



**RECOGNIZING & RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL ABUSE IN LATER LIFE (PART 1)**

NAPSA Conference August 29, 2017

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### OVW Abuse in Later Life Program

- Direct training for criminal justice professionals
- Cross-training for professionals working with older individuals
- Support a community coordinated response to elder abuse
- Support new and/or enhanced services to victims of abuse 50+



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### Elder Abuse Defined



“Elder abuse includes physical, sexual or psychological abuse, as well as neglect, abandonment, and financial exploitation of an older person by another person or entity, that occurs in any setting, either in a relationship where there is an expectation of trust and/or when an older person is targeted based on age or disability.”

U.S. Department of Justice, 2011-6

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Abuse in Later Life Defined

Abuse in Later Life is the nexus between domestic abuse, sexual abuse, and elder abuse.



National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL) (2014).

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Why Do Definitions Matter?

- Increase awareness on how abuse affects potential victims seeking help
- Better understanding of roles and responsibilities of all collaborative partners
- Improve communication with collaborative partners by understanding each other's language

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About 2/3 of elder abuse victims are women.

Division of Geriatric Psychiatry, Mt. Sinai Medical Center of Great Lakes, © New York State Department of Health, 2010



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Studies have consistently shown that the majority of elder abuse cases involve female victims with spouses as perpetrators.

Lee et al., 2003



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### IPV Relationships

Spouse, partners, gay and lesbian relationships

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- Long-term relationships
- New relationships
- Late onset abuse

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### Other Relationships

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- Adult children/grandchildren
- Caregivers
- Trusted others

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### Abuse in Later Life Power and Control Wheel



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Wheel adapted with permission from Domestic Abuse Intervention Project P & C Wheel, Duluth, MN. (2006)

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### Video: Lois & Sam

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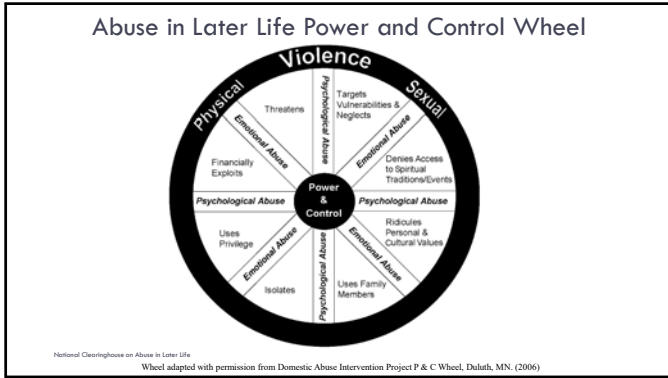
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### Sexual Abuse in Later Life

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- Any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of an older adult
- Victim is 50 years of age or older

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### Sexual Abuse in Later Life

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Statistics around sexual abuse later in life are thought to be serious underestimates, and reliable data is not yet available.

Turner & Roberts, (2004)

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### Sexual Abuse Perpetrators

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In the community, older victims of sexual abuse were violated most often by spouses/partners.

Adeiro, et al., (2010).

In facilities, employees responsible for care (43%) or other residents (41%) were most likely offenders.

Ramsay-Kawork, et al., (2008).

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### Sexual Abuse in a Family

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- Sexual abuse by a spouse or partner
- Incest such as abuse by an adult child or grandchild



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### Video: Miss Mary

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### Unique Issues

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- Incestuous sexual abuse may add to shame & self-blame for victims
- May feel need to protect perpetrator if it is an adult child or grandchild
- System may be less responsive to older victim making a report

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### Video: AI

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### Unique Issues

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- Male victims may not be believed or may have additional shame
- Victims who have dementia may not be believed or seen as credible witnesses
- Challenges of making a report in a facility setting
- Power imbalances may make it difficult for victims to report or seek help
- Fear of retaliation

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### Working with Older Survivors

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- Respect cultural and generational differences
- Clearly understand impact of trauma
- Recognize and respect relationship with offender
- Plan for victim safety
- Collaborate

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### Contact Information

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### RECOGNIZING & RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL ABUSE IN LATER LIFE (PART 2)

NAPSA Conference

August 29, 2017

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Working with Older Survivors

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- Respect cultural and generational differences
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Know Your Elders...

WWII/Great Depression Generation → Baby Boomer Generation



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## Trauma

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- Acute trauma such as experienced in a car accident or death of a loved one
- Complex trauma such as experienced by repeated acts of abuse and violence
- Historical trauma refers to the cumulative emotional and psychological wounding of a group of people often based on race, creed, and ethnicity

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## Trauma Aware

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## Effects of Trauma

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- Wide range of effects during and after an assault
- May cause memory issues
- May trigger a trauma response from earlier event
- Some survivors will show no effects from experiencing trauma

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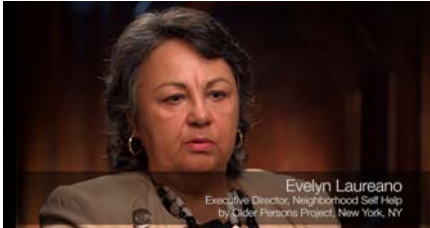
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## Historical Trauma

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## Effects of Historical Trauma

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- Lack of trust in services
- Hesitant to give information about personal life
- Passive compliance
- Misperceptions or fears

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SAFETY PLANNING WITH ABUSE IN  
LATER LIFE SURVIVORS

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**What is Safety Planning?**

- Process where helper and victim jointly create a plan to enhance safety
- Victim centered and driven (based on victim's goals and not professionals' opinions)
- Information and options provided
- Challenges discussed
- Revisited frequently

