

# TAKE CHARGE! Participant Reference Manual

## Program Introduction

Crime occurs nearly every second of every day and night. We all run the risk of becoming a victim of crime at least once during our lifetime - for many, it will happen more than once!

Personal responsibility, knowledge and prevention, together, have the power to change all that. There are steps you can take to eliminate, limit the opportunity or reduce your risk of becoming a victim for crime.

## Know thy Enemy

Crime is rarely a random act. Most people believe that they become victims because they are in the wrong place at the wrong time. The fact is that criminals have a process for selecting their victim. However, we do have a great deal of control over whether or not we get selected. The process is:

#1 Watch: They look for the most vulnerable victim, i.e., the easy target: the person that offers the least risk of being discovered, the greatest opportunity for easy gain, and the maximum potential for escape. That person may appear to have physical or psychological disabilities; be lost, pre-occupied, have predictable habits and/or routines, etc.

#2 Test: They will usually interact in a seemingly innocent way – for example, they may ask questions which require an answer, follow or stare or even bump into you. What you say, do, and how you look will determine whether or not you're selected.

OR

They will look for behaviors, situations, circumstances that create an opportunity for them to carry out the crime easily and with little or no risk being identified and caught.

#3 Select: They choose their victim based on the test. **YOU DON'T WANT TO BE SELECTED!**

#4 Isolate: The criminal will attempt to move the victim to an isolated location (if not already in one).

#5 Attack: Once isolated, they follow through with the criminal act e.g., carjacking, sexual assault, robbery, etc.

## **OSHA 3148-1996: Universal Precautions for Violence**

The concept of Universal Precautions for Violence assumes that all people have the potential to become violent.

“Violence should be expected but can be avoided or mitigated by preparation.”

The Take Charge program is about practicing prevention behaviors that will increase your safety in the community.

### **Personal Safety Strategy: A Five Step Approach**

Everyone needs to develop and put into action a Personal Safety Strategy. You can do this through a 5-step approach:

1. Evaluate your everyday behaviors.
  - Ask yourself: “What do I do that puts me at risk?” Do I:
    - Daydream or stare at the ground when walking?
    - Open my apartment/home door to strangers?
    - Carry a lot of cash, checks, and credit cards?
    - Leave my car unlocked when parked and/or when driving?
    - Let people invade my personal space?
  - You need to modify your daily behaviors to reduce the opportunity for anyone to make us their victim.
2. Avoid high-risk places and situations.
  - For example: dark, isolated areas and/or streets; alleys, wooded areas, etc.
3. Employ preventive measures/safe practices.
  - Take positive steps to minimize risk.
4. Have a mental plan and rehearse that plan.
  - Be prepared to act and react. Know what you’re going to do before it happens.
  - Being prepared means you have thought about your choices of how to react in advance and are ready to act on the one you feel best meets the situation.
  - Planning and “mental conditioning” is as important and necessary as the practicing of physical skills.

## 5. Maintain the proper mind-set.

Develop the mental commitment to do everything you can to maintain your safety and the winning attitude to survive, to escape, and even to prevail in any threatening and/or aggressive situation.

## **Personal Space**

You should always maintain a person space of at least two arms length or 4 to 6 feet.

Anytime you're around people, whether you know them or not, the distance should be appropriate for the situation.

The important thing to remember is that maintaining personal space provides you enough time to see what's coming and react! Attackers seldom tip their hand until they're close enough to grab you without having to risk chasing you. They will try to stay as "non-threatening" as possible until they think they are close enough to surprise you. You won't have time to react if they are within an arms length... keep two arms length away.

Strangers may call for you to stop or "wait a minute." They may ask you to come over and help them or they may offer to help you, even when you don't need any help. They may ask you for the time, a light, or directions, to fill out a survey or take a leaflet. They are all seemingly innocent ways to get close to you.

Stay alert-keep safe distances! You won't have time to react if they are within an arms length... keep two arms length away.

