

Tech Resources for Privacy, part II

Cell Phone Safety

We rely on our cell phones to help run our lives, but they can become a weapon in the hands of perpetrators if we don't treat them carefully.

- Put a passcode on your phone to make harder for someone to get into it.
- Don't answer calls from unknown numbers. If you answer such a call, hang up immediately.
- If you answer the phone and the caller - or a recording - asks you to hit a button to stop getting the calls, you should just hang up. Scammers often use this trick to identify potential targets.
- Do not respond to any questions, especially those that can be answered with "Yes" or "No." The caller can record your voice, and then play it back later for nefarious purposes.
- Never give out personal information such as account numbers, Social Security numbers, mother's maiden names, passwords or other identifying information in response to unexpected calls or if you are at all suspicious.
- If you get an inquiry from someone who says they represent a company or a government agency, hang up and call the phone number on your account statement, in the phone book, or on the company's or government agency's website to verify the authenticity of the request. There are many services and apps that can spoof phone numbers and names.
- Use caution if you are being pressured for information immediately.
- If you have a voice mail account with your phone service, be sure to set a password for it. Some voicemail services are preset to allow access if you call in from your own phone number. A hacker could spoof your home phone number and gain access to your voice mail if you do not set a password.

Device Safety

Computers, laptops, and tablets need strong security also.

- Put a password on your computer or laptop.
- Avoid clicking on links or opening attachments sent to you by someone you don't know or someone you think might want to monitor your computer activity.
- Run anti-virus and anti-spyware software on your computer, and make sure that it automatically updates so you have the latest protection.
- In some cases, you might have to share documents with the person you are concerned is trying to monitor you. Consider using online sharing platforms, such as Google Docs, Dropbox, or Flickr, to exchange information rather than having it come directly into your email.
- Be cautious when using a computer that is not yours. Log out of accounts, erase your activity from the web browser, and don't save personal items onto that computer. If you must save something to the computer, delete it, including from the trash.

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General Cybersecurity Guidelines

These are general guidelines for computer safety, but perpetrators can use these vulnerabilities to continue to abuse their victims.

- Don't click on a link in an email or text unless it is from a source you trust AND you are expecting it. It is better to search for the website on Google or type in the link yourself in a web browser.
- Don't open any email or message attachments unless it is from a source you trust AND you are expecting the file.
- Make sure you stay current with software updates for all your devices and apps.
- Try to use strong passwords that are unique to each account/site you use.
- Use multi-factor authentication (MFA) if you can.
- Never give out your password over the phone.
- Posts on social media are never truly private, no matter your settings: once it's online, it's no longer under your control. Be protective of your personal information and remember that phone numbers, addresses, handles, and personal details (like birth date, schools you attended, employers, and photos with landmarks) may make it easier for someone to reach you.
- Set boundaries and limits, and ask people not to post personal information, photos, or check-ins you aren't comfortable with. Check your social media settings to make sure your privacy settings are strict, and disable the ability for other people to tag you in their photos or posts. Similarly, don't post information about people without their consent – you could jeopardize their safety or the safety of others.

Passwords

The average Internet user has dozens of accounts across dozens of websites, and while password management can be difficult, it is very important to be careful with passwords. A perpetrator can cause a lot of damage if he can figure out how to log in to one of your accounts.

- The length of a password is more important than its complexity. Consider using the name of a favorite song; don't use your kids' names or birthdates or something he could guess. Try to use a password that is at least 10 characters long.
- Try to use passwords that are unique to each site. Don't reuse the password, for instance, you use for banking to be your email password also.
- Try not to write down your passwords, especially in a place he could find. Assume he is going through your belongings when you are not there and that he is snooping around. He may get suspicious and that will increase the intensity of his searches.
- However, if you can't remember your passwords and need to record them, it is better to physically write them down than to store them electronically on your phone. Or worse, keep forgetting your passwords and resetting them.

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- For Microsoft Edge, click the 3 dots in the top right and select “New InPrivate window”
- You can also delete your browsing history
 - Click the 3 dots or horizontal lines, and then:
 - For Chrome, select More tools – Clear browsing history
 - For Firefox, select Options – Privacy & Security, and then under History click the Clear History button.
 - For Microsoft Edge, select Settings – Privacy, search, and services – Clear browsing history.
- If you can get out, safe computers can be found at your local library, Internet cafe, shelter, workplace, or computer technology center; avoid using a computer shared with him when researching things like travel plans, housing options, legal issues, and safety plans.
- Be sure to sign out of your email and other accounts when you are done using them, so he doesn’t have easy access to your communications.
 - Use several different methods of communication when contacting people so that you’ll know if they tried to reach you elsewhere, and keep your monitored account active with non-critical emails in order to maintain appearances.
- Global Positioning System (GPS) trackers can be placed in your car or on items like your purse or cell phone.



How to determine if you are being tracked?

1. Check your bill for extra large data usage
2. Has he had access to your phone in order to install a spy app, or does he know your iCloud password?
3. Have any odd messages popped up on your phone screen?
4. Does your battery seem to be draining quickly?
5. Does your phone sometimes turn on for no reason?
6. Are other apps running slower than normal?
7. Does it take forever to shut down?
8. Are there unfamiliar apps running in the background?
9. Does the screen stay on when you try to turn it off?
10. Check the Permissions of all apps. Permissions include “Call logs”, “Microphone”, “Location”, “SMS”. Try to find any apps that have all these permissions, and then determine if they’re suspicious.
 - a. On Android, it is in Settings – Privacy – Permission manager.
11. Does he know things about you – things you’ve said/emailed/messaged – that he shouldn’t have known?



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What to do first?

1. If you can, get a new cell phone, with a new number, on a new plan. He may have put spyware on it to track you. Even if he hasn't, he can cause problems if you have a phone on the same account as he does.
 - a. Use this new phone to communicate to your friends and family and helpers, not with him.
2. If you have an iPhone, change your Apple ID/iCloud/iTunes password (just different names for the same thing).
3. Set auto-lock on your phone with a PIN or password he won't guess.
4. Create a new email account, without his knowledge.
 - a. You can use Gmail, but ProtonMail and Tutanota are secure email providers with free plans. Using one of those might throw him off.
5. Install a messaging app called Telegram on your phone in order to communicate with your counselor.
 - a. When you send a message, make sure you use the "Secret Chat" feature as that can automatically delete your messages.
 - b. Be careful about trusting WhatsApp or other "encrypted" messaging apps. Many spy apps can read WhatsApp messages.
6. Try not use any computer or device to communicate with your advocate, counselor, or lawyer that he has access to.
7. If you're sure he's tracking you via your phone AND you can't find the spy app, consider one of these options:
 - a. Reset your phone to defaults.
 - b. Do NOT restore your phone's apps from the cloud, because you will just restore the spy app. Manually go to the App Store and install them. It's a pain, but that is the only way to know you've gotten rid of the spyware.
 - c. Again, consider purchasing a pay-as-you-go phone and keep it in a safe place for private calls. Use a password on your phone and update it regularly.
8. Don't talk around an Amazon Alexa device. Your conversations can be recorded and tracked.

Remember:

- Your computer and cell phone use can be monitored without you knowing it.
 - Computers store information about the websites you visit. That means bills you pay and purchases you make are tracked, and messages or emails can be retrieved. You should always consider that a computer might be monitored when you use it and be careful with what you send others or post.
- When you use a web browser on a device he may have access to, try to use it in Incognito mode (for Chrome) or Private Mode (for Firefox or InPrivate Session (for Microsoft Edge)).
 - For Chrome, click the 3 dots in the top right and select "New incognito window"
 - For Firefox, click the 3 horizontal lines in the top right and select "New Private Window"

LIVING WITH AN ABUSER

SIGNS THAT MY PARTNER IS ABOUT TO BECOME ABUSIVE

Although abuse seems to appear from out of the blue or all of a sudden, there are certain words, tones of voice, and actions that are unique to my abuser and indicate an abusive eruption is about to happen.

My abuser's face looks like: _____

My abuser's behaviors include: _____

My abuser makes noises or says things like: _____

When I sense an abusive episode is about to occur:

I feel: _____

My body reacts by: _____

In my mind, I tell myself things like: _____

My behaviors that my abuser could notice include: _____

Things I Can Do When I Sense Abuse Is About To Occur

Every abusive episode could potentially end in violence, so I must trust my intuition as to which strategy to use and when. At any time, I can choose a different strategy. I could do any number of things from gathering my things and placing them by the door in case the situation escalates to stating a personal boundary and then acting on its consequence.

I could place my personal belongings (keys, wallet/purse, diaper bag, et cetera) by the door in the _____ room, at my neighbor's house, or inside my vehicle so I know I can leave in a heartbeat if I must. If my abuser notices this action, I can say _____

or I can go outside where others can see us, drive away, or _____

I could tell or remind myself: _____

*(Remember that you are **not** trying to convince yourself the abuse is not happening! The abuse is real, but you can make great choices. Use soothing, empowering thoughts to combat the anxiety and stress.)*

I could call: _____ or _____ because my partner is less likely to abuse if others can hear.

