



# HOW TO MAKE A PLAN TO LEAVE AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP SAFELY

Step by Step Guide

Narcissist & Domestic Abuse Recovery Coaching  
[www.selfloveafterabuse.com](http://www.selfloveafterabuse.com)

# How to make a plan to leave an abusive relationship safely

Once you decide to leave, escaping an abusive relationship can be dangerous. Safety should be your top concern, as abuse often escalates during a breakup. To help keep you and your children safe, if possible, you will need to take some time before you leave to develop a safety plan.

A safety plan is a personalised, practical plan that includes ways to remain safe while in a relationship, planning to leave, or after you leave. Safety planning involves how to cope with emotions, telling friends and family about the abuse, taking legal action and more. In this plan I focus on the things you need to think about when you are planning to leave the relationship.

It is really important to have a safety plan in place for times when your abusive partner gets violent and you need to immediately escape from the situation. It is also important to have a safety plan for when you separate from your partner. This plan can help to make sure that you and your children are able to leave without the risk of more violence.

Thinking and planning this in advance is helpful because in moments of crisis your brain doesn't function the same way as when you are calm. When adrenaline is pumping through your veins it can be hard to think clearly or make logical decisions about your safety. Having a safety plan laid out in advance can help you protect yourself in those stressful moments.

## Set A Timetable

The idea of leaving may overwhelm you at first. You may have fears about money, safety, your future and your children. Considering these factors is a crucial step in determining the exact timing of your departure; but these decisions should not be made in isolation. Finding help and support for your situation is vital.

Contact a [counsellor trained in abuse](#) or a shelter in your area. If the first person you talk to does not take your situation seriously, keep trying until you find someone who will listen to you. Your support person should allow you to set your own timetable. Do not let someone else make decisions for you.

Be realistic in setting your goals. Can you be ready to be leave in three months? Six months? A year? Only you can decide the exact timing. Learning to trust yourself, and your instincts will serve you well once you leave.

## Before you leave

- Keep any evidence of physical abuse, such as pictures of injuries.

- Keep a journal of all violent incidences, noting dates, events and threats made, if possible. Keep your journal in a safe place.
- Know where you can go to get help. Tell someone what is happening to you.
- If you are injured, go to a doctor or an emergency room and report what happened to you. Ask that they document your visit.
- Plan with your children and identify a safe place for them, like a room with a lock or a friend's house where they can go for help. Reassure your children that their job is to stay safe, not to protect you.
- Contact your local shelter and find out about laws and other resources available to you before you have to use them during a crisis.
- Acquire job skills or take courses at a community college as you can.
- Try to set money aside or ask friends or family members to hold money for you.

## If you need to leave immediately

Make a plan for how and where you will escape quickly. You may request a police escort or stand-by when you leave. Have a bag packed with personal items, clothes, medication, copies of documents, cash and a pre-paid mobile phone. Leave this bag at a friend's house or hide it at your place of work. Hide an extra set of keys in a place you can get to quickly. Use the checklists below to help you think of the items you will need to put in this bag.

If your life is in danger call 999 or 911 immediately.

## Checklist for leaving

Below is a list of everything you will need to do when you are preparing to leave. Some of this you will do in preparation to leave and the rest is what you will need to do afterwards to keep yourself and your children safe.

### **Have a Code Word**

Work it out in advance and share it with your most trusted friends or family or even neighbours so when you use it, they know you're in danger and can either come over and intervene or call the police.

### **Identification**

- Driver's license
- Birth certificate and children's birth certificates
- Financial information
- Money and/or credit cards (in your name)
- Checking and/or savings account cards

### **Legal Papers**

- Protective orders

- Copies of lease or rental agreements, or the deed to your home
- Car registration and insurance papers
- Health and life insurance papers
- Medical records for you and your children
- School records
- Work permits/green Card/visa
- Passport
- Divorce certificate
- Marriage certificate
- Birth certificates
- Court Orders

### **Emergency Numbers**

- Your local police and/or sheriff's department
- Your local domestic abuse program or shelter
- Friends, relatives and family members
- Your local doctor's office and hospital

