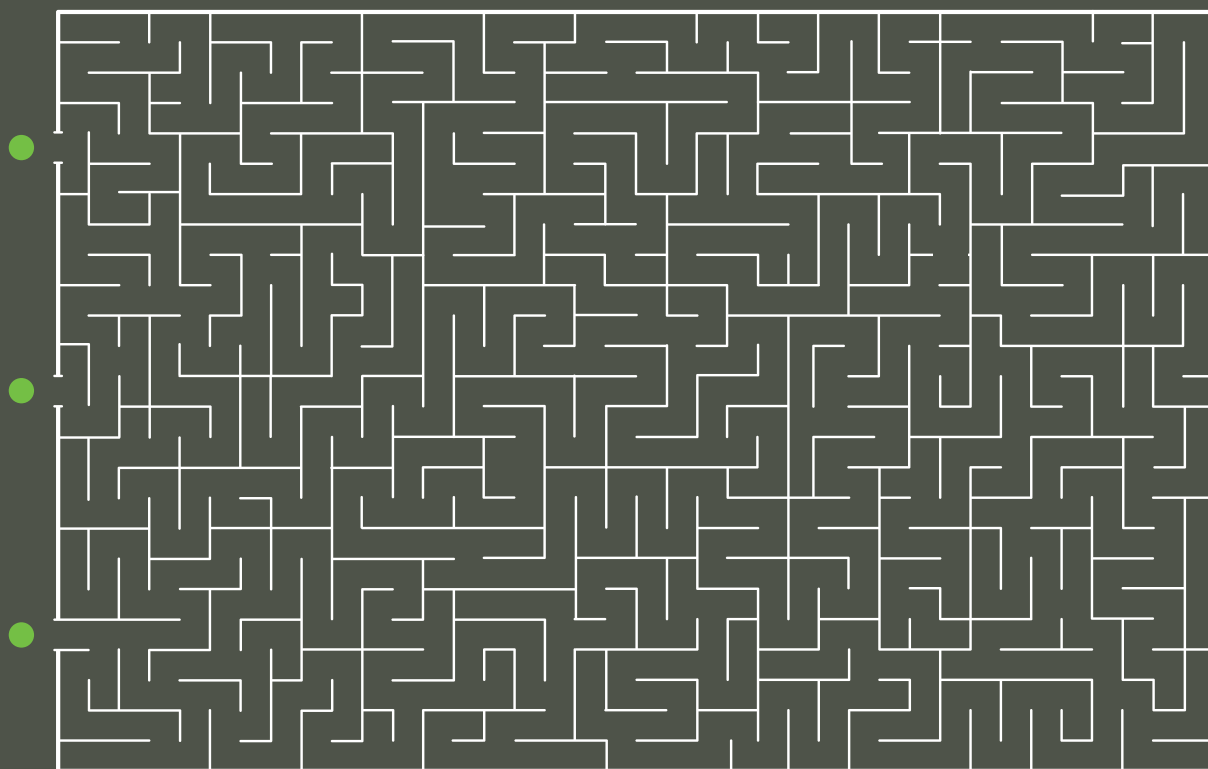


Your Escape from Abuse



This Escape Guide has been designed to help you plan and implement a sustainable escape from domestic violence and intimate partner abuse. But it is a guide only.

We strongly recommend you consult your local domestic violence support services or counsellor for professional help. We also strongly recommend you reach out to trusted family members and friends for support and assistance.

If you are employed, your employer may offer an Employee Assistance Program (also known as an EAP service) which provides free and highly confidential counselling services. This could be another great source of professional help.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-FOUNDER

When I realised I was in an abusive relationship, I had no idea what to expect. Back then, there were few resources available and I didn't know where to go for help. Things are a bit different now but I still think there's important information every victim of intimate partner abuse needs to know. It's why we began Escape to Better Foundation.

3 Things I wished someone had told me

There are 3 things I didn't know that would have better prepared me to escape from my abuser. They are:

- 1 In all probability, the longer you stay in the relationship, the worse the abuse will get.
- 2 Even after you leave, your abuser will still try to intimidate, frighten and control you so always be vigilant. Your safety depends on this.
- 3 You will be in greatest danger when you try to leave and in the months following your departure.

Thankfully, I managed to get out safely by relying heavily on my intuition and learning to recognise the likely triggers for my abusive life partner.

