

YOU CAN BREAK THE CYCLE

Leaving an abuser can be dangerous. You're the only one who knows the safest time to leave. You may know you are in an abusive relationship and realize you need to leave as soon as you safely can. Or, you may be concerned about your partner's behavior and think you may need to get out at some point in the future. Either way, being prepared can help you leave quickly if you need to. Consider taking these precautions:

- **Arrange a safety signal** with a neighbor as an alert to call the police if necessary.
- **Prepare an emergency bag** that includes items you'll need when you leave, such as extra clothes, important papers, money, extra keys and prescription medications.
- **Know exactly where you'll go and how you'll get there**, even if you have to leave in the middle of the night.
- **Call a local women's shelter or the National Domestic Violence Hotline** at (800) 799-7233 to find out about legal options and resources available to you, before you need them.
- **If you have school-age children**, notify the school authorities or school counselor about custody arrangements.

- **Avoid making long-distance phone calls from home.** Your abuser could trace the calls to find out where you're going.
- **Be cautious when using a cell phone.** Your abuser may be able to intercept conversations using a scanner. Switch to a corded phone if you're relaying sensitive information.
- **Be cautious when using the internet.** Your abuser may monitor the sites you visit. Library internet services may provide a safer connection.

When you are ready, remember the best strategy for breaking free of domestic violence may be the direct opposite of the strategy for surviving abuse. Instead of keeping the abuse secret, your safety will depend on sharing your story, standing up for yourself, and focusing on your needs and the needs of your children rather than on the abuser.

WHERE TO GET HELP

Webpages:

http://www.justicewomen.com/tips_escape.html

<http://www.abanet.org/tips/dvsafety.html>

<http://www.focusministries1.org/>

<http://www.leslievernick.com/home.php?flash=1>

Local services:

Crisis Hotline: 713-228-1505

Katy Christian Ministries 24 hour crisis hotline: 281-381-4357



UMMINGBIRD

MINISTRIES

**SUPPORTING
DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE
SURVIVORS
THROUGH
CHRISTIAN
SERVICE**

I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.

Deuteronomy 30:19

**ARE YOU IN A EMOTIONALLY
DAMAGING RELATIONSHIP OR DO
YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS?**

ABUSE IS ABOUT POWER AND CONTROL NOT ANGER AND RAGE

HOW TO RECOGNIZE ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

You are very likely in an abusive relationship if you have a relationship with someone who does even one of the following:

- *HITS, KICKS, SHOVES, SLAPS, OR CHOKES YOU OR THREATENS YOU WITH VIOLENCE OR A WEAPON*
 - *FORCES YOU TO HAVE SEXUAL INTERCOURSE OR ENGAGE IN SEXUAL ACTS AGAINST YOUR WILL*
 - *CALLS YOU NAMES, INSULTS YOU OR PUTS YOU DOWN TO MAKE YOU FEEL BAD ABOUT YOURSELF.*
 - *MAKES ALL THE MAJOR DECISIONS, DEFINES ROLES IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP, IS IN CHARGE OF THE HOME AND SOCIAL LIFE AND TREATS YOU LIKE A SERVANT OR POSSESSION.*
 - *STOPS YOU FROM SEEING FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OR REQUIRES YOU TO GET PERMISSION TO LEAVE THE HOUSE, DOESN'T ALLOW YOU TO WORK OR ATTEND SCHOOL, AND*
- CONTROLS YOUR ACTIVITIES AND SOCIAL EVENTS. THE ABUSER MAY ASK WHERE YOU HAVE BEEN, TRACK YOUR TIME AND WHEREABOUTS, OR CHECK THE ODOMETER ON YOUR CAR.*
- *HURTS, OR THREATENS TO HURT YOU, YOUR CHILDREN, OR PETS. DISPLAYS WEAPONS IN AN ATTEMPT TO INDUCE FEAR OR GUILT.*
 - *DESTROYS YOUR PROPERTY*
 - *USES YOUR CHILDREN AS PAWNS. ACCUSES YOU OF BAD PARENTING, THREATENS TO TAKE THE CHILDREN AWAY, USES THE CHILDREN TO RELAY MESSAGES, OR THREATENS TO REPORT YOU TO CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES.*
 - *CONTROLS YOUR ACCESS TO MEDICINES*
 - *BLAMES YOU FOR HIS OR HER VIOLENT BEHAVIOR OR TELLS YOU THAT YOU DESERVE IT*
 - *SAYS THAT HIS OR HER ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR IS NO BIG DEAL OR EVEN DENIES DOING IT. THIS MAY LEAVE YOU CONFUSED AND UNSURE OF YOURSELF.*
 - *TRIES TO FORCE YOU TO DROP CHARGES*
 - *TRIES TO PREVENT YOU FROM CALLING THE POLICE OR SEEKING MEDICAL*

CARE

- *SHAME YOU FOR WANTING TO LEAVE. USES THE BIBLE TO MAKE YOU STAY.*

WHAT YOU MAY BE FEELING

- *PAIN — PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, SPIRITUAL*
- *FEAR — FOR YOURSELF AND OTHERS*
- *ISOLATED AND ALONE*
- *CONFUSED*
- *POWERLESS AND DEFENSELESS*
- *BROKEN AND EXHAUSTED*
- *THREATENED AND INTIMIDATED*
- *GRIEF*
- *SHAME*

THESE FEELINGS ARE NORMAL FOR YOUR SITUATION.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

IF YOU ARE IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP, YOU CAN SEEK HELP. REMEMBER YOU HAVE A CHOICE.