide. Arrange this in advance.
- Try to leave quietly. Don’t give your attacker clues about the direction you’ve taken or where you’ve gone to. Lock doors behind you if you can – it will slow down any attempt to follow you.
- Have refuge or safe house numbers memorised or easy to find.
- If you have to leave to save your life – leave fast. Take nothing and go to the nearest safe place and call for help.

(2) Preparation for separation – advance arrangements and flight plans

- Get support from a Women’s Refuge or a specialist family violence agency to discuss your options and plans. Make sure you have all the information and support that is available for you.
- Arrange transport in advance. Know where you’ll go. Make arrangements with the refuge or safe house.
- Tell only one or two trusted friends or a refuge worker about your plans. Go through the details together.
- Start a savings account. A small amount of money saved weekly can build up and be useful later.
- Gather documents. Start collecting the papers and information you need. Make your own list: birth certificates, marriage certificate, copies of Domestic Violence Orders, custody papers, passports, any identification papers, driver’s licence, insurance policies, Work and Income documents, IRD number, bank account details and statements, cheque book, cash cards, immigration documentation, adoption papers, medical and legal records, etc.
- Ask your family doctor to carefully note any evidence of injuries on your patient records.

.....

What to take

- Documents for yourself and children.
 - Keys to house, garage, car, office.
 - Clothing and other personal needs.
 - Phone card and list of important addresses and phone numbers.
 - For children take essential school needs, favourite toy or comforter.
 - Photograph of your partner so that people protecting you know what he looks like.
-

Playing it safe

- Leave copies of documents, spare clothing and toiletries for yourself and children, some cash, spare keys, medication and other essential items with a trusted friend in case of sudden flight.
 - Try not to react to your partner in a way which might make him suspicious about your plans.
 - Tell children what they need to know only when they need to know it. Wait until plans are well advanced before talking to them. They don't need the stress of keeping a difficult secret.
-

(3) Living safely, after separation

Children

- Teach your children what to do if your ex-partner makes contact with them unexpectedly, breaching access arrangements, that is, rules about checking first before opening the door, coming inside or going to neighbours if he comes to the house, telling a teacher if they are approached at school.
- Teach your children what to do if your ex-partner takes them, for example, calling the Police on 111.
- Tell other adults who take care of your children (for example, school teacher, day-care staff, babysitter), which people have permission to pick them up and who is not permitted to do so.

Support

- Make contact with a Women's Refuge or a specialist family violence agency for support. As well as understanding abuse, these groups usually keep lists of sympathetic lawyers, and can assist in dealing with WINZ, Housing New Zealand or other government departments you may need to deal with.
- Attend a women's education programme to help strengthen your confidence, independence and freedom, make connections with other women, and deal with your ex-partner.
- Think about how to deal with potential abuse, feelings of fear and safety issues when you have to communicate with your ex-partner by telephone, or in person.
- Tell your employer that you are afraid of your ex-partner. Ask for your phone calls to be screened.

Protection Orders

- Get a Protection Order from your local District Court. Make four copies – one for your handbag, one kept at home, and one at work. Make sure your local Police Station has a copy. If you move, remember to give a copy to your new local Police Station. Tell your employer that you have a Protection Order, or that you are afraid of your ex-partner.
- If your ex-partner breaches the Protection Order phone the Police and report it, contact your lawyer and your advocate.
- If the Police do not help, contact your advocate or lawyer for assistance to make a complaint.
- Keep a record of any breaches; noting the time, date and what occurred and what action you took.

Security

- Consider installing outside lighting that lights up when a person comes near your house at night.
- If possible, use different shops and banks to those you used when you lived with your ex-partner.
- Ask Telecom to install 'Caller ID' on your telephone and ask for an unlisted number that blocks your caller ID for calls you make from your phone. Warning: make sure that emergency services (Police/ Fire/Ambulance) are allowed access to your telephone number.
- Contact Police and request a block on tracing your car registration number.
- Contact the Electoral Enrolment Centre on 0800 367656 and ask for your name and address to be excluded from the published electoral roll.
- Tell neighbours that your partner does not live with you and ask them to call the Police if he is seen near your house.
- Ask your neighbours to contact the Police if they hear signs of an assault occurring.

From: Auckland Domestic Violence Centre. Safety Plan.