



Birchway Niagara can help you over the phone or in-person if you need support developing a plan to keep you and your children safer. Here are some ideas that might help you to get started:

Cell phone:

- Use a password, and delete your call history and text message history if there are any communications you don't want your abuser to see.
- Change your notifications so that messages do not appear on your lock screen.
- Disable GPS (e.g., "Location Services") to make it more difficult to track your location.
- If you are not sure if you are able to cover your phone tracks, use a friend or family member's phone.

Email:

- Delete any messages from your inbox AND sent boxes that you don't want your partner to see. You may also have to delete them from your "Delete" file.

Computer:

- Do not favourite sensitive websites.
- Delete "Cookies" or "Temporary Internet Files" and your browsing history.
- Do not forget to close all windows when you leave your computer.
- Consider using private browsing options such as Incognito (which will not create a browsing history or cookies)

continued....

24hr Support Line

905-356-5800

Call or text. Collect calls accepted.



Home:

- Figure out your emergency exits. Teach them to your children and know them well.
- Teach your children to call 9-1-1 and what to say.
- Encourage your children to go to another room where they can leave or lock the door if they are afraid for their safety. Reassure them that they are not responsible for your safety.

During a violent incident:

- Position yourself to get out quickly or near a phone so you can call 9-1-1 if necessary.
- Try to avoid arguments where there might be items that could be used as weapons (such as the kitchen, bathroom or garage) or rooms without access to the outside.

After a violent incident:

- Call the police at 9-1-1 and tell them the details of the assault.
- If you are able to leave, take your children with you if you can. If you try to get them later, the police cannot help you remove them from their other parent unless you have a valid court order.

Prepare an escape plan

- Contact Birchway Niagara for help preparing an escape plan (which may include a shelter stay).
- Explore whether you can stay with friends or family if necessary.
- Open a bank account in your own name and arrange that no bank statements or other calls be made to your personal cell phone, or arrange for mail to be sent to a friend or family member.

continued...



- Save and set aside as much money as you can.
- Plan your transportation and any associated costs. Birchway Niagara will send a cab and can cover the costs of your taxi trip to the shelter if you are coming to stay with us.
- Develop and teach your children their own safety plan.
- Prepare an emergency bag with items you will need if you leave your home, and keep it somewhere safe or with a trusted friend or family member.

Emergency bag checklist:

Use this checklist to help you pack a bag in case you need to leave your home quickly. Only take the bag with you if it is safe to do so.

- Copies or photographs of original documents (leave the originals where they are so that you do not create suspicion that you are planning to leave)
- Birth certificates for you and your children
- Custody documents, court orders, restraining orders
- Immigration papers
- Marriage certificate
- Driver's license and registration
- Mortgage, lease or rental documents for home and car
- Account passwords
- Car registration
- Banking books and records, income tax (especially your notice of assessment for the most recent tax year)
- Insurance papers
- Health cards, medical records, vaccination records
- Passports
- All cards you normally use (social insurance, credit cards, bank debit cards)

continued:

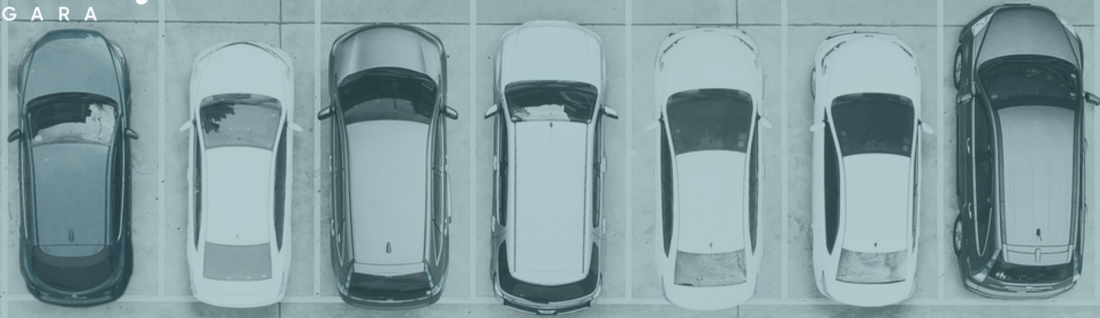


- Cell phone and charger
- Some cash
- Change of clothes for you and your children
- Special toys
- Medication and prescriptions
- Any special or valuable items (e.g., family photos, important jewelry, small gifts from family)
- Extra sets of keys for home, car, work

If you have left an abusive situation

- Keep your phone charged and with you at all times. Pre-program the number of people to call when you need help.
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times.
- If you have a protection order or custody and access documents, keep them with you at all times.
- If you are moving to a confidential location, consider using a mailing address that is different from the one where you are actually living (e.g., set up a post office box)
- Be aware that addresses can be listed on police reports and restraining orders. Before filling out your address on any form, ask if there is a way to keep your address confidential. If not, ask if you can use a P.O. Box or friend's address instead.
- Try to make sure the outside of your home is well lit. Install a motion-detection light if possible.
- Keep bushes etc. around your house well-trimmed, making it harder for someone to hide.
- Install extra security systems in your home if possible (e.g., additional locks, window bars, an electronic security system).
- Change the locks on the windows and doors if you are returning to your former home. Install a peephole in the door. Change the locks on your garage and mailbox.

continued...



- Consider having your phone number unlisted.
- Do not put your name in your apartment directory.
- Notify service providers (e.g., your doctor) not to give out your appointment times to your partner.
- Consider telling your neighbours about the situation. Make a plan with them for when you need help (e.g., to look after your children in an emergency)
- Teach your children not to answer the door.
- Change your routines (e.g., shop at different times/locations than you usually would) to make it harder for your partner to find you.
- If you are in a vehicle and believe you are being followed, drive to the nearest police station.
- If you are walking and believe you are being followed, cross the street, go into the nearest public place and call 9-1-1.
- Park where your vehicle cannot be easily seen if your partner drives by.
- Inform your employer or school of your situation. Ask about taking a temporary leave or about changing your duties while you gauge the abuser's response. Your employer has a legal obligation to take steps to protect you from abuse.
- Always park as close to a building as you can in a well-lit area. -Check the back seat before getting into your vehicle.
- Consider carrying a personal alarm or whistle.
- Ask for an escort to your car.
- When walking, stay in populated areas.
- Always let someone know when you will be home.
- Call or text Birchway Niagara for ongoing support at **905-356-5800**.