

## PERSONALIZED SAFETY PLAN

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

### **STEP 1 – SAFETY IN A VIOLENT ENVIRONMENT**

I cannot always avoid violent incidents. In order to increase my safety I can, though, use a variety of strategies.

- A. If I decide to leave in an emergency, I will practice how to get out safely. What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells, or fire escapes would I use? I can teach these strategies to my children:

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- B. I can teach my children to call 911.

- C. I can teach my children to flee the house or hide during a violent situation. I must instruct them to never try to break up a violent incident.

- D. I can keep my purse and car keys or copies ready and put them

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- E. I can tell the following people about the violence and request they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my house or see a certain signal initiated, as the porch light on during the day.

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- F. I will use \_\_\_\_\_ as a code word to signal my children or my friends to call for help.

- G. When I expect my husband and I are going to have an argument, I will try to move to a space that is least risky, such as:

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I will try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, kitchen, near weapons, or in rooms without an outside exit. If possible I will run from the house or to a room with an inside door lock. I can buy a rope ladder for the room with the lock and also install a telephone so that I can call 911.

H. During an attack, I can wrap my arms around my head to protect it from blows and curl up to protect my stomach. Generally, I will not verbally defend myself or argue with him during a beating, for he is irrational and might become more violent. If I feel that I can act in self-defense (hit, run, scream for help because it is nearby) to save further injury, I will. After an attack I will see a doctor to assess the injuries. I may be more severely hurt than I realize. I recognize the importance of reporting this assault to the police.

## **STEP 2A - SAFETY WHEN PREPARING TO LEAVE YOUR HUSBAND**

Leaving is a risky time, for your husband might retaliate, so plan carefully how you will depart. Size up the enemy. Of course, don't tell him you are leaving. Leave when he is out, or if that is not possible, tell him you are going on an errand.

A. I can use some or all of the following safety strategies: I will decide with whom I can leave the following items: money, an extra set of car and house keys, clothes for the children and myself. If I don't have a car, I will determine in advance if I can take a bus, train or borrow a car.

B. Places to go if I leave my home: If you choose a private home, phone the owner and ask permission. A shelter may be listed here as an option as well. Call in advance and find out the procedure.

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C. I will decide where I can hide important documents in my house to grab quickly when I flee.

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D. If possible, I will try to take the following items when I leave. Those that I can gather in advance, I will hide.

- This Safety Plan
- My birth certificate
- Children's birth certificates
- Social Security cards
- School and Vaccination records
- Money
- Checkbook, ATM card
- Credit cards
- Keys: house, car, office

- Driver’s license and car registration
- Medications
- Welfare identification
- Work permits
- Passport (s)
- Marriage license
- Divorce papers/Legal Separation papers
- Child custody papers
- All medical records
- Lease/rental agreement
- House deed mortgage-payment book
- Bankbooks
- Insurance papers
- Small saleable objects
- Address Books
- Photographs
- Jewelry
- Children’s toys and/or blankets
- Items of special sentimental value for you and/or the children

E. Telephone numbers I need to know:

- Crisis Hotline: memorize it!  
 NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE  
 (800) 799–SAFE (7233)

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- Police stations, school security force, and work security force

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- Children’s schools and my school (if applicable)

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- My work number and my supervisor’s home number

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- Battered women’s crisis and shelter numbers

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- Pastor and/or Christian counselor

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- County registry where I can register my restraining order. (There may not be such a system available to you. If there is, it is easier for a police officer to arrest your husband should he violate his restraining order.)

- Family telephone numbers

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- Other telephone numbers

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F. I will open a savings account by the following date \_\_\_\_\_ to increase my independence. I will have the statements mailed to a different address (not my own home). I could have them mailed to a friend or relative's home, whom I can trust.

G. 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 whose numbers I have called. To keep my telephone communications confidential, I must either use coins or I might borrow a friend's telephone credit card number for a limited time.

H. I will review this Safety Plan every month to re-evaluate the safest way to leave my residence. Review dates:

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I. Names of advocates or friends who will help me review this plan periodically.

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J. I will rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.

**STEP 2B - I AM NOT READY TO LEAVE YET, BUT...**

I can do the following things to prepare for my future, should I decide to leave:

- A. Return to school and update skills.
- B. Explore sources of supplemental aid.
- C. Find out about free day care, should I need it.
- D. Find out how to apply for welfare, as well as what income and services to expect. Write a projected budget.
- E. Find out how to apply for assisted housing. You can call your local YWCA, Department of Human Services, or Social Services organizations for information about these programs. Other ideas for increasing my independence are:

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**STEP 3 - SAFETY IN MY OWN RESIDENCE & OUTER ENVIRONMENT AFTER LEAVING**

There are many things I can do to increase my safety in my residence. It may be impossible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step by step.

