

# CREATING A BALANCED SAFETY PLAN

---

Mieka Bledsoe, MS, LMFT

Diana Uribe, MSW, LCSW

Human Options



**24/7 Hotline**



**Emergency Shelter**



**Transitional  
Housing**



**Walk-in Services**

Center for Children & Families, Counseling,  
Parenting, & Legal Advocacy



**Community  
Education**

First Responders & Teens

## Our Mission

Human Options provides safe haven and life changing programs to help abused women, their children, and families rebuild their lives - and works with the community to help break the cycle of domestic violence.



24/7 HOTLINE:  
**877-854-3594**  
humanoptions.org

# Agenda

- Safety planning strategies
- Integrating autonomy and respect in a safety plan
- Boundary setting

# WHY A SAFETY PLAN?

---

# Responding in Crisis

- Fight, Flight, Freeze
- Plan



# WHAT ARE WE PROTECTING?

---

# Types Of Safety

- Physical safety
- Emotional Safety



# Physical Safety

- Staying out of rooms that have weapons
  - Kitchen
- Hiding sharp objects or weapons
- Emergency
  - Deciding to stay or go
- Surviving a physical threat or incident
  - May need to comply to stay safe until they can leave



# Physical Safety continued

- If the plan is to leave:
  - How?
  - When?
  - Where?
- Keys
  - Easy access
- Packed bag
  - Where will it be kept

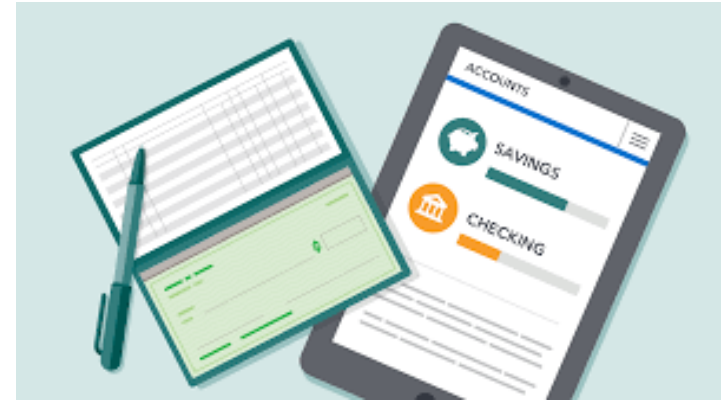


# Emotional Safety

- Who is emotionally safe?
  - Family member
  - Friend
- Share the plan
- Code words/signals for safety
- Plan for support (before and after)
  - Therapist/counseling
  - Support groups

# Financial Safety

- **Bank accounts**
  - Who has access?
  - Change banks?
  - New ATM Cards
  - Cancel credit cards
- **Investment Accounts**
- **Pension**



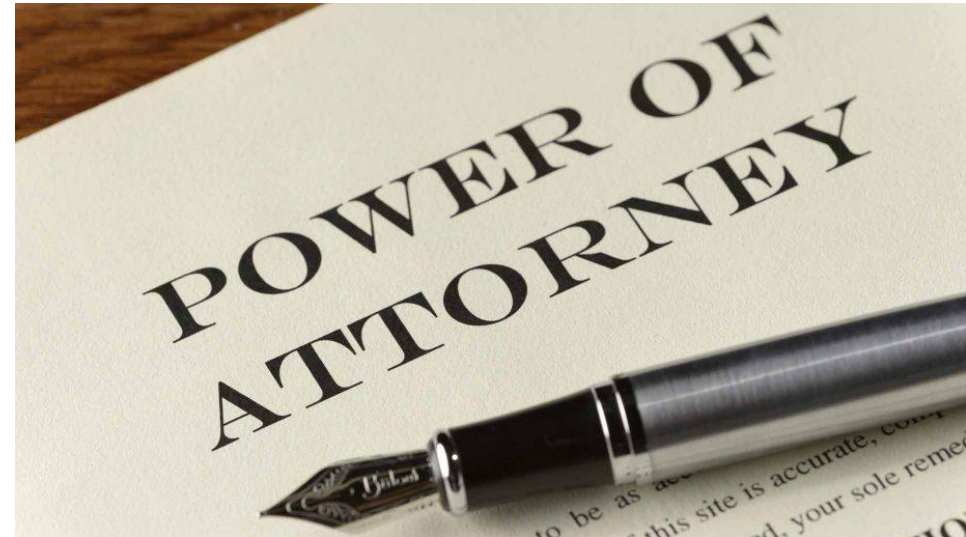
# Technology Safety

- A Toolkit for Survivors
  - General Technology Safety
    - Phone/vehicle tracking
  - Devices & Hardware
  - Online Safety & Privacy
    - Checking in via Instagram/Facebook
  - Technology & Sexual Assault
    - Apps (For smartphones and tablets)
- <https://www.techsafety.org/resources>



# Legal Safety

- **Power of Attorney**
  - Is it the abuser?
  - Does it need to be revoked?



