

# PLANNING FOR SAFETY



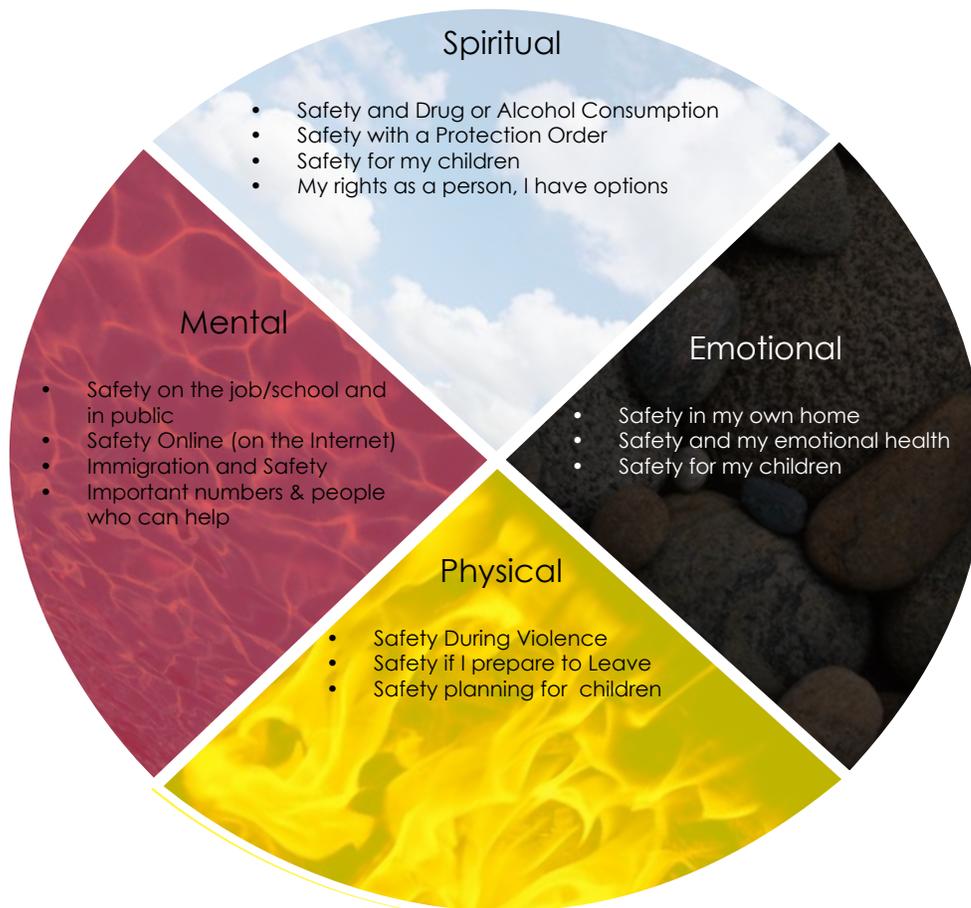
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## In Canada everyone has the right to safety

Regardless if you are a Canadian citizen or not in Canada, you have the right to think your own thoughts, speak your mind and no one has the right to abuse you. You have the right to physical and psychological safety; meaning if your sponsor is abusive you cannot be deported because you sought safety. You also have the right to an interpreter in legal proceedings. In Canada women and men have the same rights and freedoms.

## What is a safety plan?

A safety plan can help you prepare for the possibility of further violence. There are many different aspects of safety to consider. This plan is presented using the medicine wheel to guide you. You can explore safety planning techniques across a range of elements. Most safety plans deal only with how to escape in a crisis and get to a safe place. In addition to physical safety planning, this booklet will also address emotional, mental and spiritual aspects of being and keeping safe.



Check off and fill in the things that work best for you. It is your safety plan and you know best what will make you safe. Review it often and make changes as you need to. There is help for you to develop a safety plan if you need it. You can ask a social worker, victim services worker, family violence worker or some other person in the community you trust to work with you on this.

