

Identifying Situations that Put Me at Risk

You can use the checklist below to help identify the situations in your relationship that may signal that the abuse you are experiencing will grow into serious physical harm. The left-hand column sets out a checklist of possible **risk factors**. These situations are referred to as risk factors because research shows they are linked to an increased risk for partner violence.

Ask yourself: Which of these factors could put me at harm? Then, consider who might offer support. In addition to trusted friends and family, professionals can help you to assess your risk. Put a check in the circle beside the ones you would like to work on in your plan. You don't have to do everything at once. Come back often when you are ready to develop some other strategies. As you develop your safety plan in Step 3, you can tailor your actions for improving your safety in your own ways.

CHECKLIST

Could I be at risk?



Threats of suicide

When a partner or ex-partner is suicidal, it can be a dangerous time for both partners and the children. Research shows that the most common form of domestic murder-suicide in Canada involves a man killing his current or former spouse. Between 2010 and 2015, three-quarters of the women killed by an intimate partner in New Brunswick were victims of murder-suicides.

Ask Yourself:

Is your partner depressed, anxious or overwhelmed by life events or financial problems?
Does he threaten suicide?

Does he blame you? How does this affect your ability to stay safe?

Are there weapons in the house that make you more fearful?
Who could you turn to for help?

A service, agency, or individual I trust to help me:

Suicide Prevention
Crisis line:
800-667-5005



Personal perception of risk

Research shows that women can often predict that their partner will become more abusive at certain times of the day, or month, or year. Violence may be associated with certain places like the camp, the bedroom, or visiting certain friends.

Ask Yourself:

Does the abuse get worse at certain predictable times – like the weekend, when he's drinking, payday, holidays, summer, when kids are away, during harvest, when he is unemployed, during hunting season, etc.?
Is it more difficult to think about your safety at these times? Does location change the strategies you might use to feel safer? What would help?

A service, agency, or individual I trust to help me:

CHECKLIST

Could I be at risk?

Life events

Research shows that abuse and violence sometimes gets worse when a couple is dealing with a change in their life such as a new baby, separation, failing health, and financial problems.

Ask Yourself:

Is the stress of a certain life event(s) associated with abuse?

Has the abuse worsened when you were pregnant? After the birth of a child?

Is it related to job loss, financial problems, retirement, or ill-health?

Are you dealing with any life events that make you concerned for your safety?

What strategies could you use to feel safer? Who could help?

A service, agency, or individual I trust to help me:

Attitudes and values that reinforce the way he treats me

Sometimes attitudes about women's role in the family reinforce controlling behaviour by her partner. Friends and families may blame women experiencing abuse for what is happening. They may make excuses for the abusive partner.

Ask Yourself:

Does he tell you you're worthless and stupid? What about family and friends?

Do service providers in your community have attitudes or beliefs that make it difficult for you to deal with the abuse or stay safe?

Who would understand and support you?

A service, agency, or individual I trust to help me:

My Notes

Strategies for Staying Safer

CHECKLIST

Could I be at risk?

Personal supports

Victims of abuse are most resilient when they have strong, positive support persons in their lives. Abusive partners may resent your personal supports. Increasing social and physical isolation can signal the potential for serious harm.

Ask Yourself:

Has he isolated you from family and friends?

Do you have people you can turn to for support?

Is getting personal support a barrier to leaving or making a safety plan?

Think about what would help – access to computer, a babysitter, a drive to town, money for a taxi?”

A service, agency, or individual I trust to help me:

Emotional responses

Emotional responses to living with abuse are part of your personal history. Thus, each woman will have a unique set of individual risk and protective factors that make her feel scared and alone, or supported and happy.

Ask Yourself:

Are there emotions and feelings that keep you in the relationship?

Do you feel helpless, ashamed, or sad because of the abuse?

Do you feel others will reject you if you leave the relationship?

Are you depressed?

Who could help you think about how your emotional responses affect your safety?

A service, agency, or individual I trust to help me:

Available resources and access to services

Many women are not aware of the services and supports available to help them such as transition houses, mental health clinics, family doctors.

Ask Yourself:

What kind of services would you like to use?

Does he stop you from seeking help?

What are the issues with access to services that you could address when developing a strategy for staying safer?

A service, agency, or individual I trust to help me:

Love Shouldn't Hurt
END INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

www.gnb.ca/violence

CHECKLIST

Could I be at risk?