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**Safety Planning Steps**

- Build rapport and listen to the victim
- Learn what the victim fears
- Ask what the victim wants to do and why
- Identify available options
- Think creatively together about a variety of options and ideas
- Build a safety plan that is victim centered

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### A Victim Centered Plan

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- Where will the Survivor live
- Money
- Health
- Who Else is Affected by the Abuse?
- Legal

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### Safety Planning

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- Prevention strategies
- Protection strategies
- Notification strategies
- Referral/Services
- Emotional Support

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### 39 Collaboration

“...two or more people working together to achieve the same thing”

– Cambridge Dictionaries Online



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### Informal Methods of Collaboration

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- Joint interviews
- Warm referrals & follow-up
- Sharing knowledge and resource information between agencies
- Working on a project, fundraiser, or public awareness campaign together

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### Formal Methods of Collaboration

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- Multi-disciplinary case review teams (MDT)
- Community Coordinated Response: often focused on Systems Change (CCR)
- Topic specific Teams
  - Fatality review teams
  - Financial Abuse Specialize Teams (FAST)

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### Benefits of Collaboration

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- Victim safety & comfort
- More resources for victims
- Better understanding of agencies roles and services
- New ideas about how to approach a case
- Shared ownership and responsibility for case outcomes
- Less "finger pointing"

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### Challenges in Collaboration

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- Mandatory reporting
- Understanding of confidentiality
- Wanting advocate to speak for victim
- Turf wars

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### Consider

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- Cross training
- Victim safety planning with victim and possibly family members
- Long term support
- Support groups for older victims
- Visitation centers

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### Importance of Dual Response

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#### Well Elderly

- DV Programs address victims safety and advocacy
- Aging Network and Elder Abuse addresses elder care needs

#### Vulnerable Elderly

- DV/SA Programs can provide information and support to caring family members
- Aging Network and Elder Abuse Services can focus on complex needs and services for victim

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### Summary

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- Many of elder abuse cases involve domestic violence
- Many older adults will have experienced some form of trauma
- Safety planning crucial whether victims stay with offender or leave
- Work collaboratively

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### Handouts

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- Definitions of EA
- ALL & EA Resources
- P & C Wheel
- Safety Plan

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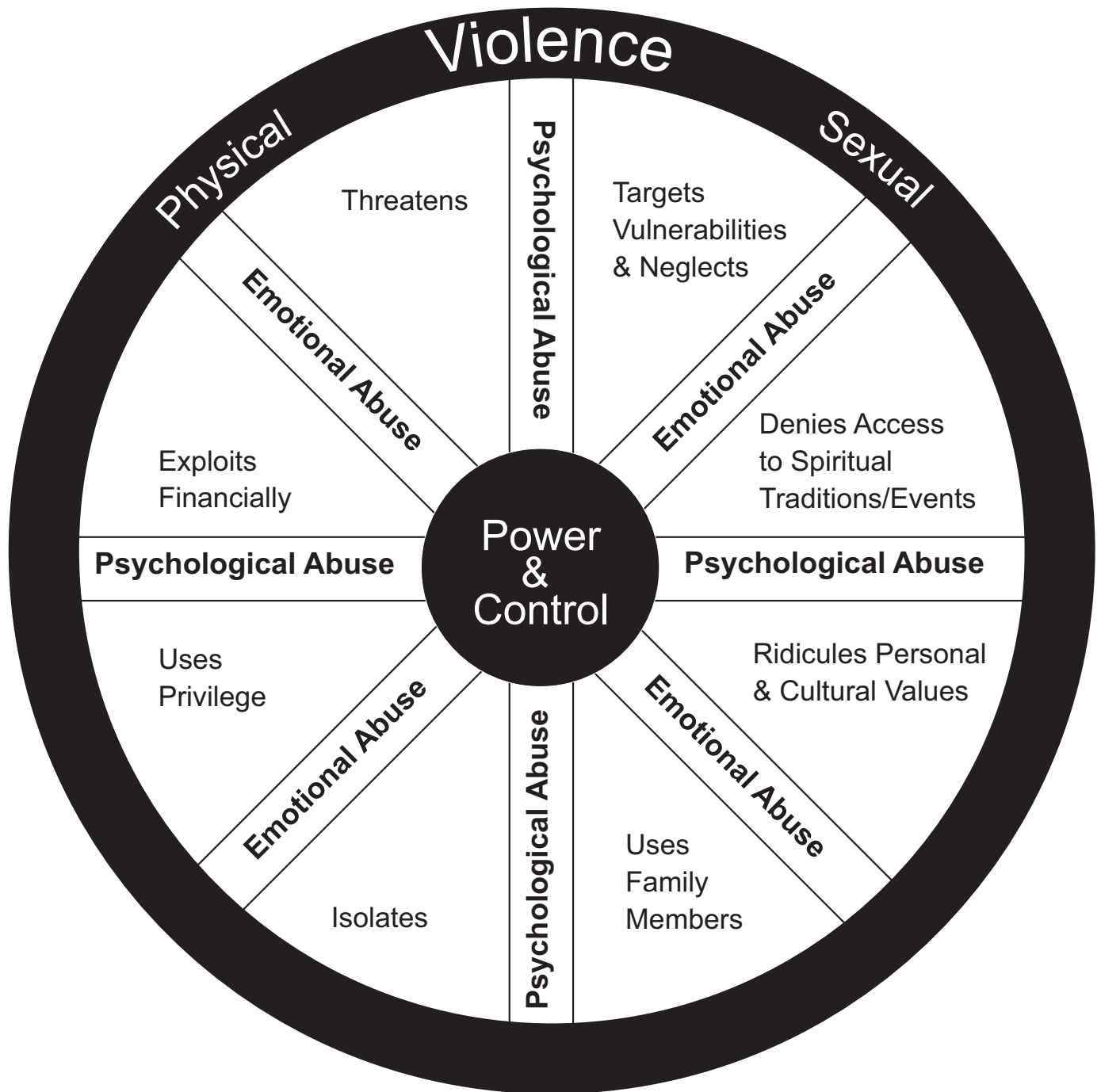
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# Abuse in Later Life Power & Control Wheel



In 2006, NCALL adapted the Power and Control Wheel, developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth, MN. Resource updated, April 2011.