### **Banking and Finances**

- Open a new bank account with a new bank, ensure that statements are online only and to a new email address that isn't linked to your phone.
- Pick up the card from the bank and hide it well. Maybe under the sole insert in a shoe, unused board game, at work, there are many places.
- Do not download the banking app to your phone!
- Start putting what you can in that account. Any birthday money from friends or family, an unnoticeable amount from your wage, don't transfer to this account yourself. And any change you find around the house, for instance a 600ml bottle of coke full of £2 coins will save £1000.
- If you have debit/credit cards, report them stolen so the abuser can't access them once new numbers are provided.
- Budget - work out your income and expenses. Try using an online budget planner.
- When you go out shopping start buying gift cards in small amounts. Amounts the abuser will not notice on your grocery shopping list. Food and petrol as they add up and can be used later.

### **Phone**

- Buy a cheap mobile and a spare sim, set that up and hide it, fully charged. You will need this when you turn your main one off to ensure they can't contact or track you.
- A project called The Lifeline programme is being run with the charity SafeLives and Vodafone, they will provide you with a mobile, sim and credit. Contact [SafeLives](#) for more information.

## **Possessions**

- Start sending important things that won't be noticed missing to loved ones, work or storage. Things like your photos, sentimental items, jewellery, and paperwork but not all at once, do this is over time.
- For any clothes you can't carry in a bag, but you want to keep. Do a “clean out”, say you are donating them and get them somewhere safe.
- If you can, start selling things worth value that you don't need and will not be noticed as missing, put that money in your new account.

## **Work**

- If you work, tell your manager what is happening so that they can be understanding for when the time comes, and also so the abuser can't sweet talk information out of your colleagues.
- Some workplaces provide Domestic Abuse Leave, or you could take it under compassionate leave.
- If you work for a large company, ask for a transfer.
- If not, have your working hours randomized for a while to ensure you don't have a continuous or steady work schedule.
- You can also ask for security to escort you to and from the car park.
- Arrange to have your calls screened by a receptionist if possible.
- Change the route you take to and from work.

## **Tax Credits / Child Benefit**

- After you have left, contact tax credits and let them know of your new address, and bank details.

## **Family and Friends**

- You may have lost some by this point, but that doesn't mean that they won't try and help you. Reach out, help is necessary, especially if kids are involved.

## **Housing**

- If you are renting and are remaining in the home, contact your landlord and change the lease so that only your name is on it. If you are leaving the home, take your name off the lease.
- Start looking for somewhere once you know you are almost ready; the first agent may be able to help with this.
- Move in with family or friends
- Phone your local Council, and see if they have emergency accommodation available and put your name on their housing list.
- Talk to a [refuge](#) if the above options won't work
- If you own a property and they are not on the mortgage you can get the police to remove them.



- ❑ If you have a joint mortgage, you might want to think about getting an Occupation Order, speak to [DV Assist](#) to help you with this.
- ❑ Utility Bills: If you are staying in the home, put all utility bills in your name only. If you have left the home, take your name off all utility bills. You may need legal advice if there are any bills owing. Call your utility companies, and secure your private information with special pin codes and passwords.
- ❑ If you have a mortgage, let your lender know you have separated.
- ❑ Trouble with Debt: If you are finding it hard to keep up with your bills talk to the company and let them know you are experiencing financial hardship, or speak to [StepChange](#).

### **Police**

- ❑ Let the police know of your plan in case something goes wrong. They can also help you get the remainder of your things at a later date.
- ❑ If you need to file for a non-molestation order or occupation order, speak to [DV Assist](#), as they will be able to help you.

### **Children**

- ❑ If you have children, you either take them with you at the time, or have someone you trust to do it.
- ❑ If they are at school, you need to let the school know in advance so that the abuser can't collect them from there.
- ❑ You also need to get them out of that school early and not keep to your normal routine.
- ❑ Change the route taken to transport children to school or consider changing your children's schools.
- ❑ Change schools if you need to.
- ❑ You might need to go to Family Court, to sort out residency and contact issues, before you do have a read of my "[How to Prepare for Family Court eBook](#)", and if you need extra support you might want to book in a [coaching session](#) with me, as I am a qualified McKenzie Friend.

### **Create safety around the children**

One of the main reasons for ongoing contact between separated or divorced couples is the children. Abusive people can attempt to regain power and control over their partner or ex-partner by using their children. They can pressure their children for information, use contact with the children as a way of seeing their partner or ex-partner, threaten or harm their children to get back at them and/or create custody challenges to cause further emotional and financial abuse.

