

Domestic Violence: *Everyone Knows a Victim* - July 15, 2024

Resources Provided by
[Victims' Intervention Program](#) (VIP) of Wayne and Pike Counties

Safety Planning

A safety plan is a plan a woman makes in which she identifies ways she can protect herself during a violent incident and reduce the risk of serious harm. Safety planning requires a holistic conception of safety: “a victim who is no longer hit by a partner but has no way to feed her children or pay rent is not safe. Nor is she safe if she experiences debilitating effects of trauma or lives in social isolation.” With this broad view of what makes a victim safe, safety plans must be comprehensive. This means that while plans will discuss violence, they will not be focused entirely on violence.

One of the most crucial, yet frequently overlooked, aspects of safety and safety planning is taking care of yourself. This includes your physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing.

Physical: Prepare for leaving, leaving, and/or after leaving an abusive relationship. Things to bring, where to go, ensure safety afterwards.

Emotional/Mental: Developing ways to move forward from a violent past. After leaving a partner who has abused you, starting fresh and new environments can bring relief, but also can be stressful and disorienting. The sense of healing is a lifetime journey, and it's very individualized.

- *Understand emotional safety:* Find a place where you can feel emotionally safe, such as talking to a trained advocate or trusted person about what you're going through. Often, they can validate what you're feeling and help you return to a calmer emotional state.
- *Address the trauma:* The physical and emotional aftereffects of abuse can take a toll on a person's ability to create a plan and put it into action. People affected by trauma may wonder what's wrong with them when they have trouble processing information. Find a support group with other

individuals of shared experience. Know you aren't alone and validate how you're feeling.

- *Understand mixed feelings:* Someone can be relieved to get away from abuse and still miss the partner or parent they've left. Some people are still very much in love with their abusive partner. Learn more about the trauma you've endured. Educating yourself on different types of domestic violence as well as tactics abusers use, some of which may have been used against you, can help you reach a place of understanding. Furthermore, learning about triggers that can send you back into a state of panic or anxiety can help you prepare better to deal with them when they arise.
- *Reach out for support:* After leaving, a survivor may feel alone. All survivors' journeys are different—you may relish in this sense of independence, or your new solo journey may mean you start to feel emotionally unstable. If needed, this is the time to ask for support. A domestic violence advocate points the way to resources. Also, consider making a list of trusted people, even if you've lost touch. Think of each connection to rebuild a web of support.

Online Resources

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence

www.pcadv.org

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

<https://ncadv.org/>

National Network to End Domestic Violence

<https://nnev.org/>

National Domestic Violence Hotline

www.thehotline.org

Office on Violence Against Women

www.justice.gov/ovw

National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma, and Mental Health

<https://ncdvtmh.org/>

For resources & information specifically related to children and trauma, visit the National Child Traumatic Stress Network at <https://www.nctsn.org/>

Journal Article: *Intimate partner violence, substance use, and health comorbidities among women: A narrative review*

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9912846/>

- 64% of IPV-EW report that violence exposure hindered their ability to work
- adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) including childhood physical and sexual abuse, adversity, and a family history of (or witness to) IPV are associated with increased risk for IPV exposure in adulthood as well as increased risk for substance use

Editorial: *Matters of the Heart and Mind: Interpersonal Violence and Cardiovascular Disease in Women*

<https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/JAHA.120.015479>

Editorial: *Homicide is a leading cause of death for pregnant women in US*

<https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.o2499>

Guns & Domestic Violence

- <https://policy.futureswithoutviolence.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Guns-and-Domestic-Violence-Fact-Sheet-2.pdf>
- <https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2497/pennsylvania-2021101912193522.pdf>