

# Domestic Violence

## Symptoms of Abuse - Threats; Power Misuse; and Control

What symptoms below fit your life?

<p><b>Using Emotional Abuse</b></p> <p>Putting the other person down Making the other person feel bad about themselves Calling the other person names Making the other person think they are crazy Playing mind games Humiliating the other person Making the other person feel guilty</p>	<p><b>Using Privileges</b></p> <p>Treating the other person like a servant Making all the big decisions Acting like the master of the castle Being the one who determines the roles</p>
<p><b>Using Economic Abuse</b></p> <p>Preventing the other person from getting or keeping a job Making the other person ask for money Giving the other person an allowance Taking the other person's money Not letting the other person know about or have access to family income</p>	<p><b>Using Coercion and Threats</b></p> <p>Making or carrying out threats to do something to hurt the other person Threatening to leave the other person, to commit suicide, report the other person to welfare Making the other person drop charges Making the other person do illegal things</p>
<p><b>Using Intimidation</b></p> <p>Making the other person afraid by using looks, gestures, or actions Smashing things Abusing pets Displaying weapons</p>	<p><b>Using Children</b></p> <p>Making the other person feel guilty about the children Using the children to relay messages Using visitation to harass the other person Threatening to take the children away</p>
<p><b>Using Isolation</b></p> <p>Controlling what the other</p>	<p><b>Minimizing, Denying, Blaming</b></p> <p>Making light of the abuse and</p>

<p>person does, who they see and talk to, what's read, and where they go</p> <p>Limiting their outside involvement</p> <p>Using jealousy to justify actions</p>	<p>not taking the other person's concerns about it seriously</p> <p>Saying the abuse never happened</p> <p>Shifting responsibility for abusive behavior</p> <p>Saying the other person caused it</p>
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**HAS ANY OF THE FOLLOWING EVER HAPPENED TO YOU?**

Does your partner:

Blame everyone else especially you, for his or her mistakes?  
 Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Prevent you from seeing your family or friends?  
 Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Curse you, say mean things, mock you or humiliate you?  
 Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Force you to have sex or force you to engage in sex that makes you feel uncomfortable?  
 Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Restrain, hit, punch, slap, or kick you?  
 Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Intimidate or threaten you?  
 Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Ever prevent you from leaving the house, getting a job, or continuing your education?  
 Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you may be in an abusive relationship. The Domestic Violence Division of the Metropolitan Police Department can assist you in obtaining warrants, orders of protection and counseling.

**Next:** Response and Follow-up by responding Police Officers

## **Domestic Violence**

### **Response and Follow-up by Responding Police Officers**

If you believe you are the victim of an abusive relationship or domestic violence, then call the police and allow us to assist you the victim. As the responding officers are in route to your address remember that they are there to help you and your children. Below is but a few of the issues that the officers will address and what you can expect.

When the Police Arrive:

- Tell what has happened and who is involved.
- Tell the location of the suspect. (If known)
- Tell if weapons were involved and there location. (Don't approach the officer with a weapon)
- Indicate injuries you sustained. (Photos may have to be taken)

The Officer Will:

- Write a report of the incident that occurred.
- The officer will ask and /or determine if medical attention is needed.
- The officer will help you if you wish to prosecute or wish to obtain an order of protection.

The Officer Can Assist in:

- In obtaining a warrant or order of protection. (The suspect's address, work location, or other possible locations is needed)
- They can provide transportation to obtain a warrant, order of protection, or shelter.
- The officer can assist in locating a victim's shelter.
- They can refer other social services as needed.

## **Domestic Violence**

### **Response and Follow-up by Domestic Violence Officers**

Responses and Follow-up of Domestic Violence Officers on Assigned Cases

The officer will:

- Photograph any injuries, property damage, or other evidence.
- Ask for any written or taped statements of the incident.
- Collect evidence and reports concerning the incident.

The officer can assist in:

Obtaining warrants or filing an order of protection.  
Calling or locating a shelter for you and your children's safety.  
Referral to counseling or other social services.  
Go over a safety plan, which helps you make yourself safer.  
Answering any other questions you have about the process by explaining the prosecution and how it proceeds.

## **A Guide to Domestic Violence: Risk Assessment, Risk Reduction, and Safety Plan**

For police officers, whose work has as much to do with crime prevention and community service as it does with enforcing the laws;

and

for prosecutors, court staff, probation, parole and community corrections staff, whose work has as much to do with public safety as it does with the administration of justice;

and

for domestic violence service providers and victim's advocates, social workers and human service professionals and health care providers and educators and clergy and everyone else to whom domestic battered victims turn for help;

we offer this **Guide** as a reference and training outline.

