

My Exit Plan Checklist

BEFORE I LEAVE

- 1. Communicate my decision to leave to my safest and closest advocates. Identify a code word or signal that I can use if I need help.
- 2. Consult with an experienced family law attorney or legal professional to gain an understanding of my state's separation and divorce laws. Ideally find someone who has represented abuse survivors.
- 3. Locate and assemble essential documents and items (birth certificates, wills, financials, passports, SS cards, insurance cards, taxes, car titles, etc.). Also gather any items of sentimental value.
- 4. Acquire job skills if new employment will need to be sought.
- 5. Assemble any records of the abuse (photographs of injuries, police reports, journal of emotional abuse). **This will be helpful in the event you need to file for a restraining order.
- 6. Set money aside that only I have access to.
- 7. Pack a bag to keep in my vehicle, at work, or a family member/friend's house. **Do not keep the bag in your home to avoid tipping your abuser off to you leaving.
- 8. Take note of important phone numbers of friends, relatives, emergency contacts, etc. in the event my phone is taken.
- 9. Determine the current threat level of my partner from 1 to 10 (i.e. will they leave if asked, physically retaliate, threaten suicide, etc).
- 10. Based on that threat level, reach out to DV advocates for backup during the first 24 hours to 1 week of my exit.
- 11. Find a trauma-informed group, therapist or coach for support during my transition
- 12. Choose when and how I will leave or ask for my partner to leave and execute my exit plan. **If you are leaving, know your abuser's schedule and identify a safe time to leave. Also come up with several believable reasons why you need to leave the house if you sense trouble is brewing.

My Exit Plan Checklist

AFTER I LEAVE

- 1. File for a restraining order & inform neighbors, school, work, etc. that there is a restraining order in place.
- 2. Change up my routine and alter my work hours and route to work if possible. Use different stores and social spots than previously used.
- 3. Change my phone number (unless kids are involved) and turn off location
- 4. services. As an alternative, purchase a second burner phone to use in the interim. **You want to make it difficult for the abusive person to contact you again.
- 5. Consider renting a PO Box for mail. **Be aware that addresses are on restraining orders and police reports.
- 6. Protect my privacy. Change usernames & passwords (email, social media, etc.). Check my phone to ensure there haven't been any smartphone apps installed to track or record my activities.
- 7. Cancel old bank accounts and credit cards (especially those shared with my abuser). Open new accounts with a different bank.
- 8. Change beneficiaries of 401K, IRAs, life insurance, etc. Also consider any
- 9. shared accounts (Uber, Venmo, etc.) and remove my abuser from having access or create new accounts.
- 10. Install a security system and motion-sensor lights outside.
- 11. Go no (or low, if you share children) contact with my abuser.