

# Making a Safety Plan

A Safety Plan is a guide to help you and your children stay safe from violence. A safety plan looks at your individual situation and what you need to increase your safety. You should prepare a safety plan in advance so you know what to do in an emergency. As your situation changes, you may need to look at it again and update it. These ideas are only a guide. **You need to be the judge of what is safest; what is realistic; and what you can afford to do.**

## Plan in Advance to Increase your Safety at Home

- Identify your supports. Talk to someone confidentially about the violence. This could be a friend, relative or counsellor.
- Tell a trusted neighbour about the violence and ask them to call the police if they hear a disturbance coming from the home.
- Decide where you will go in an emergency – this could be to your nearest 24 hr police station, a friend, neighbour or family member, or a women’s refuge.
- Keep some cash, spare house and car keys, medications, important papers and a change of clothes for yourself and your children with someone or in a place you can easily access them if you need to leave quickly.
- Keep your mobile phone with you (on your person) at all times. Have the telephone number for DVConnect 1800 811 811 (24hr crisis support and refuge referral) and the Police 000 or other emergency numbers in your mobile and nearby at all times (keeping in mind digital safety).
- Develop a simple safety plan for your children so they know what to do when domestic violence is occurring. This could be going to a trusted neighbour or friend if you are unable to get away or if they are at risk. Teach young children to call the police in an emergency and to memorise their address.
- If you are planning to leave the relationship, think about safety in your preparations. Gather information about accommodation options, finances and Centrelink benefits, supports available and seek legal advice (be aware of safety risks with technology when planning to leave). It may not be safe to tell him you are planning to leave as separation can escalate domestic violence.



## Plan to Increase Safety during a Violent Incident at Home

- Leave the situation if possible - know the easiest escape routes from the house including windows, doors and obstacles to avoid in a speedy exit.
- Move to a space in the house with access to an outside door. Avoid rooms without access to an outside door, or rooms such as bathrooms and kitchens with hard surfaces and weapons available.
- Call the police as soon as it is safe to report the incident – they can also arrange safe accommodation for you and your children.

### Domestic Violence Protection Orders

A Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVO) can help protect you, and your children. A DVO is made in the Magistrates Court. A DVO will include a condition that your partner or ex-partner is not to commit acts of domestic violence and to be of good behaviour. DVOs can be made whether you remain in the relationship or have separated. You can apply for a DVO yourself, with a solicitor, or the police can apply for your protection if they have been called out during an incident of domestic violence.

**For further information call Legal Aid Qld (1300 651 188) or Women's Legal Service Helpline (1800 957 957)**

## Safety after Separation

Many women have found violence increases at the time of separation and after separation. Your partner/ex-partner may feel he is losing control over you and may try to assert his dominance at this time. Whether you remain in the home, or move out, separation can be a dangerous time for you and for your children. Consider the following steps to increase your safety at this time.

- Change your mobile number and landline. Make your landline a 'silent' number.
- Change the locks to all doors and windows.
- Install security screens, motion sensitive lighting, and security cameras. Some domestic violence services provide funding for security upgrades. Contact your local domestic violence service to find out if you are eligible. An affordable option is a wood dowel in sliding windows and doors.
- Check smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers.
- Increase safety where you park your car and enter the home, e.g. an automatic garage door opener, safety lighting, and removal of shrubs/trees in the area.

- Inform trusted people/neighbours that your partner no longer lives with you and ask they call police if they hear a disturbance or see someone suspicious near or in your home.
- Inform your employer about your situation and ask for your phone calls at work to be screened.
- Organise for someone to be with you when you arrive/leave work and at other places you attend regularly, including any situations you know your partner will be nearby, i.e. drop off and pick up of children.
- If your ex-partner breaches the Domestic Violence Protection Order, report it to the police. Ask neighbours and colleagues to let you know, or report to the police, if he is seen at home or work, especially if that is in breach of the DVO.

