



Women's Shelter of York Region Inc.

Safety Plan for Women & Youth

FINDING A SAFE PLACE DURING A VIOLENT INCIDENT

Recommended Safety Tips:

- Figure out ahead of time a safe place you can go to inside your home when there is fighting, arguing, and/or loud voices that make you feel scared or worried.
- A safe place in your home is anywhere where the fighting, loud noises and arguing are not happening.
- Going to your safe place does not mean you have to hide. It just means getting away from the fighting. Stay there until the fighting stops.
- If there is a lock on the door of a room, this might be good place to choose because you can lock the door.
- While keeping yourself out of the way of the fighting, you might want to do something that makes you feel better, like:
 - Listen to music.
 - Watch television.
 - Write, draw pictures, or play a video game.
 - Be with any of your brothers/sisters and talk or play a game together.
 - Remember to give yourself positive messages and use techniques you have learned to help keep yourself calm such as breathing techniques (take a deep breath and count to 10) and going to a space or room that makes you feel calmer.
 - Call the Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868 and talk to someone if it is safe to do so.
- If you think you might be safer outside of your home during the fighting, think ahead of time about some safe places to go to. Talk with your mother or caregiver about where that safe place will be so you can meet up together after the fighting, when it is safer. Figure out how you will get there: walk, ride your bike, take a bus, call someone for a ride, or call a taxi.
- Try to keep some money in your pocket, purse, or room, for things like making a call from a public pay phone if there is one, or buying a bus ticket.
- Getting in the middle of the fighting could be dangerous for you. Although you may feel conflicted about the fighting and may want to stop the fighting yourself, it is safer for you and your mother or caregiver, if you do not get involved. If you need or want to stay close by, stay out of sight, and if possible, have a phone nearby.



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CALLING FOR HELP

Recommended Safety Tips:

- You are not responsible for keeping your mother or caregiver safe, but you may be able to get help. Talk to your mother about a code or special word only the two of you will know, that she can say out loud to let you know when you should call for help.
- You could also talk with your mother or caregiver about a signal only the two of you will know that she can use to let you know something is going on. (For example, if you are not at home when the fighting is starting, your mother and you could agree that, if possible, she will turn on the porch light, or close certain window blinds to let you know to go somewhere safe).
- Know how to phone to get help from emergency services if you think someone is getting hurt, you don't feel safe, or if you hear your mother say the code word.
- Try to use a phone that is not in the room where the fighting is happening or use a cell phone. Even if your cell phone minutes are used up, you can still dial 911 and get through. If it is safe to do so, go to a neighbour's house and use the phone there, or to another safe place, such as a local store, to make a call.

THIS IS HOW YOU MAKE AN EMERGENCY CALL:

- Push the buttons 9-1-1 on the phone for emergency services.
- The people who answer will say, "This is emergency services. Do you need police, fire, or ambulance?" You say: "Police" You say: "My name is _____. I am ___ years old."
- You tell them the problem: "I need help. Send the Police. Someone is hurting my mother."
- You say: "I am calling from (give complete address) ____"
- After you have said these things, the best thing for you to do, if you can, is to stay on the phone. The person on the phone might need to ask you some more questions, or you might want to talk to them some more. If you do hang up the phone, the 911 operator may call back, which could make it dangerous for you and your mother or caregiver.



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- If you cannot stay on the phone because you do not feel safe, tell the person on the phone you are just putting the phone down without hanging it up, until the police arrive.
- No matter what, the fight is not your fault, even if you hear your name in the fight or if you are worried the fight is because of you, for example because you did not clean up your toys or get a good grade in school.
- Adults have many ways to solve conflicts and problems but violence should never be one of them.
- You cannot make a person behave violently or be abusive; how a person behaves is their choice, and you are not to blame for their behaviour.
- Violence against women is dangerous and people can get hurt.
- It is against the law to hurt someone.