

SUPPLEMENT 06

Domestic Violence Safety Plan

1. DANGER ASSESSMENT FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS

- Help a domestic violence victim recognize danger.
- Help a victim develop a safety plan for herself and her children.
- If she wants to go to law enforcement, aid her in these efforts (*Hambrick, 81*).

NOTE: Native Americans in Oklahoma may feel more comfortable reaching out to local tribal law enforcement and programs. The Native Alliance Against Violence has excellent resources and information for contacting tribal domestic violence and sexual assault programs that serve areas across the state.



NATIVE
ALLIANCE
AGAINST
VIOLENCE

Created in 2009, the [Native Alliance Against Violence \(NAAV\)](#), is a nonprofit organization operating as Oklahoma's only tribal domestic violence and sexual assault coalition. The NAAV is not a direct service provider, however we do serve Oklahoma's federally recognized tribes and their tribal domestic violence and sexual assault programs.

ENCOURAGE THE VICTIM TO WORK WITH EXPERTS EVEN IF THE EXPERTS AREN'T BELIEVERS. THESE "PERSONS OF PEACE" CAN BE ASSETS, JUST LIKE THE NON-BELIEVERS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES WHO WORK ALONGSIDE MISSIONARIES (HAMBRICK, 28).

- Local law enforcement: _____
(local phone numbers)
- District attorney's office: _____
- Abuse advocacy organizations: _____

If she feels more comfortable working alongside the church, begin with the Danger Assessment below.

FOLLOW THE ACRONYM "DANGEROUS" TO ASSESS FOR COMMON RISK FACTORS OF VIOLENCE IN YOUR LIFE. Below are nine indicators that increase your risk of danger. Check all that apply.

- ☐ **D**ivorce or Separation
- ☐ **A**lcohol or Drug Use
- ☐ **N**arcissistic tendencies or disordered personality of the abuser
- ☐ **G**uns or weapons in the home
- ☐ **E**ntitled attitudes and behaviors
- ☐ **R**ebellious - history of being unwilling to obey authority figures
- ☐ **O**ther history of violent behavior
- ☐ **U**nstable mental health history
- ☐ **S**uicidal or homicidal threats or history

(This assessment is outlined in more detail in the book, *Becoming a Church that Cares Well for the Abused*, Hambrick, 81).

"[Safety Planning] is essential when physical abuse has occurred—but even if it has not yet happened, plan for a victim's safety. Sin intensifies over time, and controlling people can change their tactics, if needed, to maintain their domination. We do not know when an abuser will become dangerous, so a safety plan is always required."

DARBY STRICKLAND (STRICKLAND, 114)

2. DEVELOPING A SAFETY PLAN FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- A victim is often struggling with her own feelings about the abuse and may be unwilling to take immediate steps towards safety.
- Abuse tends to escalate in frequency and severity over time.
- When there is a history of physical violence or even threats of violence, no matter the perceived severity, it is important to develop a safety plan with the victim.
- Handle these situations with great care and patience.
- A hasty intervention or pressuring a victim to act can tempt a victim to become defensive of her abuser and even shut out Church Leadership (Hambrick, 87).

A SAFETY PLAN DOES NOT INVOLVE TAKING ANY IMMEDIATE ACTION OTHER THAN PLANNING. Use the following guidelines when coaching a victim through the development of a safety plan.

(These principals come from the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services* "Crisis Line Handbook," 10-20).

Be Empowering Recognize that the victim will ultimately have to implement the safety plan herself.	Be Encouraging We will serve victims well by locating places in Scripture where God's people fled danger.
Be Patient It is common for it to take months for the abused person to be ready to act.	Be Resourceful Remember that an individual usually needs resources beyond what a church can provide.

SAFETY PLAN

This safety plan, provided by Darby Strickland in *Is It Abuse?*, is a practical way for you to stay safe while you remain in your home, as you are planning to leave or asking your spouse to leave, and even afterward.

The plan provides a variety of steps you can take to safeguard yourself and your children. It is important to remember that abuse is unpredictable and planning ahead can be very helpful. As you fill out the form, check the boxes of the steps that you are willing to take and fill in the blanks with the needed information.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-7233) provides help for victims, their friends, and their families. Use this resource for assistance in safety planning (Strickland, 307-317).

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE WHEN AN ARGUMENT OCCURS AT HOME

Sometimes arguments escalate, and it is hard to predict when violence might start or reoccur. Here are some ways I will protect myself. I do not need to wait until physical violence occurs during an argument in order to take action.

- If an argument with my husband begins, I will attempt to move to a room that does not have weapons and has at least one exit—preferably two. I will avoid rooms such as the kitchen, where there are knives, and enclosed rooms such as bathrooms. Safe rooms that fit these criteria are:
 - 1.
 - 2.
- I will keep my purse and car keys in this location:
(one that allows me to grab them and go).
- If I am concerned for my safety, I can leave my home using a door or a window. My way out of my home will be: _____.
- If I have to leave my home, I will go to _____
or _____.
- I will remember that I am free to call the police any time I have concerns.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE IF I REMAIN AT HOME

- I will keep my phone charged and accessible.
- I will make and hide a spare car key and place it in this location: _____
_____.
- I will practice using my chosen escape route.
- If my husband uses drugs or alcohol, I can _____
and protect myself and children by _____
while he is using them.
- If I sense that an argument is brewing, I can _____.
- I can tell _____ about the abuse and ask them
to call the police if they overhear a fight or violence.
- I will choose _____ as a code word and let my children, as well as trusted
contacts such as: _____ and _____
know that they are to call the police if I use the code word.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE IF THERE ARE CHILDREN IN THE HOME

- Children are often around and want to help when abuse occurs. Teach them how to get help safely while staying out of harm's way.

- I will teach my children how to call 911 and give the dispatcher our address.
- When I teach my children how to call 911, I will explain that they might need to use the number for help in an emergency—for instance, if Mommy falls and hurts her leg.
- When violence is escalating, I will not go to where my children are.
- I will instruct my children not to get verbally or physically involved in any arguments, fights, or danger. But I will empower them to help me in other ways (such as calling 911 or getting out of harm's way).
- I will locate a safe room for the children.
- I will remind my children of the code word: _____ and teach them to call the police and to leave the house when they hear it.
- I will explain to my children that when they leave the house they should go _____ (for example, to a neighbor's mailbox) or should call _____.
- I will help my children practice escaping. We will identify and rehearse how to use a way out of our home, such as a door or a window. Their way out of the home will be _____.
- I will ask my children who they are comfortable talking with for support.
- I will ask my children if they are aware of the abuse.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE WHEN I LEAVE OR PREPARE TO LEAVE

- A victim is in the most danger when she is leaving or planning to leave—so I will need to be careful.
- If it is safe for me to do so, I will begin to gather essential items and documents—making copies if necessary—and can leave them with _____. (See the chart on page 21 for necessary documents.)
- I will begin to establish financial independence by opening a line of credit or a bank account by this date: _____.
- I will keep emergency cash or gift cards on hand and easily accessible.
- I will call the National Domestic Violence Hotline and have them review this safety plan (1-800-799-7233).

- I will keep essential numbers in my phone at all times (see chart) and can give a backup list of these numbers to _____.
- I will keep my phone charged and carry a charger with me.
- I will ask _____ if I can stay with them and leave extra belongings with them.
- I will pack an escape bag for my children and me and can keep it hidden in this location: _____.
- I will keep records of the abuse. I can use the DocuSAFE app at www.womenslaw.org/laws/general/restraining-orders.
- If I cannot go somewhere that allows me to keep my pets, I can ask _____ to provide for them by _____.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE WHEN I FLEE DANGER