## If You Need to Keep Your New Address and Contact Details Secret

- Only disclose your address to trusted friends and family.
- Open new bank and phone accounts. These records may show your location.
- Have your mail redirected to a Post Office Box.
- Contact the Australian Electoral Commission to remove your details from the published electoral role.
- Contact the police to let them know your situation, and to avoid being reported as a missing person.
- Obtain a new Tax File Number, Medicare Number and Centrelink Reference Number.
- Change your vehicle registration.
- Change your name.
- Remove details of inter-school transfers from school records.
- **If you have children and are considering separation, it is important you seek legal advice as you will have some rights and responsibilities under the Family Law Act.**

***For information on technological safety, please refer to Women's Legal Service Digital Safety Factsheet.***

## Services

### *Crisis Support/Information & Referrals*

DVConnect womensline	1800 811 811 (24 hrs 7 days)
1800 RESPECT (National DV hotline)	1800 737 732 (24hrs 7 days)
Homeless Persons Info Qld (HPIQ)	1800 474 753 (emergency housing referral)
Women's Infolink	1800 177 577 (Statewide info/referral)
Statewide Sexual Assault Helpline	1800 010 120 (7:30am – 11:30pm, 7 days)
Parentline	1300 30 1300 (8am – 10pm, 7 days)

### *Housing / Tenancy Advice*

Department of Housing and Public Works QLD	13 74 68
Residential Tenancy Authority (RTA) <a href="http://www.rta.qld.gov.au">www.rta.qld.gov.au</a>	1300 366 311
Tenants Union of Qld <a href="http://www.tuq.org.au">www.tuq.org.au</a>	1300 744 263

### *Legal Advice / Information*

Women's Legal Service <a href="http://www.wlsq.org.au">www.wlsq.org.au</a>	1800 957 957
<b>North Qld</b> Women's Legal Service <a href="http://www.nqwls.com.au">www.nqwls.com.au</a>	1800 244 504
Qld Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service (QIFVLS) <a href="http://www.gifvls.com.au">www.gifvls.com.au</a>	1800 88 77 00
Refugee and Immigrant Legal Service (RAILS) <a href="http://www.rails.org.au">www.rails.org.au</a>	(07) 3846 9300
Legal Aid Qld <a href="http://www.legalaid.qld.gov.au">www.legalaid.qld.gov.au</a>	1300 65 11 88
Family Relationships Advice Line	1800 050 321

### *Financial Support / Information*

Centrelink <a href="http://www.centrelink.gov.au">www.centrelink.gov.au</a>	136 150
Child Support Agency <a href="http://www.csaonline.gov.au">www.csaonline.gov.au</a>	13 12 72
Financial First Aid <a href="http://www.uccommunity.org.au/ffa">www.uccommunity.org.au/ffa</a>	1800 007 007

### *Domestic Violence Services*

<b>Brisbane</b> Domestic Violence Service	(07) 3217 2544
Immigrant Women's Support Service - DV Program ( <b>Brisbane</b> )	(07) 3846 3490
Domestic Violence Action Centre (DVAC) ( <b>Ipswich</b> )	(07) 3816 3000
Working Against Violence Support Service Inc. ( <b>Logan</b> )	(07) 3808 5566 or ( <b>Redlands</b> ) (07) 3286 7766
<b>Caboolture</b> Regional Domestic Violence Service Inc.	(07) 5498 9533
<b>Sunshine Coast</b> Domestic & Family Violence Service ( <b>SCOPE</b> )	(07) 5430 9300
Domestic Violence Prevention Centre <b>Gold Coast</b> Inc.	(07) 5591 4222 or ( <b>Outreach</b> ) (07) 3807 6226
Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Service ( <b>Toowoomba</b> )	1300 364 277
<b>Cairns</b> Regional Domestic Violence Service Inc.	(07) 4033 6100 or ( <b>Tablelands</b> ) 1300 909 250
Domestic Resource Violence Service Inc. ( <b>Mackay</b> )	(07) 4957 3888
Domestic Violence Service of <b>Central Queensland</b> Centacare	1300 523 985 ( <b>Rockhampton</b> )
North Queensland Domestic Violence Resource Service ( <b>Townsville</b> )	(07) 4721 2888 or ( <b>Mt Isa</b> ) (07) 4743 0946
Working Against Abuse Service ( <b>Roma</b> )	(07) 4622 5230
Centacare Safer Families Support Service ( <b>Roma</b> )	1300 477 433

### *Counselling*

Centacare <a href="http://www.centacarebrisbane.net.au">www.centacarebrisbane.net.au</a>	1300 286 822
Uniting Care <a href="http://www.uccommunity.org.au">www.uccommunity.org.au</a>	(07) 3253 4000
Relationships Australia <a href="http://www.relationships.com.au">www.relationships.com.au</a>	1300 364 277
Better Relationships Anglicare <a href="http://www.betterrelationships.com.au">www.betterrelationships.com.au</a>	1300 114 397

Call Women's Health Qld Wide (07) 3216 0376 or 1800 017 676 for a list of private counsellors in your area. You can request a specialist counsellor e.g. relationships or domestic violence. Ask your GP for a referral under a Mental Health Care Plan to be eligible for a Medicare rebate.