

## FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SAFETY PLANNING

This is a summary of the risk and safety factors that have been associated with an increased likelihood of future violence in relationships or are of particular concern for support workers in domestic violence cases. This resource has been developed to assist support workers in safety planning and is consistent with tools used by police in domestic violence cases, including the *Summary of Domestic Violence Risk Factors* job aid and the B-SAFER risk assessment tool.

**Client Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Meeting Date(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

### RELATIONSHIP FACTORS

Status of Relationship		Yes	No
<b>Living Situation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Does the woman live alone or with others (including children)?</li> <li>❖ What access does the abuser have to her?</li> <li>❖ Is she living with the abuser?</li> <li>❖ Is she in an unstable or unsafe living situation?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Past, Recent or Pending Separation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Is there past, recent, or pending separation in the relationship?</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: Social science experts indicate that the intensity and lethality of violence often escalates after the victim leaves the relationship.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child-Related Concerns		Yes	No
<b>Children exposed to violence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Have children been exposed to/witnessed violence?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Child abuse or threats</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Was there direct abuse or neglect of any of the children?</li> <li>❖ Were the children ever threatened with abuse?</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: If yes to either of the above, contact the Ministry of Children and Family Development helpline at 310-1234, ideally after having discussed this with the woman.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Custody or access concerns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Who are the children's parents? Who has custody of the children?</li> <li>❖ Is there a custody dispute?</li> <li>❖ Were there threats to take the children?</li> <li>❖ Does the abuser have visitation rights/access to the children?</li> <li>❖ Is visitation supervised?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

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### ABUSER FACTORS

Violence in the Current Relationship		Yes	No
<b>Controlling or Coercive Behaviour</b>	❖ Does the abuser display jealous behaviour or controlling coercive behaviour (e.g. limiting mobility, activities, relationships or access to finances)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Threats of Violence</b>	❖ Has the abuser ever threatened – directly or indirectly, by implication – to kill or harm the woman, family members, children, other intimate partners of the woman, another person, or a pet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Actual Violence or Abuse</b>	❖ In this relationship, has the abuser ever actually used violence against the woman, a family member, children, other intimate partners of the woman, another person, or a pet? <i>Note: A previous history of violence in a relationship has been identified as one of the most common risk factors for increased severity (escalation) of future violence, including lethality.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Escalation in Abuse</b>	❖ Is there escalation in the frequency/intensity of violence or abuse towards the woman, a family member, children, other intimate partners of the woman, another person, or a pet? <i>Note: Escalation of violence has been linked with lethality in domestic violence cases.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Forced Sex</b>	❖ Has the abuser ever sexually assaulted the woman?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strangling, Choking or Biting</b>	❖ Has the abuser ever strangled, choked or bitten the woman? <i>Note: Strangling is a risk factor that has been associated with increased severity (escalation) of future violence.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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<b>Stalking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Has the abuser ever stalked or harassed the woman, family members, children, or other intimate partners?</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: Obsessive behavior on the part of the abuser (including stalking or frequent harassment) has been linked with lethality in domestic violence cases.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Current Court Orders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Is the abuser currently bound by any court orders?</li> <li>❖ Has the abuser violated a court order related to the current relationship?</li> <li>❖ Are family and criminal court orders inconsistent?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Abuser History</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>History of Criminal Violence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Does the abuser have a history of threats, violence, sex assaults, and criminal harassment not apparently related to domestic violence?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>History of Domestic Violence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Is there a history of stalking, violence or abuse in a previous intimate partner relationship?</li> <li>❖ Is there any history of threats or actual violence or abuse against children, other family members, friends, co-workers or family pets related to domestic violence?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Court Orders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Has the abuser ever violated a court order unrelated to the current relationship?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Alcohol and Drugs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Does the abuser have a problem with drug or alcohol use?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Employment Instability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Is the abuser unemployed/underemployed or experiencing financial problems?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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<b>Mental Illness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Does the abuser have a history of mental illness?</li> <li>❖ Has the abuser been diagnosed with a mental illness?</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: An abuser's mental health problems, in particular depression, have been linked with lethality in domestic violence cases.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Suicidal Ideation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Has the abuser ever threatened or attempted suicide?</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: Prior threats or attempts to commit suicide on the part of the abuser have been linked with lethality in domestic violence cases.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Weapons/Firearms</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Access to Weapons/Firearms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Does the abuser have access to firearms or other weapons?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Weapons/Firearms Used or Threatened</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Has the abuser used or threatened to use a firearm or weapon against anyone, including the woman, a family member, children, other intimate partners of the woman, another person, or a pet?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### VICTIM SAFETY FACTORS

		Yes	No
<b>Victim's Perceptions of Risk from the Abuser</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Does the woman fear the abuser or fear that the abuser will harm her or others in the future?</li> <li>❖ Why is she fearful?</li> <li>❖ Does the woman believe the abuser will disobey any protection orders (i.e. no contact orders)?</li> <li>❖ Does the woman fear further violence if the abuser is released from custody?</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: Social science experts indicate that victims' assessments of their own risk are associated with domestic violence recidivism although it has also been observed that some victims underestimate their danger.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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<b>Relative Social Powerlessness</b>	❖ Are marginalization factors present, such as cultural/family pressures, disability, homelessness, lack of transportation, language issues, literacy issues, mental health issues, poverty or substance use issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	❖ Is the woman Aboriginal, an immigrant or refugee, LGBTQ2S, young, or elderly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Level of Personal Support</b>	❖ What kinds of supports does the woman have from family, friends, co-workers and neighbours?		
	❖ Is the woman socially isolated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	❖ Do people in her life know that she is experiencing violence and may be in danger?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Pregnancy</b>	❖ Is the woman pregnant?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Impacts of Abuse</b>	❖ Does the woman have difficulty absorbing information or making and following through on decisions, including reaching out for help?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	❖ Does the woman have physical injuries/disabilities that make her particularly vulnerable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	❖ Does the woman minimize her level of risk for future violence?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	❖ Does the woman use drugs or alcohol to cope?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	❖ Does the woman exhibit extreme fear resulting in an inability to act?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Note: Extreme fear that affects a victim's ability, energy and motivation to take self-protective actions to address their situation is of particular concern.</i>		
<b>Financial Dependence on the Abuser</b>	❖ Is the woman financially dependent on the abuser?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	❖ Does the woman have the resources to support any children on her own?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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### SYSTEM FACTORS

		Yes	No
<b>Availability and Accessibility of Services</b>	❖ Are the services that a woman needs available in the community (e.g. transition house, counselling, child care, interpreter, legal aid)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	❖ Can services adapt to different situations and meet a woman's diverse needs (e.g. flexible service delivery models; accessible services)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Provision of Information</b>	❖ Does the woman know about available services in the community (e.g. transition house, counselling, child care, interpreter, legal aid)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	❖ Does the woman have information about available notification services for cases involving the justice system?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	❖ Does the woman have case specific information, including case status or offender status?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Coordination of Services</b>	❖ Are services and systems in the community working together and sharing information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	❖ Are women receiving proactive referrals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	❖ Is someone advocating for the woman to assist her to get the services she needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS (IF APPLICABLE)

		Yes	No
<b>Other Information</b>	❖ Is there any other relevant information not captured above that should be noted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>