INTRODUCTION
Safety is to be considered in all aspects of a family’s life. It is important to consider what the current safety needs of the family are as well as the home visitor by bearing in mind the following questions:
- Who needs to be protected?
- Who is going to do the protecting?
- How are they going to protect?
- When are they going to do this?

STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE FAMILY SAFETY
- Completion of the Relationship Assessment Tool is encouraged during the initial visits with the families enrolled in home visiting.
- Once the assessment is completed, a result will yield either a positive or negative screening.
  - In the event of a negative screening (i.e. participant is NOT indicating that they are in an abusive relationship) it is still important to advise the client about being safe for the family and what resources are available in the community to access in the event more information is wanted. Reviewing the Equality Wheel is a great way to continue the discussion on healthy relationships.
  - In the event of a positive screening (i.e. participant is indicating they are in an abusive relationship) it is important for the home visitor to validate and provide information:
    - Acknowledge to the participant that they do not deserve to be abused or in an unhealthy relationship.
    - Let the participant know you are concerned for their safety.
    - Ask the participant if they are immediate danger and inform them you can support them to be safe. Always respect your client’s wishes.
- In the event of immediate danger offer to support the participant to call a shelter or 911 to get immediate assistance.
  - Listen and respect what the participant says they would like to do and what they need; they are the expert on their own relationship.
  - If the participant does not wish to leave their relationship, help them create their own safety plan. It can be as simple as providing them the number to their local domestic violence shelter or you can help them create a safety plan (see example attached to this guidance).
- Documentation is key. Please refer to CYFD HV Standards 6.3 (New Mexico Home Visiting Program Standards, March 2015) on documentation in family files and in the data base. Seek assistance from UNM CDD T-TA for further guidance.

Suggestions and examples in this document were modeled after “Strong Families AZ Home Visitation: Guidelines on Domestic Violence (2014)”
SAFETY PLAN EXAMPLE

Step 1: SAFETY DURING A VIOLENT INCIDENT
I can use some or all of the following strategies:

A. If I have/decided to leave my home, I will go____________________________________________

B. I can tell ______________________ (neighbors/friends/family) about the violence and request they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my house.

C. I can teach my children how use the telephone to contact the police.

D. I will use ____________________ as my code word so someone can call for help.

E. I can keep my purse/car keys ready at ________________ (place) in order to leave quickly.

F. I will use my judgment and intuition. If the situation is very serious, I can give my partner what he/she wants to calm him/her down. I have to protect myself until I/we are out of danger.

Step 2: SAFETY WHEN PREPARING TO LEAVE

A. I will keep copies of important documents (birth certificates, Medicaid Cards, EBT, Social Security Cards, etc...), keys, clothes and money at ___________________________.

B. I will open a savings account by _____________________, to increase my independence.

C. Other things I can do to increase my independence include: ____________________________________________________________________________________________

D. I can keep change for my phone calls on me at all times. I understand that if I use my telephone, credit card, or cell phone, the telephone bill or phone log will show my partners the numbers that I called after I left.

E. I will check with ___________________________ and my advocate to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.

F. If I plan to leave, I won’t tell my abuser in advance face-to-face, but I will leave a note or call from a safe place.

Step 3: SAFETY IN MY OWN RESIDENCE

A. I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible.

B. I can replace wooden doors with steal/metal doors.

C. I can install additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, and electronic systems etc.

D. I can install motion sensor lights outside.

E. I will teach my children how to make a collect call to me if my _________________partner takes the children.

F. I will tell people who take care of my children that my partner is not permitted to pick up my children.

G. I can inform__________________________ (neighbor/friends/family) that my partner no longer resides with me and they should call the police if my partner is observed near my residence.

Step 4: SAFETY WITH A PROTECTION ORDER

A. Always carry a certified copy with me and keep a photocopy.

B. I will give my protection order to police departments in the community where I work and live.

C. I can get my protection order to specify and describe all guns my partner may own and authorize a search for removal.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS:

• Domestic Violence is a crime and you have the right to legal intervention. Contact the police for assistance ‘

• You may also obtain a court order prohibiting your partner from contacting you in any way.

• Contact a local Domestic Violence program or an attorney for more information.

• If you have injuries, ask a doctor or a nurse to take photos of your injuries to become part of your medical record.

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