



## Forced Marriage: SAFETY PLAN

### What is forced marriage?

Making someone get married when they don't want to is never acceptable and is a crime in Australia. A 'forced marriage' happens when somebody gets married without freely and fully consenting, because they have been coerced, threatened or deceived, or when they aren't able

to understand the meaning and consequences of getting married. Anybody can be a victim of a forced marriage, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation or religious or cultural background. You can find more information about forced marriage online at [www.ag.gov.au/forcedmarriage](http://www.ag.gov.au/forcedmarriage) or at [www.mybluesky.org.au](http://www.mybluesky.org.au).

### What does freely and fully consenting mean?

Freely and fully consenting means that a person wants to get married and is able to choose if, who and when they marry. The table below explains what free and full consent means.

Free and full consent is:	Free and full consent is not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>choosing to marry because you feel you are ready to marry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>agreeing to marry because of the threat or use of force or coercion against yourself or others, including physical or sexual violence</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>choosing to marry because you wish to marry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>agreeing to marry because you are being unlawfully detained or held against your will</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>choosing to marry because you want to marry your potential spouse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>agreeing to marry because of emotional or psychological pressure, including not wanting to cause shame to your family</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>choosing to marry because you <i>understand</i> what getting married means and how it will affect your life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>agreeing to marry out of obedience to somebody in a position of trust or authority such as your parents or grandparents</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>being able to choose not to marry without fear of the consequences for yourself, and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>agreeing to marry because that is what other people in your culture or community expect</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>being able to choose not to marry without fear of the consequences to others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>agreeing to marry because you are being financially abused (for example, your wages, money for everyday things like food, or other forms of support are being withheld)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>agreeing to marry because of other forms of coercion, including blackmail or somebody withholding important documentation from you, such as your passport, or</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>agreeing to marry when you have been tricked or deceived about the proposed marriage.</li> </ul>

*Free and full consent cannot be given by somebody who is unable to understand what they are consenting to. This means that some people cannot give valid consent to marriage because of their age or intellectual capacity.*



## Forced Marriage: SAFETY PLAN

### What is a safety plan and how will it help me?

This safety plan is a guide to help you protect yourself and get help safely. You can use this plan if you are scared about being made to get married, scared about refusing a marriage or scared to leave a marriage that you never agreed to.

Completing this safety plan will help you to:

- find help and talk to other people safely
- plan ahead how you can respond to unsafe situations
- stay safe at home or get ready to leave home safely, and
- make sure that you are not taken overseas to be married.

### How do I complete the safety plan?

You can complete the safety plan by following the six steps below:

1. If it is safe to do so, ask someone you trust, like a friend or teacher, to help you complete the safety plan.
2. Go to a safe place where you will not be interrupted or discovered.
3. Carefully read the important information on the next page about communicating safely.
4. Answer the questions in the template as best you can.
5. Keep your safety plan in a safe place. You might need to hide it or leave it with someone you trust.
6. Revise your safety plan often so that it is always up to date.

**Note for organisations:** If you are assisting a person to complete this forced marriage safety plan, it is important that you read and understand the information in Appendix One about meeting with a person in, or at risk of, a forced marriage.

### How can I get help?

If you are being emotionally, physically or verbally abused, or you do not feel safe you can seek help. You can talk to somebody you trust, like a friend or their parents, an older sibling, a teacher or a co worker.

In an emergency, call Triple Zero (000) immediately and ask for help.

The *My Blue Sky* website <[www.mybluesky.org.au](http://www.mybluesky.org.au)> provides people in, or at risk of, forced marriage with important information and links to support services.

Preliminary assistance, including free, confidential legal advice about forced marriage, is available from *My Blue Sky*, the national forced marriage helpline, on 02 9514 8115. The *My Blue Sky* helpline operates Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm, with an out of hours recorded message. You can also get help by emailing [help@mybluesky.org.au](mailto:help@mybluesky.org.au), or sending an SMS to 0481 070 844.

