Domestic Violence Safety Strategies

Domestic violence is physical, emotional and/or financial mistreatment by an intimate partner. It can involve physical contact: slapping, hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, any action intended to injure you. It can involve the use of a weapon: stick, knife, gun, or any object. Emotional abuse can involve threats to harm you, family members, friends, pets or possessions; not allowing access to money, sleep or affection; harassment at work or home; any behavior that causes emotional pain. Physical and emotional abuse is done to punish, dominate or control another. You have the right to be treated with respect and have safe relationships with people who value you!

Does your intimate partner...

- “Track” all of your time—want to know where you go and with whom?
- Constantly accuse you of being unfaithful?
- Discourage your relationships with family and friends?
- Criticize, humiliate or belittle you?
- Check your email and monitor your other computer and phone communications?
- Anger easily especially when drinking or using drugs?
- Control all finances and force you to account in detail for what you spend?
- Destroy personal property or sentimental items?
- Hit, punch, slap, kick or bite you or the children?
- Use or threaten to use a weapon against you?
- Threaten to hurt you or the children?
- Force you to have sex against your will?

If you find yourself saying yes to any of these, it’s time to get help.

Things you can do:

- **Talk to someone.** Part of the abuser’s power comes from secrecy. People are often ashamed to let anyone know about intimate family problems. Go to someone you trust—a friend, family member or neighbor—or call a domestic violence hotline to talk to a counselor. Seek help through counseling or a support group. Call the Domestic Violence Crisis Hotline 303-620-9190 or The National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-7233 (SAFE), 1-800-787-3224 (TTY). These agencies can help you prepare a safety plan and find victim assistance within your own community.

- **Plan ahead and know what you will do if you decide to leave your home.** Keep information about domestic violence and your plans where your partner will not see it. Have phone numbers for shelters easily accessible. Let trusted neighbors, family and friends know of your situation and safety plan. Put aside clothing, extra keys, money, confirm a place to go, decide how you will get there, and put important papers together in a place where you can get them quickly:
  1. Driver’s license, birth certificates, Social Security cards, passport, citizenship documents
  2. Your children’s birth certificates, Social Security cards, health and school records
  3. Photos, sentimental items
  4. Money, checkbook, bank books, credit cards
  5. Medications and prescriptions
  6. Car registration, insurance cards
  7. Divorce papers, protection orders, and other important legal papers
Domestic Violence Safety Strategies (cont.)

- Identify your partner’s use and level of force so you can assess the danger to you and your children.
- Identify safe areas of the house where there are no weapons and where there are always ways to escape. If arguments occur, try to move to those areas.
- Keep children away from you if there is a fight so that your partner can’t hurt them as well.
- If violence is unavoidable, make yourself a small target: move into a corner and curl up into a ball with your face protected, your arms around either side of your head, fingers entwined.
- Create a visual signal for when you need help with trusted friends and neighbors. Teach your children how to get help. Instruct them not to get involved in violence between you and your partner. Plan a code word to signal they should get help or leave the house.
- Tell your children that violence is never right, even when someone they love is being violent. Tell them the violence is not their fault and that they did not cause it. Teach them that when anyone is being violent, it is important to keep safe.
- Practice how to get out safely. Practice with your children.
- Plan for what you will do if your children tell your partner of your plan or if your partner otherwise finds out.
- Keep weapons as inaccessible as possible. Remove if possible.
- Make a habit of backing the car into the driveway and keeping it fueled. Keep the driver’s door unlocked and other doors locked for a quick escape.
- Create several plausible reasons for leaving the house at different times of day or night.
- Call a domestic violence hotline periodically to assess your options and get support.

If you are presently being abused:

- **Do not hesitate to call the police at 911.** Domestic violence is a CRIME!
- **Leave your living situation.** Call a crisis hotline and go to a women’s shelter. If you believe you and your children are in danger—leave immediately. Make sure friends and relatives, including children, know not to tell the abuser your address or phone number. Check with the telephone company or cell phone provider to learn options to keep you safe.
- **If you have physical injuries, get medical attention from a doctor or hospital emergency room.** Have staff photograph your injuries; keep detailed records for legal action.
- **Contact Project Safeguard at** (303) 863-7416 **to obtain a protection order.**

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SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE

Numbers to call for assistance:
Denver Police Department ............................ Emergency: 911 and Nonemergency: (720) 913-2000
Denver Shelters: SafeHouse 24-hour crisis line.................................................................(303) 318-9989
Domestic Violence Crisis Hotline ...............................................................(303) 620-9190
The National Domestic Violence Hotline.......... 1-800-799-7233 (SAFE), 1-800-787-3224 (TTY)

The Center For
Trauma & Resilience

Rev. 12/2015 AB