

## 9. Leaving is complicated.

Some people undergo years of abuse and emotional breakdown. This means it's not only a matter of getting physical affairs in order.

What keeps people in the situation is the near-total mind control.

"Just leave" isn't helpful advice. To leave, a person needs a window of opportunity, a safe place to go, money to sustain themselves and any dependents, and safety protocol in place.

Sometimes they need mental health support, as well. There are a number of resources available, from finding the right therapist to support groups and inpatient care.

In the case of financial manipulation, it can be difficult and take a long time to save enough money to leave on your own.

In many cases, people subjected to intimate partner violence need to pretend that everything is normal in the household. That requires tremendous determination and focus, because they fear the retribution of violence.

## 10. Preparing to leave

Before leaving, a survivor of intimate partner violence needs a safe place to go.

Check with state-operated facilities. Be clear about age and gender as well as those of any dependents. Some shelters and safe houses only accept specific age groups and genders.

If you're helping a loved one leave, take the guesswork out of the process for them by telling them exactly when and where they can go to be safe. If you take care of logistics for them, they can be ready to act when the moment comes.

Ask for help from people you trust. They can be family members, friends, employers, club members, or mentors. Let them know what's happening and that you and your loved one need support. Memorize their phone numbers.

Offer a safe place for your loved one to keep some money and an overnight bag. They may need to add to it bit by bit to avoid detection.



## 11. Supporting loved ones

The experience of intimate partner violence can be traumatizing, demoralizing, and exhausting. To support a loved one, it's important to understand that they may change their mind a few times.

- Let them know that you're always willing to listen and to help.
- Do whatever you can to keep in contact with your loved one. Sometimes that means resisting the urge to pressure them to leave.
- Developing a safety plan takes time and research. Lay the groundwork ahead of time by:
  - finding housing and shelter options
  - looking for job opportunities
  - securing a new cellphone and SIM card
  - making a list of items for the overnight bag
  - learning the process for reporting intimate partner violence and requesting an order of protection