## **12 Steps to Safety**

These practices are actions that will contribute to increased personal safety in the community. Take personal responsibility for your safety and take these actions.

- #1 Stay alert wherever you are. Be constantly aware of what is happening around you. Never walk the streets daydreaming. Walk with your head up - eyes forward. Make eye contact with people as you go by.
- #2 Take a buddy along whenever possible, especially at night. There is "safety in numbers"! For example, take a dog...it may be blind and have no teeth but the criminal doesn't know that!
- #3 It is safer to be out during the daylight hours than at night when it's dark; there are more people around-places open.
- #4 Keep the distance between you and another person, whether you know them or not, appropriate for the situation.

- #5 Don't break your stride for strangers, even if they are trying to interact with you in a seemingly innocent way.
- #6 Keep your doors, windows, valuable, etc. always secured – locked up.
- #7 Never count or visually display your money in front of others.
- #8 Know where to go to get help should the need arise. Places which are open 24 hr/7 days a week, e.g. police and fire stations, convenience stores, gas station, or other place of business.
- #9 Choose safe routes to travel. Stay near lights, people, and action/ safe places to be. Stick to well-lighted, well-traveled areas.
- #10 Don't wear shoes to clothing that restrict your movements (i.e. to run and/or defend yourself) Avoid calling attention to yourself by wearing excessive jewelry.
- #11 Don't overburden yourself with packages and other items. An armful of packages may obstruct your view and restrict your mobility making it difficult for you're to react.
- #12 Trust your intuition or "gut instinct" that something isn't right or is going to happen...leave a dangerous scene immediately. Listen to your inner voice – correct 9 out of 10 times. If you feel un-comfortable in a place or situation, LEAVE IMMEDIATELY!

### **Safety Measures for Specific Situations**

The following information and safety measures, prevention tips and suggestions are intended to be used as guidelines to enhance your personal safety. Practicing them will make you a difficult target for criminals.

It is just as important to understand your own behavior as it is to understand the "enemy" – the criminal's behavior. Remember when we talked about how they select their victims?

As you review the following situations, keep asking yourself "What do I do in these types of common situations?"

It's important to identify what things you already do that are good habits / practices and keep doing them. Also identify what actions that will put you at risk – and make the necessary changes!

## **Walking**

ALWAYS -

- Stay alert to your surroundings.
- Communicate a sense of self-confidence when walking – walk at a steady pace, with head up, making quick eye contact with other people, particularly those coming towards you.
- Don't become distracted or preoccupied.
- Use the buddy system whenever possible. Try not to walk alone. There is strength in numbers. Your vulnerability to street crime is reduced as much as 70% by simply being with someone else.
- Avoid trouble spots – stay near lights, people, and action.
- Avoid shortcuts through deserted parks, vacant lots, wooded areas, alleys, etc. Shortcuts may save you time –but they may expose you to danger too!
- Walk toward the middle of the sidewalk facing traffic so you can see approaching traffic. Stay away from cars parked at the curb, doorways, and large bushes.
- Stick to well-lit, well-traveled streets.
- Avoid being on the streets at night, especially alone.
- Protect yourself and your valuables.
- Dress sensibly – wear clothing that doesn't restrict your ability to run or defend yourself.
- Keep your arms free. Don't overburden yourself with packages, groceries or other items which may obstruct your view and restrict your mobility making it difficult for you're to react.
- Don't accept rides from strangers and never hitchhike.
- Whenever possible, vary your route/routine each day. This minimizes the possibility of someone lying in waiting for you; makes it difficult for the criminal to plan an assault.
- Carry only what you need with you. Try using a fanny pack instead of pocketbook. They be easily concealed under clothing; difficult to steal; keeps your hands free.
- If you use a pocketbook with shoulder straps, carry it so that it hangs straight down from your shoulders, suspended between your arm and body. The strap should not cross your body.
- Carry handbags with a short strap as you would a football with your hand placed through the strap, clothing the bag.
- If you use a wheelchair, keep your purse or wallet tucked snugly between you and the inside of the chair. Again, fanny packs are great!
- Carry a wallet in a front or inside pocket, not a back pocket.
- Don't flash large amounts of cash or other tempting items like expensive jewelry. Doing this attacks the attention of criminals.
- Don't break your stride for strangers.
- Maintain personal space boundaries.

