

FINANCIAL SAFETY PLANNING

FOR SURVIVORS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Financial and economic abuse happens when someone controls your money, access to resources, or makes financial decisions without your consent. This can include things like taking your paycheck, running up debt in your name, or preventing you from working. It's a form of control that keeps you dependent and trapped, making it harder to leave a bad situation. This kind of abuse matters because it takes away your financial freedom and independence, leaving long-term effects like ruined credit or housing instability. Protecting your finances is a big part of staying safe and rebuilding your life.

“It started to become a pattern of a way of controlling me...this way, you know, I didn't have money for gas, I didn't have money to do anything basically unless he went out with me.” - Survivor interview

Financial safety planning can make it possible for you to leave an abusive situation if and when you need to. It can help you secure your financial future, protect your resources, regain independence.

HERE ARE SOME PRACTICAL STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO SAFEGUARD YOUR FINANCIAL WELL-BEING.



Remember: You are the expert on your own life and your own situation. Not all of these ideas may be safe or realistic for you. Since most financial activity takes place online, there are many opportunities for your partner to monitor you, even when you are trying to do something secretly. It's good to learn more about how to keep yourself safe online.

01 Open a Separate Bank Account

If you don't already have one, opening a bank account in your name is a key step to safety. This lets you save money that only you can access and gives you a safety net for emergencies or when you need to make decisions on your own. It's a good idea to use a different bank than your partner for extra privacy and security.



Tip: When setting up your account, use a strong, unique password and turn on multi-factor authentication for extra protection if you have access to secure devices. Be careful about any mail you might receive and when managing your account on devices or computers your partner can access.

02 Monitor Your Credit Regularly

A partner or abuser may use financial information without permission to take out credit or loans in your name. Regularly monitoring your credit report can help you spot any suspicious activity early. You are entitled to a free credit report from major credit agencies which can give you a clear picture of your financial standing and alert you to unauthorized accounts or debts.



Tip: Consider placing a fraud alert on your account if you suspect your partner may misuse your financial information. This can prevent new accounts from being opened in your name without your knowledge.



“He would get cell phones in my name and then he would never pay the bill... he would control the money” - [Survivor interview](#)

03 Secure Your Financial Information

Try to keep your personal financial information safe, like passwords, account numbers, and important documents (credit card statements, bank records, etc.). If you can, store these away from home or out of reach of your partner. For online banking and credit cards, change your passwords regularly if it is safe to do so and think about using a password manager for extra security.



Tip: If you have joint accounts with your partner, request separate login credentials where possible and if safe. This can reduce your partner's control over the accounts and provide you with more oversight.



04 Build Financial Knowledge

Understanding how to manage your finances is an important part of safety planning. Financial literacy can help you make informed decisions about your money. Learning about your financial rights and available resources can give you the confidence to take control of your future.



Tip: There are resources to build your knowledge on financial planning, rights and benefits you might be entitled to.



[Credit Canada Tools & Tips](#)



[Prosper Canada: Managing in tough times](#)

“Now I know how to spend money, how to budget money, but back then I didn't. He did everything, he controlled everything.” - [Survivor interview](#)

05 Plan Ahead

Planning ahead can make a significant difference when you are preparing to leave an abusive situation. Consider setting aside small amounts of money over time, if possible, and build a list of the financial steps you will need to take, such as closing joint accounts or updating your financial information. Having a clear plan helps ensure you are ready to act when needed.

“It would be hard because I couldn't save to leave, I couldn't like even plan...because I had no money.” - [Survivor interview](#)

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