### **I. Introduction**

**This is not one-size-fits-all work.** Domestic violence interventions must be case-specific and based on an *ongoing* analysis of the *totality* of risks the victims faces.

Being in a relationship with an abusive partner - and surviving - requires considerable skill and resourcefulness. Although she/he may not be fully aware of it, every victim of domestic violence has already been doing risk assignment and safety planning: attempting to manage rising tensions, to head off crises, to protect themselves and their children, to keep an already bad situation from getting worse.

Whatever the potential benefits, everything that we suggest that battered victims do - or that we offer to do on their behalf, or that we do **without** their consent - also carries with it some kind of potential risk or cost. Responsible intervention isn't possible unless we seriously consider and account for those

risks and costs, as well as the risks she's/he's contending with before she/he encounters us.

**The starting point for any intervention strategy is the collaborative identification of:**

the risks - physical and non-physical - that the victim faces  
the victim's identification of "priority" problems

Get used to the idea that the victim's sense of the most pressing matter may not be the same as yours. Regardless of which of you is "right", you will have to content with the victim's sense of priority. And if you show respect for the victim's priorities, she's/he's more likely to be able to trust and work with you.

The victim's **existing** resources and capabilities?

Is he/she socially isolated or does she have a good support system?

Is he/she relatively privileged (by race, case, education, or professional skill) or not?

Is he/she a drug addicted?

Alcohol abusing? Seriously emotional?

What is his/her level of literacy?

How well can he/she communicate?

the results (positive and negative) of past efforts at problem-solving and seeking help

Find out what she's/he's done that made things more safe or tolerable; see who has been helpful in the past, who has an inhibiting effect on the victim's partner, whom she/he trusts.

the **actually available and accessible** community supports and resources.

Consider how the realities of fees-for-service, "child-friendliness", proximity to public transportation, hours of operation, and language capability make a difference.

## **II. Victim-Focused Intervention**

It can't be emphasized enough that the **problem** of domestic violence can't be resolved by effecting changes in the victim's behavior. No battered victim has control over his/her partner's behavior, and it is foolish to expect victims to "stop the violence." **The problem** is the offender's conduct and sense of entitlement to coercive, controlling and terrorist behaviors.

That said, it remains true that victim-focused measures are an essential element of a domestic violence intervention strategy. Battered victims can and do find ways to reduce the level of risk and danger in their lives, and to reclaim freedom of choice and action.

Risk assessment and safety planning give us a method of identifying problems, options and resources, for evaluating those options, and for committing to a plan of action. Some people find it useful to work with a friend or advocate and write

out a plan. (A sample plan is attached.) Some find, however, that they need to keep the plan and other papers with a trusted friend, an attorney or a domestic violence advocate. The key thing, whether the plan is written or not, is to have one.

The **goals** of victim-focused interventions are:

1. To reduce offender access to victims and other vulnerable parties;

**Access** needs to be understood as a physical, social, emotional, informational and financial.

Access can be gained directly, through agents or intermediaries, and through the actions of social institutions like the courts, the schools, or the child support system.

2. To re-establish or expand a victim's zone of free choice and activity, and strengthen her ability to resist and repel her abusive partner and,
3. To increase the level of community "guardianship" surrounding the victim and other vulnerable people (children, witnesses.)

### III. Risk Assessment

#### **A Cautionary Note:**

Traditionally, this has involved the analysis of specific threats, or of the offender's capacity for serious or lethal acts of violence.

There are a number of currently available risk/danger assessment instruments, including some sophisticated computerized models.

**What these tools *do*** is help us *think through* the dynamic elements of a particular case, and compare it to known cases that resulted in serious injury or death.

In a sense, they serve an important "coaching" function, in that they remind us to do a thorough investigation and analysis of the significant elements of a case.

**What they *cannot do*** is predict the behavior of any given individual. The single best predictor of future violent behavior continues to be past violence, and we cannot, in any absolute sense, predict lethality or serious injury. The best we can do is evaluate **comparative risk**, and attempt to safeguard against identified dangers.

**The other thing they cannot do is help us really enter into the world of battered victim's problem solving.** Avoiding serious injury or death is certainly the most dramatic aspect of a domestic violence intervention strategy. But once we understand domestic violence as a problem of **coercive control** rather than simply as problem of assault behavior, we are forced to broaden our concept of **risk assessment**. Like battered victims, we then need to conduct a

thorough analysis of the **complex package** of physical, legal, economic, familial, social, and emotional risks faced by the victim, **and by those she/he feel bound to protect.**

**This set of concerns extends well beyond traditional definitions of "safety".**

While she/he wants the abuse to end, a battered victim may not want to see their partner harmed, publicly shamed, or damaged financially.