- Be careful when people try to stop you and ask for directions, the time of day, money, or are handing out leaflets. If you choose to respond, do so from a safe distance.

## **Shopping**

### ALWAYS :

- Carry only the amount of cash, checks or credit cards that you will absolutely need.
- Try to shop with a friend or relative.
- Be alert to what is going on around you.

### NEVER :

- Overload yourself with packages and groceries.
- Flash cash openly in public.

## **Car**

### ALWAYS :

- Have your keys ready when heading to your car.
- Look in, under, and around your car before getting in.
- Keep all doors locked and the windows 3/4 way up when driving.
- Maintain the same level of alertness while driving as you would walking on the street.
- Keep valuables out of view: under the seat or in the trunk.
- If someone drives you home, ask the driver to wait long enough to make sure you're safely inside your home.

### NEVER :

- Pick up hitchhikers.
- Leave your car running or the keys in the ignition when you're away from it, even for "just a minute."
- Engage in hand gestures with rude drivers.

## **Work**

### ALWAYS:

- Keep your purse, wallet and other valuable items with you or locked in a drawer or closet at all times.
- Keep emergency numbers for security, the police, and fire departments posted near your phone.
- Use caution when going to and from the office to the parking lot or parking garage.
- Be discreet – careful. Don't advertise your social plans or vacation plans, etc.

### NEVER :

- Walk to your car alone when leaving work in the dark. Ask security/public

safety or a co-worker to walk with you to the parking lot or bus stop.

### **Home/Apartment**

You want to make sure your home is a safe place to be when you're there and when you're not. Remember the criminal is looking for an easy mark! Making it difficult to enter is often enough to discourage the criminal.

Time and concealment are the two main priorities for the criminal. Slow him down or light up the shadows in which he works, and he will go elsewhere. Anything that looks like a "hassle" or too risky is bypassed by a criminal.

#### **ALWAYS:**

- Keep doors locked when you're at home, working, or outside in the yard.
- Make sure all ground floor or easy-to-reach upper floor windows are locked when the house is empty or you are sleeping.
- Use a door viewer (peephole) to see who is at the door before you open it. Never depend on a chain lock. Intercoms are helpful for an added sense of security.
- Make sure all porches; entrances, walkways, parking areas, etc. are well lighted.
- Have keys ready for quick entry into your house/apartment.
- List your initial rather than your first name on your door and mailbox.
- Use inexpensive timing devices to turn inside lights, radios, or television on and off at different times when you are out to give the appearance that someone is home.
- Cooperate in keeping the outer main doors in an apartment complex locked.
- Do not allow strangers to enter the building as you are leaving or entering.
- Arrange to have someone pick up the mail and newspapers if no one will be at home for more than a few days.

#### **NEVER :**

- Leave notes on your door to tell someone that you're not home and won't be back until a certain time.
- Let strangers into your house to use the telephone. Offer to make the phone call for them or direct them to a pay phone.
- Open the door to strangers or somebody you are not expecting.
- Hide extra keys outside in mailboxes, planters, or under doormats. Give a duplicate key to a trusted friend or neighbor in case you are locked out.

Remember 3 important tips:

1. Keep doors and windows locked.
2. Don't let strangers into your home.
3. Keep home well – lit.

## **Telephone**

### **ALWAYS:**

- Be careful of the type of information you give over the telephone when using a cordless telephone not equipped with a scrambling device. Someone with a scanner could be listening to your call.
- Carry enough change for a phone call.