I could distract myself by: *(listening to music, gardening, journaling about what my partner is saying/doing, ...)* _____

I could move to a low-risk area of my home, away from my abuser. I want to avoid the kitchen, garage, bathroom, any area with hard surfaces or objects easily used as weapons, and rooms without access to the outside. Low-risk rooms in my home are: _____

If my children are present, I can try to protect them by: *(sending them to a neighbor or friend's house, finding an activity for them to do in their room, ...)* _____

Strategies I've Used That Led to My Partner's Decision to Calm Down

Abuse victims use all types of strategies to stop the escalation of abuse when they cannot or do not want to leave the home. Sometimes you may be successful by giving in to your abuser's demands. Of course, giving in to their demands could mean all types of horrible things, including agreeing to have sex even if you don't want to. If you agree to have sex under duress, it is rape and you can report it at a hospital or police station (preferably before showering).

You know your abuser better than anyone else because you've seen their true face. You may be able to guess if your abuser might calm down if you act subservient, apologize for whatever they say you did, or sit there quietly and appear to listen to them abuse you. Perhaps you could make a call to a friend or step out to visit a neighbor. These distractions cannot last all day, but they could last long enough for your abuser to find another way to relieve their hostility.

No matter what your abuser says or does, remember that you did *nothing* to deserve their hateful words and actions. To keep yourself from taking the abuse to heart, educate yourself about abuse and the steps you can take to end it whenever possible.

My Partner Calmed Down After...

My abuser said/did: _____

I reacted by: _____

This resulted in: _____

My abuser said/did: _____

I reacted by: _____

This resulted in: _____

My abuser said/did: _____

I reacted by: _____

This resulted in: _____

Strategies I've Used That Led to My Partner's Choice to Escalate the Abuse

No matter what your abuser says or does, remember that you cannot cause a person to abuse you - the abuser makes the choice to abuse. Think about it this way: If you are powerful enough to make them abuse you, then you are powerful enough to make them be nice to you, too. **If you had the power to control your abuser's behavior, then wouldn't you force your partner to be sweet to you *all the time*?**

Abuse is *not* your fault unless you are the one dishing it out.

My Partner Abused Me After...

My abuser said/did: _____

I reacted by: _____

This resulted in: _____

My abuser said/did: _____

I reacted by: _____

This resulted in: _____

My abuser said/did: _____

I reacted by: _____

This resulted in: _____

THINGS I CAN DO TO TEMPORARILY AVOID ABUSE

If I choose to leave my home temporarily due to my stress, anxiety or fear, I will simply gather my things and leave. I will not warn my abuser that I am leaving, threaten to leave, or discuss it with them at all.

I have small children and they have diaper bags, car seats, et cetera. In order to leave quickly and with as little fuss as possible, I could: _____

I could also call _____ and ask that s/he come over while I gather my children's things to avoid my abuser's temper.

I need assistance to leave my home or no vehicle available to me. To enable my quick exit, someone must know about my situation in advance so s/he can come over promptly when I call. People or organizations that could help me are _____ and _____

If my abuser asks what I am doing, I could say nothing at all or _____

After I leave the situation, I will enjoy the peace of being alone and having time to think. My abuser cannot talk to me because I do not have to answer my phone or return home at any certain time. While giving myself time to de-stress, there are places I could go until I am ready to return home. Such places

include churches, well-lit parks or parking lots, stores, friends' homes, et cetera.

My favorite and safest places are: _____ or

_____ or
_____ or

I am aware that my abuser may have installed GPS tracking on my phone, so I should turn off my phone especially if I retreat to an isolated place where I am likely to be alone. I can record the event in my journal or abuse log for future documentation or to record the truth of the abusive events to keep my sanity, let the pain out, or for other reasons.

RETURNING HOME AFTER AVOIDING AN ABUSIVE INCIDENT

Returning home after temporarily leaving can be scary and dangerous. There are several things you can do to increase your chance of returning safely.

- a. I could return home with the police and ask my abuser to leave. This works best after I've pressed charges and received a restraining order, ex parte judgment or whatever document my state provides to remove my abusive spouse/partner from the home.
- b. I could return home with a friend who knows what happened. Friends who could accompany me include: _____

- c. I could return home after I know my abuser left for work, making sure I'm near an escape path when they come home in case I have to leave again.
- d. I could call my abuser to discuss my return.

What else could you do to make sure your homecoming is as peaceful as possible? _____

HOW I CAN INCREASE MY OVERALL SAFETY

I may not always be able to avoid violent incidents. In order to increase my safety, I may use a variety of strategies. I can use some or all of the following strategies:

- a. If I decide to leave and must do so quickly, I will: (*practice how to get out safely; check to make sure your windows open easily, decide what doors, windows, stairwells or fire escapes to use...*)

- b. I can keep my personal belongings (purse, car keys, etc. _____) ready and put them (where? _____) so I can leave quickly.
- c. I could create a duplicate purse/wallet to include keys and leave it hidden in the car (perhaps in spare tire well) or at a neighbor's house.

- d. I can tell _____ and _____ about the violence and request they call the police or MPs if they hear suspicious noises coming from my house.
- e. I will remember that it is possible for my abuser to track who I call and even *where I am* if they have access to my cell phone plan or secretly installed GPS onto my phone. To avoid giving up my location, I can purchase a prepaid cell phone to use in case my abuser takes my phone or turns off my service. I can hide the secret phone in my to-go bag or _____.
- f. I can teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the police and the fire department, and how to report violence or other problems whenever they are scared.
- g. I will use _____ as my code word with my children or my friends so they can call for help.
- h. If I have to leave my home, I will go _____ (I should decide this even if I think there won't be a next time.) If I cannot go to the location above, then I can go to _____ or _____.
- i. I can also teach some of these strategies to some/all of my children as appropriate for their age.
- j. When I expect we are going to have an incident, I will try to move to a space that is lowest risk, such as: _____ (I will try to avoid incidents in the bathroom, garage, and kitchen, near weapons or in rooms without access to an outside door.)
- k. I will use my judgment and intuition. If the situation is very serious, I can give my abuser what they want to calm them down. I can do whatever I need to do for protection until out of danger. My life is more important than being right, and sometimes the bravest thing to do is give in temporarily so I can escape later.

INCREASING MY SAFETY DURING DRUG OR ALCOHOL USE

Your abuser may have an alcohol or drug problem that negatively influences his/her behavior. You may have developed a substance abuse problem in response to the abuse suffered in your relationship. Perhaps you abuse substances with your abuser so their actions do not hurt you as badly at the time or so you can forget the abuse by blacking out. It is possible that your abuser *forces* you to abuse substances as part of their control methods. It is also possible that s/he drugs you without your knowledge (i.e. date rape drugs, laced marijuana); requesting blood work at the doctor's office will answer that question.

It is important to know that no matter how you receive the alcohol or drugs, ***your alcohol or drug use will reduce your awareness of impending abuse and your ability to act quickly to protect your children or yourself.*** Therefore, you need specific plans to deal with your partner's or your alcohol or drug use.

- a. If my abuser uses alcohol/substances at any time, I must be aware of how s/he acts when intoxicated. I should consider how s/he treats me *and* people outside of our relationship. When intoxicated, my abuser treats other people this way: _____

When intoxicated, my abuser treats me like this: _____

I can protect my children and me from my intoxicated abuser by _____

b. If I use alcohol or other substances, I must do so in a safe place and with people who understand the risk of violence I face, and who are committed to my safety.

c. I can stop using substances entirely; or, at least until I know I am completely free of my abuser.

- If I need help to stop, I can _____
- To safeguard my children while I detox, attend rehab, etc., I could _____

d. When my abuser and I both use together while our children are present, I can best protect the children by *taking them to a sitter*.

e. If my partner and I use substances together and I cannot send the children to a safe place, I could (*leave with the children, choose not to use, pretend to use but abstain, tell the children to sneak out of the house and go to the neighbor's, call a friend willing to come to my home and stay sober while my abuser and I use, ...*) or _____

f. If my abuser is using while we're living together but I am not using, I can best protect myself by _____

g. If I feel "strange" after drinking or eating, recognize signs of intoxication when there should be none, or feel much differently than I expected to after drinking alcohol or using a substance known to me (even if the substance is illegal), I should immediately call the police for help.

h. If I wake up in the morning feeling "strange" or hung over and suspect or find evidence of sexual activity that I do not remember or only partially remember, it is possible my abuser assaulted or raped me and allowed others to do the same. I will *not* shower and will go to the hospital as soon as possible to document or report the rape or sexual assault.

Completing these forms can take an emotional toll. It is difficult to plan for your safety because, in some ways, it feels like you are betraying your partner. Take a deep breath, and then remind yourself that your partner betrayed *your* trust. They seek to control you; your home does not feel safe. Your partner does not honor your relationship's stated or implied contract of "love, honor, and cherish".