## I Have Options

I plan to take the following steps to increase my safety, the safety of my children and other people or pets in my home if there is a threat of violence. Although I don't have control over my (ex)partner's violence I do have a choice about how I respond and how to get myself, my children and other people in my family to safety.

## Safety During Violence

In order to increase safety during a violent incident I can use a variety of strategies. Some strategies I can consider are:

1. What is/are the possible escape route(s) from my home? What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells, or fire escapes could I use: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
2. I can keep my backpack/purse/wallet, cell phone and car keys ready and put them \_\_\_\_\_ (An easy place to reach them in order to leave more quickly).
3. I can also have a second set of keys made in case my (ex)partner takes the first set.
4. I can tell \_\_\_\_\_ about the violence and ask that they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my home or where we like to hang out.
5. I can tell \_\_\_\_\_ about the violence and ask that they call the police if they see \_\_\_\_\_ in the window (Have a knocked over plant or a piece of ribbon that only you and the people you trust know what it means).
6. I will use \_\_\_\_\_ as my code word with my children or my friends so they can call for help.
7. If I have to leave my home, I will go to \_\_\_\_\_ (This could be a place that is public and unknown by your abuser)
8. If I cannot go to the place above, then I can go to \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.
9. During an abusive incident it is best to try to avoid places in the house where I may be trapped or where weapons are readily available such as the bathroom or kitchen. Bigger rooms with more than one exit may be safer. The places I would try to avoid are \_\_\_\_\_
10. The places I would like to move to are \_\_\_\_\_
11. The safest way for me to leave my house in an emergency is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
12. The safest way to leave the abuser's house in an emergency is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
13. I will use my judgment, experience and intuition. If the situation is very serious, I can give my partner whatever is necessary to maintain my own and my children's safety.

14. I have to protect myself until I/we are out of danger.
15. I should be aware that I am responsible for my actions and my (ex)partner is responsible for their actions. I am not responsible for another person's violence.
16. Calling the Police can increase safety. Abuse is a crime; it is against the law. The number for the Police is \_\_\_\_\_
17. Given my past experience, other protective actions that I have considered/used are: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**My Children's Safety**

My children's safety is an important part of my safety plan. I may be able to teach my children a safety plan just for them (see back page).

1. I can teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the police and fire department. The number for the Police is \_\_\_\_\_, fire department is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. I will practice this plan with my children like it is a fire drill.
3. I can tell all the people who provide childcare for my children about who has permission to pick up my children and who does not. I can give them copies of the family court orders and a picture of the abusive person. The people I will tell about pick-up permission include:

School \_\_\_\_\_  
 Daycare Staff \_\_\_\_\_  
 Babysitters \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sunday School \_\_\_\_\_  
 Teachers \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

I can tell \_\_\_\_\_ (neighbour), \_\_\_\_\_ (spiritual support), \_\_\_\_\_ (family, and \_\_\_\_\_ (friend) that I am separated and they should call the police if my (ex)partner is seen near my residence.

## Safety If I Prepare to Leave

People who are violent often strike back when they believe that their partner is leaving a relationship. I am aware this can be a very dangerous time for me. I can use some or all of the following safety strategies:

1. I should just leave without telling my partner because it may be dangerous to say that I am leaving.
2. I will leave money, important documents and an extra set of keys with \_\_\_\_\_ so I can leave quickly.
3. I can make copies of important documents such as birth certificates, status cards, custody agreements for myself and my children at \_\_\_\_\_.
4. I can also scan all these documents and store the USB drive at \_\_\_\_\_.
5. I will keep a small bag with a change of clothes, important medications, photos, toiletries, etc. at \_\_\_\_\_.
6. I arranged with \_\_\_\_\_ to make a phone call from their house.
7. I will open a savings account by \_\_\_\_\_, to increase my independence. I should make sure to tell the bank not to send any mail to my home address.
8. I can get legal advice from a lawyer or a court worker who understands how to support people experiencing violence and abuse. I should make sure to tell them not to send any mail to my home address.
9. I can keep change for phone calls on me at all times. I understand that if I use my cell phone, the following month the telephone bill could tell the person who assaulted me the numbers I called after I left. To keep my telephone communications confidential, I must either use coins or I might get a friend to let me use their cell phone or home phone for a while when I first leave.
10. I will check with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.
11. I will sit down and review my safety plan every \_\_\_\_\_ in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ (women's advocate, victim service worker or friend) has agreed to help me review this plan.
13. I will arrange for \_\_\_\_\_ to take my pet until I am safe. They know not to take my pet outside in public areas or post to facebook or tell others until it is safe.
14. I can arrange for direct deposit into my account.
15. I can prepare a will.
16. If I need to return home to get personal belongings, I can call the police and ask them to come with me and stand by to keep the peace. To do this, I call \_\_\_\_\_ and ask the police to meet me somewhere close to my home. They will stay while I pick up my own and my children's personal belongings.

## People Who Can Help

Money: \_\_\_\_\_  
Childcare: \_\_\_\_\_  
Pet Sitting: \_\_\_\_\_  
Transportation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Housing: \_\_\_\_\_  
Support attending appointments: \_\_\_\_\_

## Important numbers

Police: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lawyer: \_\_\_\_\_  
Victims Service Worker: \_\_\_\_\_  
Local Shelter: \_\_\_\_\_  
Emergency Protection Order: Alison McAteer House Toll Free 1-866-223-7775 or the RCMP \_\_\_\_\_  
Spiritual Support/Elder: \_\_\_\_\_  
Band Office: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mental Health/Counselling: \_\_\_\_\_  
Housing: \_\_\_\_\_  
Income Support: \_\_\_\_\_

When leaving an abusive partner, it is important to take certain items with you. You can sometimes give extra copies of papers and an extra set of clothing to a friend just in case they have to leave quickly. Keeping items all together in one location makes it easier if you need to leave in a hurry.

## When I leave, I should take

- Identification for myself and children (drivers license, status card, passport)
- Birth certificates, social insurance cards, immigration papers
- Protection Order papers/documents
- Divorce/separation/custody/school records
- Medical records/vaccination records
- Bankcards, credit cards, bank book (change all PINs & passwords)
- Items of special sentimental value
- Keys – house/car/office/safety deposit box
- Cellphone/address book
- Money
- Will and other legal papers
- Take pictures, a few sentimental items, jewelry
- Lease/rental agreement, deed, mortgage/insurance papers
- Medications and equipment (walker, braces)
- Extra clothing and small toiletries
- Children's favorite toys, blankets and/or clothes

## Immigration and Safety

Regardless if you are a permanent resident or conditional permanent resident your status is not affected if your sponsor is abusing or neglecting you. This means the Government of Canada will not deport you just because you left an abusive partner. Your sponsor may threaten you and insist that they will take away their sponsorship, but this is not true. In the case of conditional permanent residents it is up to you to prove that neglect and/or abuse has taken place. This can be hard but there are many organizations that can help you like victim services, the shelters or legal aid.

It is worth noting that there are still ways that your (ex)partner can put your status at risk. They could accuse you of lying on your application, or of other criminal activities that might make you inadmissible to Canada. Even if these things are not true, they can complicate your status. If you think your (ex)partner might do these things, you should speak to a lawyer or immigration officer right away to make a safety plan to protect your immigration status.

## Safety in my own home

There are many things I can do to increase my safety in my own residence. It may not be possible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step by step. Safety measures I can use include:

1. If I am renting I should check with my landlord before making any changes to my home.
2. I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible.
3. If I own my own place I can replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors and install a peep hole.
4. I can install security systems including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, an electronic alarm system, etc.
5. I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows.
6. I can install smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor in my house/apartment.
7. I can install the "call blocking" option on my telephone. This will allow me to make telephone calls, even to the person who is violent, without my number being identified on another telephone's display mechanism.
8. I can install motion sensitive lighting outside that lights up when a person is coming close to my home.
9. I can leave my lights on.
10. I can possibly speak to victim services at \_\_\_\_\_ in order to help with some of these costs.
11. Other things that I am already using or that I might use are \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Safety with a Protection Order

Protection orders are court papers that limit the movement and actions of people who threaten or are violent to their partners or other family members. Court orders come in different forms: peace bonds, restraining orders, bail conditions, parole conditions, child custody/access orders, etc. Many people who are violent do obey protection orders, but you can never be sure if they will. It is often necessary to ask the police and the courts to enforce a protection order. The following are some steps that I can take to help the enforcement of my protection order.

1. I can call the Alison McAteer house at 1-866-223-7775 or the RCMP to get an emergency protection order.
2. It is important to know the specifics and limitations of my protection order. I will find out the conditions and what they mean for my safety.
3. There may be a time when I want contact with my (ex)partner but the conditions of the order state no contact. I will either contact a lawyer regarding the removal of the conditions, wait for the order to expire or contact the police.
4. I can call the RCMP to ensure the protection order is registered on their computer system (CPIC).
5. If my (ex)partner doesn't abide by the protection order, I can call the police and report them, contact my (ex)partner's parole officer \_\_\_\_\_, and/or contact my lawyer/advocate \_\_\_\_\_. (It is important to report every violation of the order to the RCMP.)
6. If the police do not help, I can contact the shift supervisor immediately at the police station and express my concern. I can also contact my (ex)partner's parole officer, my lawyer as well as filing a complaint with the RCMP.
7. I will keep my protection order documents(s) (original if possible) in \_\_\_\_\_ (location). (Always keep it on or near you. If you change purses, it's the first thing you should check). Having a second copy in a safe place is also recommended.
8. I will inform my employer, my clergy support, my friends \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ that I have a protection order in effect.
9. If my (ex)partner destroys my protection order, I can get another copy from the courthouse, my lawyer, or \_\_\_\_\_.
10. I can give a copy to someone I trust to hold onto for safe keeping.

## Safety on the job, in school and in public

Everyone must decide if and when they will tell others that their (ex)partner is violent and that they may be at risk of being hurt. My friends, family and co-workers can help to protect me. I should think carefully about who would help me secure my safety. I may or may not do any or all of the following:

1. I can tell my boss, the security supervisor and \_\_\_\_\_ at work about my situation.
2. I can ask \_\_\_\_\_ to help screen my calls at work and keep a record of them.
3. I can talk about office safety planning with my employer, such as what to do if my (ex)partner comes my work. (i.e. phone the police, non-violence crisis intervention)
4. I can use the following safety suggestions for arriving and leaving my work or school:
  - Let someone know when I'll be home. If I need to leave school/work in an emergency, I can call \_\_\_\_\_ and let them know.
  - Walk with someone to my car or between classes.
  - No matter where I go, I will be aware of how to leave safely in an emergency.
  - If my partner is following me, I can drive to a place where there are supportive people, such as a friend's home or the RCMP station
  - I can eat lunch and spend free periods in an area where there are school staff or co-workers nearby. These are some areas where I feel safe \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
  - I have thought of the safest ways to get to and from school and/or work. I can take a route where there are lots of people or take different/changing routes home.
  - I can carry my cell phone and important contacts with me at all times.
  - I can leave if I feel uncomfortable in a situation, no matter what my friends are doing.
  - I can buy a whistle or personal alarm to call attention to myself and ask for help if I am being harassed.
5. I can do activities like going to the store at different times to reduce the risk of contact with my (ex)partner.
6. If I use the bus/taxi, I will use \_\_\_\_\_ company and take a picture of the license plate before I enter the vehicle.
7. I can take a self defense course and learn how to defend myself from physical attacks or protect parts of my body.
8. I can also \_\_\_\_\_
- 9.

**It is important to have a safety plan in case the violence/abuse gets worse.  
You are not alone. You deserve safety.**

## Safety and drug/alcohol consumption

Sometimes a victim of abuse will drink or take mood-altering drugs. Some drugs are legal and some are not. Victims should know how this could affect them, for example:

- If you and your (ex)partner have both been drinking it may be hard for the RCMP to get an accurate statement about what happened.
- Your (ex)partner may use alcohol or drugs as an excuse for violence.
- After being abused, you may be more likely to lash out at others, like your children, if you are drinking or using drugs.
- The use of any alcohol or drugs can reduce your awareness and ability to act quickly to protect yourself from your (ex)partner.
- A victim who is a parent could be at a disadvantage in legal actions with the (ex)partner over custody and access of the children if they are known to use drugs.

I need to make a specific safety plan for when/if I drink or take drugs. I can increase my safety with some or all of the following:

1. If I am going to use alcohol or drugs, I can do it in a safe place and with people who understand the risk of violence and care about my safety.
2. There can be at least one sober person in the group to drive us or keep us safe if needed.
3. If my (ex)partner is consuming, I can \_\_\_\_\_
4. To safeguard my children, I might \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_
5. I can call \_\_\_\_\_ if I need help while under the influence.
6. I can also \_\_\_\_\_

## Safety and my emotional health

The experience of being assaulted and verbally abused by (ex)partners is exhausting and emotionally draining. The process of surviving requires much courage and incredible energy. To conserve my emotional energy/resources and to support myself in hard emotional times, I can do some of the following:

1. If I left the relationship and I am feeling lonely or experiencing manipulative tactics from my ex partner, I can take care of my self by \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. If I feel down and ready to return to a potentially abusive situation, I can \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. When I feel I have to talk with my (ex)partner in person or by telephone, I can emotionally prepare by \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. When I face potentially difficult times like court cases, meeting with lawyers and other stressful things, I can prepare by \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. I can find out about workshops and support groups in the community by calling agencies and services such as the Band Office, the Shelter, Victim Services or a local community centre.
6. I will try to use "I can..." statements with myself and to be assertive with others.
7. I can tell myself " \_\_\_\_\_ " whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me.
8. I can call \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
and \_\_\_\_\_ as other resources to support me.
9. I will do things I enjoy, like \_\_\_\_\_ and/or  
\_\_\_\_\_.
10. I will join clubs or organizations that interest me, like \_\_\_\_\_ or  
\_\_\_\_\_.
11. I will spend time with people who make me feel safe, supported and good about myself.
12. I will keep a journal or doodle book to place my feelings somewhere.
13. I will allow myself to have fun by dancing, singing or expressing myself in new health ways. I will laugh and find other people I can laugh with.
14. I will remember that the abuse is not my fault and that I deserve a safe and healthy relationship.

## Online and cell phone safety

The Internet, including social media (Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat), are wonderful tools for communicating with people near and far, sharing information and getting information. For a victim of abuse, however, using email and finding resources on the Internet can put you at increased risk for harm if your activities are being monitored by the abuser. Monitoring another person's activity on the Internet is not that difficult to do. Internet browsers record a history of recently visited websites for fast reloading on your next visit. This also includes Internet searches on your phone. Your safety could be at risk if your abuser were to check this history. There are some things you can do to hide your Internet use such as using private/incognito windows in your browser. It may be safer to access information on the Internet at a friend's house, your workplace, a library or Internet cafe.

You can ask service providers about safe ways to surf the net and use email. The safest way to prevent an abuser from monitoring you and your email activity is to use a computer that no one in the family has access to. Also make sure that your (ex) partner does not know your passwords to any of your accounts. You can create a separate email for service providers if you feel like you need to share your passwords for your own safety. Make sure they do not know about the other email.

Many people forget that things done online can be seen by everyone and that information that is placed there is an easy way to learn more about a persons routine. I will keep myself safe on the Internet by doing some of the following:

1. I will use private/incognito windows or clear my search history every time I use a computer. I can research this on youtube at a friends or service provider's computer (library, band office).
2. I will not say or do anything online that I wouldn't in person. I can avoid putting personal information such as where I will be, who I will be with, or what time I will be home on Facebook, Twitter or other social media.
3. I will set my privacy settings for social media so that my (ex)partner or their contacts cannot view my information. I will set all my online profiles to be as private as they can and remove unknown or unwanted friends out of my friends lists.
4. I will save and keep track of any abusive, threatening or harassing comments, posts, or texts.
5. I will never give my password to anyone other than my parents/guardians.
6. I will change my usernames, email addresses, passwords and/or cell phone number if the harassment does not stop.
7. I will not answer calls from unknown, blocked or private numbers.
8. I will see if my phone company can block my abuser's phone number from calling my phone.
9. I will not communicate with my abuser using any type of technology, since any form of communication can be recorded and possibly used against me in the future.

## Safety Planning for Children

Strategies for developing a safety plan with your child(ren) should include their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual well-being. It is important to help children and youth learn ways to protect themselves. Children exposed to family violence can be deeply affected. It is very traumatic to be faced with violence directed at them or someone they love. Personal safety is extremely important. Safety planning is always necessary for children whose families are experiencing violence.

### Crisis Situation

When your child witnesses or is exposed to parents or caregivers who make threats of violence, cause injury, or damage to property or pets...

- Have your child identify a safe room/place in the house, (preferably with a lock on the door), two ways to get out, and where to find a phone. The first step of any plan is for the child to get out of the room where the abuse is occurring.
- Teach the child how to call for help. It is important to ensure that the child knows they should not use a phone that is in view of the abuser. This puts them at risk.
- Teach them how to contact the RCMP or someone you have identified as safe
- Ensure that the child knows their street address (or house name) and their full name (first and last)
- Rehearse what they will say. In the case of young children it should be simple yet specific, i.e. "someone is hurting mommy".
- You can make their name, address and the number to call into a song so it is easier to remember.
- It is important for children to leave the phone off the hook after they are finished talking. The RCMP will call the number back if the child hangs up. This could create a dangerous situation for yourself and the child.
- Teach the child about safe places to go such as a neighbour's or a relatives home.
- Make sure your child knows that they should not feel responsible for the abuse. It is not their fault.
- Make sure your child knows they should get to safety and that it is not their responsibility to distract the abuser or to get involved in the abusive episode.
- Make sure your child knows that they are not expected to stop the abuse - other adults can do that.
- Make sure your child knows that knowing who to call and how to get help is the best way for them to help you.

## Key Messages for Your Children

1. You are not to blame for the abuse
2. You must not put yourself in danger
3. Abuse is very dangerous, and it is against the law.
4. If you have a safe place, go there when the abuse is happening.
5. You are not responsible for your parents safety, but you may be able to get help.
6. If you can get to a phone in your own house or a neighbour's house you can call for help.
7. What are the 5 W's (Who, What, When, Where, Weapons) and the number for the RCMP
8. You are loved

## HOW TO CALL FOR HELP

Dial: \_\_\_\_\_ (RCMP Number)

They will say something like: RCMP do you have an emergency or can you hold?

You Say: It is an emergency

They will ask the 5 W's:

WHO are you?

WHAT is the problem?

WHEN did it happen?

WHERE did it happen and WHERE are you now?

WEAPONS: are there any weapons involved? A weapon can be anything from a knife or gun, to a piece of wood, or a household appliance; basically anything that is used in a threatening manner towards another person can be classified as a weapon.

Plus they will also ask if either person involved was drinking or using drugs.

You Say: My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

Someone is hurting my mom right now.

The address is \_\_\_\_\_.