### **NEVER:**

- List your first name in the telephone book. Use an initial instead.
- Give your name and address to an unidentified caller; and never tell them you are alone.
- Agree to meet anyone alone who calls you saying they found your wallet, piece of jewelry or other item and will meet you somewhere to return it. If this happens, call the police and have them accompany you to the meeting place.
- Use a pay phone in a secluded area.

## **Elevators**

### **ALWAYS:**

- Before entering an elevator, look at the persons already in the car. If anyone makes you feel uneasy or un-comfortable, wait for the next elevator.
- Try to stand near the control panel.
- Stand away from the door to avoid being pushed or pulled inside.

## **Public Transportation**

### **ALWAYS:**

- Wait in a well-lighted area, near other people.
- Try to sit near the driver, if possible.
- Keep all your possessions firmly in hand while waiting for a bus, train, etc.
- Keep your purse, shopping bag, backpack, or other belongings on your lap or in your hands.
- Observe the behavior of those around you. If you feel uneasy or threatened, change your seat or tell the driver.

### **NEVER:**



- Fall asleep or daydream. Stay alert!

## **ATM's**

### **ALWAYS:**

- Stay alert to what is going on around you while at the ATM. If you sense something wrong, leave the area immediately.
- Try to have someone with you when using the ATM.
- Have everything ready (card, envelope, etc.) before you approach the ATM.
- Stand directly in front of the ATM, blocking the view of others – most ATM's have a mirror to watch those behind you – use it.

### **NEVER :**

- Count or visually display your money when at the ATM. Immediately put it away.
- Use the ATM at night.

## **Frauds, Cons, and Scams**

It is sometimes hard to tell if a sales pitch is legitimate or not. You can't judge it by the tone or someone's voice, or by how friendly or sincere the person seems. Good salespeople are convincing, and so are crooks!

### **ALWAYS:**

- Investigate before investing money or signing a contract.
- Beware of anyone offering to perform home improvements at ridiculously low price.
- Look closely at offers that come through the mail.

## **Sexual Assault**

The information and recommendations to below will decrease the chance of you becoming a victim of sexual assault.

Even with your best awareness and continuous practice of safe behaviors you or someone you know may become a victim. Please report it as a crime.

### **Always:**

- Practice the pre-cautions in this program.
- Remember: drinking alcohol or using drugs can cloud your judgment and ability to make responsible decisions and protect yourself.

- Be careful when inviting someone to your home or accepting an invitation to theirs.
- Meet a person during the day – in public places like a restaurant, movie or wherever there is a crowd – when you date for the first time and /or don't know the person.
- Set clear sexual limits and communicate those limits.
- Be assertive – stand up for yourself. State what you really want and are feeling.
- Beware of your date's attempt to get you isolated and/ or away from groups of people.
- Plan how you'll get home. Take your own vehicle or have a back up plan in case of an emergency.

Never:

- Leave a group setting with a person you don't know well. Avoid secluded places.
- Accept a ride from someone you just met.
- Hesitate to state your feelings and immediately get out of the situation if you feel you are being pressured or coerced into sexual activity.
- Share or exchange a drink with anyone or leave your drink unattended.

Beware of people who:

- Get angry when you say "no" about anything and who disrespect or ignore your opinions and wishes.
- Need to be in control and make all the decisions.
- Act excessively jealous / possessive.
- Ignore personal boundaries.
- Display inappropriate anger and aggression - verbal or physical violence.

### **CT State Law: Use of Force**

Everyone has the right to defend him/herself against acts of violence and aggression. However, you must understand the laws regarding the use of force to make sure you do not end up facing criminal prosecution and/or become a defendant in a civil action.

- Parameters for Use of Force (CGS 53a – 19, 53a – 20, 53a-21)

Reasonable and Necessary Physical Force can be used in defense of you or a third person, property, premises.

Deadly Physical Force can be used in defense of deadly force against yourself or the life of a third person. It cannot be used in defense of property or premises.

### **Managing Fear to Survive**

This is information on ways to manage your fear to survive in a dangerous situation.

