Personalized Domestic Violence Safety Plan

Name: _____
Date: _____

The following steps represent my plan for addressing my safety and preparing in advance for the possibility of further violence. Although I do not have control over my partner's violence, I do have a choice about how to respond to him or her and how to best get myself and my children to safety.

Step 1: Safety during a violent incident. Battered partners cannot always avoid violent incidents. In order to increase safety, battered partners may use a variety of strategies. I can use some or all of the following strategies:

A. If I decide to leave, I will _____.
(Practice how to leave safely. What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells, or fire escapes would you use?)
B. I can keep my purse and car keys ready and put them (where) _____ _____ in order to leave quickly.
C. I can tell _____ about the violence and request they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my house.
I can also tell _____.
D. I can teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the police and the fire department.
E. I will use _____ as my code word with my children or my friends so they can call for help.
F. If I have to leave my home, I will go _____.
(Decide this even if you don't think there will be a next time.)
If I cannot go there, then I can go to _____
or _____ or _____.
G. I can also teach some of these strategies to some/all of my children.
H. When I expect the abuse is about to occur, I will try to move to a space that is lowest risk, such as _____.
(Try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, kitchen, near weapons, or in rooms without access to an outside door.)
I will use my judgment and intuition. I have to protect myself until I/we are out of danger.

Step 2: Safety when preparing to leave. Battered partners frequently leave the residence they share with the battering partner. Leaving must be done with a careful plan in order to increase safety. Batterers often strike back when they believe that a battered partner is leaving a relationship. I can use some or all of the following safety strategies:

A. I will leave money and an extra set of keys with _____ so I can leave quickly.
B. I will keep copies of important documents or keys at _____.
C. I will open a savings account by _____, to increase my independence.
D. Other things I can do to increase my independence include: (Increased independence can lead to increased risk.)
_____

_____
_____
_____
E. The domestic violence program's hotline number is _____.
I can seek shelter by calling this hotline.
F. I can keep change for phone calls on me at all times. I understand that if I use my telephone credit card, the following month the telephone bill will tell my batterer those numbers I called after I left. To keep my telephone calls confidential, I must either use coins or I might get a friend to permit me to use their telephone credit card for a limited time when I first leave.
G. I will check with _____ and _____ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.
H. I can leave extra clothes with _____.
I. I will sit down and review my safety plan every _____ in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence and make any changes necessary.
_____ (domestic abuse advocate or friend) has agreed to help me review this plan.
J. I will rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.

Step 3: Safety in my own residence. There are many things a battered partner can do to increase safety in his/her own residence. It may be impossible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step by step. Safety measures I can use include:

A. I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible.
B. I can replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors.
C. I can install security systems including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, and electronic system, etc.
D. I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows.
E. I can install smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor in my house/apartment.
F. I can install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to my house.
G. I will teach my children how to use the telephone to make a collect call to me and to _____ (friend/minister/other) in the event that my partner takes the children.
H. I will tell the people who take care of my children which people have permission to pick up my children and that my partner is not permitted to do so. The people I will inform about pick-up permission include:
_____ (school)
_____ (day care staff)
_____ (babysitter)
_____ (Sunday School teacher)
_____ (teacher)
_____ and
_____ (others).

I. I can inform _____ (neighbor)
_____ (pastor), and
_____ (friend)

that my partner no longer resides with me and they should call the police if he or she is

observed near my residence.

Step 4: Safety with a protection order. Many batterers obey protection orders, but one can never be sure which violent partner will obey and which will violate protection orders. I recognize that I may need to ask the police and the courts to enforce my protection order.

The following are some steps I can take to help the enforcement of my protection order:
A. I will keep my protection order _____ (location).
(Always keep it on or near your person. If you change purses, that's the first thing that should go in.)
B. I will give my protection order to police departments in the community where I work, in those communities where I usually visit family or friends, and in the community where I live.
C. There should be a county registry of protection orders that all police departments can call to confirm the existence and/or status of a protection order. I can check to make sure that my order is on the registry. The telephone number for the county registry of protection orders is: _____.
D. For further safety, if I often visit other counties in my state, I might file my protection order in those counties. I will register my protection order in the following counties:
_____, _____,
and _____.
E. I can call the local domestic violence program if I am not sure about B, C, or D above or if I have some problem with my protection order.
F. I will inform my employer, my minister, my closest friend, and _____
and _____ that I have an active protection order.
G. If my partner violates the protection order, I can call the police and report a violation, contact my attorney, call my advocate, and/or advise the court of the violation.

Step 5: Safety on the job and in public. Each battered partner must decide if and when he/she will tell others that he/she has been battered and that he/she may be at continued risk. Friends, family, and co-workers can help to protect. Each battered partner should consider carefully who to invite to help secure his/her safety. I might do any or all of the following:

A. I can inform my boss, the security supervisor, and _____
at work of my situation.
B. I can ask _____ to help screen my telephone calls at work.
C. When leaving work, I can _____
_____.
D. When driving home, if problems occur I can _____
_____.
E. If I use public transit, I can _____
_____.
F. I can use different grocery stores and shopping malls to conduct my business and shop at hours that are different than those used when residing with my battering partner.
G. I can use a different bank and take care of my banking at hours different from those I used when residing with my battering partner.

Step 6: Safety and my emotional health. The experience of being battered and verbally degraded by partners is usually exhausting and emotionally draining. The process of building a new life for myself takes much courage and incredible energy.

To conserve my emotional energy and resources and to support my mental and emotional wellbeing,
I can do some or all of the following:

A. If I feel down and ready to return to a potentially abuse situation, I can
_____.
B. When I have to communicate with my partner in person or by telephone, I can
_____
_____.
C. I can try to use "I can..." statements with myself and to be assertive with others.
D. I can tell myself "_____"
whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me.
Telephone numbers I need to know:
Police department - home: _____
Police department - school: _____
Police department - work: _____
Battered women's program: _____
County registry of protection orders: _____
Work number: _____
Supervisor's home number: _____