

# Beginning to Plan for Safety- Tool

Practice notes:

This tool is designed to help practitioners initiate a simple conversation that builds up a woman's strengths, sense of autonomy, and capacity vis-a-vis her situation. By emphasizing strengths and self-care strategies, more distance can be achieved between the woman and the power-over dynamics she is subject to from her abuser/s. **We encourage clinicians to bring their knowledge of harm reduction principles and motivational interviewing to these interactions.**

When disclosures of children's exposure to violence are made, there is a duty to report to Children's Aid. Some of the harmful consequences of mandatory reporting may be mitigated through a careful client centred approach. [This link](#) offers detailed information and tips on how to do this in a way that minimizes harm to the therapeutic alliance.



*Note:* Developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth, MN. Reprinted with permission.

**WARNING:** DO NOT encourage women to bring a copy of this plan home with them in any situation where they are living with an abuser or where the abuser has access to their living space. This could place them in a situation of greater vulnerability and bring further harm to the woman.

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Inspired by information from <http://stoprelationshipabuse.org/>

# Beginning to Plan for Safety

Name:  
Clinician:  
Date:

**Validation:**

It is understandable and perfectly ok to be feeling \_\_\_\_\_ given what you have been living through; it takes courage and bravery to speak to others about this.

**Coping strategies:**

Many survivors have developed strategies to help them cope. What has helped you survive episodes of violence? What has helped to keep you safe?

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Survivors often use substances (alcohol, drugs), to cope with distress. What substances do you use?

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**Strengths:**

What would you say your strengths are? What are the traits, skills, actions, etc. that have pulled you through this so far?

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**Self-Care:**

Many survivors have a 'safe-space', it can be a specific room, the mall, a friend's place. Where do you go that feels safe?

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Who are the people that you feel safe with?

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Are there activities or things you like to do that give you a sense of peace?

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**Support people/ Agencies:**

Is there someone in your life who knows about, or with whom you would feel comfortable, talking about your experience of violence? (Include phone numbers where possible)

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**Plan going forward:**

- How can we build on/ support your strengths and current self-care to make a plan going forward?
- What pieces of self-care can happen more often?
- What supporters and safe people can you spend more time with?
- Are there things you would like to do less off in favour of another activity that makes you feel more safe?
- Date for next meeting