

Guidance on Safety Planning

When working with people who are experiencing domestic abuse it is important to provide options for them and support them to make their own decisions (the exception may arise when agencies, such as the police or social care, take a statutory decision when exercising their power to protect children or under the Mental Capacity Act).

Generally, it is important that the victim is empowered to make their own decision on whether leaving the abusive relationship is an option for them (many people experiencing domestic abuse may not live with their perpetrator; if they do, it may not be appropriate that they leave the household or they may not be in a position to leave the abusive household immediately, either due to emotional or practical reasons). **As a professional you need to be aware that separation is understood to be a significant risk factor in domestic abuse, so it needs to be managed carefully.**

Below are some suggested safety measures for consideration, this list is not exhaustive. This page can be printed and used as a safety checklist if required.

THINGS TO CONSIDER IF YOU ARE LEAVING AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP	
REMEMBER THE RISK WILL INCREASE	
Safety Measure	Action taken
Money: ensure you have enough money put away in case you need a taxi, bus, train fare quickly. Ensure you have your cheque, savings and giro books, credit cards, current and unpaid bills.	
Child Benefit / Other Benefit Books: these will have your National Insurance Number, which you will need to make a claim for future benefits.	
Passport: make sure you take your children's passports if they have them.	
Other Legal, Financial Papers: for example, medical, marriage and birth certificates, rent books, mortgage details.	
Keys: have an extra set of house, car and office keys made and keep them somewhere safe – can you leave these with a friend or relative?	
Emergency Addresses and Contact Numbers: school, GP, solicitor, Domestic Violence Agencies (small purse-sized directory available), ensure that they are always with you.	
Medicine and Baby Provisions: prescriptions, glasses, medications, nappies, baby milk, food etc.	
Clothes: take the essential items and extra clothes for the children	
Children's Toys: sometimes it is difficult to carry much but your children may be confused and upset by what is happening and a special toy or comforter can help settle them	
Personal Items: photographs, diary, jewellery, small items of sentimental value	
<i>You may need to leave some items with a friend or relative so you can escape quickly. In an emergency it is always better to leave something or everything behind than put you and your children's safety at risk.</i>	

KEEPING SAFE IF YOU STAY IN AN ABUSIVE HOUSEHOLD	
Safety Measure	Action Taken
<p>Access to Emotional / Practical Support e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify / confirm friends who are safe to confide in ▪ Identify professional who can help / support e.g., GP ▪ Identify others you can safely tell ▪ Set up emergency code word with relevant people ▪ Do you have information on emergency help lines? 	
<p>Safety in the home (living with or without the perpetrator):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plan escape routes out of your property, if the perpetrator comes in the front door, how do you get out? ▪ Set up a code word with your friends and family, if you/they call they know when you're in trouble. ▪ Keep with you any important and emergency telephone numbers: e.g., Police DA unit, 24-hour domestic abuse helplines. ▪ Emergency contacts. - Are there neighbours you can trust? If so ask them to contact the police if they hear anything ▪ Pack an emergency bag for yourself & the children. Hide it somewhere safe away from the house, maybe with a friend you can trust – ▪ Keep a small amount of money on you at all times – including change for the bus or phone. ▪ Keep your mobile phone on you and charged, with credit, at all times. If this is not possible, can you hide one somewhere? Have an emergency mobile phone (different to usual and fully charged) ▪ If you suspect he or she is about to become violent, try avoiding the kitchen or garage where there are likely to be knives or other weapons. ▪ Avoid locking yourself in small rooms. Always try and get out of the property. ▪ Give your friends or family a spare key to your house, if you are locked in, they can help you escape. ▪ Call 999 in an emergency ▪ Is there a STORM Marker? If not, speak to the police to see if this is an option ▪ Would a referral to the Bobby Van be appropriate? ▪ Safe use of computers, covering your tracks – do you know how to do this? ▪ Useful phone numbers stored fictitiously ▪ Safe room / bolt hole ▪ Injunctions ▪ Liaison with Police ▪ Are there bail conditions? Are breaches happening? Are these being reported? Are professionals aware of bail conditions? 	
<p>Crisis Plan / Emergency Accommodations Plan: (Things to prioritise taking with you if you leave)</p> <p>Having an Emergency Bag means that if you had to flee your house you can take some basic belongings with you easily reducing the need to return to the property when it may not be safe to do so.</p> <p>What to Pack:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some form of identification-Passports, Visas and work permits. ▪ Money, savings books, cheque book, credit/debit cards. ▪ Keys for the House, Car, Work etc. (You could get additional keys cut and put them in your bag) ▪ Child, Family Tax and any other benefit information ▪ Driving licence & car registration documents. ▪ Prescribed medication/repeat prescription. ▪ Clothing & toiletries for you and the children. ▪ Address book & emergency contact numbers. ▪ Personal items (photos etc.) or favourite toys for your children. ▪ Copies of any legal documents e.g., injunctions 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children's favourite toy <p>Do not put yourself in danger getting these items, pack what you can; there may be opportunities to get things later on.</p>	
<p>Children's Safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contact arrangements – these will need to be thought about at some point ▪ Risk of 'abduction' ▪ Help for children's wellbeing – other key support people – do you know who these are? ▪ Inform key professionals e.g., social care, school, nurse, health visitor 	
<p>Keeping Safe at Work and in Public Places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Informing employer / college ▪ Changing routines (journeys / shops) 	
<p>Privacy and Changing Identity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Options to change name ▪ Options to change identity (police) 	
<p>Agreement for ongoing contact with agency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Safe contact arrangements ▪ Code words 	
<p>Referral to other agencies: (specify) Is there anyone else who needs to be involved in supporting you/your children? (Consent to share information confirmed with signature)</p>	
<p>Social Networking:</p> <p>Facebook: How to block someone from contacting you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Choose 'privacy shortcuts', this is the second button in from the right on the blue bar at the top. ▪ Choose 'How do I stop someone from bothering me?' ▪ Write email address or user name in the box – select 'Block' <p>Blocking someone prevents them from being able to view your page or searching for you from their username or email address. They will be able to search from someone else's account if they want to.</p> <p>General privacy/security settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 'Privacy shortcuts' – 'See more settings' <p>This then allows you to stop people being able to find you if they 'google' you and choose who can add you as a friend.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Select 'Security' from the left hand list. <p>This allows you to choose your security settings for your profile.</p> <p>Twitter: General privacy/security settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Choose the icon second in from the right on the main toolbar, 'settings'. ▪ Choose 'Security and Privacy' from the list of options on the left hand side of the page. <p>You can then choose whether you allow people to follow you without verification and who can tag you in pictures etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The 'settings' icon, as above, also allows you to select to deactivate your account at the bottom of the page. <p>Instagram: How to block someone from contacting you:</p>	