Please put any guilt or hurt aside for a little while longer. Even if you do not plan to leave your partner, the next section is important too. You do not know for sure whether your partner will physically harm you or if you will wake up one day and decide you're unwilling to stay another minute. *Leaving The Abuser* will prepare you for the *possibility* that you may leave quickly and in fear at some point in the future.

You've done wonderfully so far. Please, keep planning...

LEAVING THE ABUSER

If I am planning to leave the relationship, I will make my plan without telling my abuser! I will not tell his family, friends or our mutual friends. I will tell only the people that I completely trust and that will actively help me execute my plan.

I will leave when my abuser is not home. I can request that the police come to my home while I gather my things or drive by often as I pack a moving van.

I can communicate with my abuser *after leaving* by phone or email, but only if it is absolutely necessary and after I am in a safe place. If I have a restraining order against my abuser, I cannot violate the terms of the order and cannot contact him or her in any way.

WAYS TO PROTECT MYSELF WHEN PREPARING TO LEAVE PERMANENTLY

I may decide to leave the residence I share with my abuser or plan to have my partner removed. I must have a careful plan for leaving in order to increase my safety. My abuser might strike out and become [more] violent if he/she believes or finds out that I am leaving the relationship.

- a. I will leave money and an extra set of keys with _____ so I can leave quickly.
- b. I will keep copies of important documents or keys at: _____
- c. I will open a savings account by (date) _____ to increase my independence. I will use _____ as my mailing address so that the monthly statement is not sent to my home. (Post office boxes cost about \$40/year.)
- d. Other things I can do to increase my independence include: *(stockpiling baby supplies, filtering kitchen necessities to a friend, moving clothing, household necessities, etc. to a storage area, putting documents in a safe deposit box, etc.)*

- e. I can seek shelter by calling this number: _____
- f. I can keep change for phone calls on me at all times. I understand that if I use my telephone credit card or cell phone, the following month the bill will tell my abuser those numbers that I called before or after I left. To keep my telephone communication confidential, I must either use coins or a pre-paid phone card or cell phone, or I might get a friend to permit me to use his/her telephone/cell phone/credit card for a limited time when I first leave.
- g. I will check with my cell phone company to find out if any GPS tracking software is on my phone. If so, I will wait until the day before I plan to leave to cancel the service. If I cannot cancel the GPS tracking service, I will turn off my phone when I leave. I could use a prepaid phone instead.

- h. I will check with _____ and _____ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me money.
- i. I can leave extra clothes with _____.
- j. I will sit down and review my safety plan every _____ in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence. _____ (domestic violence advocate or friend) has agreed to help me review this plan.
- k. I will rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.

DOCUMENTS I WILL NEED WHEN I LEAVE

If I decide to leave my abuser, it is important to take certain items with me. I may also want to give an extra copy of papers and an extra set of clothing to a friend just in case I have to leave quickly or my plan to remove my partner from our home does not work as I thought it would.

When I leave, I should take:

Drivers' license and registration	Keys – house, car, office
Identification for myself	Medications
Military ID card(s)	Work permits/Green card
My and my children's birth certificates	Divorce papers/ custody papers
Passports	Medical records
My and my children's social security cards and my abuser's social security number	Lease or rental agreements, mortgage payment book
Money/cash (abuser may report your ATM card stolen)	Bank statements
Checkbook, ATM card	School and vaccination records
Credit cards with my name on them	Insurance papers
	Pre-paid Cell Phone (secret from abuser)

If I have the time, I will take other important items like:

Address book	My computer
Pictures	Children's favorite toys and/or blankets
Jewelry	Small saleable items (not abuser's property)

SAFETY AFTER I LEAVE MY ABUSER

If the law forces my abuser to leave our home or if I move into a new home, I can do many things to increase my safety. It may not be possible to do all the measures listed below at once, but I will do as many as it takes to feel safe.

Safety measures I can use include:

- a. I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible.
- b. I can replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors.

- c. I can install security systems including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, an electronic security system, etc.
- d. I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows.
- e. I can install smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor in my house/apartment (abusers may start fires to force you to leave your house).
- f. I can install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to my house.
- g. I will teach my children how to use the telephone to make a telephone call to me and to _____ (police, friend, clergy person, other) in the event that my abuser takes the children.
- h. I will tell people who take care of my children which people have permission to pick up my children. The people I will inform about pick-up permission include:
 - a. School: _____
 - b. Day Care Staff: _____
 - c. Babysitter: _____
 - d. Sunday/Religious School Teacher: _____
 - e. Teacher: _____
 - f. Others: _____
- i. I can inform the following people that my abuser no longer resides with me and they should call the police or MPs if they see him/her near my residence: _____

SAFETY WITH A PROTECTION ORDER

My abuser should obey protection orders (the vast majority do obey them), but I cannot be sure s/he will obey the order. I may need to ask the police or MPs, the courts, and my abuser's Commanding Officer to help enforce my protection order.

The following are some steps that I can take to help the enforcement of my protection order.

- a. I will keep my original protection order at (location) _____
- b. I will always keep a copy of my protection order with me. If I change purses/wallets, that's the first thing that should go in.
- c. I will give a copy of my protection order to my abuser's Commanding Officer and to the police department/MPs in the counties and cities where I work, visit family or friends, shop and live. The counties that concern me are: _____
- d. A county registry of protection orders that all police departments call to confirm a protection order may exist. If so, I will check to make sure that my order is in the registry. The telephone number for the county registry of protection orders is _____.

- e. I can call the domestic violence program if I am not sure about any of the above resources or if I have some problem with my protection order.
- f. I will inform my employer, clergy person, friends, and _____
_____ that I have a protection order in effect.
- g. If my abuser destroys my protection order, I can get another copy by going to _____ located at: _____.
- h. If my abuser violates my protection order, I will call the police and report a violation, contact my attorney, call my advocate, and advise the court of the violation.
- i. If the police or MPs do not enforce my protection order, I can contact my domestic violence advocate and/or attorney and will file a complaint with the chief of the law enforcement department.
- j. I can also file a private civil complaint in the offending jurisdiction where the violation occurred. I can charge my abuser with a violation of the protection order. I can also ask if the jurisdiction where the violation occurred permits the filing of private criminal complaints. I can call my domestic violence advocate to help me with this.

SAFETY ON THE JOB AND IN PUBLIC

I decide when I tell others that my partner abuses me and that I am at risk of future violence. Friends, family and co-workers can all offer protection just by knowing the truth. I should carefully consider which people to trust as I work to secure my safety. I probably cannot trust my abuser's family and friends because they will likely support him/her and may report my movements and personal details to him (stalking by proxy). I can tell anyone I want to about the abuse before or after leaving my abuser.

I might do any or all of the following:

- a. I can tell my supervisor/CO, my work's security supervisor, front desk receptionist, and _____
_____ about my situation. Your employer may be willing to bring in a domestic violence support person to speak to the entire office about domestic abuse in general, making it easier for you and others to report domestic abuse.
- b. I can inform his employer, friends and other people my abuser may try to turn against me about my situation. This may deter his friends (from accidentally or purposefully) helping my abuser to get to me.
- c. I can ask _____ to screen my phone calls at work.
- d. When leaving work, I can (walk with a co-worker to my car or public transportation, carry pepper spray at the ready, be extremely observant of the parking lot, check underneath my car, the backseat, etc.) and _____

- e. When driving home, if my abuser follows me, I can: _____

- f. If I use public transit and see my abuser following me, I can _____

- g. I can use different grocery stores and shopping malls to conduct my business and shop at hours that are different from those when I was residing with my abuser. I can use a different bank and/or take care of my banking at hours different from those I used when residing with my abuser.
- h. What else do you do regularly? How can you change your patterns to avoid running into your abuser or to minimize his ability to stalk you? _____

PROTECTING MY EMOTIONAL HEALTH

The experience of being battered or verbally degraded by abusers is usually exhausting and emotionally draining. The process of building a new life takes courage and incredible energy. To conserve my emotional energy and resources and to avoid hard emotional times, I can do some of the following.

- a. If I feel down and think about returning to my abuser, I can _____

- b. When I have to communicate with my abuser in person or by telephone, I can _____

 _____ . After leaving your abuser, the only reasons to communicate with them are about the health and welfare of your children or other conditions ordered by a judge. Co-parenting with your ex-abuser is often necessary as the majority of offenders who abused their partner do receive visitation with their children when physical abuse against the children is undocumented and not proven.
- c. I can use "I can..." statements with myself, to be assertive with others, and to remind myself that I have options.
- d. I can tell myself " _____ " whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me.
- e. I can read _____ to help me feel stronger.
- f. I can call _____ and _____ as other resources to be of support to me.
- g. I can watch movies like _____ to encourage myself.
- h. Other things I can do to help me feel better are _____

- i. I can attend workshops and support groups at the domestic violence center or _____

- to gain support and strengthen my relationships with other people.
- j. I can find a great counselor who is familiar with domestic violence and abuse to support me and to help me clear up the questions in my heart and mind.

