

## PREPARING TO LEAVE

There are a lot of barriers faced by women leaving violence that may seem overwhelming. But it is important to remember that many women leave violent relationships and find safe and fulfilling lives for themselves and their children.

It is good to be prepared before you leave.

### What should I do before I leave?

It is important to have a clear safety plan for you and your children before you leave. These are some things you can do to prepare:

- ✓ Contact the Domestic Violence Hotline and arrange safe accommodation for you and your children
- ✓ Contact RSPCA to arrange safe accommodation for your pets
- ✓ Seek support from a domestic violence worker to discuss your options and consider ways to keep yourself safe such as getting an ADVO
- ✓ Arrange your transportation in advance
- ✓ Practice travelling to your intended safe spot
- ✓ Prepare and safely store a leaving package with money, documents, clothes, spare keys
- ✓ Seek legal advice
- ✓ Program emergency services / contacts and support services into your phone
- ✓ Ask your doctor to document any injuries
- ✓ Only tell trusted people of your intended new location

### What should I take when I leave?

This is a useful list to help you prepare to leave. Take the items below only if it is safe to do so. The safety of you and your children is most important.

You may be able to return with Police support at a later time to collect your possessions.

- ✓ Driver's licence, bank details, credit cards,
- ✓ Birth/marriage/divorce certificate/s for you and your children
- ✓ Centrelink, immigration documents

- ✓ Car & house keys
- ✓ Passports for you and your children
- ✓ Car registration papers
- ✓ Medical records, medication & Medicare details
- ✓ Taxation and employment documents
- ✓ Court papers including protection and family law papers
- ✓ Rental, mortgage, legal papers, copy of ADVO
- ✓ Clothing
- ✓ Personal address book
- ✓ Your children's favourite toys and other items of comfort
- ✓ Personal items which have value, or you fear may be destroyed such as jewellery and photographs

### How do I protect myself online?

You might think that you should switch off your technology to stay safe. But technology can be an important tool to keep you connected to support and resources. There are some steps you can take to make your technology safer.

- If you are worried your phone is being monitored call 1800 937 638 for a free safe phone.
- Protect or change your passwords/PINs by choosing passwords that no one could guess. Make sure you don't select "save my password" on login pages.
- Use private browsing so no one can see the pages you have been looking at and clear your browser history of any sites that you don't want your abuser to see.
- Use a safe computer that is not accessible by your abuser. You could go to the library or ask a trusted friend.
- Change your social media setting to turn off your location and limit who can see your information.

The eSafety Commissioner has many resources to help with image-based abuse, spyware and creating alternative email accounts.

You can find out more on their website [www.esafety.gov.au/women](http://www.esafety.gov.au/women)

**PREPARING TO LEAVE**

**Parenting after domestic violence**

This wheel is a helpful guide for you to use when you think about how you want to parent your children after you leave.



**Encourage and support**

- Be affirming
- Encourage children to follow their interest
- Let children disagree with you
- Recognise improvement
- Teach new skills
- Let them make mistakes



**Give time**

- Participate in your children's lives: activities, school, sports, special events and days, celebrations, friends
- Include your children in your activities
- Reveal who you are to your children



**Provide discipline**

- Be consistent
- Ensure rules are appropriate to age and development of child
- Be clear about limits and expectations
- Use discipline to give instruction, not punish



**Trust and respect**

- Acknowledge children's right to have own feelings, friends, activities and opinions
- Promote independence
- Allow for privacy
- Respect feelings for others
- Believe your children



**Promote emotional security**

- Talk and act so children feel safe and comfortable expressing themselves
- Be gentle
- Be dependable



**Give affection**

- Express verbal and physical affection
- Be affectionate when your children are physically or emotionally hurt



**Care for yourself**

- Give yourself personal time
- Keep yourself healthy
- Maintain friendships
- Accept love