The victim may want to protect her/his privacy and sense of competence.

The victim may be weighing the effects that taking the children out of their regular school in order to seek shelter will have.

The victim may fear that their partner will try to get custody of the children if she/he seeks help about the domestic violence.

The victim may be concerned that multiple court appearances will lead to the loss of their job.

If the victim leaves an abusive partner, she/he may fear being "cast out" by their family or religious community.

Understanding "safety" as something more than protection from assault, we need to get beyond "danger", look at a broader range of risks, evaluate their seriousness, and weight the real consequences of any possible courses of action we might propose to the victim.

In identifying pressing concerns and evaluating risks, it is critical to get a sense of how the relationship has developed and at the range of coercive tactics employed by the abuser. The question isn't simply "what kind of danger is she/he in?" We have to ask at the same time, "How constricted has the victim's life become?" and "What might be done to reduce both the danger and the narrowing of free choice and action?"

In the sections that follow, we'll consider some of the most critical areas that investigations and interviews should explore.

When evaluating available options for intervention - yours and the victim's - the key questions are:

"If **she/he** does **X** (or does **not** do **X**) which risks go up, which go down, and which new risks arise?" and,

"What are the implications - for the victim, other witnesses, the offender, the community, my organization, and myself if **I** do (or don't do) **X**?"

#### **IV. Elements of Risk Assessment**

## 1. Assessing Threats

**For too long, there has been a very high "discount rate" when it comes to evaluating threats made by one partner against another.**

The tendency is to dismiss these as things being said "in the heat of the moment", or to see threats as an abuser's way of "letting off steam." Inevitably, in the aftermath of a death or serious assault, the "wisdom of hindsight" kicks in, and people tell reporters: "we saw it coming."

In evaluating threats, consider the following:

- o Does ***the victim*** ..believe the threat?

This is important information, even in those instances where you come to the independent conclusion that a victim is minimizing the danger she/he faces.

Consider also that words or acts that are not particularly threatening in one cultural frame of reference could well be terrorizing in another.

- o Was it made in the presence of other people? In writing? In a recorded telephone conversation?

Willingness to "leave evidence" or "not caring who knows" may indicate a more serious intention to follow through.

- o Is it detailed and specific?

Evaluate threats in domestics as you would evaluate potential suicides: the more thought that's gone into the plan (evidenced by the amount and specificity of the detail); the more likely it is to be acted on: "I'm going to kill you" is cause for concern; "Tonight, I'm going to feed you feet first through that wood chipper" is cause for greater alarm.

- o Is the threatened act consistent with his past behavior?
- o Does the abuser have the means to carry it out?

Again, consider the parallel to assessing potential suicides: There's having the thought, then there's having a plan, then there's being able to follow through. Where the "means" are at hand, there is more risk.

- o Have there been "rehearsals" of the act that is being threatened?

These can be verbal "picture painting" ("let me tell you what I'm going to do . . .") or partial reenactments (showing someone the weapon you intend to use or the place where you're going to kill or bury them).

- o Does the threat extend to others (children, family members, police, new lover)?



Fear of harm to others may restrict a victim's willingness to resist and/or to follow through with police, children's services and the courts. Custodial interference and parental kidnapping are routine in domestic violence cases. In addition, a substantial percentage (in one study, more than a third) of domestic homicides are multiple-victim killings, murder-suicides, or murder-suicide attempts.

- Does the threat involve murder, suicide or both?
2. General Considerations

Here, we need to consider not just "yes or no" but to what degree these factors are present.

A. ***History of Violence/Use of Force***

- Was the suspect abusive to former partners or family members?
- Has the physical violence increased in frequency or intensity over the past year?
- Has the suspect recently become violent toward the children?

Violence tends to escalate against a victim at the same time that it begins to be directed to the children.

Children are likely to be injured when attempting to intervene in domestic incidents. Young boys convicted of homicide are more likely to have killed a suspect abusing their parent than to have killed anyone else.

- Has the violence involved choking or attempted strangulation?

These acts seriously escalate the potential for serious injury or death, but are often described by offenders as attempts to "restrain" an "out of control" victim.

Whenever there is an indication that choking or "restraint" is a tactic of abuse, it's critical to do a thorough assessment.

