



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SAFETY PLANNING

Know that help is available for anyone at risk of domestic and gender-based violence. The following are a few suggestions for developing a personalized and practical Safety Plan – for staying safe while enduring an abusive relationship, or when planning to leave, and after leaving – during the lockdown. While every situation is unique, these tips help you think of actions that work for your situation.

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Be prepared and save these emergency helpline numbers to your phone or write them down on a piece of paper that you can always keep with you.

24hr Counselling & GBV Helpline

Community Intervention Centre (CIC)
Call: 082 821 3447

LifeLine's Domestic Violence Helpline

Call: 0800 150 150

MOSAIC

Telephone counselling & referrals for survivors of abuse.

Call: 021 761 7585 (08:30 – 16:00)

Rape Crisis

24-hour support including how to access Thuthuzela Care Centres for medical and forensic assistance to rape survivors.

Afrikaans: 021 633 9229

isiXhosa: 021 361 9085

English: 021 447 9762

WhatsApp: 083 222 5164

Saartjie Baartman Centre (CT)

Shelter for abused woman and children
Call: 021 633 5287

Frida Hartley Centre (JHB)

Shelter for destitute women and children
Call: 011 648 6005

Amcare (JHB)

Shelter & Gender-based Violence support
Call: 011 869 5856

Triangle Project

Specific support to LGBTQI community including referrals to shelters. Triangle offers a call back service.

General: 066 076 8845

Counselling: 021 422 0255

Helpline: 021 712 6699 (13:00 – 21:00)

24hr National Shelter Helplines

Eastern Cape

Ikhwezi Women Support Centre
Beatrice Chindoti | 063 396 2289

Free State

Goldfields Family Advice Organization
Sarah Lekale | 072 144 7171

Gauteng

Nisaa
Lisha Stevens | 083 422 8987

KwaZulu-Natal

Sahara
Nadia Munsamy | 061 282 4254

Limpopo

Thyrest
Nobesuthu Javu | 073 174 9185

Mpumalanga

MP Shelter Movement
Fisani Mahlangu | 079 310 9633

Northern Cape

Ethembeni Shelter
Rosaline Bailey | 074 236 8071

Western Cape

Sisters Inc.
Delene Roberts | 063 774 5789

General information

Zubeda Dangor | 083 289 9818

REACHING OUT

Do you have a friend, colleague, family member or local organisation that you trust and can call on for support/help? If so, contact that trusted person/organisation and let them know that you may need assistance during this time. Secure their support to do so. If they are not comfortable, reach out to others. Delete the WhatsApp/SMS if the abuser regularly accesses or has access to your phone.

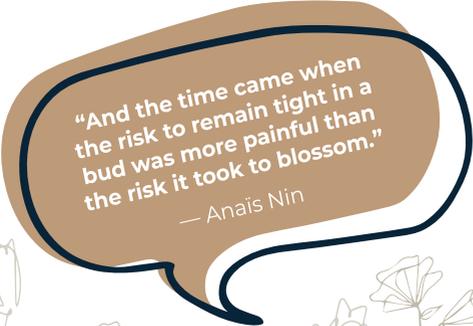
You can reach out to multiple people by developing a WhatsApp group. This helps in case some people are not reachable at the time that you may need support. Give that group a "safe" name so that it does not alert suspicion should the abuser readily access your phone. Try to name the group something that reflects what you would ordinarily do in your day-to-day life, for example, "church/mosque group" or "book club".

SIGNALING FOR HELP

Create a code word with your trusted person/group so that people know when you need help.

If you have neighbours that can help, you can also develop a visual signal that will alert them should you be in distress. Examples of visual signals could be switching an outside light on and off several times, tying a piece of material around the railing of a fence or a tree, or around/on anything visible from the outside of your house. Agree with your neighbour about what assistance is needed depending on the visual signal. For example, a piece of red material could signal that you need your neighbour to contact the police. White material could signal that you need your neighbour to create a diversion, such as ringing your doorbell or calling your cell phone or landline.

If you have children who are old enough to understand, discuss this plan with them too.



*"And the time came when
the risk to remain tight in a
bud was more painful than
the risk it took to blossom."*

— Anaïs Nin



DELETE SEARCHED / REQUEST FOR HELP

If the abuser tends to look through your phone or you share the use of a computer at home, do be careful when reaching out for help. Delete your Internet browsing history; websites visited for resources, e-mails and WhatsApps/SMSes sent to friends and family asking for help.

If you called for help, dial another number immediately after, in case the abuser hits redial.

PLANNING TO LEAVE

Pack a bag. If you have children, include items for them too.

Items to pack includes:

- Your documents (ID, Passport, Children's Birth Certificates, marriage certificate, protection order etc)
- Medication
- Spare cellphone (if you have one)
- Money/bank cards,
- Change of clothing
- Toiletries
- Small toys / teddy bear for children
- Anything else that is important to you

*Note that if this is not possible, shelters have clothing and toiletries that they will provide you with if you need them. Place this bag in a safe place where you can access it easily. Before you leave, ensure that you have airtime/data.

If you do not, reach out to your trusted contact for help with sending you airtime/data.

"The best protection any woman can have is courage."

– Elizabeth Cady Stanton

LEGALLY SPEAKING

Ensure that you have copies or photographs on your phone of any essential documents in case you cannot get hold of these documents before you leave, including a protection order if you have one. If you can, keep a record of the abuse noting dates, events and threats made, this information will be helpful when seeking legal support or protective mechanism like when applying for a protection order. Keep any evidence of physical abuse, such as pictures, if you have these.

LEAVING

First, try to determine when is the best time to leave. Can you wait until the abuser is asleep or occupied with something? If this is not possible, create a reason for going out. For example, say you need to go to the shop to buy some essential goods, or, if you have a family member living elsewhere, pretend that they are in a situation that requires your help immediately. You could also pretend to be ill and say you must go to a doctor. Only do this if you know it is safe to do so.

Know ahead of time where you want to go. Whether it is to a friend or family member's house (but let them know beforehand if possible), shelter, hospital or the police station. The police officers can refer you to a shelter too. If you cannot leave on your own, please contact any of the help numbers provided for assistance.



*"A woman is the full circle.
Within her is the power to
create, nurture and transform."
— Diane Mariechild.*

STAYING SAFE

- 1 Apply for a protection order if you don't have one already. Shelters can assist as well as organisations like MOSAIC.
- 2 Be careful to whom you give your new address and phone number.
- 3 Ensure that your children's schools are aware of the situation and inform them that only you or a person designated by you is authorised to collect your child/children from school. Consider changing your their school if this is possible.
- 4 If you work, please ensure that your place of work is aware of the situation. If possible, have your calls screened. Reschedule appointments if the abuser is aware of them. Try to use different stores and frequent different areas that are not known to the abuser.
- 5 If you remain home, try to change the locks and find ways to secure your house further. Let friends and neighbours know that the abuser no longer lives with you. Ask them to call the police if they see the abuser near your home or children.
- 6 Continue to talk to trusted people about your situation, and seek trauma counselling and legal assistance.

Thank you to the National Shelter Movement South Africa for providing the information for this journal - www.nsmsa.org.za



Dear Beautiful Woman

“When you start to feel like things should have been better this year, remember the mountains and valleys that got you here. They are not accidents, and those moments weren't in vain. You are not the same. You have grown and you are growing. You are breathing, you are living, you are wrapped in endless, boundless grace. And things will get better. There is more to you than yesterday.”

- Morgan Harper Nichols

