

Safety Planning: Tips for Safety and Confidence

- Stand up for yourself. If the abuse is just starting, tell the abuser that his/her behavior is not acceptable and that you won't put up with it. Talk to a trusted adult or peer about what's happening.
- Be careful. If the abuse is ongoing and the abuser is accustomed to getting his/her own way, you may risk more violence if you stand up for yourself. If you're afraid this might happen, try to get support from an adult or friend before you make a stand. Don't try it when you're alone with the abuser, and be prepared to take the step of leaving in order to escape the abuse.
- Remember that the abuse isn't your fault. Don't be ashamed to tell someone about the abuse. It's not your fault, it's the abuser's problem. Encourage him/her to get help.
- Hurting yourself isn't the answer. It's normal to feel down when you're being hurt. Some people who are being abused feel like suicide is the only real option. If you feel this way, it might be because you believe the abuser's put-downs or because you're turning your anger on yourself. Use your anger instead to take care of yourself. There really are options and steps you can take to make things better for yourself. Praise yourself for what you do well, and have faith in your future. If you are feeling suicidal, it may help to talk to someone about your feelings.
- Tell someone about the abuse. Sometimes just talking about the abuse can make you feel better. At other times, an adult or friend might have useful advice or be able to offer help.
- Be careful with alcohol and drugs. Many people use alcohol and drugs to deal with tension or pain. Unfortunately, they'll only drain your energy, keep you helpless, and affect your ability to think clearly. Try to drink or use only in moderation or avoid substances altogether.
- Relax and play. Relieving stress can improve your ability to communicate and make decisions. Physical activity can increase your sense of well-being. Regular exercise done with others can be fun, too.
- Try to eat well. Your physical health affects the way you feel as well as your ability to cope with stress.
- Save money and get some job skills. Knowing you have an emergency fund can help reduce your anxiety. If you have job skills, it'll be easier to avoid depending on others to get by. Even if you can't get a job or don't need one, you can do volunteer work to gain skills and meet new people.
- Know your local resources.
- Look after yourself. You are a strong person, and you can grow stronger when you know you can make it on your own. When you're ready to leave an abusive situation, know that help is there!