I SHOULD NOT KEEP THIS PLAN WITH ME. *I should find a safe place to keep this plan and discuss my decision with my victim advocate.*

I SHOULD MAKE A COPY OF THE PHONE LISTINGS PAGE AND SECRETLY CARRY IT WITH ME *separate from my cell phone in case I lose or break the phone in a struggle with my abuser.* (Extra copy in back of book in case you don't have access to copy machine.)

I CAN VISIT FIRST STEPS FOR ABUSE VICTIMS AT <http://www.verbalabusejournals.com> to find other ways to keep myself safe and call the NATIONAL DV HOTLINE AT 800-799-7233.

Find out how one woman found the courage to end the abuse in *My Abusive Marriage...and what i'm doing in it* by Kellie Jo Holly, sold at Amazon.com for Kindle and in paperback.

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Basic Custody Trial Questions

Keep a note BOOK



Introduction

1. Can you introduce yourself to the Court?
2. How do you know the Plaintiff?
3. When were you married?
4. When did you separate?
5. Are you now divorced? When?
6. Do you have any children together?
7. Can you tell me their names and ages?
8. Where do you live?
9. What do you do for a living?
10. How often do you work? (Establish days of the week, weekends, hours)
11. Do you have flexibility in your job in order to be available for your children?
12. Can you look at exhibit 1 and identify the document?

Domestic Violence

13. You testified that you separated on xxxxx can you tell us what caused the separation?
14. What happened in xxxxxxxxxxxx? Why did you file the DVPO?
15. What did you do next?
16. Did you get that ex parte order?
17. Was the Ex Parte Order dismissed? Go to tab...
18. Was there a one-year order entered? Read any relevant findings or provisions
19. What kinds of DV was there in your marriage?
 - a. Verbal, financial, physical, property damage
20. What about property damage?
 - a. Turn to tab ___ identify, admit
21. Did the children see your ex destroy things?
22. Was the DV limited to you, or also the children?
23. What did they experience?
 - a. Play the first two audio recordings
 - b. Why didn't you intercede?
 - c. What would have happened if you did?
24. How did your ex discipline the children?
25. Did you try and thwart some of his actions?

26. Have the kids started to act that way?
27. How so?
 - a. Turn to tab ___ identify and admit
28. How are you addressing this/punishing them?

CPS

29. Did CPS get involved with your family?
30. Who first contacted you?
31. She did the initial assessment?
32. Were you referred to in home services?
33. Who was your caseworker for in home services?
34. Is that case still open?
 - a. Turn to tab ___ identify and admit
35. How long was xxxxxxxxxxxx involved?
36. What recommendations did xxxxxxxxxxxx make?
37. Did you complete the safechild class?
 - a. Turn to tab ___ identify and admit

Involvement

38. Going back to before your separation, how involved was your ex-husband with the children?
39. Who took your children to the doctor? To school?
40. Who did homework with them?
41. What about extracurriculars?
42. Since you separated, how often has he seen the kids?
43. What about calling the kids?
44. What about birthdays and Christmases?

Houses

45. Where do you live?
46. How long have you lived there? (emphasize in relation to children's ages)
47. Tell me about **your** home?
 - a. Turn to tab ___ identify and admit
48. How many bedrooms?
49. What about a yard/living areas, etc?
50. Where does your ex live?

51. Have you ever been there?
52. What do you know about it?
53. Bedrooms/kid's spaces?
54. Do you have any other concerns about his apartment?
 - a. Turn to tab ___ identify and admit
55. What about bedtimes?
 - a. Turn to tab ___ identify and admit
 - b. Read posts in middle of page
56. Was he willing to work with you?
57. Ensure consistency?

Involving Children

58. Do you have other concerns about your ex and the children?
59. How does he involve them?
 - a. Turn to tab ___ identify and admit
 - b. Read about property exchange
60. How did that affect the kids?
61. Should they have been at the pick up?
62. How would you have handled that?
63. What else?
 - a. Turn to tab ___ identify and admit
 - b. Read about money
64. So it's about him and not about the kids?
65. Is money an issue for your ex?
66. Was it that way during the marriage?
67. What does he tell the kids about the house?
68. What has that caused?
69. How does that affect their behavior?
70. Any of the kids in particular?

Mental Health

71. Let's talk about that in specifics; how is the mental health of the children?
72. What concerns do you have?
73. How long have you had those concerns?

74. What have you tried to do about that?
75. Has he obstructed that?
76. Are they seeing anyone right now?
77. Do you think they should be?

Physical Health

78. So obviously mental health is a concern, but what about physical health?
79. Tell me about your kid's health?
80. Who was responsible for their health?
81. Did you keep him informed?
 - a. Turn to tab ___ identify and admit
82. During your marriage, did he show an interest in their health?
83. What about since your separation?
 - a. Turn to tab ___ identify and admit
84. How did he respond?
85. What did you have to do?
86. Does he take them to the doctor?
 - a. Turn to tab ___ identify and admit
87. What about illnesses and not injuries, does he take them to the doctor then?
 - a. Turn to tab ___ identify and admit
88. What else did he say?
89. Did your children regularly see a doctor?
90. Why not?
91. How did you handle that?
92. What did you do instead?
93. Do you still use her?
 - a. Turn to tab ___ identify and admit
94. Was he aware of this?
 - a. Turn to tab ___ identify and admit

Education

95. Let's talk about education, where do your kids currently go to school?
96. What grades are they in?
97. How are they doing?

98. Have they always been in public school?
99. When did they start in public school?
100. What did they do before?
101. Was that something you and he both agreed to?
102. Was it a joint decision to put them in public school?
103. Who was in charge of the homeschooling?
104. How was that conducted?
105. Has there been an adjustment period to public school? (not turning in assignments)
106. Do your kids have any special needs?
107. How is that being handled?
108. Who has been handling that?
109. Have you been keeping him informed?
 - a. Turn to tab ___ identify and admit
110. How involved was he with their education?

Communication

111. How do you and he communicate?
112. Is that the only way?
113. How is communication with him?
114. How does he treat you?
115. Does he threaten you?
 - a. Turn to tab ___ identify and admit
116. What else has he said to you?
117. Are you able to call him if there's an emergency or if the children want to talk?
 - a. Turn to tab ___ identify and admit
118. Does this worry you? (emergency medical)
119. Have you had other issues with your ex in regards to communication?
120. Is he flexible with you in making changes to the schedule when needed?
121. Punishing you to punish the kids?
122. Everything is his?
123. Do you think he tells the children the same?
124. Do you have any reason to believe he doesn't say the same thing to the kids?

Extracurricular and Family

- 125. What kind of relationship do you have with your kids?
- 126. What kind of relationship do the kids have with their extended family?
- 127. Tell me about their friends?
- 128. What kind of activities are the children involved in?
- 129. What about church?
- 130. Does he support their activities?
- 131. Pictures
 - a. Turn to tab ___ identify and admit
 - b. Talk about them

Child Support

- 132. Does your ex pay child support?
- 133. How much and is it regular?

Safety Concerns

- 134. Do you have safety concerns about xxxx?
- 135. Identify Exhibit 22
- 136. Does he have a criminal record?
- 137. What else has occurred?

Relief

- 138. What are you asking the court for?
 - a. Physical
 - b. Legal
 - c. Therapy
 - d. Medical
 - e. Education
 - f. extracurricular
 - g. Church
 - h. Communication with you and/or the kids
 - i. Exchanges
 - j. Grandparent both proxy and right of first refusal
 - k. Holidays/travel/no three weekends
 - l. Disparagement

Can Trust be Rebuilt?

Today's Question: My husband has betrayed my trust over and over but I still hope we can make our marriage work. What does it take to rebuild broken trust?

Answer: I'm so sorry this has happened to you. When a couple or a relationship suffers a serious and/or repetitive breach of trust, the relationship is in trouble. If your marriage is to be reconciled, you need more than repentance. You need restoration of broken trust. That takes serious effort and a period of time.

Sometimes Christian people-helpers have unfairly placed the burden to restore trust upon the shoulders of the betrayed person and linked it with forgiveness. The thinking goes, once forgiveness is granted, all memories of the incident should be erased or at least suppressed, and you should never talk about it or bring it up again. (Forgive and Forget theology). If the betrayer of trust seems repentant, then the victim of broken trust is told to not trust her own apprehensions and simply choose to open her heart and trust again so that the relationship can heal.

That approach ignores the responsibility of the one who did the betrayal to prove by the way he lives that he has repented of his sin and turned to God ().

Therefore, let me give you a few ways to introduce the rebuilding process if that's what you and your husband want to do. Remember, rebuilding trust is impossible if the betrayer of broken trust does not make changes.

