

Safety Planning with Victim-Survivors

Expanding the MARAM Safety Planning Templates
A Resource for Practitioners

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What is Safety Planning?

- Safety planning is thinking about practical actions a victim survivor (and/or services) can take to be safer when living with family violence.
- The process looks at the current situation and assesses what steps and strategies can be put in place to mitigate risk.
- A safety plan must be current, relevant, adaptable and kept up-to-date in response to change in circumstances.
- It is important that safety planning is discussed in a way that does not make the victim survivor feel that family violence risk or its impacts are their fault.
- A safety plan may be developed by professionals who have undertaken an intermediate risk assessment, or in collaboration with, or by, a specialist family violence service. If a specialist family violence service is not involved, you must develop a safety plan with the victim survivor.
- Where family violence risk has been identified, all victim survivors, including children and young people, benefit from having a safety plan. This supports them to know what to do if risk changes or escalates.



When to do Safety Planning

Safety planning should be undertaken:

- Where any level of risk is present, noting that the safety plan will differ depending on the level of risk identified.
- In collaboration with the adult victim survivor, including in the development, implementation and monitoring of the plan. It may be appropriate to work with a young person to develop their own personal safety plan.
- With the adult victim survivor to develop separate safety plans for each child or young person (if not being done separately), and to reflect these plans in the adult victim survivor's plan, if appropriate.
- Reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis, particularly in relation to relevant risk indicators. For example, change of housing arrangement, change in perpetrator circumstances, change in type or frequency of family violence behaviours, and so on.



The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework and Safety Planning

The MARAM Framework provides us with a template for Safety Planning for those who hold Intermediate Responsibility and those who hold Comprehensive Responsibility.

You can download the Intermediate template [here](#)

You can download the Comprehensive template [here](#)

These templates are likely to be in your relevant Client Record Management program for your use.

We have created this guide to assist practitioners, particularly new practitioners to build upon the questions in the MARAM to create safety plans that are unique to the individuals.



Safe Places to Go

Question on the MARAM Safety Plan:

If you need to leave your home in a hurry, where could you go?

Questions You Can Use to Expand on this Information

Inside the house

- Is there a room you can go to with two exits?
- Avoid bathrooms & kitchen, as they typically have instruments that can be used as weapons
- Is there furniture you can use as a barrier?
- Can you exit from your laundry?
- Is there anything you can clean to give you better access/safety such as garages?
- Do you have an attached garage and who has the door opener?
- What kind of locks are on your house and where are the keys and who has a copy?

Outside the house

- Once you get outside where will you go?
- Can you get out of the back yard?
- Is the back yard locked and where is the key to the gate?
- Are there places to hide, particularly on a rural property?
- Can you go to a neighbor's house for help? What do you do if they are not home?

Planning to Leave

- Do you have a backup plan for leaving, if your original plan cannot be executed?

Planning to Stay in a Relationship

- What is your threshold for calling 000?
- Is there another person you would call instead? Could they/would they call 000 for you?

Where to Go Until Police Arrive

- Do you have a place to hide?
- Is there a safe person you can stay with? For example, a neighbour

At Work

- Does your work know your situation?
- Can you park close to work?
- Can someone walk to & from car with you?
- Can you work from an alternative location?
- Can work calls be screened?
- Would you be willing to have a safety plan with colleagues?



Questions You Can Use to Expand on this Information

For Children

- Are children aware of safe places to go?
- Is there a safe neighbour they can stay with?
- Do they know how to get out of the back yard?
- Do they know safe places in the house?
- Do they know how to remove younger siblings to somewhere safe?
- Have you done a safety plan for when children are in the person's using violence care?
- If they walk to & from school, do they know where safe places to go are?
- Would they open the door if the person using violence comes to the door?
- Do they know how to call 000?

In the Community

Shopping

- Are you prepared to approach shop keeper to ask for help if needed?
- Does your client know to stay where there are cameras?
- Can they shop at a new/different location?

Driving

- Can you stay on or drive to main roads?
- Do you know where the closest police stations, service station, McDonald's are? Anywhere there are cameras
- Can you change normal route?

Schools

- Have you informed the children's school?
- Do you have a plan for children for pick up and drop off?