- Did the suspect use an object, such as a belt or other article of clothing, a telephone cord, an electric cord, a leash or a plastic bag?
- Did the victim initially "see stars", black out momentarily, or lose consciousness for a protracted period, or lose bladder or bowel control? Or subsequently, have any degree of neck swelling? Have bruises, burns or red marks or spots on the neck? Have reddening of the "whites" of the eyes? Vomit or cough up blood? Experience difficulty breathing or swallowing? Has speech become "raspy" or lost voice? Experience headaches and/or neck pain?
- Has the violence involved head-banging or a head injury?
- Has the batterer been violent while she was pregnant?

- Does the batterer have a history of violence toward people who aren't intimates or family members?
- Does the batterer have a history of sexual assault behavior?
- Has the batterer ever abused pets or other animals? During this relationship, or as a child?
- Has the batterer destroyed property particularly their partner's personal property?  
Intentional and terrorist destruction of property is often an "it could as well be you, and next time might be" message.
- Does the batterer have a special interest in/fascination with movies, television shows, video games or books that focus on themes of violence, power and revenge; "true crime" stories of homicide or stalking?

#### B. ***Weapons***

- Are there weapons in the household? Does the batterer keep weapons in more than one place? Where are they kept? Does the batterer have access to weapons owned by others? Is the batterer trained in their use?
- Does the batterer have illegal or exotic weapons?
- Is having and being willing to use weapons part of their self-image?

This is particularly crucial in relationships that involve people in law enforcement, corrections, the military, and the criminal justice system.

- Has the batterer's past violence involved the display, use or threatened use of firearms or other weapons?
- Does the victim possess weapons? What kind? Is the victim trained in their use?

#### C. ***Centrality***

In one form, this emerges when one partner feels anxious and unsafe without the compliant presence of the other.

In another, more extreme and dangerous form, one partner feels/believes they are "incomplete" without the other. Psychologists and other mental health professionals will use terms like "enmeshment" to describe this.

In assessing for centrality, we need to look at both the material and the emotional "overlaps" between people's lives.

- Do the parties live together or share possessions? Do they have children in common? Are there legal ties between them?
- Is the victim financially dependent on the abuser?
- Is the abuser possessive? Does he/she express beliefs of "ownership" or sexual entitlement to their partner? Is the abuser violently or constantly jealous of the victim? Does the abuser make unfounded accusations of infidelity?

- How much does the abuser's sense of self depend on the relationship?

For instance, has the abuser ever said, "I'd be lost without you" or (being ordered into counseling or drug/alcohol treatment,) "I can't do this without you" or "If you leave me, I have nothing to live for"?

- Is the abuser socially dependent on the relationship?
- As the relationship has progressed, has he/she become less connected to friends and family?

#### D. **Stalking**

- Does the offender engage in "checking up" behaviors? Listen in on conversations, read mail, require an accounting for whereabouts and activities?
- Does the offender enlist others in monitoring the victim's behavior?

Not only *the offender's* friends, family, co-workers and cell mates, but also *the victim's* friends, family, and co-workers.

- Has the offender contacted - or threatened - the victim's friends, relatives or co-workers?
- Has the offender followed, "staked out" or otherwise stalked victim?
- Has the offender made unwanted attempts to communicate by mail or telephone, or through third parties?

These communications don't have to be threats. They can be "oh baby, I was so wrong I don't know what came over me; can you ever forgive me; let's work it out together" messages, flowers, gifts, etc.

#### E. **Control**

- Does the abuser control most of the financial resources?
- Does the abuser control or attempt to control most or all of the victim's daily activities?
- Does the abuser give her lists of things the victim *must* and *cannot* do? Does the abuser ask the victim to repeat conversations she's/he's had with others? Is the victim required to account for her/his movements? Does the abuser check the odometer? Does the victim have to account for every penny she/he spends?
- Has the abuser attempted to isolate the victim, by moving or by driving people away?
- Does the abuser believe he/she is *entitled* to control in the relationship?
- Does the abuser equate compliance with loyalty?

- Is the abuser able to accept disagreement or behavior that is difficult from what he/she would like to see, or does he/she interpret those things as a form of personal attack?

F. **Other Concerns**

- Does the abuser drink? Use drugs? How often?
- Has there been a recent escalation in the abuser's pattern of drinking or drug use?
- Does the abuser's childhood history include domestic violence? Physical child abuse? Sexual abuse?
- Is this near an "anniversary date" of a traumatic incident from the abuser's past?
- Have holidays always been flashpoints?
- Does the abuser basically see themselves as somebody "things happen to", as being put-upon, or as the victim of other people's actions?
- How does the abuser describe "things that went wrong" (failed relationships, lost jobs) in the past?
- How able is the abuser to understand other people's motives and feelings?
- Also: how much does the abuser tend to project his/her own feelings, fears, or motives onto others?
- Is the abuser able to accept responsibility for his/her actions?
- How does the abuser respond to change, particularly when it wasn't his/her idea?
- Did the relationship begin in a "whirlwind", with quick sexual involvement, living together soon after meeting, marriage within six months of meeting?

**V. After assessing risks and the potential level of danger, the next steps are**

1. **Clarification of roles and responsibilities**

- Where, if at all, does a "special relationship" and affirmative duty to protect exist? How was it created and what are its terms?
- Is there an order of protection? Are there court-ordered conditions of probation or parole? Has the abuser said things that create a "duty to warn"?
- To what extent does confidentiality apply to your communications? What information are you legally required to disclose, and to whom?
- Tell victims what limits there are to protective actions that "the system" may undertake on their behalf. This way, you place the victim in a position to decide what's in their best interests and **not** in their best interests to tell you.
- People don't intuitively know how public systems "work", and victims need to be educated about what any given institution or responder can or cannot do for them.
- Explain - in some detail - **who** is **what part** of the system needs **what kind** of information, and **who** can reasonably be expected to undertake **what kind** of actions on her behalf.

- Everyone needs to recognize that it's the **victim** who is ultimately going to carry the "every-moment" burden of attending to their safety and that of their children.
- 2. **Education about the problem of domestic violence**
  - Nobody wants to be a battered victim. Don't forget for a moment the stigma attached to this particular label, and don't **assume** that victims identify their problem as domestic violence.
  - The victim may believe it's the abuser's insecurity or impulsiveness, drinking or drug use, stress at work, or the behavior of the children, or something the victim's doing (or not doing) that's the problem.
  - Although you can't predict what will happen in any given relationship, you can share what you know about the dynamics of domestic violence, particularly as it relates to "de-escalation phase" behaviors, separation violence, stalking, and dangerousness.
  - You can also show an understanding that, in all likelihood, this will be a "long haul" process, and that you are ready for that.
  - Without **in any way** suggesting that the victim is responsible for or can control their partner's behavior, you can assist the victim in coming to terms with the need to anticipate certain predictable behaviors on the part of the batterer - and then help the victim to develop enough of a tolerance for them that they're able to function adequately and do not, acting from fear or frustration, become drawn further into harm's way or inadvertently aggravate the situation.

## VI. Now, you can move to situation-specific safety planning

### A. First Steps

1. Think about how you evaluate advice, and under what conditions you're most likely to take suggestions. You're likely to take advice

When what's being suggested is consistent with your experience, your values, and your sense of self **and** When you "walk around" the suggestion and come to the conclusion that, on balance, it will do more good than harm in your life (that is isn't going to make matters worse.)

2. **Now**, think about what happens if those conditions *aren't* met:
  - First, you're just not likely to do it.
  - Second, you may very well, if the person making the suggestion has some kind of power over you, **act** like you're willing to or going do it, and then just **not** do it on once you're away from them.
  - Third, you may come to the reasonable conclusion that this person has something other than **your** best interests at heart, regardless of what their mouth is saying.
3. It almost **always** makes sense to **begin from the assumption** that people are going to try to make their relationships "work" and to preserve their families, if they can, and that, aside from what

**they** may want to do, powerful social forces are going to push them that way.

This is particularly true when there are children involved, as the existing laws related to child custody, visitation and support will keep people entangled even when they might not wish to be. Add to that their understanding that "leaving" an intimate relationship or a marriage is not a single event; it is an accumulation of decisions and actions. In other words, it's a **process, not just an event.**

Anyone who's ever stayed in a bad job or had a roommate conflict or has been in an intimate relationship where the "breaking up" took longer than the "being in love" knows what this involves; you don't have to be battered to identify.

- B. Regardless of what the victim intends to do about the relationship, risks need to be identified and evaluated, and plans need to be constructed for a *variety of situations*:
- o a crisis, such as an assault;
  - o a continuing to live with an assaulting or abusive partner;
  - o "leaving", including the preparation, announcement, separation and living independently phase;

Sometimes, people "leave" because they are fleeing a crisis. In other cases, "leaving" is very carefully planned over an extended period of time. Depending on the situation, it may be possible to negotiate the terms of "leaving", but for some victims, it's safest to disappear without an announcement or message.

- o continuing to date or have social contact with a partner from whom one has at least temporarily separated, and attempting to re-negotiate the terms of the relationship;

Face it: people are going to do these things. And for reasons that may be good. Or because the terms of a court order **require** them to. In any event, unless the victim is so impaired as to require adult protective services, this is simply none of your business. (It may concern you, but it's none of your business.) You reduce your own level of frustration and error by anticipating it.

