

SAFETY TIPS WHILE YOU ARE IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

If you are living with the abuser, here are some things that you can do to help keep you and children safe. However, you are never 100% safe while in an abusive relationship.

- Develop a plan for calling for help. You need to have important numbers memorized that you can call in an emergency, such as numbers to friends and family. Teach your children how to dial 911. Tell them if they cannot get to a phone, they can run to neighbor's house to call for help. You may want to create a code so your children, neighbors, friends, and/or family members will know when to call the police.
- Have a hidden emergency fund, even if it is only 1 or 2 dollars a week. If you can, open your own bank account.
- Pack a small bag for you and your children and hide it in a safe place where your partner cannot find it or leave the bag with a trusted friend. Also, hide an extra set of car and house keys or leave keys with a friend or relative.
- Keep things together that you will need in place where you can get to them safely and quickly, such as money, car and house keys, driver's license, car registration, passport, medicines, address book, pictures, and other important items.
- Leave a change of clothes and copies of the following documents with a trusted friend or relative:
 - you and your children's birth certificates
 - your children's school and medical records
 - bank books
 - welfare identification
 - car registration
 - passports or green cards
 - you and your children's social security cards
 - other identification
 - insurance papers
 - important addresses and telephone numbers
 - marriage license
 - any other important documents
- Stay in touch with friends and neighbors. Get to know your neighbors and ask them to call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from your house.
- Keep gas in the car at all times and park your car in a convenient place.
- Get rid of any weapons and firearms in the home.
- Have at least two places that you go if you have to leave your home in a hurry.
- Call your local Battered Women's Association for options.
Clayton County: 770-961-SAFE. For the location nearest you call: 1-800-33HAVEN.
- Rehearse your escape plan. Know it by heart.

If Things Are Unsafe Leave Immediately!

Leaving the relationship may increase the risk of danger. Once you no longer live with the abuser, here are some things you can do to help keep you and your children safe.

- Obtain a Temporary Protective Order (TPO). Domestic violence TPOs are free. For more information on obtaining a TPO, call your local domestic violence organization. Once you receive a TPO, keep it on you at all times and make sure friends and neighbors, employer, babysitter, and your children's school have copies to show the police. If the abuser violates the TPO, call the police; tell your attorney, the local battered women's shelter, and the court. Remember, a TPO cannot guarantee safety.
- Call the police about incidents of harassment and write them down for your documentation. Ask your local police department to patrol around your home.
- If you are still in your home, change the locks. If you stay in the home or move, install security features, such as metal doors and gates, place bars on windows, security alarm system, smoke detectors, outside lights, get a dog etc.
- Give family friends and neighbors a picture of the abuser.
- Tell you neighbors that the abuser is not welcome at the home. Ask them to call the police if they see the abuser on the property or near the home.
- Make sure people who watch your children know who can and cannot pick them up.
- Tell people you work with about the situation. Tell them to warn you if they see the person around. Always have someone walk you to your car.
- Know where family members are at all times, let them know your schedule, and check in regularly.
- Change where you shop, bank, and do business.
- Change your driving pattern to and from work
- If you are hiding from the abuser, do not leave clues where you can be found. Do not call the abuser's residence because telephone records can be traced. Have all your mail sent to a post office box. Take your address off checks and business cards. Get an unlisted telephone number, and tell friends and family not to give it out to anyone.
- Check I.D. when anyone comes to your home.
- Always park in a well lit and secure area. Check the back and front seats before getting in your car.
- Get a cell phone. Check with domestic violence organizations about borrowing a cell phone when in danger.
- Watch for people following you. If someone is following you, drive to the nearest police station.
- Scream if the abuser approaches you in public.