- I will come up with a specific place where I can go.
- I will not tell people where to find me or leave any records about my location.
- I will use cash or gift cards so that my purchases cannot be tracked.
- I will get a new cell phone to ensure that I can not be located.
- If I have obtained a Victim's Protective Order (Oklahoma's version of a restraining order) I will tell:
 1. My employer: _____
 2. My children's school: _____
 3. My friends: _____
 4. My family members: _____
 5. My neighbors: _____
- If the Victim's Protective Order is breached, I will call:
 1. The police: _____
 2. My attorney: _____
 3. My support person: _____
- I will work with someone who can help me to see if I have been monitored electronically and will take steps to ensure that I cannot be tracked, stalked, or harassed. (For tips on how to do this and on who can help, visit: www.Techsafety.org).

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE AFTER SEPARATION

- If I remain in my home or a new one, I will need to take steps to secure the home. I will secure my home by:
 1. Changing the locks
 2. Fortifying the windows
 3. Buying surveillance cameras or a security system
 4. Adding outdoor lighting
 5. Other: _____.
- I will tell my neighbors that my husband no longer lives at home and to contact me or the police if they see him around the home.

TECHNOLOGY SAFETY MEASURES

Many victims are monitored or stalked electronically, so I will take the following precautions:

- I will change my passwords and usernames.
- I will make a new email account that does not use my name.
- I will check my devices' privacy settings and confirm that other devices are not connected to mine.
- I will confirm that Bluetooth is turned off when I am not using it.
- I will make sure that there is no monitoring software on my devices.
- I will make sure that I know what each of my apps is and does.
- I will delete any apps that I do not use.
- If I think I am being monitored, I will do the safest thing and get a new device, without linking it to my old account through the cloud.
- I will limit the information that I share about myself online and on social media platforms.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE IN PUBLIC AND AT WORK

- During a separation, victims are at an increased risk of experiencing potentially life-threatening violence. I will think about other places where my abuser might try to make contact with me and will be prepared.
- I will work with _____ to think through how I can protect myself and keep my children safe during a custody exchange.

- I will let _____ at work know about my situation and will ask them to screen my calls or escort me to my car.
- I will take a new route home.
- I will change the stores that I regularly shop at (or will shop in a different town).
- If I take public transit, I can deviate from my usual commute by _____.

STEPS FOR CARING FOR MY EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL HEALTH

- It is equally important to plan for my emotional and spiritual health. I will think through some ways that I might handle the stresses that I am continually facing.
- When I am feeling overwhelmed or down, I can _____.
- I can call _____ and _____.
- I can start or continue counseling.
- I can ask God for _____.
- I can read _____.
- I can also _____.
- Because many of the factors of my situation can change over time, it is good for me to revisit my plan every couple of months. I will revisit my plan on _____.

THINGS TO TAKE WITH ME WHEN FLEEING ABUSE

DOCUMENTATION

Financial

- Tax documents
- Financial records
- W2s
- Pay stubs
- Working papers
- Bank account information

Medical

- Health insurance cards
- Immunization records

Personal

- Social Security cards
- Birth certificates
- Car title, registration and insurance documents
- Rental agreement or house deed
- Custody documents
- School records
- Driver's license
- Passports
- Immigration papers
- Pet records

Related to Abuse

- Journals or photo evidence of abuse
- Records of police reports you filed
- Victim's Protective Order

ITEMS

Financial

- Cash
- Prepaid credit cards (untraceable)
- Checks
- Bank or credit cards

Medical

- Medication and prescriptions for you and your children
- Devices such as eyeglasses and hearing aids

Personal

- Car and house keys
- Pet supplies
- Clothing
- Toys and books for kids
- Keepsakes

Related to Abuse

- Prepaid cell phone with new number and contract
- Address book and phone numbers

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:

Name/ Category	Phone Number
Domestic Hotline	1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
Police	
Local Shelter	
State registry for VPO's	
Work	
Work supervisor	
Doctor	
Attorney	

(Safety Plan adapted from Darby Strickland's *Is It Abuse?*, 301-317).