## **Tactics Used by Abusers**

During 2005, NCALL staff asked facilitators of older abused women's support groups to have participants review the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project's Power and Control Wheel. Over 50 survivors from eight states responded. NCALL created this Abuse in Later Life Wheel from their input.

In addition to the tactics on the wheel, many offenders justify or minimize the abuse and deny that they are abusive. Perpetrators of abuse in later life may make comments like "she's just too difficult to care for" or "he abused me as a child" to blame the victim, or try to minimize the abuse by stating the victim bruises easily or injuries are the incidental result of providing care. The list below provides additional examples of some of the behaviors victims might experience under each tactic included on the wheel.

### **Physical Abuse**

- Hits, chokes, burns, pinches, throws things, restrains

### **Sexual Abuse**

- Sexually harms during care giving
- Forces sex acts
- Forces elder to watch pornography

### **Psychological Abuse**

- Engages in crazy-making behavior
- Publicly humiliates

### **Emotional Abuse**

- Yells, insults, calls names
- Degrades, blames

### **Targets Vulnerabilities & Neglects**

- Takes or denies access to items needed for daily living
- Refuses transportation
- Denies food, heat, care, or medication
- Does not follow medical recommendations
- Refuses to dress or dresses inappropriately

### **Denies Access to Spiritual & Traditional Events**

- Refuses transportation or access
- Destroys spiritual or traditional items of importance

### **Ridicules Personal & Cultural Values**

- Disrespectful of cultural practices
- Ignores values when making decisions

### **Uses Family Members**

- Misleads family members regarding condition of elder
- Excludes or denies access to family

### **Isolates**

- Controls what elder does, who they see and what they do
- Denies access to phone or mail

### **Uses Privilege**

- Speaks for elder at financial and medical appointments
- Makes all major decisions

### **Exploits Financially**

- Steals money, titles, or possessions
- Abuses a power of attorney or guardianship

### **Threatens**

- Threatens to leave or commit suicide
- Threatens to institutionalize
- Abuses or kills pet or prized livestock
- Displays or threatens with weapons



## Resources on Elder Abuse, Abuse in Later Life & Aging

### Elder Abuse Websites

- [Elder Care Locator](#) (find services in your area)
- [Elder Justice Initiative](#), U.S. Department of Justice
- [Elder Justice Coalition](#)
- [Enhanced Training and Services to End Abuse in Later Life Grant Program](#), U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women
- [Long Term Care Ombudsman](#)
- [National Center on Elder Abuse](#)
- [National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life](#) (NCALL)
- [National Adult Protective Services Association](#) (NAPSA)

### Culturally Specific Websites with Elder Abuse Information

- [National Indian Council on Aging](#)
- [National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative](#) (NIEJI)
- [Red Wind Consulting, Inc.](#)
- [National Hispanic Council on Aging](#)

### NCALL ([www.ncall.us](http://www.ncall.us)) Resources

- [Advocates Toolkit](#)
- [Abuse in Later Life & Elder Abuse – Resources and Publications](#)
- [Collaboration & Community Coordinated Response](#)
- [NCALL National Resource Directory](#)

### Packets, Toolkits, and Special Collections

- [National Resource Center on LGBT Aging](#) has several booklets available on providing inclusive services to the aging LGBT population.
- [Preventing and Responding to Domestic & Sexual Violence in Later Life](#)” National Online Resource Center on Violence Against Women Special Collection.

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National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL)

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Phone: 608-255-0539 • Fax/TTY: 608-255-3560 • [www.ncall.us](http://www.ncall.us) • [www.endabusewi.org](http://www.endabusewi.org)

- [\*Rural Domestic and Sexual Abuse Program Advocates: Making a Difference in the Lives of Older Survivors of Abuse.\*](#)
- [\*Sexual Violence in Later Life Research Brief.\*](#) National Sexual Violence Resource Center.
- [\*Where Faith and Safety Meet: Faith Communities Respond to Elder Abuse\*](#) Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence.

### **Selected Videos**

- [\*An Age for Justice\*](#) (2009). Produced by the National Council on Aging and WITNESS. For information on downloading the video, visit the [National Council on Aging](#) website.
- [\*A Mother Never Gives Up Hope: Older Mothers and Abusive Adult Sons\*](#) (2009). Produced by NCALL and Terra Nova Films. To review and order visit [Terra Nova Films](#) website.
- [\*In Their Own Words: Domestic Abuse in Later Life\*](#) (2010). Produced by NCALL, Terra Nova Films and Office of Victims of Crime. To review and order visit the [Office of Victims of Crime](#) website.
- [\*Responding to Elder Abuse: What Community Corrections Should Know\*](#) (2010); [\*Responding to Elder Abuse: What Judges and Court Personnel Should Know\*](#) (2010) and [\*Responding to Elder Abuse: What Law Enforcement Should Know\*](#) (2010). To review and order visit the [Office of Victims of Crime](#) website.