- A. I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible. I can install solid-core doors with deadbolts.
- B. I can install an electronic security system. I can use window bars and poles to wedge against doors. I can buy an alarm device (about \$9.99) to attach to the doorknob. The alarm buzzes loudly if someone breaks in, alerting both me and my neighbors (I'll tell them about it) that someone is in the house. I can get a dog that barks loudly. *It is vital to know if your abuser has broken in. One woman reports that her abuser crawled in through an upstairs window and brandished a knife at her, threatening to cut of her hands. Fortunately she escaped.*
- C. I can purchase rope ladders to escape from second-floor windows.
- D. I can install smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor in my residence. *Your abuser might set your house on fire.*
- E. I can install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person nears my house.
- F. I can trim back bushes and vegetation around my house.
- G. I can ask a couple at church to stay with me if I am particularly frightened.
- H. I will have my children memorize a few telephone numbers to phone collect should my husband abduct them (list numbers):

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I. I will tell the people who take care of my children which people have permission to pick them up. I will stress that my husband is not permitted to do so. The people I will list for pick-up permission are:

- At School

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- At day care

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- At babysitter's

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- At Sunday School

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- At my parents' or other relatives'

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- Others

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J. I can inform the listed contacts, as well as friends and neighbors, that my husband no longer resides with me and they should call the police if he is observed near any of the listed settings or my residence. Should my neighbors not know him, I can provide a photograph. (List friends and neighbors.)

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**STEP 4 – SAFETY WITH A RESTRAINING ORDER**

I realize that many batterers obey restraining orders, but no one can be sure who will and who will not. I realize that I must be particularly careful as violence can escalate when there is a restraining order. I also recognize that I have a fifty-fifty chance of being stalked. I will take the following actions to help the enforcement of my restraining order.

A. I will keep it on or near my person at all times. If I change purses, the order will be transferred first.

B. I will give copies of it to police departments in the communities where I live, work, visit family or friends, and to the county registry of restraining orders (if one exists).

C. For further safety, if I often visit other countries in my state, I can file my restraining order with the court in those counties. I will register my restraining order in the following counties:

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D. If I move to a new state, I will call the district attorney and list my restraining order, for it is valid in any state. I must always have it on my person.

E. I can call the local violence-against-women program if I am not sure about any items concerning my restraining order.

F. I will inform the following people that I have a restraining order in effect (my employer, my minister, my closest friends, relatives):

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G. If my husband destroys my copy of the restraining order, I can get another copy from the courthouse located at:

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H. If my husband violated the restraining order, I can call the police to report the violation, contact my attorney, call my advocate, and/or advise the court of the violation.

I. If the police do not help, I can contact my advocate or attorney and file a complaint with the chief of police.

J. I can also file a private criminal complaint at the district attorney's office or police station in the jurisdiction where the violation occurred. Each item my abuser violated is a crime, and I can charge him with each violation. I can call domestic violence advocacy program to help with this procedure.

**STEP 5 – SAFETY ON THE JOB AND IN PUBLIC**

I must decide whom I will tell that I am separated from my husband, explaining why I am at risk to be injured. (If possible, choose people who will appreciate your need for safety.)

A. I can inform my boss, the security supervisor, and the following people at work of my situation:

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B. I can ask \_\_\_\_\_ to help screen my calls at work.

C. When leaving work, I can take these actions to be sure I get safely into my car:

Have two people walk me to my car.

Wear a bracelet that blares an alarm when the button is pressed.

Carry a container of mace.

D. When driving home, if my husband follows me, I can do the following:

Invest in a cellular phone and call 911.

If able, I can drive to the nearest police or fire station. If not possible, I can try to get to a well-lighted, public area where there is possibly someone who will be able to help.

If all else fails and I am trapped and must pull over, I can lock the doors, lean on the horn, and yell "fire", hoping to attract help.

E. If I use the public transit and my husband appears, I can:

Carry a cellular phone and call 911.

Inform the driver of my problem and ask him to radio for help.

F. I can shop at different grocery stores and shopping malls and go at different hours than I did when I lived with my husband.

G. I can choose a new bank and go at different hours than I did when living with my husband.

H. I will list ways to prevent my husband from abducting the children at school or attacking me there. (You might have to change schools to be safe. If you have moved to a different school

district to escape your husband, inform your children's principal of the risk and ask how his staff can best keep your children's presence secret from your husband. Stress the gravity of your situation. Many times husbands track down their wives through learning where the children go to school.)

