

Assessing Your Safety - Things To Consider

Without intervention, abuse tends to escalate over time. Several risk factors have been associated with escalation of violence leading to significant harm and/or homicide. This tool cannot predict what will happen in your case, but you can be aware of the risk factors of abuse and see how many of the risk factors apply to your situation.

Factors noted with * indicate escalated risk. *Risk Factors, Domestic Violence Death Review (2015)*

Perpetrator History:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Abused and/or witnessed domestic violence as a child | ☐ Exposed to suicidal behaviour in childhood |
|---|---|

Perpetrator Mental Health

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Excessive alcohol and/or drug use* | ☐ Other mental health or psychiatric problems |
| ☐ Depression- opinion of friends/family | ☐ Prior threats to commit suicide* |
| ☐ Depression- professionally diagnosed | ☐ Prior suicide attempts* |

Access

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Access to or possession of firearms* | ☐ Partner has access to you |
|---|--|

Survivor's Disposition

- | |
|--|
| ☐ Intuitive sense of fear for life or harm* |
|--|

Family/Economic Status

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Age of couple (15-24 yrs or over 60 yrs)* | ☐ New partner in your life* |
| ☐ Age disparity of couple (9+ years) | ☐ Child custody or access dispute |
| ☐ Living common-law | ☐ You have a child from previous partner* |
| ☐ Actual or pending separation* | ☐ Perpetrator unemployed* |

Perpetrator Attitude/Harassment/Violence

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Obsessive and stalking behaviour* | ☐ Prior threats to kill you* |
| ☐ Failure to comply with authority (police, court)* | ☐ Prior use or threats with a weapon* |
| ☐ Sexual jealousy* | ☐ Prior assault with a weapon |
| ☐ Strong prejudice/hate against women | ☐ Prior attempts to isolate you |
| ☐ Prior destruction of survivors property | ☐ Controlled most or all of your daily activities* |
| ☐ History of violence outside of the family | ☐ Prior hostage-taking or forcible confinement |
| ☐ History of abuse with previous partners | ☐ Prior forced sexual acts or assaults during sex* |
| ☐ History of abuse/violence during your relationship* | |

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Choked/strangled you in the past* | ☐ Threatened and/or harmed children* |
| ☐ Prior violence against family pets | ☐ Extreme minimization/denial of abusive history |
| ☐ Prior assault on victim while pregnant* | |
| ☐ Escalation of violence* | |

To learn more about assessing your risk, understanding warning signs and safety planning, consider contacting an agency such as one of the following:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| ☐ Thrive Counselling | ☐ Nina's Place |
| ☐ Halton Women's Place | |

For information about a danger assessment tool online visit <https://www.dangerassessment.org/>

Additional factors to consider:

Does your (ex)partner change before becoming violent (voice, posture, facial expression, threats)?

Does YOUR behaviour change before violence (try to reduce tension, withdraw, adjust parenting, consume alcohol)?

What are physical responses to fear or stress or anxiety you may feel before an attack (stomach pains, headache, easily startled, tight feeling in your chest, gut feeling)?

Other things you notice before the onset of violence?

What circumstances exist before you experience abuse?

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Alcohol/drugs | ☐ Birthdays |
| ☐ Lack of money | ☐ Anniversaries |
| ☐ Pay day | ☐ Holidays |
| ☐ Day of the week | ☐ Sports events |
| ☐ Time of year | ☐ Other circumstances that happen before the onset of violence: |
| ☐ Are certain people around | |
| ☐ Are certain people NOT around? | |
| ☐ Where you are located within your home or outside your home | |