### **Prevalence and Incidence Studies**

- [\*Prevalence and Correlates of Emotional, Physical, Sexual and Financial Abuse and Potential Neglect in the United States: The National Elder Mistreatment Study\*](#) (2009)
- [\*Under the Radar, New York State Elder Abuse Prevalence Study Self-Reported Prevalence and Documented Case Surveys\*](#) (2011)
- [\*The New York State Cost of Financial Abuse Study\*](#) (2016)



## **National Definitions of Elder Abuse**

### **National Organizations**

#### **Administration for Community Living (ACL), 2016**

[https://aoa.acl.gov/AoA\\_Programs/Elder\\_Rights/EA\\_Prevention/whatIsEA.aspx](https://aoa.acl.gov/AoA_Programs/Elder_Rights/EA_Prevention/whatIsEA.aspx)

“...elder abuse is a term referring to any knowing, intentional, or negligent act by a caregiver or any other person that causes harm or a serious risk of harm to a vulnerable adult. Legislatures in all 50 states have passed some form of elder abuse prevention laws. Laws and definitions of terms vary considerably from one state to another, but broadly defined, abuse may be” physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation, emotional abuse, abandonment, and/or self-neglect.

#### **Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 2016**

<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/elderabuse/definitions.html>

“Elder abuse is an intentional act, or failure to act, by a caregiver or another person in a relationship involving an expectation of trust that causes or creates a risk of harm to an older adult. (An older adult is defined as someone age 60 or older.)” Forms of elder abuse include physical abuse, sexual abuse or abusive sexual contact, emotional or psychological abuse, neglect, and financial abuse or exploitation.

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#### **National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL)**

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Phone: 608-255-0539 • Fax/TTY: 608-255-3560 • [www.ncall.us](http://www.ncall.us) • [www.endabusewi.org](http://www.endabusewi.org)

## **Elder Justice Roadmap, 2014**

<https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/file/829266/download>

“Elder abuse includes physical, sexual or psychological abuse, as well as neglect, abandonment, and financial exploitation of an older person by another person or entity, that occurs in any setting (e.g., home, community, or facility), either in a relationship where there is an expectation of trust and/or when an older person is targeted based on age or disability.”

## **National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA)**

<https://ncea.acl.gov/faq/index.html#faq1>

Federal definitions of elder abuse first appeared in the 1987 Amendments to the Older Americans Act, however, these definitions are guidelines. Each state defines elder abuse according to its unique statutes and regulations, and definitions vary from state to state. Researchers also use varying definitions to describe and study the problem.

Domestic elder abuse generally refers to any of the following types of mistreatment that are committed by someone with whom the elder has a special relationship (for example, a spouse, sibling, child, friend, or caregiver). Institutional abuse generally refers to any of the following types of mistreatment occurring in residential facilities (such as a nursing home, assisted living facility, group home, board and care facility, foster home, etc.) and is usually perpetrated by someone with a legal or contractual obligation to provide some element of care or protection.

Elder abuse can affect people of all ethnic backgrounds and social status and can affect both men and women. The following types of abuse are commonly accepted as the major categories of elder mistreatment: Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Exploitation, Neglect and Abandonment

### **National Research Council, 2003**

<https://doi.org/10.17226/10406>

“Elder Mistreatment is defined .... (a) intentional actions that cause harm or create a serious risk of harm (whether or not harm is intended) to a vulnerable elder by a caregiver or other person who stands in a trust relationship to the elder or (b) failure y a caregiver to satisfy the elder’s basic needs or to protect the elder from harm. “Mistreatment” conveys two ideas: that some injury, deprivation, or dangerous condition has occurred to the elder person and that someone else bears responsibility for causing the condition or failing to prevent it.” National Research Council. 2003. Elder Mistreatment: Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation in an Aging America. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

### **World Health Organization (WHO), 2002**

[http://www.who.int/ageing/projects/elder\\_abuse/en/](http://www.who.int/ageing/projects/elder_abuse/en/)

Elder abuse can be defined as "a single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person". Elder abuse can take various forms such as physical, psychological or emotional, sexual and financial abuse. It can also be the result of intentional or unintentional neglect.

## **Laws and Statutes**

### **Elder Justice Act, 2010**

42 U.S. Code § 1397j

The term abuse means the knowing infliction of physical or psychological harm or the knowing deprivation of goods or services that are necessary to meet essential needs or to avoid physical or psychological harm. The term “elder” means an individual age 60 or older.

### **Older Americans Act, 2016**

Public Law 89–73 As Amended Through P.L. 114–144, Enacted April 19, 2016

The term “abuse” means the knowing infliction of physical or psychological harm or the knowing deprivation of goods or services that are necessary to meet essential needs or to avoid physical or psychological harm. The term “elder abuse” means abuse of an older individual. The term “older individual” means an individual who is 60 years of age or older.

### **Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), 2014**

42 U.S. Code § 13925(a)(11)

The term “elder abuse” means any action against a person who is 50 years of age or older that constitutes the willful— (A) infliction of injury, unreasonable confinement, intimidation, or cruel punishment with resulting physical harm, pain, or mental anguish; or (B) deprivation by a person, including a caregiver, of goods or services with intent to cause physical harm, mental anguish, or mental illness.

\*\*For local definitions, check your state or tribal elder abuse and/or vulnerable adult statutes.



# SAFETY PLANNING

## Basics and Philosophy

Safety planning is a process where a helper and a survivor jointly create a plan to enhance safety. The safety plan is survivor driven and centered. It is based on the victim's life and goals, not the professional's opinions.

Abusers often isolate survivors and do not allow them to make their own decisions. Safety planning is a process that restores power and control to survivors over their lives as they make decisions about how to enhance their safety. A good safety planning process provides the survivor with information and an array of options. Some safety planning ideas will be routine choices that a helper may offer to most survivors they work with, however, many options will be unique with each individual.

Safety planning is a fluid, continuous, ever-changing process and will need to be revisited frequently. Barriers may emerge as the survivor tries to follow-through on the original plan. Follow-up contact with the survivor, specifically to discuss her safety plan and life changes, can be very beneficial to identify those barriers and provide support.

