



Personal Safety Planning

Practical steps for thinking ahead - without pressure or judgment.

Safety note: If someone may be monitoring your phone, computer, accounts, or printer, consider using a safer device. Downloads, browser history, messages, and print activity may leave traces.

Your safety plan belongs to you. There is no single “right” way to respond to abuse. A personalized plan can help you think through options before a crisis. Leaving or changing a routine can sometimes increase danger, so choose only steps that feel safe for your situation.

If violence may happen now

- **Move toward an exit** or a room with more than one way out, if you can do so safely. Try to avoid areas where weapons are present.
- Keep a phone, keys, essential medication, and emergency numbers accessible when possible.
- If children are present, teach them that their job is to get to safety - not to physically intervene. Decide where they can go and how they can call 911.
- If you are in immediate danger or have a life-threatening injury, call **911**.

Build a support plan

- Choose one or more trusted people who understand your situation. Consider a **code word** or phrase that means “I need help” or “call 911.”
- Identify safe places you could go at different times of day and at least two ways to get there.
- Consider what you may need for children, pets, medication, mobility needs, transportation, work, or school.
- A C.A.R.A. advocate can help you think through risks and options without pressuring you to make a particular decision.

After separation or a change in living situation

- Change locks, passwords, routines, or account access **only when it is safe to do so**. Some changes can alert an abusive person or escalate behavior.
- Tell trusted people at work, school, childcare, or your building about safety concerns if you choose. Share only what you are comfortable sharing.
- Keep copies of important legal or safety documents somewhere the abusive person cannot access.

Write down your plan

Safe place I can go: _____

Person I can contact: _____

Code word or phrase: _____

Transportation option: _____

Guidance sources: National Domestic Violence Hotline (thehotline.org); New Jersey State Police Domestic Violence Information (nj.gov/njsp). Reviewed July 2026. This handout is general information and is not a substitute for individualized safety planning with an advocate.