

Advocate Toolkit Guide



For advocates and providers working in domestic violence programs, crime victim services, or other community agencies serving intimate partner violence survivors

Add a tech-based resource to your toolbox

myPlan is a free web and mobile app for people experiencing abuse from an intimate partner. Users can assess the safety of their relationship, get personalized safety information, and connect to resources.

An app will never replace the expertise of a real live advocate, and an app isn't a safe or accessible resource for everyone. However, myPlan is a tool to add to your toolbox that can expand access to individualized safety information for survivors who can use a device safely and aren't yet engaged in services. Advocates can also use myPlan as a guide to walk through the assessment and safety planning process together with clients.



Introducing the myPlan Advocate Toolkit Guide

The online toolkit provides advocates with free materials to help integrate myPlan into existing resources. Everything is downloadable, shareable, and in many cases, can be customized. This guide will walk you through myPlan, and how to use the toolkit to implement myPlan in your organization.



Explore the myPlan Advocate Toolkit at

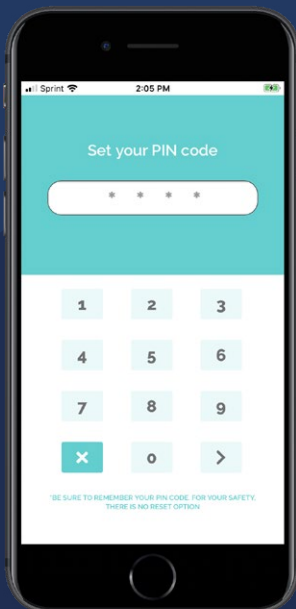
🔗 myPlanApp.org

The myPlan Advocate Toolkit and its contents are property of Johns Hopkins University, made available for use by advocates and service providers.

What is myPlan?

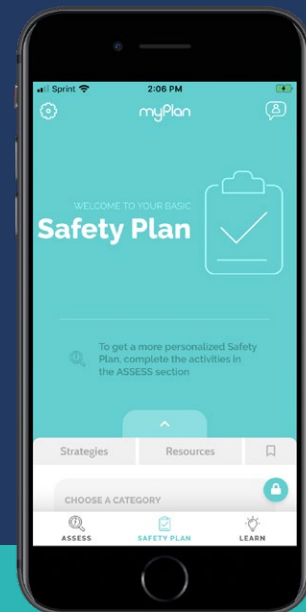
myPlan is an interactive app to support people experiencing abuse from an intimate partner in making safety decisions. Users can assess the health and safety of their relationship, get personalized safety strategies, and get connected to resources. It can help friends or family members to provide support to someone they are concerned is in an unsafe relationship, and can assist service providers to safety plan with clients. Available in English and Spanish for all genders as a downloadable app or via web browser, myPlan is anonymous to use, and completely free.

How myPlan works:



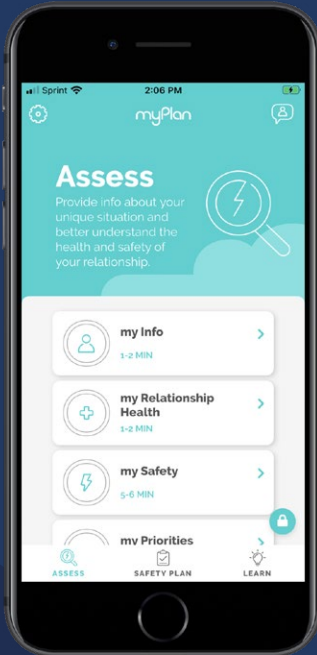
Set a PIN code to keep information private (user is also provided a "dummy code" to hide the contents of the app if they are ever forced to log in).

Go to **SAFETY PLAN** to immediately view basic safety strategies and resources.



Go to **ASSESS** to complete activities to gain clarity about the relationship -- the answers provided will personalize the safety plan section, strategies and resources.

Assessments include:

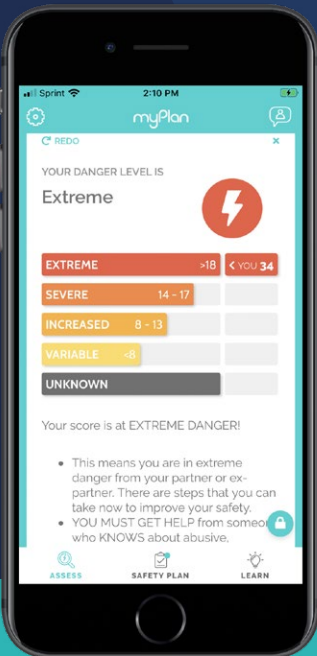


my Info

Answer key questions about a survivor's situation (for example, do they have children, do they identify as LGBTQ?)