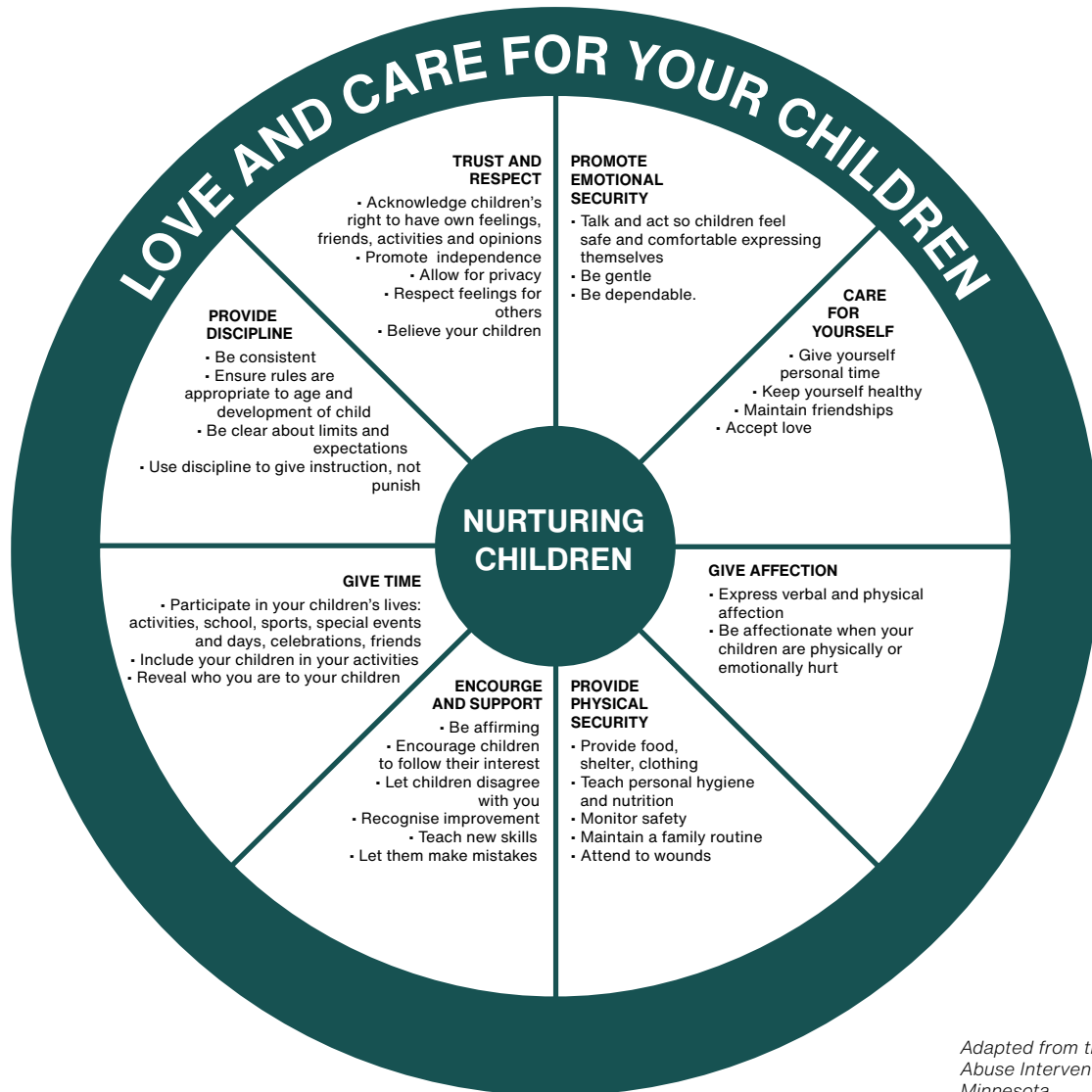
**Provide physical security**

- Provide food, shelter, clothing
- Teach personal hygiene and nutrition
- Monitor safety
- Maintain a family routine
- Attend to wounds

*Adapted from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Centre Duluth, Minnesota.*

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## Parenting after domestic violence wheel



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### More information and help

**In an emergency, call the police on 000 or 112 from mobiles.**

For information, court advocacy and referral for women in domestic violence situations and assistance with getting and ADVO call the **Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service** on **1800 WDV CAS** or **1800 938 227**.

For legal advice, assistance, referral and representation as well as social work support and financial counselling for victims of domestic and family violence call the **Legal Aid NSW Domestic Violence Unit** on **9219 6300**.

**Family Violence Law Help** is a website with easy-to-understand legal information about AVOs, family law and child protection. The information can be translated into different languages.

[www.familyviolencelaw.gov.au](http://www.familyviolencelaw.gov.au)

This factsheet is a general guide to the law. You should not rely on it for legal advice and we recommend that you talk to a lawyer about your situation. The information is correct at the time of publication, however it may change.

This factsheet is an excerpt from the booklet *Charmed and Dangerous: A woman's guide to reclaiming a healthy relationship*, an initiative of the Tweed Shire Women's Services Inc.

This factsheet is available in Arabic, Dari/Farsi, Korean, Simplified Chinese, Spanish and Vietnamese.  © Legal Aid NSW