If you have children when you separate from your partner, it is important that you obtain legal advice, and make sure you are documenting everything. You can use an app called [Bright Sky](#). You will also want to start using the "Grey Rock" technique when dealing

with your ex, I can help you learn this technique, as it will emotionally protect you, so [send me a message](#) if you want to find out more.

### Animals

- If you have pets talk to your local RSPCA or Cats Protection as they will find a free foster carer to care for your animals until you are settled.

### Planning your escape date

- Find a day that the abuser will be away for a few hours. Be nice leading up to the event, plan the weekend, dinner etc. This will keep the abuser's paranoia low; they will think they have you right where they want you.

### Leaving

- By now you should have money in your accounts and a new phone. Your kids and pets organised, your irreplaceable belongings should be safe elsewhere, and you should know exactly where you are headed once you close the door on this chapter of your life.

Your safety plan should include ways to **ensure your continued safety** after leaving an abusive relationship. Here are some safety precautions to consider:

- Change all internet banking passwords.
- Change all social media passwords.
- Change all the email addresses linked to your social accounts to the secret one you set up.
- Change PayPal password.
- Block them on all social media platforms.
- Block their mobile number.
- Change your mobile number.
- Turn that phone off and turn on the spare phone or do a factory reset on your phone and insert a new SIM.
- Contact anyone you need to from the new phone and keep your number on private.
- Change your name on social media along with your profile picture (something generic).
- Block anyone who is friends with both of you.
- Get a PO Box or virtual address, and get your mail redirected.
- Change your locks.
- Call the telephone company to request caller ID. Ask that your phone number be blocked so that if you call anyone, neither your partner nor anyone else will be able to get your new, unlisted phone number.
- If you have a restraining order, keep a certified copy of it with you at all times, and inform friends, neighbours and employers that you have a restraining order in effect.

- Give copies of the restraining order to employers, neighbours and schools along with a picture of the abuser.
- Reschedule appointments that the abuser is aware of.
- Use different stores and frequent different social spots.
- Alert neighbours and request that they call the police if they feel you may be in danger.
- Replace wooden doors with steel or metal doors. Install security systems if possible.
- Install a motion sensitive lighting system.
- Install CCTV.

The abuser is the most dangerous when they realise, they have lost control of their possession, this is you. Changing all of your social media settings and names is a must, as it is too easy to find anyone these days. If the abuser still finds you, close down all accounts (even temporarily), you can start fresh ones.

The abuser will try anything and everything, even suicide threats to get your attention. Do not fall for the games as the abuser is just craving any information on your whereabouts to feel like they are gaining some control back.

If possible, it is vital that you cease all contact until you are strong enough to not believe the manipulation and lies that the abuser will use to lure you back.

## **Stalking & Harassment**

Stalking is “a pattern of unwanted, fixated and obsessive behaviour which is intrusive and causes fear of violence or serious alarm or distress”

### **6 Golden Rules If You Are Being Stalked**

**R** - report it to police. Stalking is a crime. Tell people what's happening to you.

**E** - evidence collection. Save and retain all evidence.

**P** - practical advice from experts like Paladin and the National Stalking Helpline.

**O** - overview of what's going on. Keep a diary with the time, date, stamp of the behaviour.

**R** - risk screening questions. Answer the 12 S-DASH questions.

**T** - Trust your instinct.

*If you are being stalked and you are based in the UK, you can call Paladin on 020 3866 410 or the National Stalking Helpline on 0808 802 0300. If you are based in the US, you can call the Stalking Resource Centre at the National Centre for Victims of Crime on 855-484-2846.*

[www.paladinservice.co.uk](http://www.paladinservice.co.uk)

<https://www.suzylamplugh.org/>



<https://www.dashriskchecklist.co.uk/>

<https://www.alicerugglestrust.org/>

## Where to go to get Financial and Practical Support

It can be hard when we are in an abusive relationship and have experienced financial abuse, and yet we know it's time for us to leave, but we worry about how we can support ourselves and our children.

Below are some links and information on where you can get financial and practical support.

### Money & Food Support

If you contact your local food bank, DV shelter, The House of Ruth, or Church, they will help you get food for right now, until you can contact the SNaP office and apply for emergency assistance.

