

Disclaimer

This guide/checklist is intended for information purposes only and should not be substituted for legal and/or other professional advice or help. It was created in collaboration with victims and survivors of intimate partner abuse. This information may not apply to your particular circumstance or situation and should not be substituted for individual judgment. The information contained herein does not necessarily reflect the views and/or opinions of those who distribute it.

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If you are in immediate danger or are in need of emergency assistance, please call 911.

“Beyond Survival is Living... Without Fear!”



15 Steps to Prepare to Leave an Abusive Intimate Relationship

- 1) Stay calm. Although it may seem impossible try your best to collect your thoughts and remain logical and level headed. There is assistance available to you. You are NOT alone
- 2) If you are in real danger call 911 immediately. If the incident is over (and you are unharmed physically) report immediately to your local precinct and inquire about an Order of Protection
- 3) File as many DIRs (Domestic Incident Reports) as possible
- 4) Open a case with a professional Domestic Violence organization in your area, such as the Seaman's Society, Sanctuary For Families, Safe Horizon, Project Hospitality, etc
- 5) **Seek legal advice as soon as you can**, there is always a community based pro-bono attorney available in your area, if you can not afford one
- 6) Join a support group or discussion forum (such as Fearless Females Inc.) Check online, or inquire at hospitals, mental health facilities, colleges universities, 311, trauma specialists, and/or some family doctors

- 7) Visit a therapist, specifically a trauma specialist who can treat forms of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)
- 8) Keep any evidence such as hospital reports naming partner as the culprit, pictures of injuries and marks, threatening emails, texts, and/or voicemails. Also, keep a journal with dates and specific injuries and feelings
- 9) Get a P.O. Box
- 10) Keep an emergency duffle bag with money, clothes for yourself and all children, prescription medicines (at least a weeks' worth), women's sanitary products, snacks for children, trial size toiletries
- 11) Try to open a **small** secret bank account. If you do not have credit in your own name, try to establish it. Have the statements sent to your P.O. Box
- 12) Tell someone you can trust (**be extremely selective**). This person can possibly hold onto your emergency bag, provide you with a safe place, and/or be a witness to your abuse. Try to keep this person and their address a secret and NEVER disclose their information to your abuser. A complete stranger (to your partner) would be the best pick
- 13) Apply for Food Stamps if necessary. You can apply if your partner denies you food (which is a form of abuse), or if you are financially eligible. This is all confidential! Professional DV advocacy organizations can help you with this, and provide you with a list of food pantries in your area
- 14) Get copies of your important documents, including your children's, i.e. Social Security cards, Birth Certificates, Passport, bank and financial records etc. Keep them in your safe place
- 15) Once you have left and have established safety, seek counseling with a trauma therapist who will provide desensitization and reprocessing to help rebuild your life. This will aid in insight, assist in formulating a new direction, change negative beliefs about yourself, and prepare for new constructive healthy relationships

More Tips

- Always clear your Web Browser.
- Delete all Calls, Texts, or hide any Contacts of agencies/friends that are helping you. One option is to store agencies under fictitious names Always think of your safety first.
- **POLICE** - Always ask for a Domestic Violence Officer (DVO) when you walk into a precinct and are filing a Domestic Incident Report (DIR) Unfortunately, they are not always available. And again, the officers in the Precinct are not always trained to be "understanding/patient" to DV victims. Do not lose hope or give up. Stay calm, and ask for a detective instead.
- Caseworkers are wonderful resources! Try to not be embarrassed of your situation, they deal with cases like yours on a daily basis, and are trained specifically in this area. They can help you with counseling, housing food, emergency funds, and grants, even free cell phones.
- Don't be afraid to use 911. If you feel you are in any real danger call immediately, and be sure to let them know who it is pursuing you and if you are still in a compromising situation.
- If you are in court and are afraid to leave the courthouse and go to your car you CAN ask to be escorted.
- Never blame another victim! ONLY the abuser is to blame or shame.
- Try to stay in public places as much as possible, and bring friends and family along on daily activities (especially after you have taken any legal action). When you are completely alone you are the most vulnerable.
- Remember, MEN can be/are victims too; abusers don't discriminate against gender or sexual orientation. Keep an open mind, and offer companionship to others who are in need.
- Stay positive – when this is all over you will be able to LIVE life again!