The first question that must be asked is where was trust broken? This is one of the most basic but ignored steps in relationship counseling. Usually, pastoral counselors think of trust as being broken solely in terms of marital infidelity or unfaithfulness.

When this is the case, counselors help a couple to rebuild broken trust by making sure the other relationship has ended, accountability measures are in place, and forgiveness is granted.

But trust goes much deeper than sexual betrayal. Below are three additional areas where trust can be broken.

Honesty and Authenticity: *People intuitively mistrust someone who feels fake. When you are married to someone, work with someone, or are close to someone who is one person in public and another in private, trust is broken even if you have no specific evidence of infidelity.*

They are not to be trusted. To trust that your husband is a sheep when he acts like a wolf is foolishness. To trust your husband when he repeatedly lies to you is foolish.

The second area of broken trust that often needs to be repaired is reliability.

Can you count on him to do what he says he will do? For example, he says he will stop watching pornography but you still see evidence that's not happening.

He says he will put filters on his computer but never does. He says he will stop drinking, stop online gaming, or spending money on the credit card but doesn't. He may be or sound sincere when he says his words, but he is short on follow through.

He says wants restoration of your marriage but won't go to counseling or do any work towards that end. Remember, says, "Putting confidence in an unreliable person in times of trouble is like chewing with a broken tooth or walking on a lame foot." In other words, it's just not smart.

In the Bible, John Mark was someone who initially was not reliable and as a result, he lost the apostle Paul's trust (See). Later in we see that trust was restored, not because Paul gave him trust, but because John Mark proved he was reliable and therefore Paul could trust him.

The third area of broken trust is in the area of compassionate care:

Can you trust that your husband cares for your well-being? When you share your thoughts and feelings are you heard? Valued? Protected?

Or, is there mocking, contempt, avoidance, or indifference?

says, "The heart of her husband trusts in her." Why? Because "He trusts her to do him good not harm all the days of his life."

One of the foundational elements of marital trust is that love does not intentionally harm the other (). And, if in weakness and sin there is harm, every effort is made to make amends and not repeat that harm.

It's true, it does hurt our feelings (and our pride) to hear how we have hurt someone.

For your husband, effort to listen and care about your feelings and the impact his sin has had on you. Yet without demonstrating compassion, empathy, and care for you and the impact sin has caused, rebuilding trust is not possible. This will be painful for him. It's tough listening to the pain you have caused another. It also is a necessary step towards rebuilding broken trust.

Feeling someone else's pain as a result of your sinful actions often serves as a strong deterrent against repeating that same behavior in the future.

Rebuilding broken trust takes time and specific evidence of change, not merely words or promises of change. Those are meaningless when trust has been repeatedly broken.

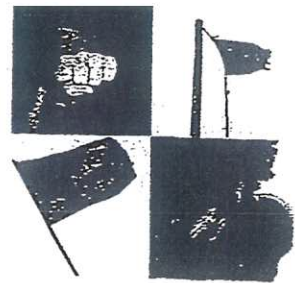
To answer your question. Do you see him being honest with you? When you ask questions or have concerns is he forthcoming with answers that help you feel reassured? When you sense there is an inconsistency in his words or actions and give him feedback does he listen or get defensive? Shut down? Accusing?

Do you see him being reliable in doing what he says he will do to rebuild your trust? Is he putting controls on the computer? Allowing you to have the passwords to establish transparency? Going to counseling for an addiction or control problem? Or is he saying one thing but doing another?

Last, is he showing you consistent care? Not love bombing care like flowers, gifts, vacations, or affection. But true care about where you are at? What you need, even if what you need is not what he wants? If you need to be alone, or separate for a season to heal, does he care about that, or is it still about what he needs? Does he use spiritual-sounding words or Bible verses to get you to comply or to feel guilty that you are trying to take care of yourself instead of attending to him or your marriage?

These things take time to see and no one does it perfectly. But when he fails, is he aware of himself, and does he apologize? Make amends. Change? When he's not aware of these things and you give him feedback does he listen? Change? Or does he argue with you that you're too sensitive, unforgiving, or holding a record of wrongs? You will see whether or not you can rebuild broken trust over time by watching what he does, not what he says.

Red Flags To Look For In An Abusive Personality



Below you will find a list of behaviors seen in abusers; the last four signs listed are abusive behaviors that are often overlooked as the beginning of physical abuse. In some cases, an abuser may have only a few behaviors that you can recognize, but they are often exaggerated. As times goes on, the behaviors become more severe and serve to dominate and control you.

- **Controlling behavior**

At first the abuser will say this behavior is due to concern for your safety, your need to use your time well, or your need to make good decisions. The abuser will get angry if you are "late" coming back from the store or an appointment; the abuser will question you closely about where you went and whom you talked with. As the behavior progresses, the abuser may not allow you to make personal decisions about the house, children, clothing, or attending church. The abuser may keep all the money or even make you ask for permission to leave the house or room.

If a person displays several of the other behaviors there is a strong potential for physical violence. The more signs a person has, the more likely the person is an abuser.

- **Jealousy**

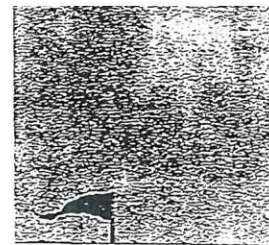
At the beginning of the relationship, the abuser will say his /her jealousy is a sign of love. Jealousy has nothing to do with love. It is a sign of possessiveness and lack of trust. The abuser may question you about who you talk to, make accusations of flirting and/or having an affair, or being jealous of the time you spend with family, friends, or children. As the jealousy progresses, the abuser may call you frequently during the day or drop by unexpectedly. He/she may refuse to let you work for fear you will meet someone else, or may even begin behaviors such as checking your car mileage or asking friends to watch you.

- **Quick involvement**

A large number of abused persons dated or knew their abuser for less than six months before they were engaged, married, or living together. The abuser comes in like a tornado, daiming, "you're the only one who understands," or "the only one I can talk to," "the only one I've loved this much". The abuser will pressure you to commit to the relationship in such a way that you may feel guilty or that you are "letting him/her down" if the you want to slow down the involvement or break off the relationship.

- **Unrealistic expectations**

Abusive people will expect their partner to meet all their needs. They expect a perfect spouse, parent, lover, and friend. The abuser will say things such as “*if you love me, I’m all you need, and you’re all I need.*” The abuser expects you to take care of everything emotionally and in the home.



- **Isolation**

The abuser tries to cut you off from all resources and support. If you have friends of the opposite sex, the abuser assumes you must be cheating. If you have same sex friends, the abuser assumes you are gay or lesbian. If you are close to family, then you are tied to apron strings. The abuser accuses people who are part of your support system of causing problems. The abuser may want to live in the country, without a phone, or refuse to you drive the car, or he/she may try to keep you from working or going to school.

- **Blames others for problems.** If the abuser is chronically unemployed, someone is always doing him/her wrong or is out to get him/her. The abuser may make mistakes and then blame you for upsetting him/her and keeping him/her from concentrating on the task at hand. The abuser may blame you for anything that goes wrong in his/her life.

- **Blames others for feelings**

The abuser may tell his/her partner “*You make me mad,*” “*you’re hurting me by not doing what I want you to do*” or “*I can’t help being angry.*” The abuser is the one who makes the decision about what he/she thinks or feels, but he/she will use these feelings to manipulate you.

- **Hypersensitivity**

An abuser is easily insulted, claiming his/her feelings are “*hurt*”, when in actuality he/she is angry or taking the slightest setback as a personal attack. The abuser will “*rant and rave*” about the injustice of things that have happened, things that are just a part of living (for example, being asked to work late, getting a traffic ticket, or being told about annoying behavior).

- **Cruelty to children or animals**

Abusers may expect children to be capable of things beyond their abilities (punishes 18 month old for wetting diaper). He/she may tease children until they cry. He/she may not want children to eat at the table or may expect them to be kept in their rooms when he/she is home. He/she may punish animals brutally or be insensitive to their pain or suffering.

- **Playful use of force in sex**

An abuser may enjoy throwing you down or holding you down during sex. He may show little concern about whether you want to have sex and uses sulking or anger to manipulate you into compliance. He may begin having sex with you while you are sleeping or demand sex when you are ill or tired.



- **Verbal abuse**

In addition to saying things that are intentionally meant to be cruel and hurtful, verbal abuse is also apparent in the abuser’s degrading of his/her partner, cursing, and belittling accomplishments. The abuser tells you that you are stupid and unable to function without him/her. The abuser may also wake you up to verbally abuse you or not let you go to sleep.