Safety plans include:

- **PREVENTION STRATEGIES:** Preventing future incidents of abuse (e.g., going to shelter or moving to another residence, securing windows and doors, obtaining a restraining/protective order, hiding/disarming weapons, changing schedules and routes to avoid being found). Name changes or change in social security number to prevent abuser from tracking down survivor. Making documents confidential (i.e. bills, utilities, car registration, taxes, bank accounts) This can be done by either using an alias, using a PO Box or an alternative address, setting up passwords that would enable only the survivor to access bills or documents and/or requesting that taxes and court records be placed in a confidential file. Survivors may want to notify local police about their abuser, that way if something happens police already have description, level of danger and history.
- **PROTECTION STRATEGIES:** Discussing methods survivors can use to protect themselves during an abusive or violent incident. This could include having an escape route, or having survivor seek shelter in a room where a door

can be locked, with a working phone available or where weapons are not present. Survivor may want to have a key hidden to assure access to the car to escape threat of or actual violent incident, including clothes and documents packed for a quick get away. Some survivors may find self-protection classes useful.

- **NOTIFICATION STRATEGIES:** Developing methods for seeking help in a crisis situation (e.g., cell phones, emergency numbers readily available, life lines, security systems, towel in the window, code words with friends/family/neighbors).
- **REFERRAL/SERVICES:** Recognizing and utilizing services that can offer assistance (e.g., domestic violence, sexual assault, adult protective services, criminal justice, aging and disability network, faith and community organizations, etc.).
- **EMOTIONAL SUPPORT:** Considering methods of emotional support and ways to become less isolated (e.g., music, exercise, yoga, reading positive or spiritual materials, hobbies, art, friends, support groups, and other community activities).

Recognize that the survivor may want to continue to have contact with the abuser, or may be in the process of leaving or returning to the abuser, or may have left and ended the relationship. In each of these situations, the five components of safety planning listed above are crucial.

### **Safety Planning For Survivors**

Transitional living providers will work with a variety of situations with the survivors who enter their programs. One of the most dangerous times in a survivor's life is when she leaves her abuser and begins the process of creating a new life. Other possibilities, for the program could include working with a woman who has decided to return to an abuser or a woman who finds herself in a new relationship that turns abusive. In any case, providing information about how to plan for safety or how to leave in a crisis can be crucial. The following issues are some of the topics to discuss.

#### **Where Will The Survivor Live?**

- Can the person remain in her home safely?
- Is there an emergency shelter in the community?

- Are friends or family an option?
- What about church groups or other organizations?
- Where does the person want to live after the immediate crisis?

### **Money**

- Can the person get money for the short term?
- Does the survivor have access to money, ATM cards or bank accounts?
- Are there programs to help persons in their situation – such as TANF, job placement, Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare, SSI etc.?

### **Health**

- What health related items (e.g., medications, glasses, walker, hearing aids etc.) will the survivor need to live without the abuser?
- Who is the victim’s primary health care provider? Have the survivor consider talking with a health care provider about the abuse to get help with health issues and possible documentation. In most states, health care providers are mandatory reporters, so discuss with the survivor if they are comfortable with reporting.
- Is respite care available through social services?

### **Who Else Is Affected By The Abuse?**

- Who can help with children, grandchildren or other persons living with the survivor?
- Can a friend or family member care for pets or livestock if the person can’t take them along? (If no, contact your local domestic violence programs. There may be a “safe haven for pets” program in your community.)

### **Legal**

- Has the abuser been arrested? If yes, what support does the survivor need?
- Does the survivor want a protective or restraining order? You can contact your local domestic abuse program or APS for help with restraining/protective orders.
- Are there immigration issues? You can contact a local domestic abuse program or the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services for more information.
- Does survivor have any past or current legal issues? Often times the illegal activity is actually the fault of the abuser or may have been forced on survivor and is often used to control survivor into staying or returning with the abuser.
- Are there custody or visitation issues? Grandparent rights issues? Are there any current custody arrangements? If so, make sure survivor was not forced to sign legal papers and that survivor is okay with current arrangements. Consider safety

- of survivor and children when planning visitation or custody arrangements.
- Drug or alcohol problems can be a legal issue in terms of future custody issues.

## **Evaluating Risks: Batterer Generated and Life Generated**

When working with survivors of abuse on safety planning, consider both batterer generated risks and life generated. Both these forms of risk will impact the choices survivors will feel are available to them. Batterer generated risks are the tactics abusers use to control their survivors. “The majority of batterer-generated risks that battered women identify as part of their risk analysis can be broken down into seven broad categories: 1) physical injury, 2) psychological harm, 3) risks to and involving children, 4) financial risks, 5) risk to or about family and friends, 6) loss of relationship, and 7) risks involving arrest or legal status.” Life-generated risks are aspects of a women’s life that she has little control over. “These can include financial, home location, physical and mental health, inadequate responses by major social institutions, and discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or other bias.” For more information about evaluating risks and how to create safety plans based on this type of risk assessment, see “Safety Planning with Battered Women: Complex Lives/Difficult Choices” by Jill Davies, Eleanor Lyon and Diane Monti-Cantania (1998).

### **Safety Planning Steps**

1. Build rapport and listen to the survivor.
2. Learn about what the survivor fears, both from the abuser, the system (law enforcement, judicial, social service) and the consequences of any action that might be taken.
3. Ask what the survivor wants to do and why. Learning why or the motivation behind the victim’s decisions can help a worker understand the victim’s goals. The worker may be able to suggest other options or methods of reaching the same goal. For example, the survivors may state she does not want to leave the abuser. If the worker asks why, she may find that the survivor is afraid to leave her three cats behind. The worker can let the survivor know about “safe haven” programs for pets to give the survivor more options.
4. Think creatively together about a variety of options and ideas.

