Notes

For you only.

KEEP THIS FILE SAFE

Keep it in the online storage of an email account only you can open (Google Drive or OneDrive). Do not save it on a phone or computer someone else can get into, and do not print it.

BEFORE YOU START

Set it up so it stays yours

Ten minutes now protects everything you write later.

1. **First, the device.** If your phone or computer might be watched (they know things you only typed, they have your passcode, or they set the device up), then anything you do on it can be seen too, private window or not. Use a device they have never had their hands on: a work computer if your employer allows personal use, a trusted friend's, a library computer, or a cheap pay-as-you-go phone kept somewhere they will not find it.
2. **A new email account.** Make one with a new password that only you know. Use the same provider you already use: if you use Gmail, make another Gmail; if you use Outlook, another Outlook.com account. That way anything that shows up on your device or network looks like what is already there. Do not let the browser save the password.
3. **A private window.** Make the account, and use it, in a private window (Incognito in Chrome, Private in Safari, InPrivate in Edge). A private window does not keep your history or logins on the device.
4. **A VPN, if you can.** A private window does not hide where you went from your network. A VPN does.
5. **Online, not on the device.** Open this file inside the new account and keep it in that account's online storage. Delete any downloaded copy and empty the downloads folder and the bin. Do not print it.

DONE

- [ ] A device they have never touched
- [ ] New email account, new password
- [ ] Private window
- [ ] This file saved online, not on the device

MY RECORD

A dated record

For you, and for a solicitor if you ever need one.

If you might one day take this to court, a solicitor will need documents and a timeline. They put it into a court bundle, and the court bundle is what the judge reads. Even if you never use it, a dated record keeps your memory of what happened yours.

- Write it as soon as you safely can, one event per row.
- Facts first: what happened, where, and the exact words in quotation marks. How it felt goes in the last column.
- Note any evidence and where it is kept: messages, photos, emails, doctor, police or school visits and their reference numbers. Keep copies in your private account, not on a shared device.
- Do not change old rows. If you remember more, add a new row with today's date.

#	DATE AND TIME	WHAT HAPPENED: THE FACTS AND THE EXACT WORDS USED	WHO SAW OR HEARD	EVIDENCE, AND WHERE IT IS KEPT	HOW IT AFFECTED ME OR THE CHILDREN
1					
2					
3					

MY RECORD · CONTINUED

#	DATE AND TIME	WHAT HAPPENED: THE FACTS AND THE EXACT WORDS USED	WHO SAW OR HEARD	EVIDENCE, AND WHERE IT IS KEPT	HOW IT AFFECTED ME OR THE CHILDREN
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					

MY RECORD · CONTINUED

#	DATE AND TIME	WHAT HAPPENED: THE FACTS AND THE EXACT WORDS USED	WHO SAW OR HEARD	EVIDENCE, AND WHERE IT IS KEPT	HOW IT AFFECTED ME OR THE CHILDREN
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DECIDING

Is the fight worth it?

Only you can answer this, and the answer can change.

Going to court is not one conversation. You go over it again at every step: with your solicitor, in the papers, in front of a judge. Then it is down to the judge to decide whether it is enough, and what happens next. Some of these fights run for ten or twenty years.

What I could get at the end

What it would take to get it: time, money, energy, years, going over it again

What walking away would cost me

What walking away would give me

My decision for now

Date

Whatever you decide, future you does not get to judge past you for making that call. You made it with what you knew and what you had left at the time.

MY PLAN

The intact circle plan

You cannot always leave the room. You can always keep the circle.

MINE AND UNSPOKEN

Five things that are true about me that they do not need to know.

1

2

3

4

5

My witness: one person or place where the real me can be seen

My direction: the smallest quiet move toward later, and the next one

My safety line: the sign that this has moved from hard to unsafe, and who I will call

SUPPORT

You do not have to do this alone.

- **In immediate danger:** call 999. If you cannot speak, stay on the line and press 55.
- **National Domestic Abuse Helpline:** 0808 2000 247, free, 24 hours.
- **Men's Advice Line:** 0808 8010327.
- **Galop** (LGBT+): 0800 999 5428.
- **Samaritans:** 116 123, any time.
- **A family law solicitor** can tell you what your situation needs, and whether legal aid could help.

These notes are for your own use. They are not legal advice and they are not a safety plan made with a specialist.