On Holidays

- Do you go to the same locations regularly and can you change locations?
- What is your plan for camping & isolated locations? Where would you go for help?

Appointments

- Does the person using violence know when and where your appointments are? i.e. GP, maternal health nurse
- Would you be able to change times, locations or doctors?



Emergency Contacts

Question on the MARAM Safety Plan:

- Would you feel comfortable calling the police (000) in an emergency? If not, how can we support you to do so?
- 000, Safe Steps and local FV Support Organisations (i.e. TOD's)
- Who are your personal emergency contacts?

Questions You Can Use to Expand on this Information

Preparedness/Ability to Call Police

- What is your threshold to call police?
- What if you are unable to call police?
- Where is your safe place to call police?

Access to a Safe Phone

- Does the person using violence take/smash the phones?
- Has the person using violence monitored the phone?
- Do you have phone reception, can they get somewhere that has reception coverage?
- Do you have a spare/old phone? You don't need a SIM or credit as long as charged to call 000.
- Do you have a Personal Safety Device? (practitioner to discuss options with FV services first)
- Can you use the phone of others such as neighbours, payphone, etc.
- Are location settings on the phone turned off?
- Do the children use apps on devices that have live location tracking? i.e. Snap Chat

Preparedness to Engage in Support services

- Is there a specific specialist services that would suit you better?
- Are you aware that it might take Safe Steps time to respond? They are not a crisis service. If they need immediate help they should call 000 and then seek assistance from Safe Steps when somewhere safe.

Calling 106 with TTY Device

- Text Emergency Relay Service is provided as part of the National Relay Service (NRS).
- 24 hours a day, 106 given priority over other NRS calls



Questions You Can Use to Expand on this Information

Calling 000

- Who is going to call 000?
- Do your children know how to call 000? Do they know their address and other relevant information?
- Do your children think they will get into trouble for calling 000?
- Do you know that 000 don't have translators and will be transferred to police in your capital city. Once connected, a translator will be arranged
- Calling 112 directs to 000 (international) can be used as secondary emergency number – it was thought to be used when out of range – not true! Phones have to have Telstra coverage
- Have you tried calling 000 as a test to ensure you have reception?
- Are you aware that 911 will not be redirected to 000?
- Some VoIP phone providers may not provide access to emergency calls

Who knows What is Going On?

- Is anyone aware of the family violence?
- Are they aware they are the emergency contact?
- Do you know how to ask some one if they are willing to be your emergency contact?
- How do they know they are willing to help?
- Do you know if they are in contact with the person using violence?
- What is their availability?
- Can you establish code words or phrases with safe individuals or groups to alert when you need help?

Children

- Do children have their own phones?
- Do they know how to call 000?
- Who has access to the phone? Does the person using violence?
- Who are the children's emergency contacts – i.e., at school other friends, family?



System Interventions

Question on the MARAM Safety Plan:

- Is the perpetrator incarcerated? Release date if known?
- Is the perpetrator prevented from contact (including with any children)?
- Is an intervention order in place (and children named)?
- If an intervention order in place, is it being adhered to? (note if any breaches, list/describe)

Questions You Can Use to Expand on this Information

Victims Register

- Have you helped the client or given them the information they need to be registered?

Where is the Person Using Violence Being Released/Bailed to?

- How close will they be to the victim/survivor?

Person Using Violence Behavior When in Prison and on Release

- What have they done in the past when released – i.e. have they tried to find/make contact with victim/children
- Has the person using violence tried to make contact from prison

IVO Conditions

- Do they have a copy of the IVO?
- Do they have an accessible copy of IVO on them at all times? i.e. email
- Have they given consent for worker to have a copy?
- Have you explained the conditions and exemptions on the IVO?
- Have you explained the implications of reducing IVO conditions?

IVO's & Children

- Does the school/childcare, sporting groups have copies of the IVO?
- What are the conditions around child access on the IVO?
- Do you have safe places for access hand over?
- Are older children covered on the IVO? (over 18 they need their own IVO)
- Are you pregnant? You will need to add the newborn to the IVO once they are born.
- Are there family court orders in place and what are the conditions?



