

BEST PRACTICES FOR FINANCIAL SAFETY PLANNING IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTERS

Domestic violence shelters should use this tool as a guide to spark important conversations about financial security with survivors and integrate that dialogue into existing programming. By including a few targeted screening questions in an initial assessment, shelter advocates can efficiently “flag” financial issues, make appropriate referrals, and help residents work on important safety planning steps to stabilize their families and establish control of their financial lives.

SCREENING QUESTIONS FOR RESIDENTS



- 1 Do you have access to all of your personal documents and financial statements?
- 2 Does your abuser have access to your personal identifying information, documents, or financial statements?
- 3 In general, who has controlled the finances in your household?



- 1 Do you have a safe place to save money without your abuser accessing it?
- 2 What’s one thing you’d like to save for?
- 3 What is one thing you or your children didn’t get to do last year that you’d really like to do this year?



- 1 Do you have a bank account? Joint or individual?
- 2 Can your abuser physically or electronically access your bank account or statements?
- 3 Have you or your abuser ever been denied a bank account when you tried to open one?



- 1 Have you seen your credit report recently?
- 2 Do you know if anyone has ever used your personal information or your children’s information to obtain credit?
- 3 Have you received calls or letters from debt collectors?



- 1 Have you ever filed your taxes? If so, where?
- 2 Have you or your children ever been claimed on a tax return without your permission?
- 3 Have you ever received letters from the IRS or NY State Tax Department stating you had a problem with your taxes?

ACTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Gather documents and establish a safe place to keep them (trusted friend, PO Box, etc.)
- Replace missing documents (birth certificates, health insurance card, photo ID, etc.)

- Designate a safe place to keep money
- Identify a short-term, passionately-held goal

- Close joint accounts
- Open new accounts at a new bank
- Change PINs, mailing addresses, and passwords on all accounts

- Visit annualcreditreport.com and pull your three reports
- Check out ftc.gov/idtheft

- Call 311 and file for free
- Contact the IRS at 800-908-9946 and NY State Tax Department at 518-457-5181 to request a tax transcript

READY, SET, GREENLIGHT



© Copyright 2012 The Financial Clinic, all rights reserved.

This tool was developed by the New York City Domestic Violence Economic Justice Taskforce with the help of the Best Practices Committee of the New York City Coalition of Domestic Violence Residential Service Providers and informed by the Ready, Set, GreenLight Initiative—a collaboration with United Way of New York City and The Financial Clinic that has trained domestic violence advocates to integrate financial development into their shelter services.