- Open mobile app. Click on a person's name if they are showing on your timeline or use the search function (the magnifying glass at the bottom of the screen) to find them by name.
- Open their profile. Select the three dots in the top right-hand corner.
- Choose 'block'. Then choose 'block' on the 'are you sure...' message.
- To hide your story from certain people, also choose 'hide your story'. Although if they are blocked they should not be able to see this anyway.

General privacy/security settings:

- Open mobile app, open your profile by selecting the person on the bar at the bottom of the screen.
- Select the three dots in the top right hand corner
- Scroll down to 'Private Account'. Press the button to turn it on. It is blue when on.

This then means that only your friends can see your profile and you have to 'accept' people who wish to follow you. Hashtags will not work in the wider network in this mode.

Snapchat:

How to block someone from contacting you: -

- Open mobile app. Screen should show front facing camera.
- Select the search function. Find contact then click on them.
- Choose 'Block' or 'Remove friend' from the left hand side of the page.

To stop someone viewing your story: -

- Open mobile app. Screen should show front facing camera.
- Swipe right then select the settings cog.
- Select 'custom' under 'Who can view my story' then choose which friends you are happy to be able to view it. Someone who is blocked should not be able to view your story.

Whatsapp: How to block someone from contacting you:

- Open mobile app. Choose conversation (single person only).
- Select the three dots in top right-hand corner. Then choose 'More'. Select 'Block'

How to email chat history:

- Open mobile app. Choose conversation
- Select the three dots in top right hand corner. Then choose 'email chat'. Then following instructions and enter email address.

This is useful if you would like to block someone but need a record of the chat history. Or if you would like to send a chat history to police, your support worker or another professional. You cannot redact this function and the whole chat history will be sent.

To leave a group:

- Open mobile app. Choose group conversation.
- Select the three dots in top right-hand corner. Select 'group admin'.
- Choose 'Exit group'. Then choose 'Delete group'.

Do not accept friend requests from someone you do not know, even if they share mutual friends. Ensure that Location Settings are turned off on your phone. Updating your social networking with these on will alert your followers/friends as to where you are. Location settings vary phone to phone, please check your manual if you are not sure how to do this.