Questions You Can Use to Expand on this Information

Increased Risk Period

- Does the victim survivor understand the increase risk periods? For example, after the user of violence is released from prison or when there is upcoming legal/family court matters

Protecting the VS Address on IVO Documents

- Does the person using violence know the victim survivors address?
- Ensure their address is not included in IVO

Breaches of IVO's

- Does the victim survivor know how to report breaches?
- What is their preparedness to report the breaches?

IVO Hearings

- Does the victim survivor need to go to court? Can they attend via phone or video link?
- Are they taking support to court?
- Can they avoid taking children to court?
- Are they aware of the court support staff?
- Have your safety at court? Particularly getting to and from court



Supports of Someone Close By

Question on the MARAM Safety Plan:

- Is there someone close by you can tell about the violence who can call the police?
- Could they assist if you want to leave?
- Could they come with assistance or call the police if they hear sounds of violence coming from your home?

Questions You Can Use to Expand on this Information

Neighbours

- Can they identify the neighbour they would be safe to ask to be part of their safety plan?
- Have you spoken the client through how to ask a neighbour to be part of a safety plan?
- Can they give permission to neighbours to call police if they hear or see anything?
- Can they let neighbours know if person using violence is excluded from attending property and to call police if they see them even if the victim survivor is not home?
- Are there safe neighbours for the children to attend their homes?
- Are there safe places at the neighbours house if they are not home?
- Do they know how to get to the neighbours house?

Signals

- Do they want to work out a signal to neighbours for them to call police? For example: blind half way down window, particular light on/candle lit signals help needed



Planning for Children, Older People or People in Your Care

Question on the MARAM Safety Plan:

- What would you need to arrange for people in your care?
- What are their support needs?
- Would they be coming with you if you needed to leave in an emergency?

Questions You Can Use to Expand on this Information

Children

- Can they stay with someone when planning to leave?
- Will they open the door for the person using violence?

Child Protection

- Has Child Protection to be notified if there are CP orders and victim survivor planning to leave

Babies and Young Children

- Are older children able to take the baby/toddler to safety?

Older People

- What is their relationship to victim survivor and the person using violence?
- Are they safe to disclose/discuss safety plan to?
- Will they open the door for the person using violence?
- What are their physical needs, medications, aids etc.?
- Is there other family that they can stay with in an emergency?

Children and Young People

- Are they colluding with the person using violence?
- Are they safe to disclose the safety plan to?

Access/Contact with the Person Using Violence

- Are they being coerced for information about the victim?
- Are they still in contact with the person using violence?
- If online, is the person using violence using technology to make contact with children?
- Can you discuss how to assert boundaries around contact with the victim?



If You Have Children in Your Care

Question on the MARAM Safety Plan:

- How many children do you have in your care? How old are they?
- Are they able to be left alone for short periods? Do they have any particular needs?
- Do your children attend childcare or school?
- What sort of routine or structure is in place for your child/ren?
- What do you already do on a day-to-day basis to keep your child/ren safe?
- Are there any other people in your child's life that they trust and can talk to?

Questions You Can Use to Expand on this Information

Safe People

- Can you run the protective behaviours training?
- Can you collaborate with the school to deliver the Protective Behaviours Training with the children?
- Are grandparents safe?
- Have you discussed emotional safety and support for children?
- Who are the children emergency contacts
- Can children make calls to emergency contacts
- Ensure the children know that they will never get in trouble for calling police if they feel unsafe.



Planning for Pets

Question on the MARAM Safety Plan:

- Would they be coming with you if you needed to leave in an emergency?
- What would you need to arrange for pets?
- Can someone else take care of them?
- Can you contact RSPCA or local services for short term support?

Questions You Can Use to Expand on this Information

Short-Term Care

- What is the eligibility for care?
- Are they vaccinated? Do you have proof of vaccinations?
- Are they de-sexed?
- Are they microchipped?
- Are they registered/microchipped under your name or the PUV?

Pet Care/Requirements

- Can you store spare leads, food, water, pet carriers, bedding, meds somewhere?
- Can you organise additional pet supplies and where would you store them until you leave?
- Do your animals have any medical conditions and do you have the required medications needed?
- Do you have your vet details, can you get a copy of your vet records if you need to change vets?



