

# UNIVERSITY HEALTH CENTER

University of Maryland, College Park



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## Safety Measures for Individuals in Violent Relationships

### Before an Attack

**Make Contacts:** Even though it may be difficult for you, inform roommates, friends, and family members whom you trust about the violence in your relationship. (If you live on campus, also contact your residence hall director.) Talk with the Victim Advocate (301.314.2222) to plan a strategy for preventing future violence and to identify resources on- and off-campus. Report the violence to the UM Department of Public Safety (301.405.3333). Talking with a counselor at the University Health Center (301.314.8106) or the Counseling Center (301.314.7651) also can be very helpful.

**Plan Ahead:** Plan with police, the Victim Advocate, Resident Life staff, friends, and family what you will do if the abuser shows up where you live, follows you, or makes any form of contact with you.

**Have Quick Access to:** A phone, cash, clothing, and important items (especially if you live with the abuser) such as: car title and keys; birth certificates; apartment lease; marriage license; Public Aid I.D. and medical insurance cards; records of partner's income; a list of phone numbers to call for shelter or transportation; credit cards; blank checks; and bank books. Keep an emergency kit containing the keys, cash, and essential papers in an old purse or small container that you can grab easily and quickly before leaving.

### During an Attack

#### Defend and Protect Yourself If You Can

**Call for Help:** Scream loudly and continuously. You do not need to be ashamed.

**Get Away:** Escape if you can. Go to a relative's or friend's room/apartment/house or to a shelter.

**Call the Police:** The police must now attempt to protect you from further abuse. They are required to provide or arrange transportation to a hospital or safe place.

### After an Attack

**Seek Medical Attention Immediately:** Tell the doctor or nurse what happened and ask to have pictures taken of your injuries. Find out how to get copies of records.

**Make a Police Report:** This can be done even if you do not want your abuser arrested. The abuser will not be notified that you made the report. Complete the report within 24 hours if possible.

**Save Evidence:** Include copies of medical records and police reports, dated photographs of your injuries or your living space in disarray, torn clothing, any weapons used, and statements from anyone who heard or saw the attack.

### Order of Protection

**Get a Written Court Order (peace order or civil protective order):** This requires the abuser to do or not to do certain things, for e.g., it can forbid further abuse; order the abuser out of the shared home for a period of time; keep the abuser away from the victim's place of employment, school, or other specified places. It also may prohibit child abduction; require counseling for abusers; and provide other relief as needed (Consult the Domestic Violence Act in your state and get specific information in your locality. This is best done through a local Women's Shelter, which can provide support for you through this process). In PG County: Family Crisis Center, (301.779.2100).

Adapted from the Handbook for Domestic Violence Victims by the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 1986, Chicago, IL: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.

Revised 8.03