- o maintaining an independent life after a permanent separation, divorce or termination of a relationship.

## VII. Crisis plans

**Think about handling yourself in a crisis:**

If you sense trouble, or find yourself in an argument, move to a "low risk space" - rooms with two exits and where there are fewer things that can be used as weapons; rooms where you can be seen or heard from the outside.

Kitchens, bathrooms and garages are more dangerous than living rooms, dining rooms, or bedrooms. Can you guess why?

Learn - and teach your children - to get positioned "between trouble and the door."

Learn defensive tactics. If you are going to be around someone who is likely to hit you, learn how to position your body to reduce the damage.

Create signals and/or code words that will let your children know to get out and go to a pre-arranged place of safety, or that will let your neighbors/family members know to come over (and create a supportive or defusing presence) or to call for help.

Examples of signals are a turned-on porch light or a drawn shade, or an "I can't come over on Thursday after all" phone call to a friend or family member.

Have an escape plan and a back-up. **Rehearse** getting out: in the dark and with your children. Keep spare keys and important documents where you can get to them readily.

Consistent with their age, their "instincts" and their skills, developed safety plans for the children: about calling for help, or getting to a place where they will be safer.

Do **whatever it is you need to do** to buy time and/or space, to defuse the situation, or to protect yourself and your children.

## **VIII. Elements of safety plans for victims who are "staying" or "staying in contact"**

Reduce isolation wherever it can be done without "rocking the boat" - find neutral opportunities to build and maintain social supports

That is, ways you can connect with people that your partner is less likely to find threatening or provoking

Through children: playgroups and child-care "co-ops"; Headstart home-and-school programs; PTA or Home-School Associations; sports; scouting; attending to children's health needs;

Through church or spiritual communities;

By having friends and family drop by, particularly people in whose presence the abuser is likely to keep things in check.

Over the long term, develop better options

For victims who have a couple of very young children, or children with special needs, a safety plan may well have "not getting dead" as its short-term objective, with the long-term goal of "getting out":

Although **you** may not be at all comfortable with this decision, it may well be not only the best thing the victim can do at the moment, but also the safest. The victim may well get out:

- after there are no more - or there are less burdensome - child care expenses,
- after the children are old enough to speak for themselves in custody/visitation proceedings,
- after the children are old enough to enact their own safety plan.
- after the victim's education - or some critical stage of her children's education - is completed,
- after the victim is better able to cope emotionally or physically, gets out of treatment, off probation/parole, or out of mandated services,
- after the abuser is fully vested in a pension or is able to leave his/her military/law enforcement job or political position.

**Safety plans for victims who are "staying" should always include:**

- Getting a cellular phone and programming it for an emergency call;
- Learning to protect the privacy of communications: how to "foil" Caller ID and automatic recall functions; using someone else's credit card to make calls; adding (if you can do it safely) a "password voice mail" feature to your existing telephone service;
- Avoiding "little ears";

Children in these situations often have conflicting emotions and are too easily "pumped" for information by the abusive partner or allies. It's important to protect children from things they don't need to hear or might be overwhelmed by.

- Paying attention to the fact that cellular and cordless phones, baby monitors, household intercoms and even some hearing aids can be picked up on a scanner;

- Finding really safe places to store or hide documents, diaries, notes, letters and other information;

- Figure out safe places to hide things. Under the silverware divider? In a coffee can in the freezer? Between the mattress and the box spring? Behind a drawer? Use your best judgment.

This can be understood in part as building evidence for a future legal case, in the event there has to be one.



Developing practical skills that will also build self-confidence: like learning to drive, learning to do simple home repairs and/or auto maintenance, or learning to swim;

Note: this last item turned out to be really useful for the protagonist in *Living with the Enemy*.

Completing or furthering education and developing marketable skills;

This may include learning English; learning to read, learning to drive, or improving existing reading and computational skills.

Finding part-time work or a developing home business;

Squirreling away small amounts of money; opening separate bank accounts; getting credit in your own name;

**Consider, immediately before leaving**, transferring assets out of joint accounts and into your own name, so you can retain control of them until the courts get to decide.

Similarly, if you can, use the "cash advance" feature of your jointly-held credit cards and take them to their limit, then put the money in an interest-bearing account in your own name.

Helping the kids get part-time jobs and teaching them to save money

## **IX. Elements of separation-based safety plans include elements of crisis and "staying" planning (see above) plus**

1. Personal security measures limit the batterer's access to the victim or help the victim shield themselves - and information about their whereabouts, activities and intentions - from the batterer.