my Relationship's Health

Answer questions about and assess if the relationship is unhealthy



my Safety

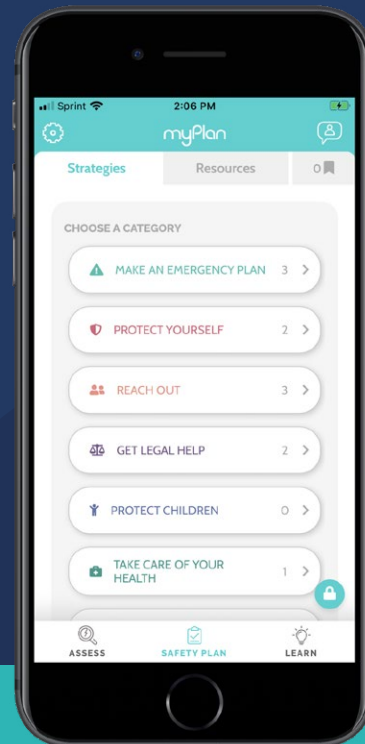
Complete the **DANGER ASSESSMENT**, a series of questions that can help determine the level of risk of being seriously injured or killed by a partner

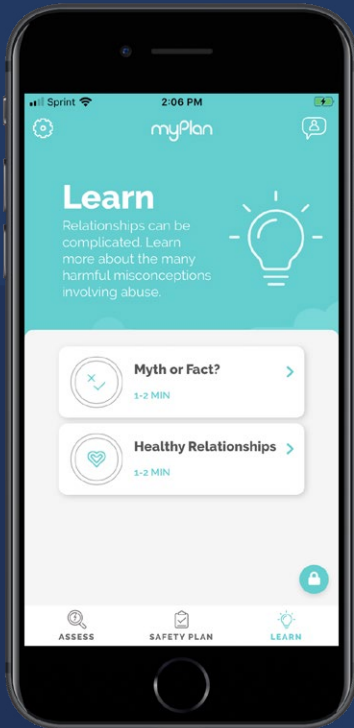


my Priorities

Compare competing priorities to clarify what's most important to the user when making safety decisions

Return to **SAFETY PLAN** to explore updated, expanded, and personalized strategies and resources based on answers to assessments. Bookmark what's useful



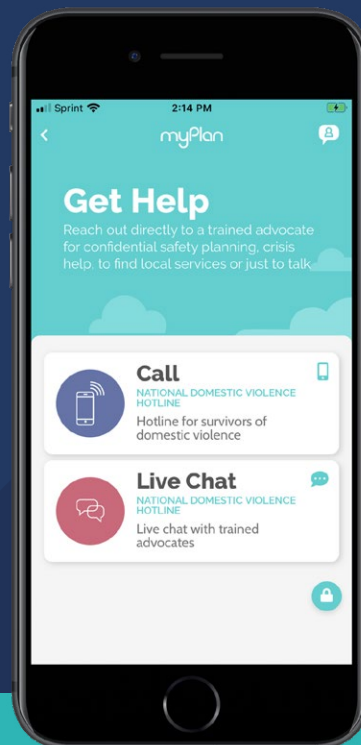


Learn

Explore **LEARN** for info about healthy relationship characteristics and common myths about abuse

Get Help

At any time users can connect with an advocate at the Domestic Violence Hotline by phone or via live chat



Safety is our greatest concern



The privacy and safety of myPlan users is of the highest importance. Survivors are incredibly savvy and creative in navigating their own safety every day, however, online activity can be difficult to fully hide and myPlan may not be a safely accessible resource for everyone. To increase user safety, myPlan was designed with advocate input and includes best-practice safety features.

User safety begins before accessing the app

- + We provide information on the website and app stores about the risk of using if a partner monitors your device activity
- + We provide links to tech safety planning info on the myPlan website
- + myPlan offers choices for most safely accessing the app: via mobile app or web browser

We keep user activity private



- + Set your own secure PIN code specific to your device to keep your information private



- + We provide a "dummy code". If you are ever forced to open the app the code will hide the contents of the app



- + Quick Exit button on every page to lock the app quickly

We ensure you stay anonymous



- + No account set up is required and no identifying information is collected, your use is completely anonymous
- + User data will never be shared with any other entities

Tech Safety Strategies

The safest way to access myPlan is by using a device an abusive partner doesn't have access to

Protect your devices and passwords



- + Keep track of your devices. Never leave a device unlocked & unattended
- + Password protect all devices. If possible use biometric logins (like a fingerprint)
- + Choose strong passwords
- + Set up two-step verification
- + Use a password manager, like LastPass
- + Fully log out of everything (just closing an app/site might keep you logged in and the next person who uses the device could access your accounts)

Set tight privacy settings

- + Update your privacy settings
- + Use private / incognito mode to visit sites you don't want recorded in your search history
- + Turn off Bluetooth, GPS, and location services if they are not needed



Remove things you don't want anyone to see



- + Close browser tabs for iPhone or Android
- + Remove select sites from your browser history. Clearing entire histories could arouse suspicion if someone is monitoring your device
- + Delete myPlan when you're done using it (you can always re-install) & remove from your purchase/download history for iPhone (you can "hide" but not fully delete) on Android

Why myPlan?