The “Flight or Fight” survival mechanism describes what happens when an animal or human feels threatened or scared.

Physiological and psychological changes in your body have one purpose – to give you more power and better concentration on survival during a life-threatening crisis.

Our natural instinct of survival is suppressed when we freeze (panic). Freezing is nothing more than your fear being in control rather than you being in control. When you panic and freeze, you stop breathing. Oxygen is restricted or cut off, making your muscles weak. Your blood rushes to your inner organs and away from your head, arms, and legs. You can’t scream, dial a phone, or find your keys. When frozen by fear, you are unable to concentrate on saving yourself, and you’ll never notice any fleeting opportunities to escape.

To break out of paralyzing fear, you must redirect or convert your fear and re-channel the power of that emotion. Stop the panic by breathing –slowly and steadily. Think the word “NO!” Yell or shout in a loud authoritative voice, exploding from the diaphragm each time you act or react. This releases the panic and sends blood and oxygen to your head and limbs, so you can think clearly and move. No, you have no right to hurt me! No, you may not touch me, “NO! NO! NO!”

Yelling or shouting “NO!” propels you into action. It can also surprise and tell your aggressor that you are not a victim! Additionally, yelling or shouting helps block out everything else and focuses you.

Remember, when you feel threatened or scared, your life will depend on your ability to channel your natural and healthy response to danger, i.e. fear to overcome the threat.

### Common Sense-Self Defense

- Self-defense is not just about fighting. It’s about avoiding, escaping, seeking, cover getting assistance (help).
- There is no best way to react. It depends on you, the assailant, and the immediate environment. Whatever you decide, your primary goal is survival; getting out of the situation alive!
- More often than not, multiple defense responses need to be used, ex. Yelling – physical resistance – Running away – to effectively deal with the situation at hand.
- Recognize and Avoid

The easiest action, when it is possible, is to sense and respond to potentially threatening people, places, and situations promptly enough to avoid it altogether. For example, you’re walking down the street, when you see an individual who is asking people as they pass by the money. You immediately cross the street to avoid this person.

- Yell, Shout, Make Noise, Attract Attention

Don't hesitate to make noise. Attracting attention may be your best protection; yell, whistle, shout, anything you can think of draw attention to yourself. Generally speaking, the louder and longer the sound, the more successful this is as a deterrent.

Yell, "FIRE" rather than "HELP". A fire gets everybody's attention. Yell "NO". "NO" is powerful. It implies you're not going to be a passive or willing victim and increases the assailant's fear

- Comply

Temporarily cooperate while seeking and/or creating an opportunity to escape. It is foolish to risk injury to protect property or money. Your life is far more valuable than material things. You can always replace your valuables – you can never replace your life. Give up your property or money – Don't give up your life!!

- Break away and Escape

*And*

- Resist, Fight Back

Although your first choice is to avoid or prevent physical aggression whenever you can, this is not always possible. There may be a time when you can't retreat fast enough or where your attempts at other personal defense options fail.

The general rule of thumb in defending a physical assault is to do whatever is reasonable and necessary to defend yourself. The goal is survival! However, only you can make this decision.

When faced with imminent (immediate) physical assault, you will need to make a personal choice – to fight or not to fight back. Considerable evidence supports the view that fighting back / resisting is safer than not fighting back in these types of situations. Only you can determine the acceptability and risks of fighting versus not fighting once it is clear that there are not other options available.

### **Situation Involving a Weapon**

If a gun, knife, or other weapon is presented, and the primary intent is robbery, not assault - DON'T RESIST!

Give it up immediately and then run, escape. It is generally safer to cooperate than to resist. It's foolish to risk your life to protect money, property, and valuables.

## **The Survival Mentality**

Physical skills, strength, size, etc. alone do not insure success in an aggressive situation - a certain mentality is needed:

Mental Preparedness:

- If you approach high-risk situations without proper mental preparedness, the strongest force in deciding your destiny is going to be LUCK! Mental planning, conditioning and a proper mind set can change that.
- Planning - prepare for a crisis before it happens. Ask yourself "What would I do if.....?"
- Mental conditioning - Program your brain by repeatedly "visualizing" successful implementation of your plan, i.e. effective and winning response to the situation.

