



Calvert**Health**[®]

Safety Planning

What You Need to Know.

Safety Planning

in an Abusive Relationship

What is a Safety Plan?

A safety plan is a personalized, practical plan detailing how to leave an abusive relationship and what to do once your leave. While some of the steps may seem simple, in a crisis it can be difficult to think clearly and act quickly.

When to Leave?

You have a right to leave a relationship anything you are being physically, mentally, or verbally abused. Deciding when you to leave will be different for everyone, but the most important goal is to get out safely and know the available resources.

Safety with an Abusive Partner

When living with an abusive partner, assess your level of risk and identify areas in the house where there are no weapons so you can move to those areas if needed. Try to have a phone accessible at all times and if possible have a code word with a trusted friend or family member to signal the need for help.

Safety Planning with Children

Teach your children to call 911; create a code word for when they need to leave the room/home; teach them that while they may want to protect their parent, they should never intervene; enroll them in a counseling program with someone they trust.

Safety Planning During Pregnancy

According to the CDC, intimate partner violence affects as many as 324,000 pregnant women each year. During pregnancy can be an especially vulnerable time because abuse often begins or escalates during a pregnancy. Try to attend doctor's appointments alone to discuss your abuse and your plan for leaving.

Emotional Safety Planning

Many women stay in abusive situations because they don't know where to turn to for support. It is crucial to seek out supportive people in your life or connect with a local organization. Remind yourself about your value, and that it is never your fault if someone chooses to abuse you. As you establish a safety plan, be kind to yourself as you move to make a life transition.

Tech & Social Media Safety

If you share a computer with a partner or if they have access to your phone, all of your activities could be monitored. On shared devices, they can look at search history, turn on GPS tracking, and read texts and emails.

When possible, use a landline or a computer at a public library and never post your location on social media. Change any passwords that your partner knows when you leave so they cannot access any of your accounts.

Preparing to Leave

Before you leave, try to document as much of the abuse as possible. Keep pictures of injuries and keep a journal of violent incidents, noting the dates of the threats made. If you have to go to the ER or doctors, ask them to document your visit.

If children are old enough, identify a safe place for them and reiterate that their job is to remain safe, not to protect you. Set aside money or have a trusted family member or friend hold it for you and look into other resources in your area so you know where to go during a crisis.

When you Leave

Make a plan to escape quickly, and know where you are going. Remember that you can always call the police for an escort or have them stand by as you leave.

After you Leave

Your main goal after you leave is your continued safety. Change your locks, phone number, work hours and routine. Cancel or reschedule any appointments or plans that your partner may know about. For children, alert school authorities of the situation.

If you have a restraining order, keep a copy of it with you to inform employers, friends and neighbors. Think about renting a PO Box to have a safe place to receive your mail.

Legal Actions

The application for a Protective Order can be found at courthouses, women's shelters and volunteer legal service agencies.

Be Prepared

If possible, collect these important documents and belongings and store them in a safe place in case you need to leave quickly.

- Driver's License, birth certificates, social security cards, passports or immigration papers
- Financial information for checking and savings accounts and stocks or mutual funds
- Copy of rental agreement or lease to your home
- Insurance information – car, life, health, etc.
- Medical records for yourself and children
- Medications
- Valuable jewelry
- Extra set of car and house keys
- Several changes of clothing
- A written copy of important phone numbers and addresses
- Title or lease paperwork for your car
- Past two years' tax returns
- Statements for any retirement plans

CalvertHealth Medical Center's (CHMC) Domestic Violence and SAFE Program helps to provide immediate, direct and conveniently accessible local service to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in Calvert County and throughout Southern Maryland. If you or someone you know is in need of a forensic examination or victim resources and referrals, please reach out to our SAFE Program Coordinator, Yvonne Dawkins, at 410.535.8344.