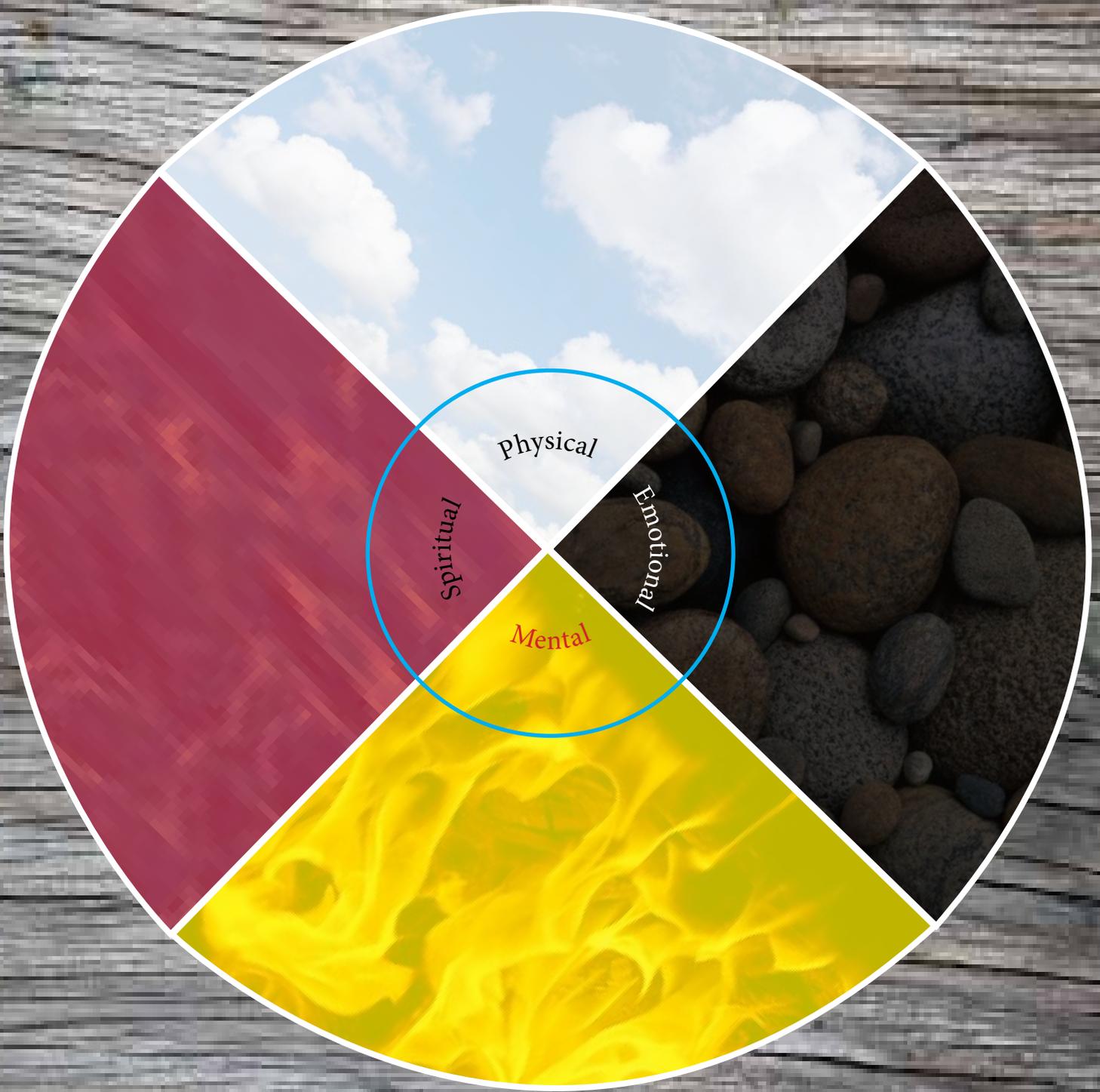
(Yes/No/I Don't Know) there was \_\_\_\_\_ (weapons)

(Yes/No/I Don't Know) they have been drinking or using drugs.

If you are not safe say: I am not safe on the phone.

Then put the phone down. **DO NOT HANG UP or END CALL.**

Get to safety.



YOU ARE STRONG ENOUGH