The brain is like a computer; when properly programmed, it responds accordingly.

When you're suddenly faced with a dangerous situation, the **brain** stops thinking and shifts into an automatic response mode. If the brain has been properly programmed through mental conditioning, it responds and says, "Oh yes, I'm going to handle it" and does! If the brain has not been programmed, we do not respond or we react too late.

Proper Mind Set

**There are 5 Elements:**

- # 1 Alertness: Be ready when it's time to act.
- # 2 Decisiveness: Once you decide what to do, do it without hesitation.
- # 3 Aggressiveness: If you decide to do it, do it like you mean it.
- # 4 Speed: Gain the advantage of surprise by taking action before aggressor does; immediate response/resistance.
- # 5 Relentlessness: With spirit and determination, do whatever is reasonable, necessary and justified to do to win and survive.

## **BASIC PARAMETERS FOR SAFE PRACTICE**

Remember: your safety is the first and most important priority. What are some basic safe practices you do at work each day?

Your strategies should include:

- Assess the risk of the client, environment, and others that may be in the environment.
- Leave a written schedule of who you will be visiting (and where) with estimated times.
- Carry your cell-phone.
- Learn the safest route to your destination.
- Learn as much as you can about the neighborhood that you are going to prior to going:
  - Gang and drug activity
  - Other criminal activity
- Consider a neutral, safer site or going in pairs for the visit whenever possible.
- Consider (when possible) whether a change in visit time or place will decrease your risk of danger.

### **NEVER**

- Get lured into a false sense of security with the client or the environment because of familiarity. Remember Universal Precautions!
- Hesitate to respond to your “gut feelings” about safety.

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

### **The Home-Site Visit**

- Avoid darkened stairwells or isolated parts of the building.
- Know where the exits are.
- Stay closest to the door in the client’s home.
- Leave if you are asked to leave or feel unsafe.
- Take your cell-phone into the home.

### **The Street Visit**

- Learn the criminal, illegal and unsafe activities of the areas you are entering. Contact the local police department for information about current activities.
- Stay as visible as possible. Avoid tunnels, parking garages, and other isolated sites.

### **Transporting Clients**

The safest practices to implement when transporting your clients include:

- Assess environmental conditions and destination prior to the transport.
- Consider and assess the clients risk potential minimally based on H/O

violence, medical and mental status, suspicion of weapons, substance use, and the reason for the transport.

- Give serious consideration to transporting intoxicated clients.
- Have Psychiatric Security Review Board (PSRB) prior authorization for transporting PSRB clients.
- Be prepared to exit the vehicle quickly.
- Continually assess the clinical condition of the client during transport.
- Respond to verbal and behavioral threats of danger immediately.

## **EMERGENCIES DURING TRANSPORT**

### **Medical**

Actions to take if there is a medical emergency while you are transporting a client:

- Stop the car and obtain medical emergency assistance.
- Employees are only expected to medically intervene to the extent that s/he is formally trained or prepared.

### **Psychiatric**

Actions to take if there is a psychiatric emergency while you are transporting a client:

- Stop the car, pullover and reassess whether to proceed and/or leave the vehicle immediately and access help.
- Be prepared to give a visual description of the client.
- In the event that you leave the vehicle and conditions allow, attempt to maintain visual contact with the client(s) while summoning/awaiting help.
- If other clients are in the vehicle, assist them in exiting and secure a safe place for them.