5. Build a safety plan that is survivor centered.

Keep in mind that safety planning is more than referring the survivor to agencies for services. It also involves problem solving in advance what a survivor can do during and after a crisis.

## **Children's Safety**

There are additional steps that advocates need to consider when doing a safety plan regarding the safety of children.

1. Discuss with survivor the legal steps regarding custody, visitation, grandparents rights etc.
2. If there is shared visitation, inform survivor about supervised visitation and what that might entail. There may be two possible options to accomplish this, either with a trusted family member or friend, or if danger level is high, through a supervised visitation center (if one is available). A well run center will have an option of supervised exchanges which may add an element of safety for the survivor and the children.
3. Survivor may want to inform the children's school, daycare, church, friend's parents, extracurricular activity leaders, etc about the situation. If there is an order for protection, all should receive a copy.
4. If survivor/children are in hiding, teach children not to disclose contact info or personal identifying information to the abuser.
5. Make sure children's' information is protected at school or daycare centers. Survivor can notify school to not take pictures of children or publish child's information in a directory.
6. Teach safety awareness to the children - no talking to abuser or anyone that survivor would deem dangerous (abuser's family, friends, strangers, or anyone claiming they are a public servant).
7. Placing a red flag on the child through the State Department. If she/he were being taken out of the country, this red flag would alert authorities. This is especially import if there is an existing passport for the child.
8. Have the child ID'ed and registered through a local child identification program

## **Program Rules - Supportive or Eroding of a Safety Plan**

Programs need to examine their program rules to identify the roles these rules have in supporting or eroding a survivor's safety plan. Does your program have a "no contact with the abuser" rule? How will this affect a safety plan? Sometimes such a rule can create an adverse relationship with the survivor and the helper, causing the survivor to feel they have to lie to the helper about having made contact or returning to their abuser. In some cases, a survivor may feel too embarrassed to return to a program if faced with another crisis. Is there a limit on how often a survivor can receive emergency housing or other services? Does your program require a survivor to report abuse to the authorities or to obtain an order for protection? Remember that such interventions are not right for all situations and, in fact, can increase a survivor's risk significantly. Ideally, the survivor makes these decisions.

## **Staff Role in a Survivor's Safety Plan**

A good safety plan requires an active role on the part of the helper. It begins with much discussion and good listening on the helper's part to help sort through a survivor's story and assist with listing as many options as possible. The next step of a safety plan will be to identify any barriers that may get in the way of a survivor's ability to choose a particular identified option. It requires active participation on the part of the helper, not just making referrals to other agencies. For example, if a survivor needs to secure the doors and windows in their house, a helper may discuss the need to replace door locks in the house. Find out if the survivor has the funds to purchase those new locks and if not, work with the survivor to purchase those new locks. The next question may be who will install those new locks? Again, the helper will assist in identifying who can do that work. Staff must take an active role beyond making a list of referrals for a survivor to contact to complete an effective safety plan.

## **Technology and Safety Planning**

Technology can be a useful tool for survivors of domestic & sexual violence, however it is important to consider how technology might be misused. If an abuser seems to know too many details regarding a survivor's whereabouts, it is possible that phone, computer, email or other activities are being monitored. Work with survivors on how to use technology safely. Have emergency cell phones available for survivors to use in case of emergency. For more information regarding technology and safety planning see the publication "Technology Safety Planning with Survivors" available at: [www.endabuse.org/health/ejournal/archive/1-3/NNEDV\\_TechSafetyPlan.pdf](http://www.endabuse.org/health/ejournal/archive/1-3/NNEDV_TechSafetyPlan.pdf)

## **Cultural Competency and Safety Planning**

It is extremely important that helpers who may assist survivors with safety planning learn about the different cultural communities within their service area. Only through growing familiar and comfortable with the cultural norms in a community will a helper be able to think through the options that may be available within a specific cultural community. If an interpreter is necessary, try to find someone who is from the community that would be willing to assist in the process. It is vital that whoever is assisting is aware of the importance of the confidentiality of the process. Using a friend or family member can be dangerous, as they may, whether intentional or not, pass information on to the abuser.

## A SAMPLE SAFETY PLANNING TOOL

### Safety Planning

- ⊖ Always assist a survivor with developing a safety plan, regardless of whether the client seeks a protection order.
- ⊖ As part of safety planning, consider with the survivor if there are other parties who should be notified about the existence of a protection order and/or the possibility of further violence. Possible people or places requiring notification are: children's school, babysitter/daycare, victim's workplace, victim's school, embassies, US Passport Agency, local police station, domestic violence shelter, and other family members.
- ⊖ Safety planning tools should be available in alternative formats – such as large print, Braille, and on audiotape. Also consider having safety plans translated into languages that may be needed given the needs of the community.

### *PERSONALIZED SAFETY PLAN*

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

Review dates: \_\_\_\_\_

The following steps represent my plan for increasing my safety and preparing in advance for the possibility for further violence. Although I do not have control over my partner's violence, I do have a choice about how to respond to him/her and how to best get myself and my children, grandchildren or other dependents (such as frail elderly or persons with disabilities who may be living with the survivor) to safety.



## Step 1: Safety during a violent incident.

Survivors cannot always avoid violent incidents. In order to increase safety, survivors may use a variety of strategies. I can use some or all of the following strategies:

A. If I decide to leave, I will \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Practice how to get out safely. What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells or fire escapes would you use? Consider your physical stamina and abilities as well as the health status of anyone who may need to leave with you)

B. I can keep my purse and car keys ready and put them (place) \_\_\_\_\_ in order to leave quickly.

C. I can tell \_\_\_\_\_ about the violence and request that they call the law enforcement if they hear suspicious noises coming from my house.