# Planning Strategies

- Planning for physical, emotional, financial and legal safety
- Restraining Order?
- What will it do for them?

# RESTRAINING ORDERS

---

# Restraining Orders

- Types vary by state
- California
  - Domestic Violence
  - Elder Abuse
  - Civil Harrassment
  - Sexual Assault
  - Stalking
  - Gun Violence Restraining Orders
- Know where to file
- <https://www.womenslaw.org>





# Restraining Orders continued...

- Pros
  - Criminal prosecution if violated
  - Faster than eviction
- Cons
  - Giving notice
  - May not keep the person away
  - Show up in background checks
    - Varies by state

# Restraining Orders - Enforcement

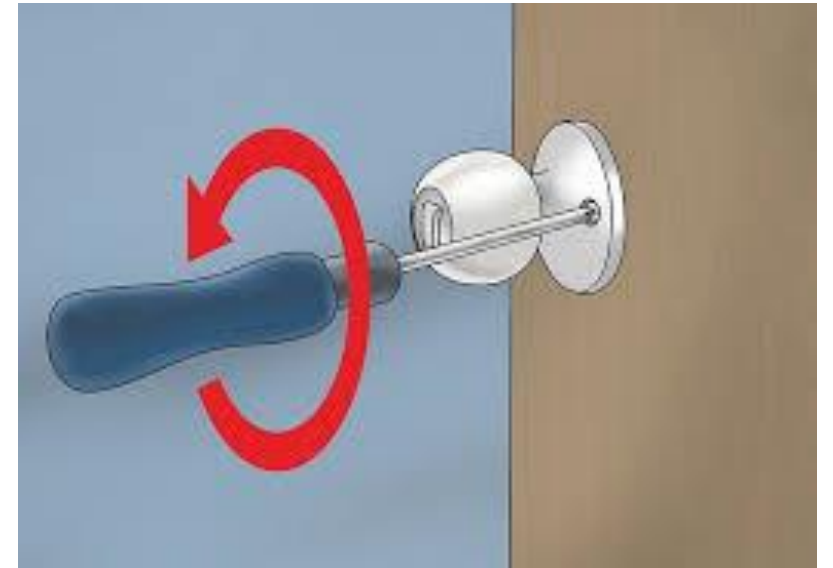
- Support-emotional
- Enforcing RO
  - Report all violations
- Keep copy with you
- Extra copies
  - Car
  - Home
  - Give copy to emergency contact



# PLAN FOR STAYING IN THE HOME

# Staying In The Home

- TRO's are faster than evictions if someone has established residency
- If TRO has been obtained and served:
  - Changing locks
    - Yes, with TRO & move out order
      - Renting
        - 24 hrs by landlord
  - Change security code
  - Improve lighting around perimeter



# PLAN FOR LEAVING

---

# Plan For Leaving

- How long do they plan to be gone?
  - Temporary/long term
- Determines what they take
- If there needs to be a plan to retrieve items
- Domestic Violence Shelter
  - Nearby?
  - Take seniors?
  - Accessibility for those with disabilities
  - Eligibility requirements
- Pets
  - Challenging obstacle

# Leaving continued...

What will be needed?

- Clothes
- Money/ATM Card
- Keys (extra set)
- Cell phone/prepaid phone
- Important phone numbers
- Shelter phone number & other DV agencies
- Important documents
  - ID/Driver's license
  - Restraining orders
  - Social Security Award Letter
  - Medicare/Insurance Cards

# Leaving continued...

- Bus passes
- Eye glasses
- Medications/prescription list
- Hearing aids
- Canes





# Leaving - Long Term

- Safe At Home Program
  - Protects home address
    - Reroutes mail
  - Program name-vary by state
- Victim Witness Assistance Programs
  - Program name-vary by state
- CalVCB
  - Victim's Compensation
    - Expenses & bills
    - counseling
    - CalVCB Helpline: [1-800-777-9229](tel:1-800-777-9229)

# AUTONOMY & RESPECT IN SAFETY PLANNING

---

# Autonomy & Respect

Working from a Trauma Informed perspective:

- Trust/Transparency
  - Choice/Empowerment
  - Safety
  - Collaboration
  - Peer support
  - Cultural/Historical/Gender issues
- 
- [https://www.cdc.gov/phpr/infographics/6\\_principles\\_trauma\\_info.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/phpr/infographics/6_principles_trauma_info.htm)

# Autonomy & Respect continued...

- Meeting the client where they are
- Respecting their ambivalence
  - Crisis response
    - Response to authority/law enforcement/service providers
    - Possible agitation/resistance from victim
- Support
- Connect them to a support group and/or counseling
- Planting the seed
  - Change could happen later
- Note-if client is a victim of a crime make sure to follow proper protocol
  - Law enforcement, cross reports
    - TIC approach
      - Informing client of reporting mandates

# Resiliency



- Strengths
- What can you build on?
  - What are they doing already? Doing well?
- Devereux Adult Resilience Survey (DARS)
  - By Mary Mackrain

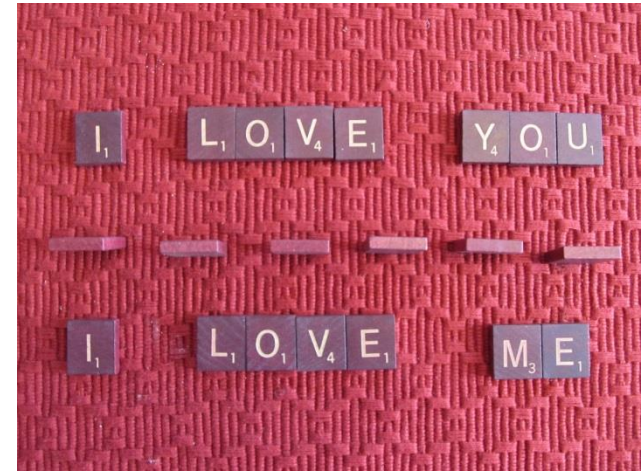
- ✓ Safety Plan
- ✓ Autonomy & Respect
- ✓ Resiliency

# BOUNDARIES

---

# Boundaries

- Know their limit
- What boundaries are being crossed?
  - Emotional
  - Physical
- Boundary setting only when safe
- Negative reactions
  - Common when boundary setting begins
- Never too late
  - Start showing others how they want to be treated





# Boundaries continued...

- Cultural Considerations
  - American culture vs other cultures
  - What is allowed in one culture may not be in others
  - What happens in the family stays...
- Generational Considerations
  - Difficulty interacting with authority
  - Provokes different responses
    - Guilty saying “no”
    - Agreeing to interventions but not taking action

# Boundary Setting

- Never set a boundary they can not maintain
- Enforcing Boundaries
  - Make boundaries clear
- Maintain your boundaries
  - May need to repeat them
  - As many times as it takes
- Put it in writing
- Contracts
- What is their recourse?
  - What if these things do not work, what next?



# Boundaries - Living Arrangements

- Rental Agreements
- Put in writing
  - How long are they staying?
  - Will they pay rent?
  - Will they pay utilities?
  - Will rent be in exchange for transportation or home upkeep, maintenance

# Vignette

Client is an 84 year old female named Helen. Helen and her husband wanted children but were unable and decided to adopt a baby boy. As he grew up he was their pride and joy. Helen's husband passed away two years ago and her health has started to decline. She uses a walker to ambulate and has poor vision due to macular degeneration. She is no longer able to drive. Helen's son is 60 years old and has never moved out. He works off and on as a handyman. Helen thinks he may be using drugs but she has never found evidence of it. She says he is moody and will yell at her especially if she refuses to give him money. He has grabbed and pushed her so hard he has left bruises. He tells her she is a "horrible mother", she is "selfish", and she is a "bitch". Helen relies on her son to drive her to doctor's appointments and to the grocery store. Sometimes he refuses and stays gone for hours or even days at a time. Helen barely has enough money for food and utilities and complains that her son does not pay rent or try to help her with bills. She used to attend a local church as well as go to the nearby senior center but stopped after her son yelled at her in front of church members as well as at the senior center. Helen said she is too embarrassed and ashamed to return. Most of her family members and close friends have passed away but she does have a good friend out of state that calls to check on her.

# Questions?

!



## SERVICES

24/7 HOTLINE:

**877-854-3594**

[humanoptions.org](http://humanoptions.org)

# Thank You!

Follow us on social media!



@HumanOptions