### **After a Crime Occurs: “Where do I begin?”**

Actions you must take if a crime does occur include:

- If you have been physically hurt in any way, make sure to get medical attention immediately.
- Call the police to report the crime.
  - When you call to report a crime, you will be asked for your name, address and telephone number. This information is requested in case additional contact with you becomes necessary. You can remain anonymous if you wish.
  - Do exactly as the police instruct you to do over the phone. Remain on the phone with the police dispatcher until you are told to hang up, or at least until you are sure that the police have all of the information.
  - If after the police has interviewed you, you remember or think of

something about the crime or suspect that you did not tell them, call the police.

- Talking about what happened may be very difficult at first and you may not understand why the officer has to ask you so many questions. Try your best.
- Tell the police, as factually as possible, what person(s), thing(s), and event(s) has/have occurred. That is, briefly state WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, HOW, WHO and WHY (if known).
- Give the best possible description of the suspect(s) as you can. The suspect(s) name (if known), sex, race, weight, height, hair, eyes, clothes, tattoos, scars, etc.
- If a vehicle was involved, give the best possible description of the vehicle – color, make, model, year, license plate number, etc.

Remember that with your help in reporting a crime or any type of suspicious activity, the police can more effectively protect the property and rights of others. Your relationship with the police in crime prevention is an important one!

### **Your rights as a victim and the services available to you**

- You have just gone through a terrible experience being a victim of a crime, whether or not you were physically injured or have suffered a loss by theft or vandalism (destruction of property) or just a witness to a crime has an effect on you. This is very normal. Each of us reacts to crisis in our own way.
- Sometimes the first reaction is shock, disbelief, and fear. You may respond by appealing very upset or by appearing calm and controlled. You may be unsure who to tell or what to do, and may not even be sure of how you feel.
- You may not be able to sleep, or you may have nightmares. Your eating habits may change. You may be afraid to be left alone, or you may want to be left alone.
- Whatever you are going through, thinking or feeling – remember an important point – you have survived!
- There are resources that you can access for assistance especially in helping you work through the trauma. In CT, victims of crime can get help from State agencies, private agencies and/or a victim advocate.



DMHAS has a network of CISM teams and also offers EAP Services. In addition, the Office of Victim Services and other support and crisis services offer many types of assistance to crime victims and their families including:

- 24 hr. hotlines with immediate access to trained, certified, counselors  
Crisis intervention and short-term counseling
- Support groups
- Explaining your rights as a victim; helping you through the legal system!
- Planning for future safety
- Emergency shelters

You may want to seek other professional mental health help especially if your experience seems to be interfering with your quality of life.

### **Make a Mental Plan**

Earlier you learned about the importance of making a mental plan. No one knows the situations you encounter as well as you do. You should think ahead about those situations that put you at a higher level of risk like having medications – money – or the neighborhood.

It is critical to have a mental plan for “high risk” situations...by having a plan you increase the potential that you will take action and not freeze in an emergency situation when your safety may be at risk.

Visualize yourself taking the actions outlined in your mental plan. This will increase the potential for you to put your plan in action if a dangerous situation develops.

## **Closing Summary: “WINNING STARTS WITH BEGINNING”**

We all want to live our lives in a peaceful and safe environment. We want to walk on the streets without the fear of being assaulted; use an ATM machine or cash our checks at a bank without the fear of being robbed; and live in the fear of being robbed; and live in our home without the fear of being burglarized.

- There are choices you can make and things you can do to reduce your chances of becoming a victim of crime and being hurt physically, emotionally and financially!
- Winning – staying safe – starts with beginning

### **There are 3 important keys to winning:**

#### 1. Personal Responsibility

- Taking the responsibility for your own safety – Personal Safety begins with you!
- Making the commitment 100% to your survival and maintaining your safety.

#### 2. Knowledge

- Learning preventive tips, habits, precautions, etc. which will protect you and your property.

We talked about many of these today. For example – importance of maintaining Personal Space, the 12 steps for Safety, preventive measures when walking, shopping, using public transportation...etc.

- Learning to make careful choices when it comes to your safety.

#### 3. Prevention

- Applying what you've already learned today to reduce the risks to your personal safety – EVERYDAY – ALL DAY!!!

Updated: September 2007