**All** of these involve some kind of personal loss, dislocation or disruption of personal/family routines; most of them cost money - and some create significant financial burdens.

Victims will understandably and legitimately resent having to bear these costs in order to achieve a measure of safety and privacy. Don't try to undercut these feelings; help them to do what needs to be done despite the fact that "it's not fair."

Moving. This is easier to do if you are a tenant, although there may be need for legal assistance in getting out of a lease; harder to do when it involves selling a home. This may require leaving the area altogether, and if children are involved, the civil courts will have something to say about it.

Try to use a "no name" mover, so you can't be easily traced, or more your things to storage, then use a different company to move them to where you're going.

In extreme cases, relocation is an element of a complete change of identity. Unless a person is involved in a formal victim/witness program, this generally requires a number of illegal acts and a strong commitment to following through, including a willingness to cut most, if not all, existing personal ties.

#### Protecting the confidentiality of your new address

- notify the local postal service that it is **not** to release the change of address information;
- changing your mailing address to a private box; using a private mailing service, or renting a post office in a different location from where you live;
- using your "mailbox" address on personal checks, letterheads and business cards;
- getting dropped from commercial mailing lists that get rented or sold (especially with companies who send your catalogs or publications);
- advising phone company, utilities, banks and creditors of the change and asking them to put a "code word" on your file to restrict inquiries. (TRW has a service which will let you know if someone runs a credit check on you;)
- registering your vehicle at and having your driver's license list your "mailbox" address;
- placing property or other assets in trust so that your address cannot be obtained through a title records search;
- as far as is legally possible, (in the state where you live or from the state that you've fled) protecting the new address in transfers of school records and in any legally-required release of educational information;
- teaching children to keep address and phone numbers confidential;

Changing the phone number, getting an unlisted number and radically restricting who you give it to, **and/or** using an answering service or voice-mail number. If you need to share a phone, (with a roommate or relative) get a "password" voice mail feature added to your service.

If you can afford it, you might want to consider using one number to call-forward your calls to yet-another phone somewhere else.

#### Making sure your address isn't listed in the phone book or "reverse" directories

If you are routinely harassed over the telephone and you can find the money, you might want to get an new unlisted line while continuing to use an answering machine to monitor calls to the "old" number. The tapes may be useful in building a "stalking" case.

Using caller ID and call tracing services defensively: know who's calling you before you answer, but learn how to keep your calls from being identified, or call from public telephones.

Courts have the ability to keep a petitioner's address and telephone number confidential.

This will take a formal request from you, and in some cases, from the prosecuting attorney.

Get the name and number of your abuser's probation/parole officer and stay in touch.

Where available, enroll in victim-notification systems that will alert you to releases from jail/prison.

Some victims may be eligible for Federal victim-witness protections.

## 2. Home security measures

keep doors, windows, basement access and the garage locked;

change window and door locks;

replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors;

install peepholes, window bars, and/or poles to wedge sliding doors;

put fire extinguishers near your doors and learn to use them as "intruder repellents";

if you can afford it or negotiate with your landlord for it; install outdoor (motion sensitive) lighting, timed indoor lights, and/or electronic security systems and alarms;

get a dog;

program emergency numbers into home and cellular telephones;

if you are eligible, get involved in victim/witness programs that utilize "panic button" security alert systems, and/or dedicated cellular phones programmed to 911.

## 3. Changing or modifying social habits

Moving won't help if you can be found at familiar places. As much as you possibly can, vary your patterns places: join a new congregation; shop at different stores; go to a new dry cleaners; frequent different restaurants and theaters; change banks; work out at a different gym; find a new hairdresser.

Change the route you take to get to work or school. Get a different bus/train; get off of the subway one stop earlier and walk the extra distance;

Learn to spot someone following you. If you're in the car, make four right turns in succession, or get off and then immediately back onto the highway (then check to see if the car/s you're concerned about is/are still there. If you're on foot, go into a large building through one entrance and out a door on another side. If you're **being** followed, go immediately to a police or fire station.

#### 4. Visitation

Get the clearest possible terms in orders for visitation. These may include supervised visitation programs, pick-ups and drop-offs that are at a neutral site or monitored by a trustworthy third party, protective orders that limit contact to written and emergency communications.