Safe Communication

Question on the MARAM Safety Plan:

- Do you have access to a phone or internet?
- Can you contact friends or someone trusted if you need to?
- Can you have a code word so the person knows how to respond if you contact them in an emergency?
- Does anyone else have access to your phone or online accounts? (email, Facebook, other social media, etc.)
- Sometimes people can use your phone and accounts to try and track you. Do you know how to keep your phone and online accounts safe? Have you accessed/put in place any security features?

Questions You Can Use to Expand on this Information

Person Using Violence Tech Literacy

- Is the person using violence IT literate? Are they likely to gain access or monitor accounts?
- Do they know how to use tracking devices or exploit location features of phones/devices?

Victim Survivors Tech Literacy

- How literate in technology are you?
- Do you have supports around IT? For example; workers, teenagers, adult children

Phone/Devices

- Can you have the phone on and charged at all times?
- Do you suspect phones/devices are monitored?
- Have you developed code words, phrases that are safe which can be used in group chat (so more than one person can act).
- Is Find My Phone app set up?
- Are your location settings activated?
- Apple watch has emergency call function

Online Accounts

- Change passwords and access to:
 - Phones and phone accounts
 - WiFi Modem
 - Emails
 - Social media
 - Banks and online banking
 - Vic Roads
 - Linkt
 - Myki
 - AEC
 - MyGov including Centrelink
 - Debt payments and collections
- Are your social media accounts public or locked to private?
- Safety plan around:
 - Online Professional registrations details
 - Ensure landline or mobile phone number is not listed online
 - Perpetrator using bank accounts to send messages



Questions You Can Use to Expand on this Information

Australia Post

- Free 12 month mail redirection
- They will send a letter to the old address confirming redirection but without the new address
- Free one-off access to PO Box for 22 months

Interventions

- Personal Safety Device (PSD) (has to have phone reception)
- Bug Sweeps
- Forensic Sweeps
- New phone
- Factory reset

Children's Devices

- Does the person using violence have access to children's devices?
- Can the person using violence access the victim survivor via the modem or children's devices?
- Does the person using violence connect with children via social media?
- Could there be listening/tracking spyware on devices?
- Snap Chat has live map feature

Did you know:

- PUV's can use streaming services to find real-time location?
- Small cheap devices can be placed on cars, items, property that transmit real-time location and sometimes even audio?
- PUV's can ascertain whether a phone number is active via a small bank transfer?
- Small child watches/gifts/tech-toys can transmit real-time location information as well as audio? Even the cheap ones.



Transport

Question on the MARAM Safety Plan:

- How will you get to a safe place? Do you have access to a vehicle or other public transport options?
- Can you park your vehicle in a position that is not restricted from leaving quickly?
- Can you use someone's car? Can someone come to pick you up?
- Can you plan and practice the quickest way to leave where you are?
- [if appropriate] Do you have appropriate car seats or restraints for children in your care in your car?
- Do you need to bring a pram? Can you get that into your car or on public transport?
- Can you transport older people in your care safely?

Questions You Can Use to Expand on this Information

Car use

- Is it operational?
- Does it have petrol?
- Does the person using violence have keys for the car?
- Can you hide a spare key?
- Is it garaged/ how is it parked in the driveway? Can you leave quickly?
- Does the person using violence have a garage remote?
- How are you going to restrain children if leaving quickly?
- Do you have a licence?

Car Details

- Who is the car registered too?
- Is there a loan on car and can they meet payments?
- Who is on the the insurance?
- Who does the tolls get sent too?
- Where would fines go?

Public Transport

- What type are they using? Where is the closest stop? How far?
- Can they read the timetables? Do they have a copy of the timetable?
- Is it on main roads?
- Can they avoid walking down alleyways or shortcuts?
- Can you identify safe places on the way that they could go into if needed?

Support person Who Can Pick You Up

- Where will they meet the victim survivor?
- Will they come to the house?
- Do they have children's car seats?
- How will the person using violence respond?