I. I will inform my pastor that my husband might show up and harm me or abduct our children. With my pastor's help, I will develop safety measures at church. You might have to change churches, difficult as that may be, because church is one place your husband knows where to find you.

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J. To assure my safety in public (eating out, walking, going to church) I can also:

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### **STEP 6 – SAFEGUARDING MY SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH**

Battering and/or verbal degradation has emotionally exhausted you. The process of building a new life takes courage and incredible energy.

A. If I feel down and ready to return to an abusive situation, I will do the following things to avoid it:

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B. When I have to communicate with my husband in person or by telephone, I will do the following things to lessen emotional turmoil:

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C. I will memorize scriptures that assure me the Lord Jesus Christ is with me. I will meditate on these verses when I am afraid. For example, 2 Samuel 22:49, "He delivers me from my enemies. You also lift me up above those who rise against me; You have delivered me from the violent man." List other scriptures of comfort, hope, and promises of protection from your daily devotional reading.

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D. When others try to control or abuse me, I will tell them that their behavior upsets me. Some things I can say are:

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E. Daily, I will commit \_\_\_\_\_ amount of time to reading my Bible and \_\_\_\_\_ amount of time in inspirational reading to gain spiritual and emotional strength.

F. I will create a daily prayer journal where I will list all my anxieties, concerns, fears, and needs. I will commit to praying \_\_\_\_\_ amount of time on a daily basis for these needs and will record the date and circumstances in which God answered my prayers. This will encourage my faith in Jesus Christ and give me courage to continue to trust in His divine guidance, love, and abiding presence.

G. For spiritual support and practical advice, I can call:

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H. Character traits I can work to develop to make me stronger spiritually and emotionally are:

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I. I can attend workshops and support groups offered at women’s crisis centers or through local churches, and I can strengthen my relationships with Bible-believing Christians through Bible study groups, church fellowship and service opportunities. A list of these groups are:

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Material contained in this document was taken, in part, from the San Diego Family Justice Center’s Domestic Violence Center’s Volunteer training material. Original document did not contain the spiritual and emotional health suggestions listed in Step 6. That information was compiled from a book entitled, “*Broken and Battered*”, written by Muriel Canfield, Howard Publishing Company, 2000.

## SUGGESTED BIBLE READING

The following is a list of scriptures for guidance, hope, correction, encouragement, memorization and meditation:

**Romans 5:1** “Therefore, since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.”

**John 3:16** “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

**John 10:10** “The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give life in all its fullness.”

**Romans 3:23** “For all have sinned; all fall short of God’s glorious standard.”

**Romans 6:23** “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.”

**Proverbs 14:12** “There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death.”

**Isaiah 59:2** “But there is a problem—your sins have cut you off from God. Because of your sin, he has turned away and will not listen anymore.”

**I Timothy 2:5** “For there is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and people. He is the man Christ Jesus.”

**I Peter 3:18** “Christ also suffered when he died for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners that he might bring us safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit.”

**Romans 5:8** “But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.”

**Revelation 3:20** “Look! Here I stand at the door and knock. If you hear me calling and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal as friends.”

**John 1:12** “But to all who believed him [Jesus] and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.”

**Romans 10:9** “For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

**Romans 10:13** “For ‘Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’”

**Ephesians 4:21-23** “Since you have heard all about him and have learned the truth that is in Jesus, throw off your old evil nature and your former way of life, which is rotten through and through, full of lust and deception. Instead, there must be a spiritual renewal of your thoughts and attitudes.”

**1 John 5:12-13** “So whoever has God’s Son has life; whoever does not have his Son does not have life. I write this to you who believe in the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life.”

**2 Corinthians 5:17** “What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!”

**2 Chronicles 16:9** “For the eyes of the LORD search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him...”

**Ephesians 3:20** “Now glory be to God! By his mighty power at work within us, he is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope.”

**Hosea 2:23** “...I will show love to those I called, ‘Not loved,’ And to those I called, ‘Not my people’, I will say, ‘Now you are my people.’ Then they will reply, ‘You are our God!’”

**Psalms 1, 23, 34, 37 & 91** –The whole chapter of these psalms.

**Psalms 73:25-28** “Whom have I in heaven but you? I desire you more than anything on earth. My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak, but God remains the strength of my heart; he is mine forever. But those who desert him will perish, for you destroy those who abandon you. But as for me, how good it is to be near God! I have made the Sovereign LORD my shelter, and I will tell everyone about the wonderful things you do.”