You can also call the Domestic Violence Hotline and ask them to help you find agencies in your area to help feed, clothe and get nappies for your children.

Contact your local Church, even if you don't belong to one, [Catholic Community Services](#), [Salvation Army](#), and [Vinnies](#) will supply you with formula and diapers so look up them in your area.

Look up food banks near you, and sign up for a WIC and an EBT card, they might not be able to help right now but in the future, it will really help

Lasagne Love, will make and deliver to you, a home cooked lasagne for free:  
<https://lasagnalove.org/request/>

If you are in the USA, go to the EBT Office and file for a domestic violence grant to help with costs.

If you are in the UK, contact Tax Credits / Child Benefit via the <https://www.gov.uk/topic/benefits-credits/tax-credits> or your local job centre and find out what you are eligible to claim.

### Facebook Groups

Facebook has loads of "give me your money groups" all you need to do is post and leave your cashapp or Venmo. There are always people willing to help out.

Here are some links to groups to get you started.

- **Give me your money:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/gmyu/?ref=share>

- **Resources for Homeless and struggling families!:**  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2150311231939191>
- **Free items for people in need! (NEPA):**  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1620812191486353>
- **Families Helping Families:** <https://www.facebook.com/famhelpingfam.org>
- **Local food banks, free food, free clothes, let's help each other:**  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/782252108647219>
- **Free Stuff by Mail:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/583368842050274>
- **Free food and clothes for families and people in need:**  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/free.food.clothes>

If you need assistance there is a non-profit organization in Maryland, called Opening New Doors Foundation, Inc. and they offer practical assistance, no matter where in the USA you are - [www.facebook.com/openingnewdoorsmd/](http://www.facebook.com/openingnewdoorsmd/)

You can also contact Lou Feltham at [www.facebook.com/miraclemumsmovement](http://www.facebook.com/miraclemumsmovement) she will be able to put you in contact with other support services.

Also, every state has a Facebook page which provides human milk for babies. Woman post milk donations or post looking for donations. If you are not producing you can reach out and get your baby some milk.

**Remember** you are not alone, and for emotional support on your journey, my Facebook Support Group: [www.facebook.com/groups/SelfLoveAfterAbuse](http://www.facebook.com/groups/SelfLoveAfterAbuse)

## About the Author

This leaving plan has been produced by Zoe Parsons, Narcissist & Domestic Abuse Coach and Counsellor.

Zoe went from being in an extremely abusive relationship, where she experienced physical, sexual and emotional abuse to helping others heal and recover from abuse. She has first-hand experience of the effects of abuse and how damaging being in an abusive relationship is, as well as the entangled confusion and complexity of a power and control based intimate relationship.

She is a qualified Coach and Counsellor and has a proven track-record, specialising in helping people recover from abuse. She named her coaching practice 'Self Love After Abuse' because one of the first steps to healing is starting to love yourself.

In 2016 Zoe took her facilitator training for The Freedom Programme and has run support groups for women who have experienced abuse. Zoe is also one of the UK's 43 facilitator's who are able to run this program for primary school children.

Zoe is also a 'Be Real' Body Confidence Ambassador as often after abuse you feel worthless but Zoe can help you to grow in self-love and to be body confident. Because no matter how you have been treated or what you have been told about how you look, you are beautiful, worthy and deserve so much more.

Zoe is also a qualified McKenzie Friend. She offers a range of personalised Family Law services to help you with an upcoming hearing where you're representing yourself in court. Afterwards, you'll feel prepared and confident, knowing you've increased the chances of the outcome going in your favour.

If you are in a toxic relationship, Zoe can help you, she will walk you through the process of leaving and help you take control. She will educate you about the types of abuse and the tactics an abuser uses and will help you find your confidence, self-worth & self-esteem.

Recovering from abuse takes time and on-going support, and Zoe is there to help you. She will educate, validate, support, encourage, and empower you on your journey to [Self Love After Abuse](#) and although the path to freedom can be a bumpy one, it's so worth walking, so why not [contact](#) Zoe, and let her help you on your journey of recovery.

If you want to find out more about how I can help you, why don't you book in for your [FREE](#) video consultation call with me.

You can also follow Zoe on:

