



# Safety Planning

## Accessing Safety in Hennepin County

A collaboration between

The Arc Minnesota (The Arc) and the Sexual Violence Center (SVC)

Welcome to the Safety Planning Training. This training is brought to you by Accessing Safety in Hennepin County, a collaboration between The Arc Minnesota and the Sexual Violence Center. Going forward The Arc Minnesota will be referred to as The Arc and the Sexual Violence Center as SVC.



# Learning Objectives

Staff will learn what a safety plan is, how to use a safety plan, and limits of safety planning

Staff will learn about community resources

Staff will have the opportunity to complete a practice safety plan

There are three learning objectives to this online training.

First, you will learn what a safety plan is, how to use a safety plan, and the limits of safety planning when it comes to confidentiality and safety from abusers.

Second, you will learn about community resources helpful for safety planning with victims/survivors of sexual violence.

And third, you will have the opportunity to get familiar with the safety plan document.

# Accessing Safety in Hennepin County (ASHC)



A Collaboration between The Arc and SVC

## **Mission**

The collaboration will improve how both agencies support victims with intellectual and developmental disabilities. ASHC will work together to provide services that respect and empower victims. ASHC will help victims get the skills and resources they need to heal.

First, let me tell you about the program that brought this training together.

Accessing Safety in Hennepin County exists to improve how The Arc and SVC support victims/survivors with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The collaboration works together to provide services that respect and empower victim/survivors while helping victims get the skills and resources that they need to heal.



# The Sexual Violence Center

At SVC, the mission is to end sexual violence and abuse by:

- Challenging rape culture,
- Educating the community, and
- Supporting victims/survivors

The Arc's partner in this collaboration is SVC.

Since 1985, SVC has been serving youth and adult victim/survivors of sexual violence 12 years of age and older. SVC works in Hennepin, Carver and Scott counties, with services coordinated out of an office in Minneapolis. They will never turn anyone away from services if they live outside of these counties, but can often refer people to a local agency that has connections with more specific resources to help.

The mission of the Sexual Violence Center is to end sexual violence and abuse by challenging rape culture, educating the community and supporting victims/survivors of sexual violence.



# The Sexual Violence Center

SVC services include

- 24-hour crisis line
- One-to-one and group peer counseling
- Medical and Legal advocacy

## SVC Services Include

- 24-hour crisis line where people can get support from a trained advocate any time. This is the most used service at SVC. Some people call when they are having a flashback to a previous assault. Some people call wondering how to support a friend who experienced an assault. Some people call immediately after an assault to learn about their options.
- One-to-one and group peer counseling is available to provide on going support for victim/survivors.
- Medical and Legal advocacy is available to people when they go to a hospital for a forensic exam after a sexual assault or go to court for reasons related to sexual violence.

# What is a safety plan?



To keep someone safe right now

For people who have been sexually assaulted recently or in the past

Physical and Emotional safety

**My Safety Plan**

I have the right to be safe. Abuse is not my fault. I am not alone. There is help.

If I am in danger now I can call 911. I will call 911 if \_\_\_\_\_

If I need help, I can call:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Number \_\_\_\_\_  
This person can \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Number \_\_\_\_\_  
This person can \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Number \_\_\_\_\_  
This person can \_\_\_\_\_

If I need to leave:

These things help me get around (like a wheelchair, scooter, walker or cane) and communicate (like a tablet): \_\_\_\_\_

These things help keep me healthy (medications): \_\_\_\_\_

If I need to leave, I will go \_\_\_\_\_

Let's look at the safety plan and what it does. On the right hand side of the slide you can see the first page of the safety.

The purpose of a safety plan is to help keep a person safe right now, and to think about safety in the near future. A safety plan may be helpful for people who were recently sexually assaulted, but it can also be helpful for people who were hurt many years ago.

People who were sexually assaulted recently might not feel safe in their own home or in the community. A safety plan can help them think about options and decide what they will do if they feel unsafe.

People who were sexually assaulted in the past may also have safety concerns. For example, people who were sexually abused as children may have flashbacks of their assault, or something in their everyday life may remind them of what happened in the past. A safety plan can help them think about what they can do if they have a flashback or are reminded of the violence.

A sexual assault safety plan may include physical and emotional safety.

# Physical Safety



- Safety at home
- Safety at work
- Safety in the community
- Safety on public transportation



Examples: locking doors, or finding a new bus route to work

Physical safety is about the safety someone feels because of their physical environment. Someone living with their abuser or hurt by someone who they see regularly might need more help thinking about physical safety. This could include safety in their home, safety at work, in the community, or on public transportation. Physical safety planning may include locking doors, changing the locks to your home, or finding a new bus route to work.

# Emotional Safety



Safety if someone feels overwhelmed  
Safety if someone is triggered  
Safety if someone is thinking about self-harm  
Safety if someone is feeling alone



Examples: calling a friend or hotline, or deep breathing

Emotional safety is an important part of safety after a sexual assault.

Emotional safety planning can include:

Planning for what to do when someone is overwhelmed or considering self-harm, if someone is triggered, meaning that something around them has reminded them of past sexual violence, if someone is thinking about self-harm or if someone is simply feeling alone and isolated.

Emotional safety planning may include calling a friend or hotline, or taking deep breaths.



## Limits of a safety plan



It is not a guarantee

It may not keep some people safe

It could add to danger

A safety plan does not guarantee safety.

A plan is just that. It may not actually keep anyone safe. It is important that you know the limits of a plan. Advocates and victim/survivors cannot control what the abuser or other people will do.

It is important to remember that a safety plan can add to danger if the abuser finds the safety plan. The person who hurt them might be angry that they reached out for help or told anyone about the abuse. This could lead to more violence. Anytime you are safety planning with someone you need to talk about whether they want to have a hard copy of the plan, and if so, where is a safe place to keep the plan where no one will find it.



# Confidentiality

No notes

No hardcopies

No trail on computer database

If the person is meeting with you in person and wants a hard copy, provide them with a blank folder and discuss where to keep the plan

Confidentiality, or privacy, is very important when safety planning.

The Arc must take extra steps so that there isn't a paper trail that could hurt the victim/survivor if a case does go to trial.

For example, we might ask the person to make a plan for what they will do if the person who hurt them contacts them. Let's say the person decides they will not answer their phone if the person calls or answer their door if they show up. If the person then does answer the door and let the person into their home at a later date it could be used against them in court.

To help increase confidentiality: do not keep written notes, do not keep hardcopies, and do not keep a trail in any computer database

If in doubt, call SVC or another rape crisis center or domestic violence shelter. They can provide safety planning services with complete privacy.



## How to Use the Safety Plan

- If someone reports feeling unsafe, or if you are concerned for their safety
- Ask, “Do you feel safe? Do you want to make a plan for your safety?”
- The safety plan is only a template
- The safety plan example is to help you use the tool

For the rest of the safety plan training you should have the safety plan document and safety plan sample document printed out in front of you. Please pause this video to gather these materials if you do not have them out already. (Pause for 3 seconds)

You can use this tool anytime someone tells you they do not feel safe, or if you are concerned about someone’s safety

Ask them if this is something they would like. Ask, “Do you feel safe? Do you want to make a plan for your safety?”

The safety plan is only a template. Not everyone will need to complete all parts, some people may have different safety concerns. For example, someone who is assaulted by a coworker will need to focus on safety at work, but someone assaulted by a dating partner or roommate focuses on safety at home. Use the information you have to personalize the plan, but do not interrogate the person for information if they have not told you.

# Safety Planning Tips



Consider pros and cons for calling 911

Consider pros and cons for reporting to the Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center (MAARC)

Identify people and resources already in a support system

Call SVC for back up



Here are a few tips for safety planning.

First, consider the pros and cons for reporting abuse before doing so, and always get consent from the individual before making a report. It may be helpful to talk through potential pros and cons of reporting if the person isn't sure what they want to do.

- The person might want to report the assault if they are comfortable with police, if they have worked with the police before, or if they are in immediate danger
- The person might not want to report if the person is uncomfortable with police, if they have had a bad experience with police, if they are not in immediate danger (what can the police do for them at this time?), if they do not want the person who hurt them to know they are seeking help.

Note: 911 is for immediate danger, the Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center (MAARC) is the common entry point to report abuse of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Help identify people and resources in the persons life. Odds are, they already have some sort of support system. Empower them to identify the support that is already there.

Again, if in doubt, call SVC for back up.

# Mandated Reporters



If you are acting as a mandated reporter (i.e. person-centered planning) you must explain your role before someone discloses abuse or neglect.

You can always ask another staff member to help safety plan or reach out to your local rape crisis center.

Please see The Arc's Policy and Procedures and ask your supervisor if you have additional questions.

Mandated reporters have a couple of things they also need to keep in mind. As a reminder, Arc advocates providing person-centered planning under 245D and staff and volunteers working with the Regional Quality Council must act as mandated reporters when performing those tasks.

If you are acting as a mandated reporter you must explain your role before someone discloses abuse or neglect. Safety planning requires you to ask questions that you may have to report to MAARC. Be sure that the person you are working with understands this before you safety plan.

If you are concerned about someone's safety you can ask another advocate to help create the safety plan.

Please refer to The Arc's mandated reporter policy and procedures.

# Community Resources



**SVC for Hennepin, Scott and Carver Counties (612)871-5111**

**For Domestic Violence Shelters call DayOne (866)223-1111**

**Sexual Offense Services (SOS) for Ramsey County (651)266-1000**

**Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center (MAARC) to report (844)880-1574**

Here are a few important community resources we want you to know about.

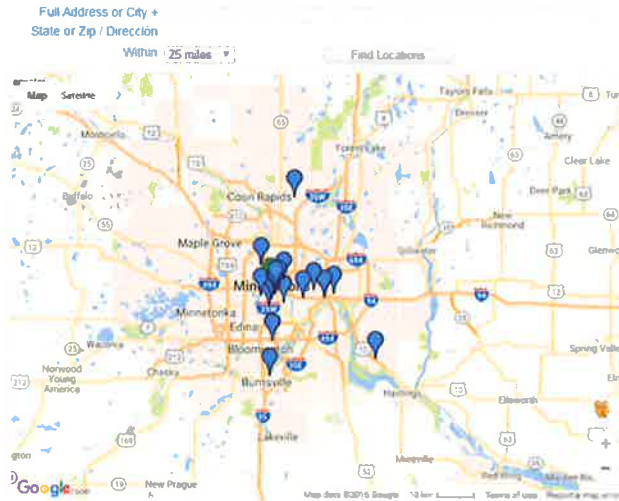
SVC was already discussed at the beginning of the training. The hotline for SVC is available 24/7.

DayOne is the hotline for all domestic violence shelters in Minnesota. Call them if you are looking for emergency housing. You can also call domestic violence shelters directly, but DayOne should have the most up-to-date information.

Sexual Offense Services or SOS is the rape crisis center in Ramsey County. If someone wants continued advocacy services in Ramsey, direct them to SOS. If someone is calling from outside of Ramsey, Hennepin, Scott or Carver county there is another resource you can use. That is on the next slide.

The Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center (MAARC) is the place to report abuse of vulnerable adults. Reporting abuse should be a decision made by the victim/survivor. If they do want to report, you should offer to assist them in contacting MAARC.

# Rapehelpmn.org



Rapehelpmn.org is a resource provided by the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault. You can put in an area code and all resources related to sexual violence will come up in that region.

## Let's practice!



Jordan calls over the phone. They tell you that they don't like their guardian and they want to know more about getting a new guardian. After asking why they don't like their guardian they mention that their guardian raped them when they were younger.

Let's practice using the safety plan with a scenario.

Jordan calls over the phone. They tell you that they don't like their guardian and they want to know more about getting a new guardian. After asking why they don't like their guardian they mention that their guardian raped them when they were younger.



# Let's practice!



## My Safety Plan

**I have the right to be safe. Abuse is not my fault. I am not alone. There is help.**

1



If I am in danger **now** I can call 911. I will call 911 if

2



**If I need help, I can call**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

This person can \_\_\_\_\_

To start off, you would offer to safety plan with Jordan and let them decide if they want to create a plan. You might say, "Thanks for sharing that with me. Your safety is important to me. I can share more information about getting a new guardian, but I can also talk to you today about what you can do to feel safe. Would you like to make a plan today for your safety?" Since Jordan called on the phone you don't need to fill out the safety plan, but rather use it to guide your conversation.

Next, you'll grab the safety plan. First, discuss the option to call 911 if Jordan is ever in dangerous of violence again. You can use examples of when it would be appropriate to call police, like if their guardian threatens to hurt them again. Ask Jordan if they can share an example of when it would be appropriate to call the police.

Second, the safety plan will prompt you to ask about three people who this person can call for help. Ask Jordan to think about safe people in their life. Who is safe, and what can they help you with? If the person has trouble thinking of 3 people, you may prompt them to identify friends or family, or offer hotlines that they can call, like SVC or another crisis hotline.

# Let's practice!



## If I need to leave

3



These things help me get around (like a wheelchair, scooter, walker or cane) and communicate (like a tablet)



These things help keep me healthy (medications)



If I need to leave, I will go

The third section of the safety plan is to plan if the person may need to leave their home. If Jordan doesn't live with their guardian they may not need to complete this section. Ask, "Do you feel safe where you live? Do you want to make a plan in case you need to leave your home to get away from the person who hurt you?"

If Jordan says that they might need to leave if the person who hurt them has access to where they are you should discuss the important things they need to take with them. You should ask specifically about things that help them get around, anything that helps them communicate with others and medications they need. Next, you can brainstorm where Jordan could go if they need to leave. You should first try to identify a safe person in their family or friends who they could stay with in an emergency.

# Let's practice!



4



**These are the things that make me feel safe.**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

5



**These things help me calm down. If I feel stressed or overwhelmed I can do these things.**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The fourth section of the plan starts a conversation about emotional safety. Ask Jordan what things make them feel safe. You can ask, “What can you keep with you that makes you feel safe?” If they struggle to think of things share some examples. They might want to have their phone, a bag, or a hot cup of tea to keep them safe.

Next, ask them about what helps them feel calm. You can ask, “What do you do when you feel stressed or overwhelmed? Can we plan what you will do in case you feel overwhelmed?” Some things that may help people calm down may be listening to music, breathing deeply, or watching a favorite television show.

# Let's practice!



6



I will keep this safety plan in a safe place. I will keep it

7



## HELPFUL PHONE NUMBERS



If I am in danger right now, CALL 911

Who can I call?	When should I call?	Phone number

Number 6 is important if the person is keeping a written copy of the safety plan. Over the phone you usually won't need to ask this question. It is important to always talk about where a hard copy of the safety plan will be kept if it may get in the hands of the person who hurt the individual, or someone who knowingly allowed abuse to happen.

Number 7 prompts you to revisit important phone numbers. You already identified safe people Jordan can call, this is an opportunity to make sure Jordan knows about helpful hotlines like SVC for sexual violence, DayOne for domestic violence shelters, or the suicide hotline if they may be considering suicide.

# Let's practice!



***People in some jobs (like nurses, doctors, and therapists) might have to tell police or adult protective services if they think someone with an intellectual and/or developmental disability has been abused.***

Finally, the last note on the safety plan is about mandatory reporters. Since Jordan is calling about violence that happened a long time ago, mandated reporters would not need to report what happened, but if someone is calling about a recent event or ongoing violence, you must tell them that professionals like nurses, doctors, and therapists would have to report violence. This could start an investigation and the person who hurt them would know that they told someone. Sexual assault counselors can help without reporting.



**Thank you for helping to keep  
people with intellectual and  
developmental disabilities safe!**

Thank you for watching this online training and doing what you can to help keep people with intellectual and developmental disabilities safe! Safety planning is an art, not a science. We encourage you to practice safety planning and reach out to your supervisor with any additional questions.



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**Evaluation Questions will be available through a SurveyMonkey link**

1. A safety plan will guarantee that someone is safe.  
True or False
2. The safety plan will be kept in which of the following place (select all that apply):
  - a. In IMIS, b. In a folder to take home with the victim/survivor c. filed at my desk
3. Name one resource you have to help when completing a safety plan.
4. What else would you like to learn about safety planning?
5. What questions do you still have about safety planning? We welcome any and all feedback.

Now that you have completed this training, please complete these evaluation questions by linking to the SurveyMonkey located below the online video on the training page. You will need to complete the survey to show that you completed this training.