You can also contact the Australian Federal Police (AFP) for help and advice. The AFP protect people who are in, or at risk of, a forced marriage and are specially trained to deal with these situations. They are able to refer you to support to help you access safe accommodation, financial support, medical treatment, counselling and access to legal and migration advice. You can contact the AFP anonymously by filling out an online form on the human trafficking page on the AFP website: <[https://forms.afp.gov.au/online\\_forms/human\\_trafficking\\_form](https://forms.afp.gov.au/online_forms/human_trafficking_form)> or by calling 131 AFP (131 237).

The Translating and Interpreting Service can be contacted on 131 450.



## Safety Plan: HOW TO COMMUNICATE SAFELY

If you are in, or at risk of, a forced marriage, it is important that you seek help. The information below will help you to communicate safely with people who are trying to help and assist you.

### Talking on a phone or texting

- If you are worried that someone might check your phone you can ask to borrow a phone from someone you trust, ask to use a phone at work or school, or use a pay phone. If it is safe to do so, you can secretly purchase a cheap mobile phone to use.
- Only call when you are alone or with someone you trust.
- Think of a safe word that you can use when talking on the phone or sending text messages to someone you trust. You can use this safe word in the future to confirm your identity, and that it is safe for you to talk (for example, the safe word could be a certain answer to a question that is asked every time you talk). Choose a safe word only you and your trusted person know.
- Remember that any calls you make will appear in the phone bill or call log.
- If you can, delete the record of your call from the call log. If you are using a landline phone, dial another number after you finish the call. This will stop somebody else using the redial function to identify who you called.
- You may need to delete any text messages that you send or receive.
- Store the numbers for *My Blue Sky* (02 9514 8115 and 0481 070 844), the Australian Federal Police (131 AFP [131 237]) and your trusted person under a different name that will not raise concerns.

### Using email

- Try to use a public computer or a computer that nobody else in your family or community has access to. You could borrow a trusted person's computer or use a computer at school, work or a public library.
- Delete your browsing history and cookies if you think that members of your family or community may be able to access the computer.
- Use a private email address that nobody else in your family or community has access to. You can create a new email address for free online through Gmail or Yahoo.
- Think about the risk that your email might be read by someone else, printed or forwarded.
- You may need to delete any email messages that you send or receive.

### Meeting with somebody face to face

- Meet in a safe and private place where you will not be recognised by anyone else.
- It may be hard for you to meet with people who aren't part of your family or community without permission. If so, try to meet with someone you trust, who can organise for other people to join you both.
- You could also try to meet at a place where your family and community will not know what you are doing, like at your school or work or somewhere you might need to have a 'private' examination, like a doctor's clinic.



## Safety Plan: TEMPLATE

### Who can I talk to?

*If you do not want to keep a copy of the safety plan, you can complete and cut out the important information in the box with the dotted-lines. Keep this cut-out hidden and easily accessible so that you know how to get help and advice.*

I have read the information on page one about communicating safely.

Some people and organisations I can talk to get help, support and advice are:

- The Australian Federal Police (131 AFP [131 237])
- My Blue Sky (02 9514 8115 or 0481 070 844)

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

I will keep a list of these numbers in this safe place \_\_\_\_\_

When I contact \_\_\_\_\_ by phone/text/email/face-to-face, I will make sure that I stay safe by doing these things:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### I'm not sure what I want to do

*This section will help you if you are worried you might be made to marry somebody but aren't sure what to do.*

Someone that I trust and I can talk to if I don't want to be married is: \_\_\_\_\_

I will leave a copy of my completed safety plan with this trusted person: \_\_\_\_\_

If I feel comfortable and safe, I will talk with these people in my family and community about forced marriage:

\_\_\_\_\_

- I will explain to these people that forced marriage is against the law in Australia and that no one has the right to make me marry someone if don't want to. I will do this by saying that:

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- I can get help to talk to these people from this person: \_\_\_\_\_

### What can I do to stay safe at home?

*Even if you feel safe it is important that you are ready to leave home quickly and safely if and when you need to.*

- Three possible situations which might threaten my safety at home are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

- I can deal with these situations by:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

- If it is safe to do so, I will keep a detailed list of any threats, violence, abuse or harassment, including dates and times.

