

**Safety Planning**  
Presented by Victoria Ybanez



This project was supported by Grant No. 2012-TA-AX-K058 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this webinar are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

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**SAFETY PLANNING  
MAKES A  
DIFFERENCE**



It helps prepare for the likelihood of future violence and enables survivors to have options and protect themselves when emergency responders might be too far away.

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**Safety planning is a dynamic process**

It should be ongoing and done in a way that develops the survivor's skills to continue doing their own safety planning.

- *Safety in their home*
- *Safety on the way to work and at work*
- *Safety at public locations*
- *Safety with their children*
- *Safety at places their children go (school, childcare, grandma's, etc.)*

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**A safety plan will . . .**

- Examine the current risk,
- Provide an exploration of options for improving safety and
- Identify possible resources that can help
- Consider both the safety of the survivor and the children
- Help them identify when they may be in physical danger
- *Each person's situation is unique*

As an advocate, do not assume anything. The survivor will be the expert in their own life and can tell you what they know about their own personal safety. Help the survivor use her skills to create her safety plan.  
*(Davies, Lyon, & Monti-Catania, 1988)*

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**Safety Planning Differences**

<p><b>Domestic Violence</b></p> <p>Focus safety planning on anticipating the actions of the abuser, looking at dangers, recognizing that abusers shift their tactics, adaptable, exploring options, considerations for children, putting in place strategies to protect, to inform support, and to escape.</p> <p><b>Dating Violence</b></p> <p>Many people minimize the seriousness of the abuse, safety planning will need to make sure supports will believe the victim. Social media and social community can be used to vilify the victim and further isolate, with possible retaliation.</p>	<p><b>Sexual Assault</b></p> <p>Focus safety planning on knowing community resources, normalizing potential responses and triggers, creating a sense of safety within themselves and within their personal space as well as anticipating dangers that may result from the perpetrator.</p> <p><b>Stalking</b></p> <p>Stalking may not be the result of an intimate relationship. The abuser may not have had a relationship but is infatuated/obsessed with the person being stalked. Documentation is critical to demonstrate the existence and extent of the stalking.</p>
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**Strategies for Safety**

Protection strategies	Seek to prevent and respond to physical violence
Staying strategies	Respond to the range of batterer-generated and life-generated risks while a woman remains in her relationship
Leaving strategies	Respond to the range of batterer-generated and life-generated risks a woman faces as she leaves or after she has left her relationship
Time frames	May be short term and/or long term

Safety Planning with Battered Women. Jill Davies, 1998

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### Role of the Advocate

- Talk with the survivor about her current situation and needs for safety
- Assist the victim/survivor with accessing emergency shelter, civil and legal remedies and community supports
- Assist with developing long-term safety planning and safety strategies
- Provide long-term advocacy

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### Information to Gather about Safety Plans

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| <p><b>Identify past safety plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What has she tried?</li> <li>• How did it work?</li> <li>• Would she try it again?</li> <li>• What was her partner/husband/boyfriend's reaction?</li> </ul> | <p><b>Identify current safety plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include protection, staying, and leaving strategies</li> <li>• What is the time frame for her strategies?</li> <li>• What personal and public resources has she identified?</li> <li>• How does she think her partner will react to her strategies?</li> </ul> |
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### Work with a battered woman to strengthen her safety plan

- Identify available and relevant options and resources
  - How well do the options work?
  - What consequences can occur by using or not using the option/s?
  - What needs to happen in advance to make the options readily available?
- Analyze these options with her

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### Work with a Battered Woman to Strengthen her Safety Plan, continued

- Assist her with recognizing that situations/circumstances change, plans should be dynamic, reinforce their autonomy in making decisions regarding safety
  - ✓ If they want police assistance, offer to make the call
  - ✓ Recognize the need for possible other support systems
- Provide follow-up

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### Facility safety

- Safety can be improved by taking some basic actions such as increasing the light bulb wattage at the front entrance, or removing places to hide near all entrances and exits to the property.
- Consider whether the property is located in an isolated location or if there is adequate access to cell phone or telephone from the location inside and outside of the property.
  - ✓ Are there multiple ways a person can exit or enter the property?
  - ✓ What might those risks or advantages be from those access points?
  - ✓ Can a car be identified when parked at the property?

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### Technology Safety

Addresses how technology impacts survivors of stalking, sexual & domestic violence

- ✓ Discuss risks as technologies evolve
- ✓ Regularly ask “do you use a computer?” and “does the abuser have access to it?”
- ✓ Build a network of “techie advocates”

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## Advocate Safety

*Batterers are generally targeting their violence at the victim, however, there may be a time an offender may target an advocate because they have been working with their former partner.*

- **Build in regular practices to create a safe office space**
  - ✓ Locking the door at 5:00 p.m. when office hours end if someone works late
  - ✓ Letting other staff know where an advocate is going and when they are expected to return
  - ✓ Parking in lighted areas, making sure car doors are locked as soon as getting into the car when alone and with someone
  - ✓ Having code words among staff for when to call the police

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## Safety Planning Tools

**Red Wind Consulting, Inc.**  
 3578 Hartsel Drive, E-368  
 Colorado Springs, CO 80920  
 (866) 599-9650  
 • [www.red-wind.net](http://www.red-wind.net)  
 Template resources

**National Center on Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence**  
 4612 Shoal Creek Boulevard  
 Austin, TX 78756  
 (512) 407-9020  
 • <http://www.ncdsv.org/publications/safetyplans.html>

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