

MAKING A SAFETY PLAN



A safety plan is a personalised plan that helps someone think about ways to stay safer if they are experiencing an unsafe, controlling or violent situation.

You do not have to wait until there is a crisis to think about safety.

Making a safety plan does not mean you have to leave a relationship or make decisions before you are ready. It is about understanding risks, knowing your options and having support around you.

A safety plan can be created with the help of a specialist domestic, family or sexual violence service, 1800RESPECT, a counsellor, or another trusted professional.

These services can help you think through your situation, understand risks and make a plan that works for you.

What safety planning is like

Safety planning often happens one-on-one with a trained support person. It may happen in person, over the phone or online.

A safety planning conversation should be:

- Private and confidential (unless there is a serious safety concern)
- Respectful and supportive
- Focused on your safety and choices
- Based on your situation
- At your pace

You should not feel judged, pressured or forced into decisions.

Identifying danger points

Together with a support person, you may look at:

- Times when things are more likely to escalate, such as separation, court dates, alcohol or drug use, conflict at home, or changes in living arrangements
- Warning signs that things may be becoming less safe
- Immediate risks and longer-term risks
- Whether children, siblings, pets or other people may also be affected
- What has helped you feel safer in the past

This part is about spotting patterns and planning ahead, not judging your choices.

Safety plans can change

A safety plan is not something you only do once.

It can change as:

- Your situation changes
- Risks change
- Your support needs change

Understanding your situation

A support person may help you think through:

- What has been happening
- Whether things are becoming more frequent or serious
- Behaviours that make you feel unsafe
- Times when risk may increase
- People or places that help you feel safe
- What support you already have around you

Building your safety plan:

A safety plan should be tailored to your situation. It may include different options depending on whether you are staying, thinking about leaving, or have already left.



Remember

A safety plan is not about having a “perfect” solution. You don’t have to leave a relationship to make a plan. Small steps, trusted people and knowing where to get help can make a difference.

If you are staying in the home

A support person may help you think about:

- Safer places in the home, such as areas near exits and away from kitchens, bathrooms or rooms with objects that could be used as weapons
- How to keep your phone charged and accessible
- A code word or message you can use with someone you trust
- How to call for help quickly if things escalate
- How children, siblings, pets or other people in the home can get help safely

If you are planning to leave or may need to leave quickly

A support person may help you think about:

- Packing an emergency bag with important items you may need, such as ID, medication, keys, bank cards, documents or essential belongings
- Safe ways to leave and when risk may be higher
- Where you could go, such as a trusted person, refuge or emergency accommodation
- Transport options
- How to get help from police or a specialist domestic and family violence service if needed
- Making copies or photos of important documents are storing them somewhere safe

If you have already left

A support person may help you think about:

- Changing routines or travel routes
- Safety at work, school, TAFE or university
- Blocking, documenting or safely managing contact
- Digital safety, including passwords, devices and location settings
- What to do if the person breaches an order or tries to contact you
- Ongoing emotional support and practical support

Technology and online safety

Technology can sometimes be used to monitor, control or intimidate:

- Check if unknown apps, AirTags or location sharing are active

A safety plan may include:

- Reviewing privacy settings
- Checking location sharing
- Updating passwords safely
- Checking if your phone or accounts could be monitored
- Securing social media
- Thinking about safer ways to communicate

Legal and practical protections

A safety planning conversation may also include information about legal and practical supports available to you. This may include:

- Understanding protection orders and how they can help increase safety
- What to do if a protection order is not followed
- Reporting options and what may happen if police become involved
- Housing, financial or other practical support options
- Connecting with specialist domestic and family violence services

Different states and territories have different names and processes for protection orders. A support service can help explain what applies where you live.

Support connections

A safety plan can also help connect you with practical and emotional support. This may include:

- Counselling or emotional support
- Specialist domestic and family violence services
- Housing or accommodation support
- Financial assistance options
- Legal advice or advocacy services
- Support at school, work, TAFE or university
- Services for children, young people, pets or others affected

Support looks different for everyone. A specialist service can help you understand what options are available where you live.

Where to get help

If you or someone else is in immediate danger **call 000**

1800RESPECT
1800 737 732

24/7 national domestic, family and sexual violence counselling, information & support.

Kids Helpline
1800 55 1800

Free 24/7 counselling and support for young people aged 5–25.

Lifeline
13 11 14

24/7 crisis support if you feel overwhelmed or unable to cope.