

Cameron County Family Violence Task Force Personal Safety Plan

DURING AN EXPLOSIVE INCIDENT

- If there is an argument, try to be in a place that has an exit and not in a bathroom, kitchen, or room that may contain weapons.
- Practice getting out of your home safely. Identify which doors, windows, elevator, or stairwell to use.
- Identify one or more neighbors you can tell about the violence and ask them to call the police if they hear a disturbance coming from your home.
- Devise a code to use with your children, family, friends, and neighbors when you need the police.
- Decide and plan where you will go if you ever have to leave home.
- Use your instincts and judgement (your 'gut' feeling). In a dangerous situation, placate the abuser if possible, to keep him or her calm.

Remember: You do not deserve to be hit or threatened

WHEN PREPARING TO LEAVE

- Open a checking account or savings account in your own name.
- Leave money, an extra set of keys, copies of important documents, and extra clothes and medicines in a safe place or with someone you trust **IF IT IS SAFE FOR YOU TO DO SO**. Do not do this if you think your batterer might find out and retaliate against you.
- Get your own post office box.
- Find a safe place where you and your children can go or a person who can lend you money.
- Always keep the shelter phone number and some change or a calling card on you for emergency phone calls.
- If you have pets, make arrangements for them to be cared for in a safe place. The Women's Shelter may be able to help with these arrangements.

Remember: Leaving your batterer is the most dangerous time

WITH A PROTECTIVE ORDER

- If you or your children have been threatened or assaulted, you can request a protective order from the District Attorney's Office Crime Victims Unit in Brownville 574-8153 or 574-8154, in Harlingen 427-8048
- Always keep your protective order with you.
- Call the police if your partner violates the protective order.
- Inform family members, friends, and neighbors that you have a protective order in effect.
- Think of alternative ways to keep safe if the police do not respond immediately.

IN YOUR OWN RESIDENCE

- If you stay in your home, lock your windows and change locks on your doors.
- Develop a safety plan with your children for when you are not with them.
- Inform your child's school, day care, etc., about who has permission to pick up your child.
- Inform your neighbors and the landlord that your partner no longer lives with you, and that they should call the police if they see him/her near your home.
- Never call the abuser from your home; he/she may find out where you live. Never tell the abuser where you live.
- Request an unlisted/unpublished number from the telephone company.

ON THE JOB AND IN PUBLIC

- Decide who at work you will inform of your situation. Include the office building security (if possible, provide them with a picture of your batterer).
- When at work, if possible, have someone screen your telephone calls.
- Have someone escort you to and from your car, bus, or train.
- If at all possible, use a variety of routes to come and go from home.

WHAT YOU NEED TO TAKE, if it is safe to do so. Remember, all of these items can be replaced. You cannot.

IDENTIFICATION

Driver's license
Birth certificate
Children's birth certificates
Social security cards

FINANCIAL

Money and/or credit cards (in your name)
Remember, though, that credit cards may be 'traced'
Checking and/or savings account books

LEGAL PAPERS

Protective order
Marriage license
Lease, rental agreement, house deed
Car registration and insurance papers
Health and life insurance papers
Medical records for you and your children
School records
Work permits/Green Card/Visa
Passport
Divorce and custody papers

OTHER

Medications
House and car keys
Valuable jewelry
Address book
Pictures and sentimental items
Change of clothes for you and your children

If you need assistance with developing a safety plan, contact the Crime Victims Unit or The Women's Shelter