### **X. General considerations for all safety plans**

1. Keep a record of incidents and contracts
  - Include the date, time what happened, who else heard or saw, photographs, tapes, and the names and badge numbers of responding officers.
2. Workplace safety
  - Inform your supervisor, EAP program and/or the security office about the situation. Some companies have developed protocols for handling these cases.
  - If you have security in your building, give them a photograph of the abuser, a vehicle description, and a copy of your order of protection, if you have one.
  - Work-site security may also involve changing your work space or shift; screening calls, mail, packages and visitors; arranging for special or different parking spaces and/or accompaniment to and from your car, bus or subway stop. In larger organizations, it may be possible to arrange a transfer to a different office, or another branch.
  - Similarly, if you are in college or a vocational educational program, you can notify your adviser and the security office, and get their help in keeping safe.
3. Children
  - keep copies of orders of protection, custody and visitation with everyone who takes care of your child, and with their schools;
  - teach children how to make collect and emergency calls, and that they can give their address and phone number to "safe" adults (i.e. police;)
  - identify locations to re-group and rehearse "escape plans" with your children. (You should do this in case of fire, in any event.)
4. Personal supports and skills

*Don't underestimate the difference it makes when people take the victim's situation seriously, and communicate both concern and respect. The development of a "partnership for safety" reduces isolation and may also reduce feelings of powerlessness and anxiety. In addition, it helps to:*

- find a "positive mirror" - friends, family members, spiritual supports - to affirm your self-worth and ability to cope with the abuse (and for that matter, with the changes you're making in order to get free of it!);
- get involved in peer support groups for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and/or stalking; or in individual or group psychotherapy where trauma and continuing stress begin to compromise your ability to function;
- *if you've "left", even if it makes you anxious*, try to restrict your contact and communications with your ex-partner, to have witnesses present when it can't be avoided, and to keep a record of calls, messages, or unwanted contacts;
- be alert to your own "flashpoints": don't let your abuser provoke you - through fear or anger - into a more dangerous situation;
- learn techniques for stress reduction;
- participate in self-defense training or the martial arts;
- make a commitment to good self-care: nutrition, sleep, regular health care, attention to one's use of alcohol, prescription medications and other drugs.

## **XI. Suspect/Offender-Focused Interventions**

A. The goals of suspect/offender focused interventions are:

1. To establish that batterers are strictly and solely accountable for their own actions, and to hold them to standards established by law;
2. To disrupt the idea that domestic violence is a "private matter", and to establish a "social hold" over the abuser;

This includes establishing bail, conditions of pretrial release, conditions of probation, and the terms of orders of protection, custody/visitation and support.

3. To the greatest extent possible, to require restitution to the victim and the community;

In addition to covering the cost of medical care, temporary shelter, lost work, trauma counseling and other costs directly associated with an offense, this can include requiring abusers to cover the victim's attorney fees and other court costs.

4. To provide, through access to batterers' intervention programs, the opportunity for offenders to learn about the dynamics of domestic

violence, come to terms with their own culpability, and effect a change in their attitudes and behaviors.

- B. In some cases, the most appropriate suspect intervention (from the point of view of enhancing the safety of a given victim) is to leave it alone because any system-based intervention directed at the suspect/offender will dramatically escalate victim risk, in a way that cannot adequately be accounted for.

Most of the time, however, by the time case reaches the attention of police or the courts, there are criminal offenses and/or child abuse/neglect issues that **require** an affirmative response.

For example, mandatory arrest laws; mandatory child abuse reporting; laws and regulations involving adult protective services; policies which are based in "prosecuting without the victim."

**In these cases, it is *absolutely incumbent*** upon criminal justice professionals and the courts to take affirmative measures to reduce the risks *their* actions are creating for the victim.

- C. Intervention may involve
- o Detective contacts/DA's Office "warn-off" letters
  - o "STOP-the-stalker" and other anti-stalking surveillance and apprehension measures
  - o Temporary Orders of Protection

Including orders issues on behalf of non-victim witnesses

- o Arrest and detention - for victim-directed criminal conduct
- o Arrest and detention - for "other" criminal conduct
- o Independent criminal activity; possession or sale of illegal drugs; weapons charges; probation or parole violations
- o Permit revocation/weapons confiscation
- o Bail and other conditions of pre-trial release
- o Criminal convictions
- o Permanent Orders of Protection
- o Jail, Fines and Restitution
- o Including weekend and "part-time" jail sentences
- o Suspended sentences
- o Supervised probation
- o Including intensive supervision and day reporting
- o Electronic monitoring and "house arrest"
- o Psychiatric evaluation and hospitalization/drug and/or alcoholism treatment (As conditions of release/conditions of probation)
- o Batterers' Intervention Programs
- o (As conditions of release/probation/suspended sentence and not as an "alternative" to a criminal resolution of a case.)
- o Deportation