

Safety Planning



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

DFS Division of
Family Services

What is it?

Safety Planning is working with a survivor and their particular life circumstances to develop the best option(s) for safety for themselves and any children. Survivors are most likely already safety planning in their lives. Build on their skills to increase safety.

Why is it important?

Emphasizing safety on a regular basis may help survivors to consider the potential danger in their lives. Recognizing that leaving the abusive relationship may increase the danger for a survivor is essential.

Is this required?

According to Professional Standards, safety planning should be a service available 24/7. Programs can work to build safety assessments and safety planning into all aspects of program services.

How do we make it happen?

Research and understand how to assess for high danger situations. Make asking about safety a regular part of interactions with survivors. Work with community partners to develop a lethality assessment program. Build in systems to support staff with these assessments. Have resources available for staff support if there is a domestic homicide.