

SafetyPlan



A M P E R S A N D
Sexual Violence Resource Center
of the Bluegrass

This safety plan will be most effective when filled out with an advocate, trusted friend, or family member who also has some knowledge regarding sexual violence issues. This safety plan can be helpful at differing points during the healing process, but will be most helpful only after some of the initial crisis and emotions have calmed. Some of it may not apply to you, and while attempting to give concrete suggestions, it is impossible to cover every possible scenario.

Sexual violence affects a person's emotional and physical safety. The following steps will help me identify ways to increase my safety.

Step 1: Emotional Safety: The experience of being sexually assaulted is very emotionally draining and traumatic. The process of overcoming these traumatic effects takes courage and energy. To get through some of the hard emotional times, I can:

- 1) Expand my support network through talking with an advocate, joining a support group, making new friends, etc.
- 2) If I feel down or frightened, I can _____
_____. (Some healthy activities may include: listening to music, taking a warm bath, taking a walk, exercising, etc...)
- 3) I can tell myself "_____" if I feel others are trying to control my life. (Example: affirmation, chant, song, saying, poem, or prayer that feels strengthening and soothing)
- 4) I can attend workshops, support groups, or _____ to gain support and strengthen my relationships with other people.
 - a. Local group info: _____
 - b. Contact person: _____
- 5) I can begin to identify my triggers by journaling, especially after feeling particularly anxious or fearful. I can then discuss this with someone I trust and who has an understanding of sexual violence issues, such as _____ (examples: trusted friend, therapist, supportive significant other, sexual violence advocate, etc.).

6) I can begin to recognize that triggers are a natural part of healing, but that when I am triggered I can do the following things to calm myself down (for example, deep breathing, mental imagery, pictures of places or people I love, grounding techniques):

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

7) I can ask that people in my life who love and support me to also get support. They may be able to get support from the local sexual violence center or from _____.

Step 2: Safety within my house: To increase my feelings of safety at my house, I can do some or all of the following:

- 1) I will make sure that all the doors and windows lock. If the offender was someone who used to live at the house I will have my locks changed. If I have a sliding glass door, I can put a wooden rod in the track to make sure it can't be slid open. Other structural changes to increase safety include _____.
- 2) Increase lighting in my house, and have outside lights as well. Maybe even put a nightlight in a hall, bedroom, or bathroom.
- 3) Other things that I can do within my house to increase my feelings of safety include _____.
- 4) I can change my telephone number and/or get my address unlisted.

Step 3: Memories of the Assault: I can implement the following strategies when memories of the assault are affecting my day-to-day living:

- 1) I can do deep breathing and mental imagery to help reorient my body and lower the level of adrenaline in my body. I choose to use a picture of _____ as my mental imagery.
- 2) I can call _____, _____, _____ or the local sexual violence crisis center at (____) ____ - _____ if I need to talk to someone to help overcome some of my fears.
- 3) I can attempt to reorient myself to the current place and time through the following grounding techniques:
 - a. Ice
 - b. Stomping Feet

- c. Saying the day and/or time
 - d. Other _____
- 4) I can ask _____ or _____ to help me with some of my responsibilities if I need more time to relax or rest.
 - 5) I can choose to talk with someone who is knowledgeable about sexual violence such as _____.

Step 4: Safety if there is still contact with the offender. Since sexual violence is often perpetrated by someone that is known or trusted it is not always feasible to not have contact with the offender. In order to help ensure my safety, I can use some or all of the following strategies:

- 1) I can tell _____ and _____ to have them stay near me when the offender is around so that I don't have to be alone with him.
- 2) I will choose _____ as a code word, and tell _____ and _____ so that if I am feeling unsafe they can help me get to a previously agreed upon place where I may feel more safe.
- 3) In case the offender attempts to be violent again, I can know the possible exits. I will keep an extra set of keys and some money at (list place) _____ in case I have to leave quickly, and I will practice exiting quickly several times.
- 4) If I feel unsafe in my current place of residence, I can go stay with _____ or _____. I can also call the local sexual violence program at (____) _____ - _____.
- 5) If I have to leave quickly or need to change residences, I know that the following will be important for me to have. These items can be gathered up beforehand and given to a friend or relative or placed somewhere where they can be grabbed quickly.
 - a. Driver's license and registration
 - b. Social security cards
 - c. Money, checkbook, ATM card
 - d. Keys
 - e. Welfare records
 - f. Birth certificates
 - g. School and vaccination records
 - h. Credit cards
 - i. Medications/medical records
 - j. Other _____
 - k. Other _____

6) I know that the offender may try to maintain control over me while in his presence. Therefore, I have asked _____ to look for these specific things (triggers) _____ and to accompany me out of the offender's presence if those things are taking place. Also, if unable to immediately leave or to be accompanied by someone, I can call _____ afterward to help process what I am feeling.

7) I may run into the offender at places unexpectedly and where there is less chance of having someone pre-planned to be with me. At those times, some safety considerations would include:

- a. Carrying a cell phone (even if it only has access to 911, which can be gotten for free through the local domestic violence/sexual violence program)
- b. Being aware of exits
- c. Trying to have someone with me
- d. Immediately calling one of my previously identified support people

Step 5: Safety Within the Criminal Justice System: If I am involved with the criminal justice system, I may want to look at some strategies to make myself feel more safe and more in control throughout that process. Additionally, it is important to make sure that my voice is heard in the process.

- 1) I can ask the following people to attend hearings, trial, or sentencing with me _____, _____, or _____. I can also ask an advocate from the local sexual violence program.
- 2) I may be eligible for a protection order. I can talk with an advocate at the local program about the eligibility guidelines for protection orders, how I would apply for a protection order, and the possibly benefits or consequences of getting a protection order. I can reach an advocate at this number (____) _____ - _____.
- 3) I have the right to speak at the sentencing, to be informed of the dates and times of any hearings associated with this case, and to be informed about parole or probation. I can talk with the local victim/witness coordinator regarding this information and to make sure that my voice is heard. The local victim/witness coordinator who I would need to contact is _____ at (____)____ - _____.
- 4) I can apply for victim's compensation to help with costs associated with being sexually assaulted, including therapy, cost of any treatment at the hospital, lost wages, etc. I can get a victim's crime compensation application through the Attorney General's Office, through my local sexual violence advocacy program, or through the local prosecutor's office.

It is important to note that this safety plan should be hidden in a safe place if there is a concern that the offender will find it.

Helpful telephone numbers:

Ampersand Sexual Violence Resource Center: 800-656-4673

Police/Sheriff _____

Prosecutor _____

Prosecutor Based Advocate _____

Therapist _____

Doctor _____

Attorney _____

Other (list) _____

Statewide Crisis Number 1-800-656-4673

I need to share this plan with the following people (e.g., employer, advocate, therapist, etc.):

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