

The VIGOR Protective Strategies That May Help in Safety Planning Sherry Hamby

This list of over 150 strategies can be used with the VIGOR to help come out with possible steps to take. At the time of writing, this is the longest available list of protective strategies for domestic violence.

These focus on longer-term options. For an in-depth discussion of immediate situational strategies, see Chapter 6 of *Battered Women's Protective Strategies: Stronger Than You Know*.

Housing

Go to shelter

Stay in your own home/ask partner to leave

Get a roommate to cover rent or mortgage

Stay with family

Stay with friends

Put children in safe housing

Apply for subsidized or public housing (such as Section 8)

Move to another house or apartment, buy or rent new housing

Stay in a hotel

Seek assistance with getting a down payment for a new home

Financial and employment option

Keep current job

Seek new full-time or part-time work

Get a second job

Get job training

Establish a retirement account

Pay down debt

Save money

Develop a budget

Sell or pawn extra items

Borrow money from family, friends, or bank

Declare bankruptcy

Open new account and/or get separate bank accounts

Apply for "welfare" (TANF, food stamps, or other public assistance)

Save to buy a car
 Use only cash
 Change insurance
 Apply for Medicaid
 Continue education (apply for college funding such as Pell Grant)
 Take GED exam (earn certificate of high school equivalency)
 Stash money with family or otherwise hide money from partner
 Have family help with finances
 Get financial help from friends at work
 Pay his bills so easier to divide property
 Apply for disability (SSDI in the U.S.)
 Keep bank statements and other financial records
 Put all financial assets in own name (remove spouse's name)
 Apply for church assistance
 Learn from past financial mistakes
 Vocational rehabilitation
 Cook own meals/eat out less to save money
 As boss or co-workers to re-arrange schedules
 Ask for security plan at the workplace

Legal and law enforcement options

Call the police
 Notify police/sheriff if Protection/Restraining order not being followed
 Ask police to drive by home frequently
 Don't be afraid to reach out to police/sheriff for help
 Become acquainted with law enforcement officers
 Apply for Orders of Protection/Restraining order
 Obtain a divorce or separation
 Petition for custody of children
 Petition for child support
 Pursue alimony
 Seek help from Legal Aid
 Get a private attorney or lawyer
 Report partner's abuse to child protective services
 Document all abuse (pictures, save texts, phone messages, pictures)
 Keep all identifying documents in safe place (birth certificate, social security card, licenses, etc)
 Find out about victim assistance programs in your area

Social options

Rely on support of friends
 Make new acquaintances, expand social circle
 Rely on family as social support
 Spend time outside with children
 Help children process experience
 Share testimony/share story (tell other people your story to help others)
 Get social support and advice from advocates at shelter
 Volunteer in community or otherwise work to help others
 Volunteer at children's school
 Become an advocate for nonviolence
 Arrange to see family or friends when partner is at work
 See family and friends at church or other safer venue
 Put pets in "doggy daycare," kennel, or other safe housing
 Ask family or friends to go with you to court, social services, or other agencies

Psychological options

Exercise
 Write about your experiences
 Keep a journal
 Stay clean (no drugs or alcohol)
 Take a vacation
 Believe in yourself
 Look to your children for strength
 Stop thinking he will change
 Stay committed to school
 Find a hobby
 Focus on self and children

Religious and spiritual options

Visit with pastor, minister, reverend, or other religious figure
 Rely on God as a counselor
 Pray
 Attend church more frequently
 Rely on church community
 Take comfort from inspirational stories in religious texts
 Seek social support from other members of the congregation

Take advantage of free social activities at churches
 Ask church for help with bills, home repair, transportation
 Ask about donations of food, clothing, furniture, and other necessities
 Seek help with immigration status

Community resources

Seek domestic violence advocate or social worker
 Use domestic violence program services, such as transportation, referral, & court accompaniment
 Research domestic violence resources available in area
 Look for all types of help can obtain from the community
 Use food bank
 Use Goodwill or Habitat for Humanity or other thrift stores
 Find daycare for children
 Join Al-Anon (group for family and friends of alcoholics)
 Use community resources to obtain food, clothing and help with prescriptions
 Rely on sheriff's department (ask them to drive by home frequently to make a presence)
 Live near a police station
 Participate in single mom programs
 Participate in meal program
 Look for job training
 Develop safety plan with social services
 Take a self-defense class or firearm safety class
 Campus ministry
 Seek counseling/therapy
 Seek any needed health care, including medication for psychological problems
 Seek information about domestic violence
 Seek community mental health services
 Seek therapy with partner
 Attend support groups

Cyber protection/privacy/guarding against identity theft

Get a private phone number
 Have two phones (don't give second number to partner)
 Increase Facebook privacy
 Avoid Facebook/ do not use social media
 Change password for phone, email, other accounts

Keep personal information private (in general)
 Get a PO Box instead of having mail sent to home
 Put a lock on mail box
 Change accounts
 Increase internet security (general)
 Only use computer at work or public library to access personal information

Other Safety Steps

Leave town (relocate)
 Get mace
 Get a dog
 Change locks and/or add new or stronger locks to home (dead bolts)
 Avoid unnecessary alone contact with spouse or use a mediator for necessary contact
 Change routines to avoid abuser
 Avoid going out alone—try to bring a friend or family member
 Get a home security/alarm system
 Carry cell phone at all times
 Be more cautious, be more aware of surroundings
 Create a safety plan and share with kids
 Change last name
 Get a prepaid or emergency phone
 Keep a landline phone so always on without charging, etc.
 Alert neighborhood/community watch
 Install outdoor lights all around the house
 Use a rotary phone (always on, no caller id)
 Use a daycare with security cameras installed
 Provide daycares and childcare workers with a list of safe people who can pick up your kids
 Use code words
 Change vehicle (so partner won't recognize)

Note: These are options generated by women in the VIGOR studies and by other women I have known over the years. Many of them are described in more detail in *Battered Women's Protective Strategies: Stronger Than You Know* by Sherry Hamby (Oxford University Press, 2014).

Simply appearing on this list is not intended as an endorsement of any particular strategy for any particular person.