**Proverbs 27:12** “Do not deliver me to the will of my adversaries; For false witnesses have risen against me, and such as breathe out violence.”

**Proverbs 22:24-25** “Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul.”

**Proverbs 22:3** “A prudent person foresees the danger ahead and takes precautions; the simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences.”

**Proverbs 26:24-26** “People with hate in their hearts may sound pleasant enough, but don’t believe them. Though they pretend to be kind, their hearts are full of all kinds of evil. While their hatred may be concealed by trickery, it will finally come to light for all to see.”

**Proverbs 28:5** “Evil people don’t understand justice, but those who follow the LORD understand completely.”

**Ecclesiastes 3:1-8** “There is a time for everything, a season for every activity under heaven. A time to be born and a time to die. A time to plant and a time to harvest. A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to tear down and a time to rebuild. A time to cry and a time to laugh. A time to grieve and a time to dance. A time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones. A time to embrace and a time to turn away. A time to search and a time to lose. A time to keep and a time to throw away. A time to tear and a time to mend. A time to be quiet and a time to speak up. A time to love and a time to hate. A time for war and a time for peace.”

**Proverbs 19:19** “Short-tempered people must pay their own penalty. If you rescue them once, you will have to do it again.”

**Proverbs 27:6** “Wounds from a friend are better than many kisses from an enemy.”

**Proverbs 29:25** “Fearing people is a dangerous trap, but to trust the LORD means safety.”

**Jeremiah 29:11-13** “For I know the plans I have for you’, says the LORD. ‘They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me in earnest, you will find me when you seek me.’”

**John 14:27** “I am leaving you with a gift – peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn’t like the peace the world gives. So don’t be troubled or afraid.”

**John 16:33** “I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me [Jesus]. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”

**Psalms 118:5-9** “In my distress I prayed to the LORD and the LORD answered me and rescued me. The LORD is for me, so I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? Yes, the LORD is for me; he will help me. I will look in triumph at those who hate me. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in people. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.”

**Psalms 118:17-18** “I will not die, but I will live to tell what the LORD has done. The LORD has punished me severely, but has not handed me over to death.”

**Psalms 17:6-8** “I am praying to you because I know you will answer, O God. Bend down and listen as I pray. Show me your unfailing love in wonderful ways. You save with your strength those who seek refuge from their enemies. Guard me as the apple of your eye. Hide me in the shadow of your wings.”

**Psalms 17:9-13** “Protect me from wicked people who attack me, from murderous enemies who surround me. They are without pity. Listen to their boasting. They track me down, surround me, and throw me to the ground. They are like hungry lions, eager to tear me apart – like young lions in hiding, waiting for their change. Arise, O LORD! Stand against them and bring them to their knees! Rescue me from the wicked with your sword!”

**Ephesians 6:10-12** “A final word: Be strong with the Lord’s mighty power. Put on all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies and tricks of the Devil. For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world, and against wicked spirits in heavenly realms. Use every piece of God’s armor to resist the enemy in the time of evil, so that after the battle you will still be standing firm.”

**2 Thessalonians 3:3** “But the Lord is faithful; he will make you strong and guard you from the evil one.”

**James 5:16** “Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and wonderful results.”

**Proverbs 21:5** “Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty.”

**Psalms 34:8-10** “Taste and see that the LORD is good. Oh, the joys of those who trust in him! Let the LORD’s people show him reverence, for those who honor him will have all they need. Even strong young lions sometimes go hungry, but those who trust in the LORD will never lack any good thing.”

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### *Romans 8:31-39*

*“What can we say about such wonderful things as these? IF God is for us, who can ever be against us? Since God did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won’t God, who gave us Christ, also give us everything else? Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? Will God? No! He is the one who has given us right standing with himself. Who then will condemn us? Will Christ Jesus? No, for he is the one who died for us and was raised to life for us and is sitting at the place of highest honor next to God, pleading for us.”*

*“Can anything ever separate us from Christ’s love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or are hungry or cold or in danger or threatened with death? (Even the Scriptures say, ‘For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.’*

*“No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. For I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love. Death can’t and life can’t. The angels can’t, and the demons can’t. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, and even the powers of hell can’t keep God’s love away. Whether we are high above the sky or in the deepest ocean, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

*Distributed by House of Compassion Ministries*

For more information on domestic violence, visit our website at [www.houseofcompassion.org](http://www.houseofcompassion.org)

Above scriptural references are from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation (NLT), Tyndale Charitable Trust, Tyndale House Publishers and copied from the online Blue Letter Bible, [www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org).