Items to Take with You – Escape Bag

Question on the MARAM Safety Plan:

- Key items including phone, keys, money (cash and bank cards)
- What documents, clothes, or other things should you take with you when you leave? What is essential?
- Can you put together items in a safe place or leave them or copies with someone, just in case?
- Medication or other support aides for yourself or anyone in your care – prescriptions or a second set of items held in a safe place?
- Security/comfort toys for children or items that are highly significant to the child/ren.
- Do you need to bring:
 - Breastfeeding/expressing equipment?
 - Bottle feeding formula and equipment?
 - Particular foods?
- Can you put aside a water bottle and snacks for children?
- School bags?
- School, kinder, childcare contact details?

Questions You Can Use to Expand on this Information

Where to Leave Items

- Can they leave items with safe family or friend?
- Can they hire a storage locker?
- Can they leave scripts at the pharmacy?

Technology

- Are they taking:
 - Computer or laptop
 - Phones
 - Children's devices
 - Chargers
 - Personal Safety devices
 - External storage devices

Personal/Additional items

- Jewellery
- House keys
- Personal items
- Photos
- Clothes
- Family heirlooms
- Torch
- Nappies and wipes
- Petrol
- First aid kit
- Sleeping bags/pillows
- ID & passports



Questions You Can Use to Expand on this Information

Important Papers

- Birth certificates including children's
- Passports including children's
- Marriage certificate
- IVO's
- Family Court Orders
- Drivers licence
- Insurance policies
- Taxation, employment and income documents
- Centrelink card or reference number
- School Records
- Medicare card or number
- Bank account numbers and statements
- Bank Cards, cheque books, credit cards
- Department of Immigration & Citizenship documentation
- Medical records
- Medication
- Leases or Mortgages
- Car rego papers
- Phone numbers in case you cannot take your phone
- Copy of business records



Financial Access

Question on the MARAM Safety Plan:

- Do you have access to money if you need to leave? Where is it kept?
- Can you get it in an emergency?
- Do you have online banking?
- Does anyone else have access to your money or bank accounts? (including online?)
- Do you have access to employment?

Questions You Can Use to Expand on this Information

Centrelink

- If planning to leave have contact with centrelink social workers around payments

Employment

- Do they know about access to Family Violence leave?
- Do they know how to access to EAP?
- Do they have access to internal transfers?
- Have they looked into agency work?

Business

- Is the victim survivor & person using violence in business together?
- Is their business income their main source of income?
- Do they both have equal access to the income?
- Have they considered engaging with a lawyer to ensure assets are not sold?

Financial Responsibilities

- Are there any bills, debts/responsibilities?
- Have you referred them to a financial counsellor?
- Have you referred them to a community legal service for advice about caveats on properties to prevent properties being sold?



Current Supports

Question on the MARAM Safety Plan:

- Do you have supportive people in your life who you trust to talk to about your situation? Can they help you in an emergency?
- Are you connected to social networks (family, friends, community, informal social networks)?
- What do you usually do day-to-day to manage your safety?
- Are you engaged with any professional/therapeutic services?
- Access to antenatal services? (if applicable)

Questions You Can Use to Expand on this Information

Supports

- Does the person using violence know of the supports, and would they contact them?
- Do they have supports at work, schools, gym, church, via services?
- Can someone walk them to and from their car?



Additional Information that is not in the MARAM Safety Plan

Questions You Can Use to Expand on this Information

Money/Cash

- Does the victim survivor have access to:
 - Food security/requirements
 - Clothes
 - Personal care items
 - Sanitary items
 - Medication

Pregnant/New Born

- Safety plan around this specifically
- Does the person require terminations & pregnancy options?

Medications

- Is the victim survivor on methadone treatment/medications? Does the person using violence know the pharmacy they use to pick up the medication and their schedule?
- What needs to be arranged with pharmacy if relocating?
- What other medication require consideration when relocating i.e. some ADHD meds

Security at Home

- Locks
- String of bells
- PSI response
- Dowel on windows (bunnings can cut)
- Spare keys
- Access into the house
- Hiding spots – low branches
- Don't promise a funding security response
- How agile is the person using violence? Can they climb trees, get into roof cavities etc.?



Safety Planning with Specific Cohorts

Specific cohorts require additional safety planning based off their specific needs.

However, intersectionality requires practitioners to understand that people are complex and may be experiencing oppression from multiple sources at once that need to be considered within the context of safety planning.





This resource was written by Kim Adams, Principal Strategic Advisor Family Violence

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