



How To Begin Safety Planning

The following interview guidelines can help elicit a safety plan based upon a survivor's strengths and experience. The safety plan should be conducted by an RD or trained counselor.

- Ask questions that help you to learn about useful coping strategies and resources. Ask what the person has done in the past and what the outcome was.
- As the person tells her or his story, be sure to acknowledge out loud times he or she showed courage, resourcefulness or strength. Note, for instance, how remarkable it is that, in spite of the abuse and how they might be feeling, they get up in the morning, go to classes and do well, hold down a job, maintain friendships or whatever “every day thing” the individual accomplishes.
- Ask specific questions about coping and self care — what activities, places or people can and/or have functioned as an oasis for them, and is it possible to build on that oasis experience.
- Let them know that they have a right to feel the way they do, whether it is overwhelmed, terrified, angry, bitter, exhausted, tearful, desperate or some other emotion.
- Let the person know that you know how much courage and strength it is taking for her or him to be talking with you about their situation.
- Ask specific questions about support people — does anyone in the individual's life know about the violence? Can they think of even just one person whom they would trust to start talking to about their situation? How have the other people in their life reacted to the situation?
- When it is feasible, work with the individual on a plan to further develop the strengths that have been identified.

Make a Home/Date Safety Plan

- If you feel your life is in immediate danger: Call the police, **911**
- Call the National Hotline to talk with a counselor about making a safety plan: 800-799-SAFE
- Avoid going on long trips alone with your partner
- Tell your RA/PHE/roommates about the situation
- Arrange for double dates — if possible try not to be alone with your partner
- Keep your cell phone with you; keep money for transportation on your body
- If the abuser also lives in your residence hall, try to get transferred into another building, switch rooms, etc.
- Try to let friends, roommates and RAs/PHEs know where you are going and when you should be back — check in with them while you're out
- If your abuser has a copy of your key, request that they return it to you or change your locks
- Avoid arguments in the kitchen as this is the most dangerous room in the house
- If you plan to break up with your partner, plan for safety, stay somewhere else, do it in a busy place and arrange for transportation