- Three safe places I can go if I need to leave home quickly and safely are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

- Address: \_\_\_\_\_
- Contact details (including after hours): \_\_\_\_\_
- The quickest and safest way for me to travel to this safe place is (bus routes etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

- Address: \_\_\_\_\_
- Contact details (including after hours): \_\_\_\_\_
- The quickest and safest way for me to travel to this safe place is (bus routes etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_
- Address: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Contact details (including after hours): \_\_\_\_\_
  - The quickest and safest way for me to travel to this safe place is (bus routes etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

- Important documents I will try to take with me if I need to leave are:
- *passport* \_\_\_\_\_
  - *drivers' licence* \_\_\_\_\_
  - *other photo identification* \_\_\_\_\_
  - *birth and/or marriage certificate* \_\_\_\_\_
  - *Medicare card* \_\_\_\_\_
  - *bank details* \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_

If I can, I will try to make copies of these documents and keep them in a safe place I can get to easily or give them to somebody I trust.

The quickest and safest ways out of my home/school/work are:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I will practice leaving quickly in these ways:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**How can I keep my children safe?**

- I will make sure my children can use a telephone to call the police or someone I trust to ask for help and give their address.
- I will consider using a code word with my children so that they know I want them to call for help.
- I will tell these people at my children’s school that I am worried about protecting my children:

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**What if I think I may have to go overseas?**

- I will contact a specialist community organisation as soon as possible to ask for help and advice if I think I will be taken overseas with my spouse or made to get married overseas.
- If my family asks me to travel overseas and I suspect that I will be made to get married, I will use these excuses to avoid going:

- ---
- ---
- ---
- ---

- If I decide it is safe to travel overseas, I will tell this person I trust \_\_\_\_\_ as much information as I can about where I am going and how long I will be gone. If I can, I will also give this person a copy of my passport, itinerary and contact details while overseas.

- If I am taken to the airport against my will, or become concerned while at the airport, I will ask for airport staff for help as soon as I can.

- If I am taken overseas, I will contact the nearest Australian Embassy/Consulate for help or contact the 24 hour Consular Emergency Centre in Canberra by phone on +61 2 6261 3305 or by text message on +61 421 269 080.

- The closest Australian Embassy/Consulate to where I think I might be taken overseas is:

- City: 

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- Embassy/Consulate address: 

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- Embassy/Consulate phone number: 

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- Embassy/Consulate email: 

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(A list of Australian Embassies/Consulates overseas is available online at: [www.dfat.gov.au/missions/](http://www.dfat.gov.au/missions/))

**What do I do if I want to leave home?**

*Leaving can be the most dangerous time.*

- If I don't feel safe and decide that I need to leave home I will contact these people or organisations to ask for help and advice before I leave:
- The Australian Federal Police \_\_\_\_\_
  - My Blue Sky \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- I will ask this trusted person if I can stay with them: \_\_\_\_\_
- I will try to take these important documents (including for my children) with me when I leave:
- *passport* \_\_\_\_\_
  - *drivers' licence* \_\_\_\_\_
  - *other photo identification* \_\_\_\_\_
  - *birth and/or marriage certificate* \_\_\_\_\_
  - *Medicare card* \_\_\_\_\_
  - *bank details* \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- If I can, I will keep copies of these documents in a safe place I can get to easily or give them to somebody I trust.
- I will take these other things with me when I leave:
- *a recent photo of myself* \_\_\_\_\_
  - *keys to my home, place of work and/or car* \_\_\_\_\_
  - *prescription medication* \_\_\_\_\_
  - *money/bank cards* \_\_\_\_\_
  - *extra clothing* \_\_\_\_\_
  - *any information that could identify anyone who is helping me or that could be used to locate where I have gone* \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- If I can, I will open my own bank account before I leave at: \_\_\_\_\_
- I will make sure that everyone who knows where I have gone understands that they must not share this information with anybody else.