Presence of children (and possibly pets and other family members)

Research shows that disputes over custody, contact with the children, primary care and control of the children, or the presence of step-children may increase the risk for violence. Many women cannot afford a lawyer and they don't know their legal rights or services to help them with their family law issues.

Ask Yourself:

How does the presence of children and loved ones affect your decisions when he gets abusive?

Does he threaten to harm them?

Is he more violent when the children are away or present?

How could you address your family law concerns?

What strategies could you put in place for the safety of your children, pets or property?

A service, agency, or individual I trust to help me:

Toll-free family law information line:
888-236-2444

Alcohol and/or drug use

Alcohol and drug use have serious implications for personal safety. Research in New Brunswick found that alcohol or drug use occurred in nearly three quarters of the cases of partner homicide. Including ways to stay in control and deal with situations involving drugs and excessive drinking may keep you out of a potentially risky situation.

Ask Yourself:

Does his use of alcohol/ drugs affect the way he treats you?

Does your use of alcohol/drugs affect your ability to stay safe?

Who could you talk to about staying safe when alcohol/drugs are being consumed?

A service, agency, or individual I trust to help me:

My Notes

Strategies for Staying Safer

CHECKLIST

Could I be at risk?

Physical and mental health

Some of the New Brunswick women killed by their partners had recently become ill and this contributed to the stress in the family. The courts also noted that many of the men who killed their partners suffered from depression or health problems.

Ask Yourself:

Do you have health issues, physical or mental, that make it difficult to make a safety plan?

Does your partner have mental health issues that affect your safety?

A service, agency, or individual I trust to help me:

Economic stressors – unemployment, financial worries

Research shows that unemployment and financial problems in an abusive relationship may be associated with increased risk for harm to female partners.

Ask Yourself:

Does your financial situation affect your decision to stay or leave?

Do you have your own income source?

Do you have your own bank account?

Is your partner unemployed?

Are financial problems causing problems and stress?

Could someone help you develop some strategies for coping with your financial situation?

A service, agency, or individual I trust to help me:

Extreme Jealousy

Extreme jealousy can be a warning sign of potential violence.

Ask Yourself:

Does he accuse you of being unfaithful for no reason?

Does he tell you he can't live without you?

Does he threaten to kill himself if you leave him?

Does he threaten to kill you if you ever find someone else?

How does extreme jealousy impact on your safety plans? What could you do about it?

A service, agency, or individual I trust to help me:

Strategies for Staying Safer

CHECKLIST

Could I be at risk?

○ Presence of weapons, especially long guns

Research on domestic homicide in New Brunswick found that over half of the women were shot by their partners with hunting rifles or shot guns. In other provinces, only about 20% of female domestic homicide victims are killed with hunting rifles.

Ask Yourself:
Are you fearful of the guns in the home?
Has he threatened (directly or indirectly) to shoot you?
Is dealing with firearms in the home a part of your safety plan?

A service, agency, or individual I trust to help me:

Canada Firearms Program
(Spousal Abuse)

1-800-731-4000

○ Fear - Warning signs

Sometimes an abusive partner does not give any signals before an abusive incident – but many do. Listen to your instincts.

Ask Yourself:
Can you sometimes predict when he will hurt you?
Does he look a certain way, say certain things or get angry when discussing certain subjects?
Does he get depressed, talk about suicide, or have angry outbursts?
Can you think of strategies for responding to these warning signs.

A service, agency, or individual I trust to help me:

My Notes

Strategies for Staying Safer

CHECKLIST

Could I be at risk?

Increasing physical violence

Once violence happens in a relationship, it usually gets worse over time. Research shows that many women killed by their partners had been increasingly subjected to choking, sexual assault and abuse.

Ask Yourself:

Has he recently become more physically violent?

Has he started to choke you?

Do you feel you have to give in when he wants to have sex?

Does increased physical violence affect your strategies for staying safe?
Who could you talk to about this?

A service, agency, or individual I trust to help me:

Reaction to past attempts to leave

Past violent behaviour is a strong predictor that it will happen again. Many women harmed by their partners had a prior history of abuse and violence in the relationship.

Ask Yourself:

In the past, have you told him you wanted to leave?

How has he reacted?

Has he stalked you, threatened to commit suicide, kill you, harm the children or destroy pets? How does this affect your safety planning?

Have you created an Emergency Leaving Plan in case you decide to leave?

A service, agency, or individual I trust to help me:

Emergency Leaving:

If you decide to leave the abusive relationship, even if it is not an emergency, you should not tell your partner about your plans. Get to safety and then call or text or have someone else explain that you have left.