I can also tell \_\_\_\_\_ about the violence and request that they call the law enforcement if they hear suspicious noises coming from my house.

D. I can teach my children/grandchildren how to use the telephone to contact law enforcement and the fire department.

E. I will use \_\_\_\_\_ as my code word with my children/grandchildren or my friends so they can call for help.

F. If I have to leave my home, I will go \_\_\_\_\_ . (Decide this even if you don't think there will be a next time.)

If I cannot go to the location above, then I can go to \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ .

G. I can also teach some of these strategies to some/all of my children/grandchildren.

- H. When I expect we are going to have an argument, I will try to move to a space that is lowest risk, such as \_\_\_\_\_ . (Try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, kitchens, near weapons or in rooms without access to an outside door.)
- I. I will use my judgment and intuition. If the situation is very serious, I can give my partner what he/she wants to calm him/her down. I have to protect myself until I/we are out of danger.

**Step 2: Safety when preparing to leave.**

Survivors frequently leave the residence they share with the battering partner. Leaving must be done with a careful plan in order to increase safety. Batterers often strike back when they believe that a survivor is leaving a relationship. I can use some or all of the following safety strategies:

- A. I will leave money and an extra set of keys with \_\_\_\_\_ so I can leave quickly.
- B. I will keep copies of important documents or keys at \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. I will open a savings account by \_\_\_\_\_, to increase my independence.
- D. If I have a payee for SSI/SSDI benefits and the payee is my abuser, I can contact the Social Security Administration at \_\_\_\_\_ to have my payee changed.
- E. The domestic violence program's hotline number or TTY number is \_\_\_\_\_. I can seek shelter by calling this hotline. If I have a disability, I can contact my local domestic violence agency at \_\_\_\_\_ to ensure in advance that they would be able to provide emergency shelter for me if needed.
- F. I can keep change for phone calls on me at all times or I can purchase a telephone calling card or get a cell phone. I understand

that if I use my telephone *credit* card, the following month the telephone bill will tell my batterer those numbers that I called after I left. To keep my telephone communications confidential, I must either use coins or a telephone *calling* card. I may also get a friend to permit me to use his/her telephone credit card for a limited time when I first leave.

- G. I will check with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.
- H. I can leave extra clothes with \_\_\_\_\_.
- I. I will sit down and review my safety plan every \_\_\_\_\_ in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence. \_\_\_\_\_ (domestic violence advocate or friend) has agreed to help me review this plan.
- J. I will rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.
- K. If I have a disability, I may need to set up an emergency care plan if my abuser is also my caregiver. I can contact \_\_\_\_\_ to make a plan for an emergency care provider.

**Step 3: Safety in my own residence.** There are many things that survivors can do to increase safety at home. It may be impossible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step by step. Safety measures I can use include:

- A. I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible. I can contact \_\_\_\_\_ to help with purchasing the locks and \_\_\_\_\_ to help with installing.
- B. I can replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors. I can contact \_\_\_\_\_ to help with purchasing the doors and \_\_\_\_\_ to help with installing.

- C. I can install security systems including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, an electronic system, etc. I can contact \_\_\_\_\_ to help with purchasing the items and \_\_\_\_\_ to help with installing.
- D. I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows if I am physically able. I can contact \_\_\_\_\_ to help with purchasing the ladders.
- E. I can install smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor in my house/apartment. I can contact \_\_\_\_\_ to help with purchasing the items and \_\_\_\_\_ to help with installing.
- F. I can install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to my house. I can contact \_\_\_\_\_ to help with purchasing the lighting system and \_\_\_\_\_ to help with installing.
- G. I will teach my children/grandchildren how to use the telephone to make a collect call to me and to \_\_\_\_\_ (friend/clergy/other) in the event that my partner takes the children/grandchildren.
- H. I will teach my children/grandchildren how to not disclose our address and phone number to: \_\_\_\_\_ abuser, and the abusers family/friends including \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and others including \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.
- I. I will tell people who take care of my children/grandchildren which people have permission to pick up my children/grandchildren and that my partner is not permitted to do so. The people I will inform about pick-up permission include:  
 \_\_\_\_\_(school), \_\_\_\_\_(day care staff), \_\_\_\_\_(babysitter),  
 \_\_\_\_\_(religious school teacher), \_\_\_\_\_(teacher), \_\_\_\_\_ and  
 \_\_\_\_\_(others).

- J. I can "red flag" my child's name with the State Department to alert authorities if someone were to try and take my child out of the country. I know this is especially important if my child already has a passport. I can contact \_\_\_\_\_ for more information.
- K. I can have my child ID'ed and registered through a local child identification program. I can call \_\_\_\_\_ to find out more information.
- L. I can inform \_\_\_\_ (neighbor), \_\_\_\_ (clergy), and \_\_\_\_ (friend) that my partner no longer resides with me and they should call the police if my partner is observed near my residence.
- M. I can contact local law enforcement and tell them about my abuser including the abuser's birthdate \_\_\_\_\_, his physical description height \_\_\_\_\_, weight \_\_\_\_\_, hair color \_\_\_\_\_, facial hair \_\_\_\_\_, tattoos and/or scars \_\_\_\_\_, the type of vehicle he drives \_\_\_\_\_, and his license plate number \_\_\_\_\_.
- N. I can change my name or social security number. I can contact \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to assist me with doing this.
- O. I can take steps to assure the confidentiality of certain documents, possibly through using an alias, a PO Box or alternative address or setting up a password with certain institutions to assure only I can access my personal information. The documents I will change include: \_\_\_\_\_ bills, \_\_\_\_\_ utilities, \_\_\_\_\_ car registration, \_\_\_\_\_ taxes, \_\_\_\_\_ bank accounts.
- P. I can request that my taxes and/or court records be placed in a confidential file.