Most survivors never access domestic violence services. A tech resource can expand the reach of life-saving safety planning information.

Domestic violence (DV) is often complex and dangerous. Safety planning is the cornerstone of DV interventions, and is ideally an individualized process, taking into account each survivor's unique situation. Safety planning is most frequently done with trained advocates at hotlines, shelters, DV programs, etc. Yet due to many barriers, the vast majority of survivors never access these services.

myPlan can bridge this gap, offering a free, private, 24/7 accessible way to assess the health and safety of a relationship and get personalized safety planning strategies and resources. **myPlan is not intended to replace the expertise of an advocate.** It can however complement services, provides resources and education about advocacy services, and encourages survivors not engaged in services to reach out.

myPlan is backed by research in collaboration with survivors and advocates:

- + Developed by IPV experts at the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing
- + Based on the science of decision making, risk assessment, & the empowerment principles that guide DV advocacy
- + Survivors and DV advocates collaborated & tested myPlan at every step to ensure usability and safety
- + Two randomized controlled trials showed myPlan's effectiveness in supporting survivors to make decisions about their safety. For list of publications about the research visit myPlan.com/publications



Using myPlan in your organization...

As a resource for limited-engagement clients

In some settings, advocates and providers may have limited time with a survivor and may not have the ability to do individualized safety planning. myPlan can be a quick resource to suggest. A few ideas:

- + Suggest myPlan verbally or hand a myPlan flyer to clients for them to use if/when convenient and safe.
- + Put flyers in waiting areas or places to reach survivors privately (e.g., restrooms).
- + Add myPlan to your resource list/website (similar to listing the National DV Hotline as a resource).
- + If your org has devices available for client use, download/bookmark myPlan and direct clients to it.
- + Expand awareness about myPlan by suggesting it to community partners who may encounter survivors (e.g., healthcare providers, law enforcement, school personnel) and/or on your social media.

Sample script for suggesting myPlan:

"If you are interested, I can tell you about a free online resource where you can privately assess your safety and get basic safety planning strategies and resources"

"You can go to myPlanApp.org to learn more. It's available as an app to download or to use via web browser, whichever is safer for you"

"Do you have access to a safe device- meaning a device your partner doesn't have access to?"

If no safe device, can brainstorm where can access a device (e.g. at work, a friend's device)

Using myPlan in your organization...

For use along with case management

myPlan was created for survivors who don't have the support of a trained DV advocate. However many advocates and providers are using myPlan with clients to help facilitate a discussion about their level of danger and their priorities when making difficult safety decisions.

- + Offer myPlan to new clients as part of your needs assessment. They can complete privately, hand to you, and you can use the assessments as part of your safety planning discussion. If using myPlan on a desktop (rather than downloadable app) you can save/print pages of the app for your files if needed.

Click [here](#) for instructions for saving a webpage.

- + Go through myPlan together with a client, using myPlan to guide the discussion.
- + Use myPlan as a training tool for new advocates/staff.

Benefits to using myPlan alongside case management:

- + The Danger Assessment (DA) is a commonly used assessment but is usually done on paper and scored by hand. myPlan includes the DA digitally and it automatically provides a risk score in real time
- + Allows the client to communicate specific risks without retelling traumatic abuse experiences
- + Clients can review content 24/7 and change the information in myPlan as their situation evolves
- + Clients can continue to use myPlan even after they discontinue services

Tools for integrating myPlan into your setting

By visiting myPlanApp.org today, you can access a toolkit of free and shareable resources to integrate myPlan into your services. Here's what you will find in the online toolkit:



Fliers & Handouts

Materials you can download, print, and have available for clients.



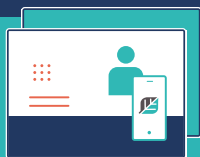
User Safety Guide

Brief handout highlighting safety features of the app and providing general online safety information for DV survivors.



Templated Email

Introduce myPlan to your organization using the provided messaging to email staff or administrators.



PowerPoint Presentation Slides

A short visual presentation of what myPlan is to present to staff.



On-demand Webinar

Narrated slide presentation for why myPlan was developed and how it works.



