

HANDOUT ...**Safety Planning for Students**

Safety planning is thinking and acting in a way that can increase your safety and/or the safety of your friend who is experiencing dating violence. You can do safety planning whether you stay in a relationship or if you are able to leave an abusive relationship.

Safety planning is something you do to help yourself feel and be “safe” when you are being hurt or afraid of being hurt.

If you are being abused by an intimate partner, there are things you can do that may help increase your safety.

In fact, you are probably already doing things to make yourself more safe.

What do I need to know about safety planning?

You are the expert on your life. Your own experience is the best tool in planning for your safety.

Planning often involves thinking about many choices. If Plan A doesn’t work...what is Plan B? There are many kinds of dangers or risks when you are being abused. When planning, consider all of the risks.

Think about different places you may not be safe: home, work, school, other places you often visit and your abuser knows about.

Think about different times you feel unsafe:

- Right after you try to leave the relationship
- When drugs or alcohol are around
- When you are alone with the person
- If the person gets violent (starts yelling, hitting, threatening)

Consider your emotional safety as well as physical safety. Above all, trust your feelings and instincts. Remember...you are the expert on your life!

Here are several things to consider if you or your friend is being abused by an intimate partner.

- This is not your fault! No one deserves to be treated in an abusive way.
- Seek outside help in a support group or in counseling. Talk to your student counseling center or call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) to find help near you.
- Share what’s happening with a trusted friend. It is important to have a good support system to get through this.
- Abusers will often isolate their victims; reach out to friends and family you may have not connected with in a while.
- If you live together, try to save small amounts of money. Keep it in a safe place like a safety deposit box or with a friend.
- Open your own savings account; if you live together, do not have the statements sent to your home; get a P.O. Box or pick them up at the bank.
- Leave some extra money at a friend’s home.
- If you want to try to stay in school, ask the student counseling center if they can refer you to offices that can help you get through tough semesters, You may also inquire about withdrawing from classes so you can take a break away from campus.
- If possible, get a part time or full time job to make your own money—check out student employment or identify family members or friends who could lend temporary financial support if you need it.
- Consider taking out extra student loans to help pay for a new apartment.
- Investigate student housing options—emergency loans and housing are sometimes available.

HANDOUT...

Safety Planning for Students (continued)

- If you are in danger, call campus police or 911.
- Be aware of weapons your partner may have.
- Avoid going on long trips alone with your partner.
- Tell your RA/roommates about the situation.
- Arrange for double dates—if possible, try not to be alone with your partner.
- If the abuser also lives in your residence hall, try to get transferred into another building, switch rooms etc—ask the student counseling center if they can assist in facilitating the transfer.
- Try to let friends, roommates and RAs know where you are going and when you should be back—check-in with them while you're out.
- If your abuser has a copy of your key, request that s/he return it to you, or change your locks.
- If you live with her/him: Include keys, emergency phone numbers, money for calls or a prepaid calling card, a change of clothes, and medications.
- Don't forget important documents such as birth certificates, resident cards/student IDs, social security cards, student loan info and schedules
- Arrange for a safe place to leave your school books, such as a trusted friends' place, the locked trunk of your car, etc.
- Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) to find a domestic violence court advocate near you, so you can discuss your options.

Take warning signs seriously

Talk with someone and make a safety plan right away if...

- You have recently left the abuser or changed the relationship.
- The abuser has made threats to kill you, her/himself, or someone close to you.
- The violence happens more often or there is more sexual violence.
- The abuser has threatened you with a weapon or used one against you.
- You are moving on with your life, feeling better, setting more limits, and the abuser resents the changes.
- The abuser has taken or broken equipment that you need, like a TTY, wheelchair, or cane.
- The abuser feels as though he or she has nothing left to lose.