

PRACTICE TOOL 8: SAFETY PLAN

All victim survivors of DFV require a safety plan, regardless of the level of assessed risk. The safety plan clearly outlines the responsibilities of the worker and what the victim survivor and worker agree that they will each do. It is developed with the victim survivor and should begin by asking her what she already does to keep herself and her children safe. The plan should be documented and kept by the victim survivor (if safe) and worker(s), and should be regularly reviewed and updated based on ongoing risk assessment.

For more guidance see RAMF Practice Guide 3: Managing DFV Risk

Worker safety planning checklist

- Assist with access to a mobile phone and /or free call for help and support.

- Help the person connect to workplace supports including DFV Leave, workplace safety planning tools, emergency contacts and identify trusted workplace colleague(s).

- Help the person create signals and/or code words and share them with neighbours, friends or family members so that they will know when it is necessary to call for help or to visit if safe.
Examples of signals are a turned-on front light, a closed curtain, or a sentence such as 'I can't come over on Thursday after all' spoken over the telephone.

- Assist with arrangements for someone to care for pets if this is needed.

- Help the person prepare to quickly access to information they might need in a DFV emergency e.g. keeping the telephone number of the local police station and a note of the street address and nearest cross street easily accessible.

- Help the person download the Emergency+ app which provides emergency services location information via coordinates. This app can work also in places where there is no phone reception.

- If the person experiencing DFV wishes to leave the person committing DFV, talk with the person about the safest ways and times to leave e.g. think about leaving when the person perpetrating DFV is away from the house or away from the community, and think about who can help you make a safe and strong plan to leave.

- Help the person who is experiencing DFV to identify who would be able to assist them to pack up and leave if they chooses to exit the home quickly.

- Help the person who is experiencing DFV create a list of emergency help contacts (including police) on paper or on a mobile device. Alternatively, help them download the shelterme app which is free and contains all the local and national crisis services in their area.

- Assist the person who is experiencing DFV to check in regularly with someone they trust and create a plan for what the trusted person should do if they don't hear from them. For example, a trusted person may be someone who works at the community store, the local health clinic or the children's school.

Worker safety planning checklist

- Assist the person to develop and rehearse (either physically or mentally) an escape plan to use when violence or control is happening or is likely to happen. It is recommended to develop and rehearse a second (back-up) plan also so that if the first plan doesn't work, the back-up plan can be used.

- Assist the person to identify ways it might be possible to keep a small amount of money aside for use in a DFV emergency.

- Help the person to save or document evidence of abuse e.g. abusive texts, phone messages, emails and screenshots of social media.

- If there has been physical violence, assist the person to take photographs of injuries or take photographs of injuries for their own records (only with their consent). This evidence can be used to assist with obtaining a DVO or providing evidence of a breach of a DVO.

- Assist the person to check if their online presence is being monitored or mirrored including through shared passwords on phones, shared social media accounts and other electronic devices.

When victim survivors leave violent partners it is important to take certain items with them.

Help the person experiencing DFV to prepare a safe escape bag and place the safe escape bag where she will be able to access it in an emergency e.g. at a friend's house.

Consider the following contents for the safe escape bag below

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|--|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spare keys | <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Glasses, contacts, hearing aids and any other medical devices | <input type="checkbox"/> Children's favourite toy or book |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Important documents such as DVO, birth certificates, passports and visas, bank records, bank cards and driver's licence | <input type="checkbox"/> Clothes | <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping bag or blanket | <input type="checkbox"/> Pet bowl, lead and pet food if needed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medications, prescriptions e.g. asthma puffer | <input type="checkbox"/> Cash | <input type="checkbox"/> Dummy, nappies | <input type="checkbox"/> Any items that are very important to the person experiencing DFV and irreplaceable e.g. photograph of a deceased relative. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Toiletries | <input type="checkbox"/> A telephone and charger (preferably one that the person perpetrating DFV cannot track) | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Torch | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Batteries | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Wet wipes | | |

SAFETY PLAN TEMPLATE

Instructions: After reviewing the safety planning information in the RAMF Practice Guide 3: Managing DFV Risk, complete the safety plan template below. All DFV risk requires a safety plan.

Part One below responds to the immediate safety needs of the client, and should be filled out using the checklist provided above.

Part Two responds to ongoing safety needs. It may be that it is only possible to complete Part One of the safety plan with the client until their immediate safety is established, at which time Part Two can be completed.

Every safety plan will be unique and based on the needs of the client- you should be guided by them on what is important and safe for them in their safety plan.

Worker Name		Organisation name	
Client Name		Date form completed	
Other workers/ services engaged in responding to DFV needs:			
Comments			
PART ONE: Immediate safety planning action table			
Who	What	By When	
Trained or specialist worker			
Other organisations working with the client			
The client and their support network			

PART TWO: Ongoing safety planning action table

Needs identified by victim survivor	How will these needs be met?	Service or agency which can best respond to this need	Actions taken to meet this need	Date that actions were taken
Monitoring perpetrator eg bail and parole supervision				
Safe accommodation e.g. home security / replace locks, safe place with family, refuge accommodation, access to safe house when needed or transport to safety				
Medical care e.g. injury management, access to medication, assistance to attend for dialysis, STI testing and response				
Response to trauma e.g. access to health, legal and other systems through multiple pathways, flexible services that provide predictable and continuity of care				
Responses to sexual violence including child sexual assault e.g. Access to forensic testing, sexual assault counselling, medical management that give privacy and protection from blame and safe accommodation				
Help for the children e.g. childcare, play therapy, counselling, transport to and from school, school holiday and after school activities, positive role modelling				
Safety for pets e.g. transport, safe relocation				
Education about DFV e.g Information about responsibility for violence, sharing experience of and resistance to violence				
Empowerment e.g. building confidence by learning a new skill like learning to drive or swim; learning and improving literacy, learning English; employment and training, helping other victim survivors				
Financial assistance e.g. assistance to open a bank account, redirect Centrelink benefits, access to emergency funds; manage internet banking				
Legal Assistance e.g. assistance to make changes to a DVO, advice about charges and court processes, family law assistance, visa assistance, court support and advocacy				
Access to belongings and essentials e.g. police assistance to access belongings from the home; emergency supplies of food, nappies, clothing, bedding				
Transport e.g. transport to a safer community, transport to work, medical and legal appointments, transport to safe accommodation, finding ways to pick up children from school				

PART TWO: Ongoing safety planning action table

Needs identified by victim survivor	How will these needs be met?	Service or agency which can best respond to this need	Actions taken to meet this need	Date that actions were taken
Assistance with e-safety e.g. Help with changing settings on devices, information about privacy settings				
Social support e.g. help identifying people including family who can support in everyday life				
Language solutions e.g. interpreter services for legal appointment and other case management actions				
Maintenance of cultural/religious practices e.g. returning to country or home community, regular contact with safe and supportive family and elders, or attending religious services				
Workplace safety e.g. assessment of victim survivor safety in the workplace, access to paid leave or flexible work				
Any other needs identified by victim survivor				