

## What A Woman Can Do If She Decides To Stay or Is Currently Unable to Escape the Violence

Domestic violence does not just go away. It will happen again. Protect yourself and your children by taking precautionary measures.

- If at all possible, don't go through this alone. It's not safe and you deserve support and help. Reach out to someone you trust. Contact an advocate.
- Leave if you think he is going to hit you. Don't wait to get hit.
- Have an extra set of car and house keys made and keep them outside the house or with a trusted neighbor or family member.
- Pack an emergency kit with things you and your children may need if you have to leave in a hurry, such as clothing, toothbrush, diapers, etc. Keep this in a safe location.
- Try to put some money aside. Even if you're on assistance, open a savings account in your name only. Consider using a post office box, or other safe address, or using paperless on-line communication in order to keep your location confidential if needed.
- Make copies of legal papers, children's birth certificates, social security cards, school records, divorce and protection orders, etc. and keep them with your emergency kit.
- Work out a signal with a neighbor to call for help.
- During an attack, try to get out and run for help. If you can't get out, go to a room with a lock or that can be barricaded. Try to stay out of the kitchen.
- After an attack, document injuries by having medical, law enforcement, or shelter staff take pictures or keep a record of injuries.
- If you decide to leave, **do not warn him**. Your leaving means he is losing control of you which makes the danger greater for you. Be as careful as you can about your safety and your children's.
- Develop a support network. Counseling, support groups, cultural and other activities that develop self-esteem and self-worth are important.
- Learn all you can about domestic violence and about traditional beliefs and life ways that honor the sacredness of women.
- Know his violence is his choice and not your fault or responsibility.