

Working towards a Safe Path Forward

is not easy, but we believe in you!

You can do this!

You are not alone.

Help is a phone call away.

**24–Hour Hotline**

**☒ 708.429.SAFE (7233) ☒**

**[www.crisisctr.org](http://www.crisisctr.org)**

Stay positive • Plan ahead • Stick to your plan.

Your best future is waiting for you.

a safe path  
*forward*

HOPE

*A Safe Path Forward is a tool to help you  
make the changes necessary for you and  
your children to live abuse free.*

*It's never too soon — or too late — to  
admit there is a problem and seek help.*

*your rights*

You have the right to live free from violence.

You deserve to be listened to and supported.

You have the right to your own opinions

and the right to pursue your own happiness!

You deserve to realize your own dreams.

*Domestic violence is a crime, and can affect anyone.*

*It has lasting effects on adults and children.*

*Domestic Violence is a pattern of one person exerting power and control over another in the context of dating, family or household relationships. There are several types of abuse: physical, emotional, sexual, and financial are the most common. Creating a Safety Plan and thinking through your options and resources can make the difference between life and death. Trust your judgement and instincts and take measures that ensure you and your children's welfare.*

The **Crisis Center for South Suburbia** is here for you **24/7**. We are only a phone call away... **1.708.429.SAFE (7233)**



## *know the warning signs*

- How do you know when the abuse is escalating?
- What do you experience when you feel extremely distressed or unsafe?
- How will you know when it is time to get to a safer environment?

## *internal coping strategies*

- What do you need to do for yourself to ensure you are prepared for an escalation in the situation?
- Create positive self-talk statements that will support you emotionally through the crisis.
- What might stand in the way of your safety?
- How can you overcome these roadblocks?

## *making the environment safe*

- Remove or secure firearms.
- During volatile situations, stay away from rooms that do not have an exit, or rooms that may have weapons.
- Obtain a rope ladder to escape from second floor locations.
- Remove or minimize alcohol and drug use.
- Open blinds and curtains to maintain a view for outsiders who might be able to call **911** on your behalf.

- Obtain a “pay as you go” phone for emergency back-up and place in an area you may end up needing to call **911**.
- Teach children how and when to call **911**.

## *preparing for a quick exit*

- Always know where your purse, wallet and keys are located.
- Create digital copies or photographs of any important or legal documents.
- Prepare an escape bag with essentials, store in the trunk of car or with friends or families.
- Open a bank account or stash money with a friend that you can get to in the event of need.
- Keep emergency numbers with you or program them into your phone or keep a list on your person.
- Keep your cell phone with you, and turn your location services off once you are free of danger.
- Rehearse leaving in a rush and practice with your children (*create a code word if appropriate*).
- Identify where you will go in the event of a crisis at any time of day or night.

## *family/friends who may offer help*

- Identify who you could share your fears with, someone you trust, someone who makes you feel better.
- Identify who you can turn to in the event you have to leave your housing.
- Identify who you could turn to for financial support and transportation.
- Identify public or safe settings you can go to until things settle down.
- Determine who will watch your children in the event of a crisis and who could pick them up from school.
- Determine which neighbors you could turn to in a time of need.

## *professionals and agencies who can help*

- Remember **911** is the best choice if you feel unsafe and cannot escape the violence.
- Crisis Center's hotline is available to you **24-Hour Hotline**  
**☎ 708.429.SAFE (7233) ☎**
- Identify the professionals and agencies you know you could reach out to for help in an emergency.