The one big thing I'd do differently

With hindsight and the knowledge I now have, I believe I should have left the relationship earlier than I did. At the time, I was concerned about getting a job that could support me. That took time and included a probation period where I had employment insecurity for several months. I also placed great value on my belongings and didn't want to leave without them.

But when I look around my home, I have very few of those belongings now.

I literally risked my life by staying too long in an abusive relationship to hang on to things that eventually had no value.

Please don't make the same mistake

These days, I would tell myself to leave that abusive relationship as quickly as possible because the only things that I truly value are:

- My health and stamina
- My ability to earn an income to support myself
- My two dogs (or for you it might be your children or other pets)
- A bit of cash and access to important documents like my driver's license and bank account details

Everything else can be replaced. It may take time and it may be annoying but everything else can be replaced.



I'm really sorry you are in an abusive relationship. I hope this guide helps you make a safe and sustainable escape.

Very best wishes,
Karen Anderson

OUR SUGGESTED ESCAPE GUIDE

Abusive people are volatile and unpredictable. That's why you can't trust them and why you need to leave them. It also means that when they are in a rage and you want to leave, you may not be able to access your car (if you have one) or things like your medication, important documents etc.

For this reason we suggest you have 4 different escape plans. But remember, your goal should be to leave your abuser before it's urgent or an emergency.

Plan #1

YOU NEED TO GET HELP URGENTLY. If you are in a crisis, call your local emergency services to access police or urgent medical assistance. If you have children, it is also wise to teach them how to call your local emergency services.

Plan #2

FOR TIMES WHEN YOU FEEL THE TENSION BUILDING IN YOUR ABUSER AND YOU WANT TO LEAVE BEFORE YOU ARE HURT. Make an innocent excuse to get you, your children and/or pets out of the house. An example to leave might be you want to take them to the park.

In case you are unable to leave the house, have a pre-arranged agreement with trusted family members or friends to come and get you. Depending on the age of your children and their ability to keep a secret, it may be wise to give them these contact details as well – just in case your abuser is preventing you from using your phone.

With either of these plans, you need to be mentally prepared to leave everything behind for the sake of your safety. But your safety is what truly matters.

Plan #3

PREPARE AN EMERGENCY ESCAPE BAG AND STORE IT IN ANOTHER LOCATION. Having an emergency escape bag packed and ready for when you need it means you have some possessions to get you through the first few days of your escape. It's important to store this bag somewhere away from your home so it's available if you need to leave in a hurry. If you have children, you may need to have a couple of emergency bags – one for each of you.

Some suggestions for what to pack are:

- Any cash you can save so you have money available for things you couldn't pack
- Your credit/debit card and your bank account details
- Underwear, a pair of shoes and a change of clothes
- Any medications you take or a prescription to obtain them (For women, this may include birth control)
- A few toiletries (For women, this may include sanitary items like tampons)
- For your children, perhaps their second favourite toy, a change of clothes, underwear and shoes, plus any medications they may need and a toothbrush

OUR SUGGESTED ESCAPE GUIDE

Plan #4

A PLANNED DEPARTURE FROM YOUR HOME AND ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP. You may think this is your ideal scenario but it will be extremely challenging to achieve without your abusive partner discovering your plans. That's what makes it so dangerous! Your plans to leave are highly likely to enrage your abuser. So be careful and only attempt this if you can be confident your abusive partner won't discover your plan until after you have left your home.

REMEMBER: *No matter which plan you use, you will be in great danger in the leadup, during and for many months after you leave your abuser. So when you confide in someone and ask for their help, ensure you explain this to them.*

CONFIDENTIALITY IS KEY

You will need help to plan and implement a sustainable escape from abuse but think carefully about who you can trust.

Your children could accidentally reveal you are planning an escape or talk about their emergency escape bag.

Sometimes family or friends may inadvertently reveal you are planning to leave in the heat of the moment when talking to your abusive partner.

Ensure the people who help you understand their silence is essential to your safety and the safety of your children or pets (if you have any).

DISCLAIMER: This advice is provided in good faith and as a guide only. We recommend you seek professional advice, tailored to your specific situation. Your local domestic violence support services or trained and qualified counsellors are often great resources for assistance.

In addition, your employer or your abusive partner's employer may offer an Employee Assistance Program (often called EAP). They provide free and highly confidential outsourced counselling services so you don't need to worry that your manager will learn about your situation or your abuser will discover your plans.

The Escape to Better Foundation disclaims all liability for any adverse consequences resulting from anyone relying on this guide or our advice in general.