### How can I stay safe after I leave?

- I will contact these people or organisations for help, support and advice:
- The Australian Federal Police
  - *My Blue Sky*
  - 
  -
- I will change my mobile phone number and other personal details including my online passwords and billing addresses.
- I will change my routine, including where I usually shop and the way I travel to work or school.
- If possible, I will tell the people who look after my children who is allowed to pick them up and that they must not let my children go anywhere with anybody else.
- I will be careful when I use social media and not upload photos which include identifiable people or places.
- I will talk to a solicitor (such as through a Community Legal Centre) about legally ending any marriage that may have occurred. I can find my nearest Community Legal Centre at <http://www.naclc.org.au/>.
- I will have my mail delivered to a postal box and not my new address.
- I will contact the Australian Electoral Commission and ask to be a silent elector. This means my name and address will be excluded from the electoral roll.
- I will think about what I can do if I am followed home.
- *Do not go home or to a place where you will be alone or away from other people.*
  - *If you are on a bus, do not get off at your stop. Either stay on the bus and seek assistance from the driver, or get off at a stop where there are many people.*
  - *If you are walking and it is safe to do so, change your direction. Stay as close to other people as possible, and go to the nearest place where you might seek assistance.*
  - *If you have a phone, call someone you trust to meet you at an agreed location.*



## Appendix One: Information about meeting with a person in, or at risk of, a forced marriage

- The most important consideration at all times is your safety and the safety of the person you are meeting.

### DO

- Read the information available online at: [www.ag.gov.au/forcedmarriage](http://www.ag.gov.au/forcedmarriage) and at [www.mybluesky.org.au](http://www.mybluesky.org.au).
- Consider if you need to contact *My Blue Sky* or the Australian Federal Police for specialist assistance and advice.
- Read the information available in the *Guidelines for NGOs: Working with trafficked people*, available online at: [www.ag.gov.au/humantrafficking](http://www.ag.gov.au/humantrafficking).
- Meet with the person alone in a secure and private place where they will not be recognised and will feel comfortable and safe.
  - Where possible, ensure that the person is able to choose the gender and ethnicity of the person who meets with them.
- Consider if an accredited interpreter will be required. If so, ask the person what they prefer their interpreter's gender and ethnicity to be.
  - Ensure that the interpreter and person do not know each other. You also need to carefully check that the interpreter does not have any links to the client's community. Remember that these links may not always be obvious.
- Explain your organisation's confidentiality policy and make it clear that you will not give any information to the person's friends, family or community without their permission except in particular circumstances, including due to mandatory reporting requirements. Ensure you are very clear about the types of situations in which you will have to share information about the person (for example, if their safety is at immediate risk).
  - Ensure that you always inform the person if information about them is shared.
  - Ensure that you are familiar with and understand the requirements about privacy and sharing information.
  - Obtain written consent to release the person's information, specifying what can be shared, with whom and for what period of time that apply in Australia.
  - Ensure that you are familiar with relevant child protection frameworks and mandatory reporting guidelines, which will provide guidance for acting in a child's best interests.