- **Rigid sex roles**
The abuser expects you to serve him/her. He/she may even say that you must stay at home and obey in all things-, even acts that are criminal in nature. The abuser sees you as inferior, responsible for menial tasks, and unable to be a whole person without a relationship.
- **Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde**
The abuser may keep you confused by sudden changes in his/her mood. You may begin to believe he/she has some sort of mental problem because one minute he/she is loving, and the next he/she is exploding. Explosiveness and moodiness are typical of abusers who beat their partners.
- **Previous abusive relationships**
The abuser may say he/she has hit previous partners in the past, but often blames them for the abuse (*"they made me do it"*). The abuser's relatives or ex-partners may warn you that he/she is abusive. An abuser will abuse any person he/she is with if the relationship lasts long enough for the violence to be introduced.
- **Threats of violence**
The abuser may make threats of physical violence meant to control the partner: *"I'll kill you," "I'll break your neck,"* and *"you'd better watch yourself, or else."* Most people do not threaten their partners; abusers will try to excuse their threats by saying, "everyone talks like that".
- **Breaking or striking objects**
Breaking cherished possessions is used as punishment, but mostly to terrorize you into submission. The abuser may beat on the table with his/her fist, or throw things around or near you.
- **Any force during an argument**
This may involve the abuser preventing you from leaving a room, by restraining, pushing, or shoving. He/she may hold you against the wall, telling you "you're going to listen to me!"

**Interact 24 Hour
Domestic Violence
Crisis Line**

919-828-7740

www.interactofwake.org

1012 Oberlin Road Raleigh, NC 27605 919-828-7501 fax: 919-828-8304
309 S. Main Street Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526 919-557-8020 fax: 919-557-8025
24 Hour Crisis Lines: Domestic Violence: 919-828-7740 Sexual Assault: 919-828-3005

interact
safety support awareness

LETHALITY RISK ASSESSMENT

The greater number of indicators below that are present, the greater the likelihood of a life-threatening attack.

- Has the abuser threatened to kill you, the children, your relatives, or himself/herself?
- Has the abuser expressed ideas, dreams, and/or fantasies about killing you, the children, relatives, or himself/herself?
- Has the abuser made more than one threat? Daily? Monthly? What are the threats?
- Is there availability of or past use of weapons (guns, knives, machetes, etc.)?
- Has the abuser ever used hands or an object to choke, strangle, or suffocate you?
- Does the abuser have a history of arson or threats of arson?
- Does the abuser express ownership of you (e.g. "You can never leave me," "If I can't have you, no one else can," "Death before divorce")?
- Does the abuser depend heavily on you, idolize you, or isolate you from all other aspects of community life?
- Has there been separation violence?
- Has there been stalking, hostage-taking, or abduction?
- Is the abuser acutely depressed or seeing little hope in life?
- Has there been an escalation of the abuser's violence or risk behavior?
- Is there frequent use of alcohol or drugs?

LIST OF EVIDENCE TO GATHER TOGETHER IN CUSTODY CASES WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- School Records for your child(ren)
- Medical Records for you or child(ren) that may show medical neglect, lack of vaccinations
- Copies of Awards and Achievements – dad showed up for one recital, she is playing soccer, violin and orchestra
- Photos of you and children (at holidays, birthdays, on trips, etc) (@ 10 photos)
- Photos of your home and children's rooms, children's spaces (@ 10 photos)
- Criminal record of other parent or third parties
- Evidence of extracurriculars
- Evidence of abuse
- Evidence of mental health issues
- Create timelines or custody calendars (that document moving, instability, lack of contact, calls, or visits)
- Texts/ Emails between you and the other parent
- Provide a list of all civil court cases and orders that exist for you or your partner;
- A certified copy of any existing criminal records for you or your partner;
- Provide a list of all civil court cases and orders that exist for you or your partner;
- A certified copy of any existing criminal records for you or your partner;
- Certified copies of any police reports due to domestic violence/violence or alcohol/drug use;
- Copies of phone bills or text messages (if they are harassing or extensive in number);
- Pictures of bruising, bodily injury, blood, damage to oneself, others, or personal property (such as holes in the wall, ripped up clothing, broken or burnt items, etc.);
- All copies of e-mails or any other writing that the abuser may have sent to you recently;
- A list of potential witnesses with their contact information, who have witnessed acts of domestic violence, good or poor parent and your relationship with our child(ren);

- Bills or invoices to pay for costs associated with damage that the abuser did (not limited to carpentry, contractor, automobile, or medical bills);
- Certified copies of medical records, reports, or x-rays;
- Keep a copy of all social networking posts, such as facebook (or other social networking postings) of the other party and provide to your attorney;
- Proof of drug use or alcoholism;
- Proof of mental illness (or neglect of mental or physical health):
- List of activities that endanger the minor children that the abuser subjected the children to:
- Any audio or videotape recordings you may have;
- Anything else you may think is helpful but not irrelevant or overburdensome – that shows that you are a good parent and the other parent is not;
- Drawings, cards that the children have made for you;
- Any written admissions from the abuser (that they are sorry, admitting to abuse or that you are a good parent):
- Evidence of financial control;
- Evidence of dangerous behavior - such as stalking, rape, prostitution, etc.
- A list of potential witnesses with their contact information, who have witnessed acts of domestic violence, good or poor parent and your relationship with our child(ren);
- Videos/ Audios;
- Social Media Posts;
- A list of witness and their contact information who would be willing to testify on your behalf.



PUTTING YOUR BEST LEGAL CASE FORWARD

Judge Carolyn Thompson and Family Law Attorney Tiffany Lesnik (NC)

1. HOW TO FIND FAVOR WITH THE COURT

- a. Be prepared (create an outline) and be on time.
- b. Stand when addressing the judge and be polite.
- c. Dress church nice (No Armani) and smile. (Be emotional when appropriate).
- d. Do not interrupt. Respond when spoken to. Know when to stop talking.
- e. **DO NOT LIE** or try to cover up bad facts! Answer the questions asked and don't argue or become defensive.
- f. Bring a notepad + (trial baggie- with post-its, highlighters, pens, etc.)
- g. Bring your evidence with at least 2 copies.
- h. Know the difference between testifying and cross-examination



NOTES:

2. BEST EVIDENCE TO COLLECT AND PRESENT (NC LIST)

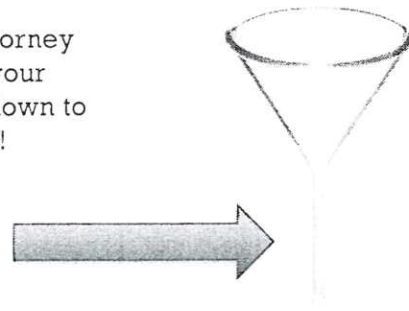
- a. See attachment

NOTES:

3. HOW TO BE AN ASSET TO YOUR ATTORNEY (& SAVE \$\$\$)

- a. Do not call them every day. (Especially not multiple times per day).
- b. Recognize when you need to reach out to a friend, family member or counselor rather than your attorney.
- c. Do not email repeatedly and unnecessarily.
- d. However, return their calls and emails when your attorney contacts you. *Don't bury your head in the sand. Your case isn't magically going to disappear.*
- e. Answer your attorney's questions and meet their deadlines
- f. Listen to your attorney's advice.
- g. Be patient!
- h. Be organized and bring your evidence in an organized manner (either by date, by topic, by type, etc.)
- i. Understand the distinction between what is important to you versus to the Court.
- j. Narrow the issues. If you are scheduled for child support don't bring a box full of pictures of your children when they were infants. Likewise, if your case is in 2022, don't bring in evidence that is over ten years old.

Like a funnel, a good attorney
will help take ALL of your
evidence and narrow it down to
the BEST evidence!



NOTES:

4. HOW TO DEAL WITH A NARC IN TRIAL

- a. See handout.
- b. Expect them to try and manipulate.
- c. Stop asking why "he is the way that he is."
- d. Don't think he will change now that you are in court, he will likely get worse
- e. Expect him to outspend you.
- f. Expect him to buy the children's affections with material possessions.
- g. Expect him to disparage you to the children.
- h. Expect him to use the children to get what he wants.
- i. Covert v. Overt Narcissists
- j. Nares will blame you for THEIR behavior and accuse you of alienation

NOTES:

**Arguing with a
Narcissist**
is like getting arrested.
Everything you say
can and will be
used against you.

5. OVERCOMING ALIENATION CLAIMS

- a. Be a positive co-parent (in writing and recording).
- b. Do not involve your children! Do not "parentify" your children.
- c. Be above reproach. Keep him informed. Keep a calendar.
- d. Keep good evidence!
- e. Enroll your children in therapy.
- f. Enroll yourself in counseling (to help give you support and positive coping skills)
- g. Be proactive, rather than reactive
- h. Hire an expert as a rebuttal witness
- i. Collect his negative evidence, collect your positive evidence
- j. Use communication tips handout as a guide when responding (Use "grey rock")
- k. Contact an attorney.

TIPS FOR BETTER COMMUNICATION WHEN CO-PARENTING SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE WITH A DIFFICULT EX

1. Do not volunteer information

For example: If he/she asks: Can I come pick up the children at 5:00pm, and you will be on a date... Do NOT respond and say, "No, I will be on a date so that time won't work." Respond and say, "No, 5:00pm won't work today. Can we pick another time?"

