

MedStar St. Mary's Hospital

Domestic Violence Program

Safety Plan

If you are in an abusive situation or planning to leave one, please:

- **Find a safe place to go** if an argument breaks out – if in the house, avoid places with only one exit or potential weapons, like the bathroom or kitchen. If possible, get outside to a public place or go to a friend's or neighbor's house.
- **If injured, seek medical attention immediately.**
- **Document the abuse**, keep records.
- **Tell people in your life** that can help you in an emergency what is happening, develop a plan and a code word or signal in case of an emergency.
- **Have emergency funds** set aside for food, shelter, transportation in case you must leave quickly.
- **Keep an extra set of keys** to your house or vehicle somewhere safe.
- **Teach your children what to do, where to go, who to call.** If an argument breaks out, do not tell them to intervene physically; their priority is to remain safe and go for help if possible.
- **Pack a bag** with extra clothing, medications, cell phone and any important documents. Hide the bag where you can get to it in an emergency situation—where your abuser won't find it (at a friend's house, in the trunk of your car, work).

Other Items to include:

- Driver's License, ID, Social Security card, birth certificates for you and your children, passport, immigration papers
- Marriage License or Divorce decree
- Leases or deeds in your name or both of your names
- Insurance Card
- Keys
- Important records for you and your children
- Money, check book, credit cards, bank statements

- Proof of income for you and your spouse (W2's, paystubs)
- Child's favorite toy, sentimental values
- Documentation of prior abuse (pictures, police reports, hospital records, torn clothes...)

Remember, leaving an abusive relationship is the most dangerous time. Be safe, take precautions.

In case of an Emergency, CALL 911

St Mary's County Sheriff's Office 301-475-4200

Maryland State Police, Leonardtown Barrack: 301-475-8955

Hotlines:

Maryland Network Against Violence Hotline 1-800-634-3577

National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-7233

Once you leave an abusive situation:

- **File a protective order;** contact your local court or police for assistance.
- **Notify work/school security of the situation,** give them a picture of your abuser and a copy of the Protective Order, and do not walk to your car alone; have security walk with you.
- **If you left the house, use police accompaniment.** If you need to get items out of the house, do not go alone.
- **Vary your routine,** take different routes to work/stores, leave at different times.
- If you remained in the house and the abuser left, **consider changing the locks or installing a security device.**
- **Consider changing phone numbers or getting a prepaid cell phone.** Only give that number to people you trust; get caller ID and block numbers.
- If the abuser contacts you, **document/save any contacts** (text messages, letters, threats, stalking, injuries, vandalism, other incidents involving the abuser).

- **Keep a copy of your Protective Order with you**, always (in your car, at work, children's daycare, or schools).
- **Seek legal counseling:** Southern Maryland Center for Family Advocacy / 301-373-4141
- **Register with V.I.N.E** to be notified when the Protective Order has been served and receive updates on when the abuser is incarcerated or released. 1-866-8463 or vinelink.com
- **Seek ongoing counseling support** from hotlines and/or counselors who understand the dynamics of an abusive situation.
- If you must meet your abuser (child visitation, etc.), **plan to meet in a public place**. Take someone you trust with you or let someone know where you are meeting, the time, and when to expect you back. If you cannot take someone with you, have someone on the phone while you are meeting and have a code word for them to call the police if needed.

My Personal Safety Plan

Crisis Counseling Referrals:

Shelter Referrals:

Financial Assistance Referrals:

Other Referrals:

Important Numbers:

In Case of Emergency Contact: