

**The VIGOR**  
**Protective Strategies That May Help in Safety Planning**  
**Sherry Hamby**

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This list of over 150 strategies can be used with the VIGOR to help come out with possible steps to take. At the time of writing, this is the longest available list of protective strategies for domestic violence.

These focus on longer-term options. For an in-depth discussion of immediate situational strategies, see Chapter 6 of *Battered Women's Protective Strategies: Stronger Than You Know*.

**Housing**

Go to shelter

Stay in your own home/ask partner to leave

Get a roommate to cover rent or mortgage

Stay with family

Stay with friends

Put children in safe housing

Apply for subsidized or public housing (such as Section 8)

Move to another house or apartment, buy or rent new housing

Stay in a hotel

Seek assistance with getting a down payment for a new home

**Financial and employment option**

Keep current job

Seek new full-time or part-time work

Get a second job

Get job training

Establish a retirement account

Pay down debt

Save money

Develop a budget

Sell or pawn extra items

Borrow money from family, friends, or bank

Declare bankruptcy

Open new account and/or get separate bank accounts

Apply for "welfare" (TANF, food stamps, or other public assistance)

Save to buy a car  
Use only cash  
Change insurance  
Apply for Medicaid  
Continue education (apply for college funding such as Pell Grant)  
Take GED exam (earn certificate of high school equivalency)  
Stash money with family or otherwise hide money from partner  
Have family help with finances  
Get financial help from friends at work  
Pay his bills so easier to divide property  
Apply for disability (SSDI in the U.S.)  
Keep bank statements and other financial records  
Put all financial assets in own name (remove spouse's name)  
Apply for church assistance  
Learn from past financial mistakes  
Vocational rehabilitation  
Cook own meals/eat out less to save money  
As boss or co-workers to re-arrange schedules  
Ask for security plan at the workplace

#### Legal and law enforcement options

Call the police  
Notify police/sheriff if Protection/Restraining order not being followed  
Ask police to drive by home frequently  
Don't be afraid to reach out to police/sheriff for help  
Become acquainted with law enforcement officers  
Apply for Orders of Protection/Restraining order  
Obtain a divorce or separation  
Petition for custody of children  
Petition for child support  
Pursue alimony  
Seek help from Legal Aid  
Get a private attorney or lawyer  
Report partner's abuse to child protective services  
Document all abuse (pictures, save texts, phone messages, pictures)  
Keep all identifying documents in safe place (birth certificate, social security card, licenses, etc)  
Find out about victim assistance programs in your area

**Social options**

Rely on support of friends

Make new acquaintances, expand social circle

Rely on family as social support

Spend time outside with children

Help children process experience

Share testimony/share story (tell other people your story to help others)

Get social support and advice from advocates at shelter

Volunteer in community or otherwise work to help others

Volunteer at children's school

Become an advocate for nonviolence

Arrange to see family or friends when partner is at work

See family and friends at church or other safer venue

Put pets in "doggy daycare," kennel, or other safe housing

Ask family or friends to go with you to court, social services, or other agencies

**Psychological options**

Exercise

Write about your experiences

Keep a journal

Stay clean (no drugs or alcohol)

Take a vacation

Believe in yourself

Look to your children for strength

Stop thinking he will change

Stay committed to school

Find a hobby

Focus on self and children

**Religious and spiritual options**

Visit with pastor, minister, reverend, or other religious figure

Rely on God as a counselor

Pray

Attend church more frequently

Rely on church community

Take comfort from inspirational stories in religious texts

Seek social support from other members of the congregation

Take advantage of free social activities at churches  
 Ask church for help with bills, home repair, transportation  
 Ask about donations of food, clothing, furniture, and other necessities  
 Seek help with immigration status

### Community resources

Seek domestic violence advocate or social worker  
 Use domestic violence program services, such as transportation, referral, & court accompaniment  
 Research domestic violence resources available in area  
 Look for all types of help can obtain from the community  
 Use food bank  
 Use Goodwill or Habitat for Humanity or other thrift stores  
 Find daycare for children  
 Join Al-Anon (group for family and friends of alcoholics)  
 Use community resources to obtain food, clothing and help with prescriptions  
 Rely on sheriff's department (ask them to drive by home frequently to make a presence)  
 Live near a police station  
 Participate in single mom programs  
 Participate in meal program  
 Look for job training  
 Develop safety plan with social services  
 Take a self-defense class or firearm safety class  
 Campus ministry  
 Seek counseling/therapy  
 Seek any needed health care, including medication for psychological problems  
 Seek information about domestic violence  
 Seek community mental health services  
 Seek therapy with partner  
 Attend support groups

### Cyber protection/privacy/guarding against identity theft

Get a private phone number  
 Have two phones (don't give second number to partner)  
 Increase Facebook privacy  
 Avoid Facebook/ do not use social media  
 Change password for phone, email, other accounts

Keep personal information private (in general)  
 Get a PO Box instead of having mail sent to home  
 Put a lock on mail box  
 Change accounts  
 Increase internet security (general)  
 Only use computer at work or public library to access personal information

### Other Safety Steps

Leave town (relocate)  
 Get mace  
 Get a dog  
 Change locks and/or add new or stronger locks to home (dead bolts)  
 Avoid unnecessary alone contact with spouse or use a mediator for necessary contact  
 Change routines to avoid abuser  
 Avoid going out alone—try to bring a friend or family member  
 Get a home security/alarm system  
 Carry cell phone at all times  
 Be more cautious, be more aware of surroundings  
 Create a safety plan and share with kids  
 Change last name  
 Get a prepaid or emergency phone  
 Keep a landline phone so always on without charging, etc.  
 Alert neighborhood/community watch  
 Install outdoor lights all around the house  
 Use a rotary phone (always on, no caller id)  
 Use a daycare with security cameras installed  
 Provide daycares and childcare workers with a list of safe people who can pick up your kids  
 Use code words  
 Change vehicle (so partner won't recognize)

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Note: These are options generated by women in the VIGOR studies and by other women I have known over the years. Many of them are described in more detail in *Battered Women's Protective Strategies: Stronger Than You Know* by Sherry Hamby (Oxford University Press, 2014).

Simply appearing on this list is not intended as an endorsement of any particular strategy for any particular person.