Also, don't call him/her or e-mail him/her out of the blue just to let him/her know of upcoming plans (unless you are required to by agreement or court order. Why stir up a hornet's nest - if you don't have too?

2. Do not volunteer the children (if you don't want them to go with the other parent)

Until you have a Parenting Agreement/Separation Agreement or a Court Order you both have 100% rights to your kids and if he/she wants to keep them indefinitely he/she can. Your oral agreement doesn't mean anything to law enforcement. Don't volunteer the children or anything for that matter. It just creates problems in the long run. This means don't initiate visitation - make him/her do the initiation. This also doesn't mean withhold. But wait until he/she asks - before you engage and don't succumb to dangerous or unreasonable requests (it makes you look like a bad parent). You would not let your children get into the car with someone who was intoxicated, why would you let your children get into the car with someone who was raging?! Call the police if you have real safety concerns and your spouse is out of control.

3. Make them wait!

The natural tendency for people who have been in high conflict or domestic violence relationships is to have the urge to respond to an e-mail or text message by their spouse immediately to thwart an impending attack or conflict. This many times actually makes the impending problems worse. Take some time to think about your response. He/she doesn't need instant gratification. Unless, it is an emergency. He/she can wait!

4. Make your response brief and to the point

When asked a question - sometimes yes or no will do. If you are engaging in e-mails that are paragraphs long - that is too long. Likewise, limit text exchanges to 3 or 5.

5. Ignore the irrelevant

You should only be discussing three things: 1. the children (and/or family pet), the schedule, 2. your property, and 3: support. If he/she asks about anything outside the scope of these issues - ignore it and don't respond. If they threaten you with negligence because you are not responding to overly excessive calls and/or texts - let them! He/she shouldn't be texting/calling you 30 times a day!

6. Set boundaries

Just because they call or text 10 times doesn't mean you have to respond. Learn to ignore it or make them wait until it is a convenient time for you to respond. If the calls or texts are inappropriate, then don't respond. There is power in not answering the phone. If you can't take it anymore, turn off your ringer or send a very clear message to them to STOP! If it continues, he/she may be violating NC stalking and domestic violence statutes. You deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

Domestic Criminal Trespass: N.C. Gen Stat. 14-134.3 - Likewise, they cannot come onto your property without consent (even if he/she has a key or their name is on the title to the house or name is on the lease). Once he/she moves out of the home, if you tell them to leave or that they're not allowed at your home and they continue to return, you can call the police and have them arrested for domestic criminal trespass.

Likewise, do not go to his/her house or anywhere with him/her alone!

7. Seek outside help and the advice of neutrals

If you seem really confused and have cloudy judgment seek the advice of objective support persons around you or even get help from a counselor. This is a difficult time and the issues surrounding your children and family can lead you to be irrational at times. Get some outside help. You don't need to do this alone.

8. Be Polite and to the Point

Regardless of his/her responses to you, be polite and to the point and then go take that kick boxing class at the local gym to get out all your aggression! Should your case ever go to litigation - you want him/her to look like the bad one. Taking out years of pent up hostility and frustration is not appropriate through e-mail at this time and could really hurt any future custody, domestic violence, or alimony claims the you have.

ANYTHING IN WRITING BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR EX IS ADMISSIBLE IN COURT. BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU PUT IN WRITING! THINK ABOUT IT BEFORE YOU HIT SEND - OR SEND A COPY BY YOUR ATTORNEY TO GET APPROVAL BEFORE SENDING. (This includes texts and facebook posts).

9. Defer to the Law

When in doubt tell your ex that you are going to follow the parenting agreement/separation agreement or your current court order. You can't get in trouble for following a contract or order. Deviating from your contract or order, however, can create problems for you in the future. Defer to your attorney. If your spouse is putting pressure on you to make a decision that you don't want to make - tell them to contact your attorney. If they try to "guilt" you into attorneys are too expensive - why can't we do this ourselves? Remember, you are in your current situation, most likely, because of him/her, and following his/her advice will likely only make things worse - not better. Seek the advice of your attorney before agreeing to anything.

10. Do NOT sign anything! Unless advised by your attorney.



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Divorce Checklist: 7 Steps to Consider

Going through a divorce can be a challenging period in a person's life. Knowing where to start and which information to gather can help you maintain financial stability during this transitional period and serve as the foundation for a brighter financial future.

Here is a checklist that you and your financial professional can use and, ultimately, devise a new plan that will benefit you for years to come.

If Divorce Is Being Contemplated

Step 1: Gather tax and income information for you and your spouse.

- Federal, State, and Local income tax returns for at least the last two years
- Proof of current and past income
 - Pay stubs (at least 12 months back)
 - W-2s
 - 1099s
 - K-1s

Step 2: Gather statements and inventory assets/debt.

Account Statements

- Checking and savings
- Brokerage accounts or investments
- Certificates of deposit
- Money market
- Mutual funds and annuities
- College savings

Retirement Plan Statements and Summary Plan Descriptions

- 401(k), 403(b), 457 plans
- Profit sharing or money purchase plans
- IRAs (Traditions, Roth, SEP, SIMPLE)
- Defined benefit pension plans
- Deferred compensation plans

Real Estate (Joint and Separate)

- Real estate deeds
- Mortgage statements
- Real estate tax bills
- Utility bills, phone, cable, internet

Personal Property

- Car and recreational vehicle titles
- Jewelry, artwork and other valuables
- Furnishings
- Televisions and computers

Insurance Policies

- Homeowners or renters
- Health insurance
- Health and medical savings account statements
- Automobile
- Life insurance

Financial Documents

- Monthly budget
- Documents pertaining to ownership in a business
- Credit reports
- Credit card bills
- Loan documents
- Social Security statements

Step 3: Gather legal documents.

Gather any legal documents that could impact your divorce such as:

Legal Documents

- Documents pertaining to prior divorce(s)
- Prenuptials
- Postnuptials
- Marital property agreements
- Employment contracts

Estate Planning Documents

- Power of Attorney documents
- Medical directives
- Last will and testaments
- Trust documents
- Beneficiary designation forms

When Divorce Is Imminent

Step 4: When the divorce is imminent consider the following:

- Close or freeze jointly held accounts and credit cards.
- Monitor your credit on an ongoing basis.
- Change user names and passwords on financial accounts and social media.
- Open new accounts and credit cards in your individual name that only you can access.
- Arrange an alternate residence, if required, and budget for the essentials.
- Establish a mailing address or P.O. box that your ex-spouse cannot access.
- Begin looking into getting health insurance if your coverage is from your spouse's plan.
- Estimate alimony payments or receipts; account for this in your budget.
- Determine ongoing care and child support.
- You may need additional professionals beyond your attorney and financial advisor:
 - Business valuation expert: If ownership in a business is involved.
 - Forensic accountant: Can delve into your household finances to make sure no assets are being concealed. This is more important if you did not handle the household finances.
 - Vocational expert: Can evaluate a non-working spouse for employability.

After the Divorce Is Final

Step 5: Split accounts, update account titles, and change your name (where appropriate).

Contact each company holding your financial accounts and retirement plans to determine their process for splitting accounts. They will likely require a copy of a qualified domestic relations order (QDRO) or divorce decree.

- Bank accounts
- Brokerage accounts
- IRAs (Traditional, Roth, SEP, SIMPLE)
- Qualified plans (401(k), 403(b), 457, Defined benefit, etc.)

If applicable, change your name on:

- Driver's license
- Social Security card
- Automobile insurance
- Insurance policies
- Employer records
- Credit cards
- Professional licenses
- Real property
- Utility bills
- Titles to automobiles
- Deeds to real property
- Retirement and investment accounts

Step 6: Update beneficiary designations and estate plans.

A divorce decree or QDRO does not remove your ex-spouse as beneficiary on your accounts with beneficiary designations. Be sure to review all beneficiary designation forms and estate planning documents and update them accordingly. Estate planning made prior to the divorce is now likely obsolete. Meet with your estate planning professional to update your estate planning documents, such as:

- Last will and testament
- Revocable trusts
- Beneficiary designations
- Power of Attorney
- Medical directives
- Living wills

Step 7: Meet with your financial advisor to update your financial plan.

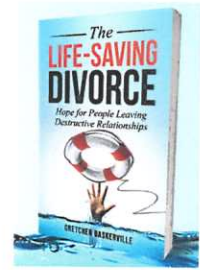
Now that you are divorced, previous financial planning may be obsolete. Meet with your financial professional and update your overall financial plan to reflect your situation after the divorce.

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THE LIFE-SAVING DIVORCE



7 Effective Ways to Deal with Criticism When You Divorce

Nobody likes criticism, but it's a fact of life. When you finally get the courage to divorce, there's nothing more painful than family, acquaintances, and people at church questioning you, calling you selfish, and trying to instill fear in your heart about your future. They assume you didn't try hard; you gave up too easy; you didn't value the sanctity of marriage; you didn't care about your faith. They accuse you of not caring about your children and their future.