- Let the person know that this is a crime and that they can contact the *My Blue Sky* or the AFP for help. Contact with both *My Blue Sky* and the AFP can be anonymous.
- Attempt to gather as much information as possible as the person may be unable to meet directly with you again.
- Never ignore or disregard the information the person provides (even if they are a child).
- Clearly explain all possible options to the person and recognise and accept their wishes.
- Establish if the person requires any immediate medical treatment, or mental and emotional support.
- Establish if there are any other people at risk (for example other siblings).
- Establish if the person is an Australian citizen or resident.
  - If the person is not an Australian citizen or permanent resident they should seek advice from a registered migration agent or the Department of Immigration and Border Protection about their immigration status.
- Understand the appropriate referral pathways, including the names and contact details of appropriate organisations who are able to provide specialist assistance and support to people in, or at risk of, a forced marriage. Detailed information is available at Appendix Two.

**DO NOT**

- Attempt to set up a meeting with the person and their family or community members to discuss the situation.
- Attempt to contact family or community members without the express permission of the person.
- Speak or approach the person if they are in the company of people you do not know and trust.
- Allow family members to be present at interviews or meetings.
- Use anyone from the community (including friends, neighbours or community leaders) as an interpreter.
- Make promises that you are unable to keep.
- Provide advice that you are not qualified to provide, in particular legal or migration advice.



## Appendix Two: Referral pathways

In addition to the Australian Federal Police, the following specialist non-government organisations may also be able to provide advice and assistance to people in or at risk of forced marriage.

### **My Blue Sky**

*My Blue Sky* is an easy to use website dedicated to preventing and addressing forced marriage in Australia. The website provides important information and links to support services. The *My Blue Sky* helpline also provides free and confidential legal advice about forced marriage.

Phone: 02 9514 8115  
SMS: 0481 070 844  
Email: [help@mybluesky.org.au](mailto:help@mybluesky.org.au)  
Website: [www.mybluesky.org.au](http://www.mybluesky.org.au).

### **1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732): The National Sexual Assault, Domestic & Family Violence Counselling Service**

The National Sexual Assault, Domestic & Family Violence Counselling Service is a confidential telephone and online counselling service, staffed by professional counsellors to assist any person who has experienced, or is at risk of, family and domestic violence and/or sexual assault.

Phone: 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)  
Email: Online counselling is available through the website listed below.  
Website: [www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au).

### **Anti-Slavery Australia**

Anti-Slavery Australia is based in Sydney and provides comprehensive legal advice, representation and assistance to people who are in, or at risk of, a forced marriage.

Phone: 02 9514 9662  
Email: [antislavery@uts.edu.au](mailto:antislavery@uts.edu.au)  
Website: [www.antislavery.org.au](http://www.antislavery.org.au).

### **Australian Muslim Women’s Centre for Human Rights (AMWCHR)**

The AMWCHR is based in Melbourne and works to advance the rights and status of Muslim women in Australia. The AMWCHR provides case-work, referrals, secondary consultation and outreach services for people in, or at risk of, a forced marriage.

Phone: 03 9481 3000  
Website: [www.ausmuslimwomenscentre.org.au](http://www.ausmuslimwomenscentre.org.au).

### **Australian Red Cross**

The Australian Red Cross is a humanitarian organisation dedicated to meeting the needs of vulnerable people in the community.

Email: [national\\_stpp@redcross.org.au](mailto:national_stpp@redcross.org.au)  
Website: [www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au).

\*The Australian Red Cross is the contracted service provider for the Australian Government’s Support for Trafficked People Program. People in, or at risk of, forced marriage can only be referred to the Support Program by the Australian Federal Police.

### **Salvation Army**

The Salvation Army provides residential and case-management support for people in, or at risk of, a forced marriage.

Phone: 02 9211 5794  
Email: [endslavery@aue.salvationarmy.org.au](mailto:endslavery@aue.salvationarmy.org.au)  
Website: [www.endslavery.salvos.org.au](http://www.endslavery.salvos.org.au).

### **Family law information**

The Family Law Courts National Enquiry Centre  
Phone: 1300 352 000  
Email: [enquiries@familylawcourts.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@familylawcourts.gov.au).

### **Translation services**

The Translating and Interpreting Service can be contacted on 131 450.