Social Media Posts

A series of pre-designed visuals and accompanying messaging to share myPlan via social media.

Advocate FAQ about myPlan:

Is myPlan safe to use?

Survivors are incredibly savvy and creative navigating access to resources. However, online activity is nearly impossible to fully hide, and any resource accessed on a device (including a DV org website, hotline calls/chats, etc) may pose some additional risk. A tech resource may not be safely accessible for everyone. To increase user safety, myPlan collaborated with tech abuse experts and survivors to include safeguards including:

- + Information provided on the website and in app stores about risk of using if a partner monitors your device activity
- + Links to tech safety planning info on the website
- + Accessible via downloadable app or web browser to provide users options for how to access most safely
- + No account set up required and no personally identifying information is collected, use is completely anonymous
- + App name and logo and the opening page doesn't indicate it's a domestic violence resource
- + Users set their own secure PIN code specific to their device to keep information private
- + Users are provided with a "dummy code" to hide the contents of the app
- + Quick Exit button on every page to lock the app easily
- + Usage data will never be shared with any other entities

Over a thousand survivors with a current or recent abusive partner participated in research and were followed for 1 year to understand myPlan's impact. myPlan use was not associated with an increase in risk for violence and no adverse events were reported.

My client doesn't have a smartphone, can they still use it?

Yes, myPlan can be accessed 2 ways

1. as a downloadable app on an Apple (iPhone, iPad) or Android device
2. through the website online on any web browser (Chrome, Safari, Firefox). You can help clients brainstorm a safe device to use. myPlan users report using on a friend/family member's device, on a work computer, on a computer at a service provider agency, etc.

What data does myPlan collect from me? Is it kept private?

myPlan does not ask users to set up an account or provide any identifying information. None of what is entered into myPlan can be connected to an individual user, use is completely anonymous. Periodically our team may look at summary reports of items (for example how many times a resource is clicked on or how many users heard about myPlan from a specific source) to improve our content and services. This information would be used in summary reports and would not identify specific users. Visit our website to read our full privacy policy.

Does myPlan encourage survivors to work with an advocate, or will users think they don't need services?

An app can never replace the expertise and services provided by a real live advocate. myPlan was developed because the vast majority of people who experience abuse never access formal services, and myPlan offers free, 24/7 access to personalized assessments and safety planning information. myPlan encourages users throughout to reach out to advocates and service providers.

I'm a DV advocate with lots of experience, why would I need to use myPlan with my clients?

myPlan was designed for survivors who are not necessarily receiving support from a trained advocate. However, we have heard from many organizations that they use myPlan in some of their services, as it provides these benefits:

Many DV organizations use the Danger Assessment (DA), a risk assessment usually done on paper and scored by hand. myPlan includes the DA digitally and it automatically provides a risk score in real time.

- + The app can be handed to a client to complete the questions privately, allowing the client to communicate specific risks without retelling traumatic experiences.
- + Can print assessment results pages (from the web version only) for case files (check your organizational and funder requirements for record keeping).
- + Can be used a training tool for new advocates/staff to guide safety planning discussions.
- + myPlan can be suggested as a resource for clients you have limited engagement with.
- + Clients can independently change the information in myPlan as their situation evolves to update their safety plan, and can continue to use myPlan after they discontinue services.

You can get basic safety planning information on lots of websites. What does myPlan do for survivors that's different?

- 1. It's personalized.** Safety planning is ideally an individualized process as each survivor's situation is unique. Many websites provide comprehensive lists of safety strategies and resources that cover a wide variety of factors that impact safety (e.g., if you have children, if you are going to stay with or leave a partner, etc.). However, myPlan asks a series of questions and the algorithm delivers information tailored to the user's specific situation, taking the work out of sifting through information that isn't useful. Research shows that the personalized nature of myPlan increases the use of safety strategies helpful for safety and well-being.
- 2. It helps when making complicated decisions.** Survivors are often making complex, difficult decisions all while juggling competing priorities. "Decision aids" are tools used in healthcare to help someone make a treatment decision when there are multiple options with different risks and benefits. myPlan is a "safety decision aid" that research has shown to be effective in reducing decisional conflict making it easier to make and move forward with safety decisions.

Can men and LGBTQ clients use myPlan?

myPlan is available for survivors of all genders who have an abusive partner of any gender. At this time myPlan is optimized for women-identified users as the early research was focused on cisgender and trans women due to the higher risk for abuse and risk for more severe violence. However, an upcoming update to myPlan (fall 2021) will expand content to be even more inclusive.

Is myPlan really free? It must make you pay to unlock features or includes advertisements.

myPlan will always be free for users. There is no paid tier and no advertisements.