

It is **NOT** your fault.

The abuser is the only person responsible for the crime. There is never a time when the use of alcohol or drugs is an acceptable excuse for violence.

Batterers choose to commit violence....

- On whom
- Who will witness
- By what means
- When
- Where
- How much

**YOU ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR, NOR DESERVING OF VIOLENCE**



**FLORIDA COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**  
1-800-500-1119

[www.FCADV.org](http://www.FCADV.org)

## WHO IS A SAFETY PLAN FOR?

**For those:**

**Living with an Abuser** - because the danger can occur at any time

**Planning to Leave** - because few abusers allow their partner to leave peacefully

**Living Separately** - because danger often increases after a survivor leaves or ends the relationship

**If you are experiencing domestic violence, What are your options?**

***If you choose to stay in your relationship, consider the following:***

- Notify someone of the abuse
- Talk with a counselor
- Get help from a domestic violence center
- Make a plan for escape
- Teach your children how to get help
- Plan for safety--whether the relationship continues or ends.

**Should you decide to leave your relationship**

Leaving can be very dangerous and should be planned carefully. Planning may increase your safety.

**You may ask an advocate about:**

- Filing for a free injunction for protection
- Helping you understand the legal system
- Free confidential counseling
- Staying at a free emergency shelter

## SAFETY TIPS

1. If someone is threatening you or your children, take their threat seriously.
2. Calls for assistance should be made from phones in safe locations
3. It is not possible to delete or clear all the "footprints" of your computer or online activities. It may be dangerous to change computer behaviors, such as suddenly deleting your entire internet history, if that is not your regular habit. Use a safer computer to research an escape plan, look for new jobs or apartments, or ask for help.
4. Email and Instant/Text Messaging (IM) are not safe or confidential ways to talk to someone about the danger or abuse in your life. If possible, please call a hotline. If you use email or IM, please use a safe computer and an account your abuser does **NOT** know about.
5. Change your habits ...choose different grocery stores, routes home, etc.
6. Identify transportation options through friends, family, agencies, and hotlines.
7. Request confidentiality when working with agencies and churches.
8. Ask an advocate to help plan for safety.
9. Identify someone on the job who is most likely to help you if you are in danger. Have a signal for help with trusted friends and neighbors
10. Make a list of people you can count on during emergencies.

## SAFETY BAG

A safety bag is used when planning to leave a dangerous relationship. It should contain important items and information. It is best to keep the bag with someone you trust. That person should keep it safely hidden and not tell your abuser of your plans to leave.

**Safety bags items may include:**

- ✓ ID
- ✓ Keys (spare)
- ✓ Checkbook and Money (if possible)
- ✓ Bank Statements
- ✓ Birth Certificates (for you and your children)
- ✓ Medicine, prescriptions and medical equipment
- ✓ Pictures of the family that include the abuser
- ✓ Proof of income pay stubs, financial statements
- ✓ Partner's personal information (date of birth, social security number, place of employment)
- ✓ Health care information
- ✓ Address book

## Who can I turn to for HELP??



The toll-free, confidential hotline is available 24 hours a day. Hotline advocates will provide you with immediate assistance as well as local referrals.

Advocates can provide you with referrals and information on counseling, advocacy, and other services you may choose to pursue.

**PEACEFUL PATHS HOTLINE:**

**(352) 377-8255**

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:

### What is it?

Domestic violence is about  
**POWER AND CONTROL**

It is a pattern of controlling behavior that may include physical, sexual, or emotional abuse.

It occurs in heterosexual and homosexual relationships.

**Domestic violence is a crime and it is a choice made by the batterer.**

Even if your partner does not physically hurt you, threats of battering may be present and are reinforced by:

**Intimidation, Blame, Denial, Isolation, or the Threat of Force**

**You may be experiencing domestic violence if your partner is doing any of these unwanted behaviors:**

Accusing you of having affairs, controlling how you look, threatening you, calling you names, saying you are ugly, fat, or crazy, taking your car from you, threatening to take the kids away if you tell, demanding sex, harming your pets, acting extremely jealous or possessive, threatening to commit suicide or to kill you, keeping you from taking birth control, using your religious beliefs against you, withholding medical help, controlling your money, keeping you from your family or friends, and/or using physical attacks such as kicks, pushes, hits, slaps, punching holes in the walls, destroying your belongings, hair pulling, choking, etc.

## Assessing the Danger in your Relationship

The following questions may help you examine how dangerous your situation is and how it is affecting your life. The number of "YES" answers does not necessarily indicate greater or lesser danger, but answering these questions can alert you to what you may already suspect about the dangerousness of your situation.

***Remember: Domestic violence can lead to death.***

- ◆ Has your partner ever threatened your life?
- ◆ Has your partner threatened violent retaliation if you leave?
- ◆ Has your partner ever injured you so badly you needed medical attention?
- ◆ Does your partner seem preoccupied or obsessed with you? (following you, monitoring your whereabouts, stalking)
- ◆ Has your partner's assaults or abuse become more violent or brutal?
- ◆ Do you believe your partner may seriously hurt or kill you?
- ◆ Has your partner threatened, harmed, or killed a family pet?
- ◆ Was your partner's last relationship abusive?
- ◆ Has your partner ever been charged with domestic violence?
- ◆ Do you feel isolated from sources of help? (phone, family, or friends is restricted?)
- ◆ Does your partner have access to a gun?

**Victim Advocates can help you. They are trained in domestic violence issues, are available 24 hours a day, and there is no charge for services.**



To reach an advocate

**CALL:**

**24 hours/day .. 7 days a week**

**PEACEFUL PATHS HOTLINE:**

**352-377-8255 OR  
1-800-393 SAFE (7233)**

**Monday-Friday,  
8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
Office of the State Attorney  
**352-374-3627**  
Ask to speak to a  
domestic violence Victim  
Advocate**

# A Domestic Violence Safety Plan

Because  
you have the right to  
live a life free of  
fear and violence

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