**Step 4: Safety with a protection order.** Many batterers obey protection orders, but some do not. I recognize that I may need to ask the police and the courts to enforce my protection order. The following are some steps

that I can take to help the enforcement of my protection order:

- A. I will keep my protection order \_\_\_\_\_(location). (Always keep it on or near your person. If you change your purse, your protection order is the first thing that should go in.)
  
- B. I will give my protection order to police departments in the community where I work, in those communities where I usually visit family or friends, and in the community where I live. There should be a county registry of protection orders that all police departments can call to confirm a protection order. I can check to make sure that my order is in the registry.
  
- B. The telephone number for the county registry of protection orders is \_\_\_\_\_.
  
- D. For further safety, if I often visit other counties in \_\_\_\_\_, I might file my protection order with the court in those counties. I will register my protection order in the following counties: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
  
- E. I can call the local domestic violence program if I am not sure about B., C., or D. above or if I have some problem with my protection order.
  
- F. I will inform my employer, my religious leader, my closest friend and \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ that I have a protection order in effect.
  
- G. If my partner destroys my protection order, I can get another copy from the courthouse by going to the Office of the \_\_\_\_\_ located at \_\_\_\_\_.
  
- H. If my partner violates the protection order, I can call the police and report a 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 will file a complaint with the chief of the police department.
- J. I can also file a private criminal complaint with the \_\_\_\_\_ in the jurisdiction where the violation occurred or with the district attorney. I can charge my battering partner with a violation of the protection order and all the crimes that he commits in violating the order. I can call the domestic violence advocate to help me with this.
- K. I will inform and provide a copy of my restraining order to people who have contact with my children/grandchildren. The people I will inform about my restraining order include:  
 \_\_\_\_\_(school), \_\_\_\_\_(day care staff), \_\_\_\_\_(babysitter),  
 \_\_\_\_\_(religious school teacher), \_\_\_\_\_(teacher),  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (coach) \_\_\_\_\_(others).

**Step 5: Safety on the job or volunteer setting and in public.** Survivors must decide if and when to tell others about their experience as a survivor of domestic violence and that they may be at continued risk. Friends, family, and co-workers can help to protect survivors. Survivors should consider carefully which people to invite to help secure safety. I might do any or all of the following:

- A. I can inform my boss, the security supervisor and \_\_\_\_\_ at work of my situation.
- B. I can ask \_\_\_\_\_ to help screen my telephone calls at work.
- C. When leaving work/volunteer site, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- D. When driving home if problems occur, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- E. If I use public transit, I can \_\_\_\_\_.

- F. I can use different grocery stores and shopping malls to conduct my business and shop at hours that are different than those that I used when residing with my battering partner.
- G. I can use a different bank and take care of my banking at hours different from those I used when residing with my battering partner.
- H. I can also \_\_\_\_\_.

**Step 6: Safety and my emotional health.** The experience of being battered and verbally degraded by partners is usually exhausting and emotionally draining. The process of building a new life for myself takes much courage and incredible energy. To conserve my emotional energy and resources and to avoid hard emotional times, I can do some of the following:

- A. If I feel down and ready to return to a potentially abusive situation, I can \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- B. When I have to communicate with my partner in person or by telephone, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. I can try to use "I can . . ." statements with myself and to be assertive with others.
- D. I can tell myself - " \_\_\_\_\_ " - whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me.
- E. I can read \_\_\_\_\_ to help me feel stronger.
- F. I can call \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ as other resources to be of support to me.
- G. Other things I can do to help me feel stronger are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- H. I can attend workshops and support groups at the domestic violence



program or \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ to gain support and strengthen my relationships with other people.

**Step 7: Items to take when leaving.** When survivors leave partners, it is important to take certain items with them. Beyond this, survivors sometimes give extra copies of papers and an extra set of clothing to a friend just in case they have to leave quickly.

Items with asterisks on the following list are the most important to take. If there is time, the other items might be taken, or stored outside the home.

These items might best be placed in one location, so that if we have to leave in a hurry, I can grab them quickly.

**When I leave, I should take:**

- \* Identification for myself
- \* Children's/grandchildren's birth certificates
- \* My birth certificate
- \* Social Security cards
- \* Social Security award letter (if appropriate)
- \* School and vaccination records
- \* Money
- \* Checkbook, ATM (Automatic Teller Machine) card
- \* Credit cards
- \* Keys - house/car/office
- \* Driver's license and registration
- \* Bus pass, mobility ID card or special transit ID card for persons with disabilities
- \* Medications
- \* Welfare identification
- \* Work permits
- \* Green card
- \* Passport(s)
- \* Divorce papers
- \* Medical records - for all family members
- \* Medications and prescriptions for you and others

- \* Assistive devices like glasses, dentures, walkers, canes, wheelchairs, hearing aids for you and others
- \* Lease/rental agreement, house deed, mortgage payment book
- \* Bank books
- \* Insurance papers
- \* Small saleable objects
- \* Address book
- \* Pictures
- \* Jewelry
- \* Children's favorite toys and/or blankets
- \* Items of special sentimental value

**Telephone numbers I need to know:**

Police department - home \_\_\_\_\_  
 Police department - school \_\_\_\_\_  
 Police department - work \_\_\_\_\_  
 Domestic Violence Victims' Services Program \_\_\_\_\_  
 County registry of protection orders \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Supervisor's home number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Clergy \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 County or Tribal aging unit \_\_\_\_\_  
 Case worker \_\_\_\_\_  
 National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)  
 National Domestic Violence Hotline (TTY) 1-800-787-3224

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