

Safety Planning



A personalized plan to help you stay safer in harmful situations—including protecting any children, family members, or pets who may be affected.

For survivors of power-based abuse, a safety plan may include steps to support your well-being at any stage—whether you're staying, preparing to leave, or have already left. **A good plan is flexible and focused on what feels safest and most realistic for you.**

EMERGENCY

Prepare for dangerous situations and know exactly what to do if you need to act fast.



- **Identify the safest areas in your home.** Avoid rooms with potential weapons or no exits like kitchens or bathrooms.
- **Establish a safe place to go** if you need to leave your home suddenly (e.g., a friend's house, a shelter, or a public space). **Practice exit routes** so you're prepared in a crisis.
- **Keep a charged phone with you** at all times and memorize or write down key phone numbers in case you lose access.
- **Choose a code word** or phrase to alert a trusted friend or family member that you need help.
- **Pack a go-bag** with essentials for yourself, and any children or pets: ID, keys, medications, money, legal documents, etc.
- If **firearms** are present in the home, try to store them unloaded, locked, and separate from ammunition.
- If you experience **strangulation or choking**, even briefly, seek medical attention right away.

TECHNOLOGY

Protect your privacy, secure your devices, and stay in control of your digital life.



- **Use strong passwords** for your accounts and change them regularly. Enable two-factor authentication and use answers to security questions that aren't easily guessed.
- Check devices for **spyware or stalkerware**. Install security software that can detect and remove malicious programs.
- Consider installing a **security system or cameras**. They can deter abuse and provide documentation if needed.
- Be cautious with **location sharing**. Turn off location services on your phone and apps, and avoid posting your location.
- Protect your privacy, someone has access or the login to a **shared or cloud account**, they may be able to access messages, photos, or files. Store sensitive information in an encrypted location.
- **Consider creating new emails**, phone numbers, or social media accounts that only you have access to.

EMOTIONAL

Find ways to care for yourself, stay grounded, and access support when you need it most.



- **Build a network** of trusted friends, family, or professionals who can check in with you or offer a safe space to talk.
- **Create a daily routine** to bring structure and stability, helping reduce feelings of chaos or unpredictability.
- **Practice grounding techniques** like deep breathing, mindfulness, or journaling to manage stress and anxiety.
- **Stay connected** even when you feel emotionally drained. Reaching out can help you feel supported and less alone.
- **Keep a list of affirmations** or positive reminders to turn to when you're feeling overwhelmed (e.g., "I am strong," "I deserve peace").
- **Seek professional support** through counseling or support groups. Many organizations offer free or low-cost services.
- **Celebrate small victories**—every step you take toward healing and safety matters, no matter how small it may seem.

LEGAL

Protect your safety before, during, and after any legal process.



- Do your best to **document incidents or threats** whenever it's safe to do so. This could include saving texts, voicemails, screenshots, or taking notes with dates and details.
- **Ask family and friends if someone can go to court with you.** Your local family violence organization may also have a legal advocate that can go with you.
- Let your attorney or advocate know about **safety concerns** so they can request separate waiting areas, remote hearings, or safety escorts at court.
- **Keep copies of any orders** or legal documents in a safe and secure place. Consider leaving a set with someone you trust.
- Be aware that many Texas court filings are public; **ask about protecting sensitive information.**