You need confidence to deal with these situations. And you need a calm, polite response. Although they may be well-meaning, long-time friends, they are wrong about your situation. They aren't living in your home, dealing with the tension in your relationship, interacting with your spouse, forgiving the indignities you've experienced. They have no skin in the game, and they have no say. It's your life and only you know what's happening behind closed doors, and only you know how much you can take. You don't owe them an explanation.

Here are 7 responses to have at your fingertips to give you confidence

False Claim 1: You're divorcing because you are a quitter. Or you're not willing to endure the normal ups and downs of marriage like everyone else.

More than 40% of divorces are "Life-Saving Divorces," divorces to end desperate marriages that are unsafe and/or high distress. These are not marriages with normal ups and downs. Usually these marriages are impacted by serial infidelity, physical abuse, chronic emotional abuse, sexual immorality, neglect, or debilitating substance abuse. Sometimes these marriages are confusing: There's control, pressure, tension, fear, despair, and walking on eggshells, but you can't quite figure it out. Some people are suicidal from trying to improve the marriage, sacrificing their own wellbeing, but failing to see any real improvement. These are anything but frivolous divorces.

False Claim 2: Divorce doesn't solve your problems: it's just running away

Divorce saves lives. No-fault divorce has lowered the suicide, domestic violence, and murder rates. In states that adopted no-fault divorce from 1969-1983, researchers discovered that the suicide rate for wives dropped around 20%; the domestic violence rate by and against both men and women dropped 30%; and the homicide rate for women murdered by intimates dropped by 5-10%.¹ If we care about safety, we need to have a new view of divorce.

False Claim 3: You're going to destroy your children if you divorce.

Divorce is no longer as devastating to children as it once was. Now researchers are finding that kids *on average* bounce back well. So, if your children were fine before the divorce, they will have some additional stress during the divorce process, but on average within a year or two, they will go back to normal.

For most youths, the legacy of divorce is largely overcome. Twenty years after divorce, most men and women who had grown up in divorced families and stepfamilies are functioning reasonably well. Only a minority still exhibited emotional and social problems.ⁱⁱ

—Dr. E. Mavis Hetherington and John Kelly

False Claim 4: Being raised in a two-parent home is always better for children.

Divorce is often better for children than staying in a high-distress homes. The pro-marriage, pro-family Institute for Family Studies says divorce may be the best option in difficult or dangerous marriagesⁱⁱⁱ. And leading family researcher, Paul Amato, says it's better to get your children out of there.

“In some cases, divorce may be the best option for husbands and wives in a difficult or dangerous marriage. Domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and infidelity — among other things — are certainly legitimate grounds”

—Bradford Wilcox, *Inst. For Family Studies*

*_*_*

When parents reported high levels of discord...offspring with divorced parents were better off than offspring with continuously married parents.^{iv}

—Dr. Paul Amato

False Claim 5: Your children will become drug addicts if you divorce.

Divorce Doesn't Mean Your Kids Will Have Drug and Alcohol Problems. Your kids are not likely to have alcohol or drug problems. The vast majority of kids in single-parent and step-parent families do not have *any* substance abuse problems.

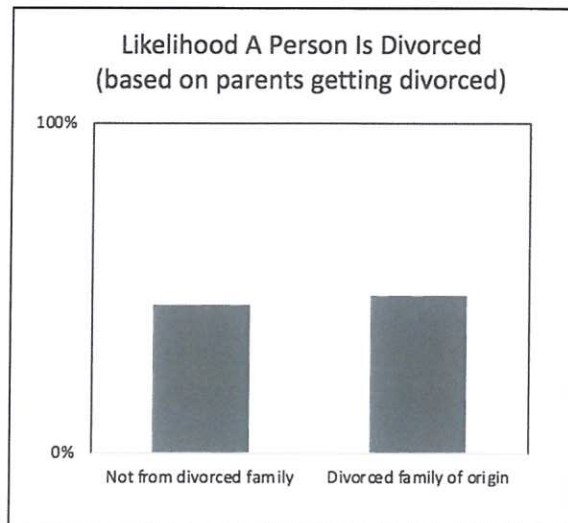
- Only **6 in 100 adolescents in single-mother** families had substance abuse problems. 94 in 100 have no substance abuse problems.
- Only **5 in 100 adolescents in two-parent** families had substance abuse problems. 95 in 100 have no substance abuse problems.^v

False Claim 6: If you divorce, your kids will likely divorce too.

Divorce Doesn't Mean Your Kid's Marriage Will End in Divorce Too

Most adults whose parents divorced *do not* divorce. The majority of people whose parents divorced have lifelong marriages. According to 2018 figures^{vi}—

- 45% of adults whose parents divorced, got divorced themselves.
- 41% of adults whose parents did not divorce, got divorced.

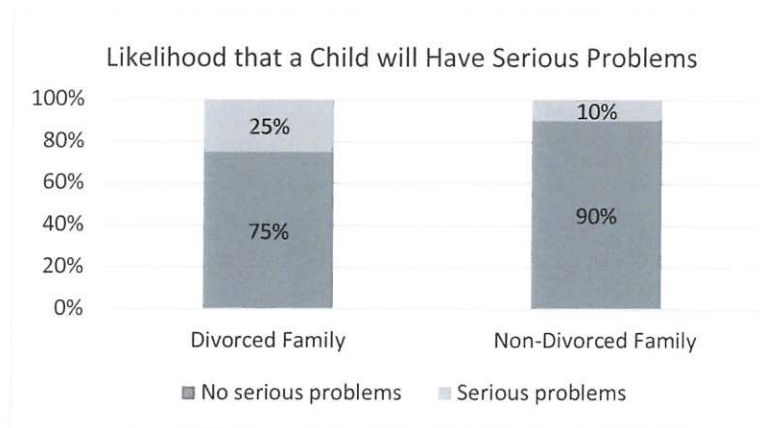


The difference is only 4% (that is minimal!) between the divorce rate of children of divorce homes and non-divorced homes.

False Claim 7: Your children will be emotionally damaged for life.

Divorce Doesn't Doom Your Children to Serious Emotional Problems. Your child is not likely to have long lasting damage from a divorce. According to research, 3-in-4 kids from divorced homes do not have any serious problems psychologically, socially, or emotionally. While everyone acknowledges the first two years are stressful, divorce doesn't have long-lasting effects on most kids. In non-divorced homes 10% of children are likely to have serious problems. In divorced homes 20-25% of children are likely to have serious problems.

This chart shows that 10 in 100 youths from non-divorced homes are likely to have serious social, emotional, or psychological problems, and 25 in 100 youths from divorced homes are likely to have serious social, emotional, or psychological problems.



In fact, it's more dangerous for the long-term health of your children if they are brought up in a two-parent home where they observe you being mistreated, or them themselves experience physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, or are exposed to substance abuse or mental illness.^{vii}

Landmark family sociologist Dr. Mavis Hetherington wrote:

“In the short run, divorce is brutally painful to a child. But its negative long-term effects have been exaggerated....

“Twenty-five percent of youths from divorced families in comparison to 10 percent from non-divorced families did have serious social, emotional, or psychological problems. But most of the young men and women from [the study] looked a lot like their contemporaries from non-divorced homes. Although they looked back on their parents’ breakup as a painful experience, most were successfully going about the chief tasks of young adulthood: establishing careers, creating intimate relationships, building meaningful lives for themselves.”^{viii}

*_*_*

Bonus Fact: Does God Say: “I Hate Divorce”? No! That’s a Bad Translation

God doesn’t say, “I hate divorce.” The translation of this verse in some versions of the Bible is incorrect. This verse is about God’s anger at unfaithful violent husbands who kick their wives to the curb. The Hebrew does not say “I hate divorce.”^{ix} Rather it says:

“So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth. **“The man who hates and divorces his wife,”** says the Lord, the God of Israel, **“does violence to the one he should protect,”** says the Lord Almighty. So be on your guard, and **do not be unfaithful.** —Malachi 2:15b-16 ASV

Or the same verses in the English Standard Version (ESV)

“...**let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth.** “For the **man who does not love his wife but divorces her,** says the LORD, the God of Israel, **covers his garment with violence,** says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and **do not be faithless.**” — ESV

God is not against all divorce. God is against treacherous divorce, divorce where the vow breaker abandons the innocent spouse. And God is also against treacherous treatment of spouses, such as abuse, abandonment, neglect, and exploitation.

*A marriage must be safe and loving, or at least respectful.
If it is not, it's not a marriage.
It is more like kidnapping, incarceration, or servitude.*

Sign up for the Life-Saving Divorce email list for more helpful fact sheets: www.LifeSavingDivorce.com



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- ^{viii} Hetherington, E. Mavis, Kelly, John, 2002, *For Better or For Worse* (New York: WW Norton & Company), p. 7
- ^{ix} Link to the Hebrew-English interlinear for this verse. <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/malachi/2-16.htm>

