Seek out community support to stay safe

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Women ready to leave abusive partners need to know their options

My sister is in an abusive relationship but is now ready to leave the guy but I worry because he will be so angry What can she do to stay safe? Answer:

You are right to be concerned because the most dangerous time for a woman in an abusive relationship is when

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she leaves it. This is because violence against women is in part about the dynamic of a man needing to have control over his partner to feel powerful within himself. When a woman decides to leave the relationship, she is breaking his control over her, and therefore stepping into a more dangerous situation as he may choose

of violence to regain control.

It is extremely important to develop a safety plan so that a woman who leaves the relationship can do so safely. It is also why it is very important to respect a woman's decision to stay in a relationship. She may actually be correct in her assessment that she could be severely injured or killed if she

So if your sister is ready to leave she should have a few things lined up for herself. She needs a safe place to stay that he does not know about and does not endanger any other people. This could be a friend's place if safe, a hotel or a women's shelter. The women's shelter in our community is operated by North Shore Crisis Services Society. She may need to apply for a restraining order so that he is not allowed to be around her or contact her. It

should be noted that restraining orders are not a protective measure if he does not respect the order. If she is working she may want to speak with her employer about her concerns about safety so that they can come up with a safety plan while she is at work. This may include moving her to another location or allowing her to work at home for a period of

In addition to plans for safety after she leaves, it is a very good idea for your sister to plan ahead for all the things she will need to take and have access to when she leaves. This may include cash, cheques, jewelry, birth certificates, pass ports, legal papers, children's immunization records (in case she needs for them to change schools), address book, laptop, cell phone, and any other important documents.

She may also want to take

her like photographs, children's toys or other irreplaceable items

She should be very careful about using any credit cards because her partner may be able to access her accounts and online statements and trace her use (i.e. hotel bills or gas purchases).

There are many resources in the community that are available to help your sister stay safe if and when she decides to leave. We can help connect her to those resources, as well as to our programs and services that support women living in violence and abuse. Please have her give us a call.

Staub-French, juna Staub-French, M.A., R.C.C., is director of clinical programs at Family Services of the North Shore. Questions? Write onthecouch@familyservices.bc.ca or call 604-988-5281.

health notes

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North Vancouver, Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. at St. Anthony's Parish, 2347 Inglewood Ave., West Vancouver, and Fridays, 9:30 a.m., in a private North Vancouver home. Groups are part of the ecumenical B.C. Christian Meditation Community. Anyone interested is welcome. Free. Info: cdonald@shaw.ca, 604-985-1592 or www.wccm.

SPORTS. FITNESS AND HEALTH

Aboriginal Support: A variety of programs are offered for families and individuals at the So-Sah-Latch Health and Family Centre, 422 West Esplanade, North Vancouver. Info: 604-985-7826

day, 7-8 a.m. and Monday-Thursday, 6-7 p.m. for beginners; Monday-Thursday, 7-8 p.m. and Saturdays, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. for Taijutsu classes; Wednesday, 7-8 p.m. and Saturdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m. for weapons classes at 121 East First St., North Vancouver. Free beginner classes are being offered to any adult that can provide confirmation that they are unemployed. Info: 604-983-8730 or nsaikido@telus net or www.nsaikido.org

Arthritis Support/Motivational Group meets

the first Tuesday of each month, 7 p.m. at the John Braithwaite Community Centre, 145 West First St., North Vancouver. Learn tips and tricks for living well with arthritis. New members welcome. Info: Paulette at 604-983-3429 or pgj@ shaw.ca.

Belly Dancing: From beginner to advanced. Learn the art of this sensual dance while getting a full body workout and having fun. Instructor Pooneh Alizadeh is a professional modern Egyptian and folkloric dance instructor and choreographer. The first class is free. Info: 604-809-2187. Everyone welcome.

Box Lacrosse: Registration is open for new and returning players. Boys and girls between five and 16 who are looking for a way to keep in shape, develop hand-eye co-ordination and meet new Info: www.northshoreminorlacrosse. friends.

Co-ed Indoor Soccer: Is being offered on Sundays, 7-9 p.m. at the West Vancouver Community Centre, 2121 Marine Dr., West Vancouver. Drop-in: \$6. For more information, phone 604-

> - Compiled by Pamela Stone and Debbie Caldwell

E-mail information for your non-profit, by donation or nominal fee event to listings@nsnews.com.

Aikido: Martial arts classes held Tuesday to Fri-

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