

Safety Planning with Parents of Violent Youth

1. Assess Risk Level

- a. What behaviors is the teen using?
 - physical violence
 - threats
 - property destruction
 - emotional abuse
- b. Severity of violence
 - who has been hurt and how (i.e. bruises, cuts, medical tx required)
 - damage to property
 - use of weapons
 - types of threats (i.e. threats to kill or hurt; suicide threats)
- c. Are you afraid of your teen?
 - for yourself, others (i.e. siblings, partner)
- d. Are there weapons in your home?
- e. How much control/influence do you have with your teen?
 - no control; he does whatever he wants
 - some control; responds to some consequences
 - usually have control; often does what he is told
- f. How long has the violence been going on?
- g. How have you responded?
 - called police (number of times, what has been police response)
 - counseling, crisis line, hospitalizations
- h. Mental health issues
 - medications, psychiatric care, hospitalizations
 - refusing to take meds?
 - Suicide history – attempts, threats, talk
- i. Alcohol/drug issues
 - frequency, behaviors, drugs used
 - treatment?

2. Safety Planning

- a. What precautions (if any) have you taken for safety in your home?
- b. What dangerous behavior are you most concerned about that your teen might use?
- c. Is there anything you can do to prevent this behavior?
- d. What is the safest response to this behavior?
- e. What else can you do for safety in your home?

Such as:

- remove weapons, put knives away
- locks on doors
- do not leave teen home alone with siblings
- keep a cell phone accessible at all times
- have planned escape routes out of the house
- call the police if youth is violent or threatening
- call a friend, counselor, probation counselor, court advocate, or other support person for help
- call the crisis line (Children's Crisis Response Team)

3. Make a Plan of Action

- a. With all of the above in mind make a 'plan of action'.
- b. A plan of action should include *prevention steps* and *intervention steps*.

Intervention Steps – what you will do the next time your teen is violent.

Prevention Steps – what you will do now to prevent harm or injury.

Most effective immediate safety action is to:

- Separate from your teen when he/she starts to escalate;
- Do not engage with your teen;
- Calmly go to another room or outside and decide what to do (take a walk, call for help, go to a neighbor, get in your car and drive someplace for help)

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