

THESE SAFETY SUGGESTIONS

have been compiled from safety plans distributed by state domestic violence coalitions from around the country. Following these suggestions is not a guarantee of safety, but could help to improve your safety situation.

Personal Safety with an Abuser

- ❖ Identify your partner's use and level of force so that you can assess danger to you and your children before it occurs.
- ❖ Try to avoid an abusive situation by leaving.
- ❖ Identify safe areas of the house where there are no weapons and where there are always ways to escape. If arguments occur, try to move to those areas.
- ❖ Don't run to where the children are as your partner may hurt them as well.
- ❖ If violence is unavoidable, make yourself a small target; dive into a corner and curl up into a ball with your face protected and arms around each side of your head, fingers entwined.
- ❖ If possible, have a phone accessible at all times and know the numbers to call for help. Know where the nearest pay phone is located. Know your local battered women's shelter number. Don't be afraid to call the police.
- ❖ Let trusted friends and neighbors know of your situation and develop a plan and visual signal for when you need help.
- ❖ Teach your children how to get help. Instruct them not to get involved in the violence between you and your partner. Plan a code word to signal to them that they should get help or leave the house.
- ❖ Tell your children that violence is never right, even when someone they love is being violent. Tell them that neither you nor they are at fault or cause the violence, and that when anyone is being violent, it is important to keep safe.
- ❖ Practice how to get out safely. Practice with your children.
- ❖ Plan for what you will do if your children tell your partner of your plan or if your partner otherwise finds out about your plan.
- ❖ Keep weapons like guns and knives locked up and as inaccessible as possible.
- ❖ Make a habit of backing the car into the driveway and keeping it fueled. Keep the driver's door unlocked and others locked -- for a quick escape.
- ❖ Try not to wear scarves or long jewelry that could be used to strangle you.
- ❖ Create several plausible reasons for leaving the house at different times of the day or night. Call a domestic violence hotline periodically to assess your options and get a supportive understanding ear.

