

A CHILD'S SAFETY PLAN

This plan was developed to help mothers teach their children some basic safety planning. It is based on the belief that the most important thing that children can do for their mothers and their families is to get away from the area of violence! They cannot stop the abuse, although they often try by distracting the abuser or directly interfering in the abusive episode. It is important to tell the child that the best and most important thing for them to do is keep themselves safe.

Children who experience woman abuse can be profoundly affected. It is very traumatic for them to be faced with violence directed at them or at someone they love. Personal safety and safety planning are extremely important and necessary for children whose families are experiencing violence. Children should learn ways to protect themselves. There are several ways to help you develop a safety plan with your children.

- Have your child pick a safe room/place in the house, preferably with a lock on the door and a phone. The first step of any plan is for the children to get out of the room where the abuse is occurring.
- Stress the importance of being safe, and that it is not the child's responsibility to make sure that his/her mother is safe.
- Teach your children how to call for help. It is important that children know they should not use a phone that is in view of the abuser. This puts them at risk. Talk to your children about using a cell phone if they are unable to use a phone at home. Be sure that your child/children know your cell number.
- Teach them how to contact police at the emergency number.
- Ensure that the children know their full name and address (rural children need to know their Emergency # and neighbourhood landmarks).
- Rehearse what your child/children will say when they call for help.
For example: Dial 911.
An operator will answer: "Police, Fire, or Ambulance"

Your child says: **Police.**

Then your child says:

My name is _____.

I am _____ years old.

I need help. Send the police.

Someone is hurting my mom.

The address here is _____.

The phone number here is _____.

- It is important for children to leave the phone off the hook after they are done talking. The police may call the number back if they hang up, which could create a dangerous situation for yourself and your children.
- Pick a safe place to meet your children, out of the home, after the situation is safe for you and for them (so you can easily find each other).
- Teach your children the safest route to the planned place of safety for them.