



CHECKLIST & WORKBOOK

Separation Planning

WITH SPECIALIST DIVORCE COACH
DANIELLE BLACK





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Hi, I'm Danielle.

I'm who Australian women turn to when 'conscious uncoupling' or 'amicable' separation doesn't seem like a genuine option.

I help women stay sane, take back control, and heal, while dealing with high-conflict separation, divorce and co-parenting. Yes, it's possible!



About Danielle

Today, I'm on solid ground. I remarried over 10 years ago and I'm living the life I always dreamed of - a loving, healthy, supportive marriage with a horde of happy, healthy kids. There **is** life after high-conflict separation, divorce and court-proceedings! I'm very much a product of the processes and strategies that I now teach my clients.

In terms of separation, I didn't understand the importance of careful planning beforehand. Things have progressed a lot since then, but 15 years ago family violence wasn't something that was often spoken about, and I'm not sure that the term 'coercive control' was used at all in the context of a marriage or similar relationship.

I hope this ebook, with checklist, helps you as you begin to carefully plan your separation. If you decide that you would like more support, *please reach out*. We are stronger, and braver, **together**.

Danielle x

If you're struggling right now, I get it. More than I can put into words. I've had many struggles navigating my own separation and post-separation path. My extensive lived experience greatly informs the work I do with my clients.



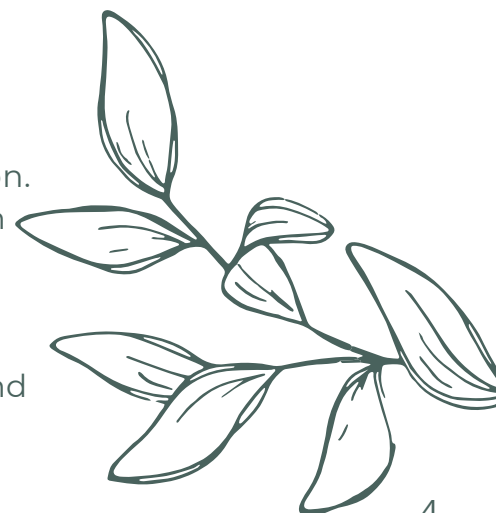
Why spend time Planning Separation?



Making the decision to leave a marriage or long-term relationship is often very challenging. When the person you are leaving has a high-conflict personality, and/or long-term patterns of abusive behaviour, this already difficult situation can become even more confronting - largely due to the abusive partner's intense need to maintain the balance of power and control. If possible, it is best to carefully plan your separation with the help of an experienced professional before you mention the words 'separation' or 'divorce' to your partner.

Abusive people thrive on *maintaining control.*

It is important to realise that leaving an abusive relationship does not always mean that you will become safe immediately. In fact you may be in the greatest danger from your partner's abuse at the time of separation. This is one reason why separation should be planned with the safety of you and your children in mind. Whilst the challenges may seem overwhelming at this planning stage, many women have been able to leave abusive relationships and go on to create safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives for themselves and their children.





Planning Separation *continued...*



Make no mistake, your abuser
knows how to control you.

Their behaviour is often very
deliberate, and is designed to
*gain and maintain control -
even after separation.*

Controlling and abusive people don't like losing control. Abusive men in particular feel entitled to know what you are doing and when. It is common for them to view you as a servant, and feel that they own you. They can also extend this view of 'ownership' to your children, and may view any children you share as possessions, or extensions of themselves. All of this can make separation a very stressful and potentially dangerous time. This is why it is so important to plan your separation carefully if it is safe for you to take the time to do so.



Separation Planning Checklist



Documentation of your experiences should start now. Create a new gmail that you will use solely for documentation purposes (i.e sallydocumentation@gmail.com). You will compose emails in this new account and send them to the same address so everything is contained in the one account. The reason for using email to document situations and abusive behaviour is that the emails will be time and date stamped which can be important if your situation ever proceeds to court and/or requires 'proof'. Screenshots of text messages can be sent here too.

Remove all important documents from the home for yourself and your children (passports, birth certificates, tax return information, banking information and statements (including mortgage etc), insurance and registration documents etc).

Remove all important personal possessions and keepsakes that you can without drawing attention. (i.e photographs, souvenirs and other mementos).

Photograph all valuables and furniture etcetera that you cannot remove from the home, or have chosen not to take. Create a written or typed inventory. Email the photographs to yourself and also to a trusted person.

Remove all important possessions and keepsakes that belong to your children without drawing attention. (i.e special toys, items needed for school, technology etc

Consider buying a second phone and a pre-paid sim card if your partner monitors your communication. This can be kept at work or with a trusted friend or family member and can be a means of private communication if you suspect that your partner is monitoring your phonecalls and texts etc.

Make a list of all important phone numbers, in case you are unable to keep your phone or your partner/ex-partner deletes your contacts.

All things that you remove from the home should be taken to your place of work and stored securely (if you have an office or similar) that the high-conflict person cannot gain access to (and doesn't have friendships with your work colleagues), or, with a trusted friend or family member.

Choose the safe storage place carefully. DO NOT choose a person to help you if they have any strong connection with your partner, such as a member of his family or any mutual friend. Abusers can be charming and very persuasive. The person you choose to assist you needs to be someone who will not be manipulated by the abusers lies, or give in to demands due to fear.



Separation Planning Checklist



- Make copies and/or print documentation regarding car loans, investments, company documents, superannuation etc even for the things that are in your partners name only.
- Consider going into your local post office and organising a PO Box for your mail (and your childrens) that your partner cannot access. Direct all your mail to the new PO Box. Even after you leave, have your PO Box listed as your postal address to protect your mail from tampering by your partner/ex-partner.
- Consider arranging spare keys for your home and your vehicle. Keep these spare keys at your workplace (if safe) and/or with a trusted friend. You may like to have multiple spares in different locations.
- Even if you believe that your partner doesn't have access to your phone, strongly consider changing your PIN lock for your phone, your passwords for your Apple ID (or android equivalent) and resetting things such as 'Touch ID' and 'Face ID'. This is due to the fact that perpetrators of abuse have been known to store their fingerprint and face in the settings of their partners phone which then enables them to gain access even when the PIN has been changed.
- Change passwords for all email accounts, laptop access etc.
- Consider taking photocopies of all of your personal identification (drivers license, medicare card, bank cards, etc) and get those copies certified. If you aren't sure who can certify documents in your country/state this can be found online. Remove the certified photocopies from the home and keep them somewhere safe and/or with a trusted person.
- Go into a local bank branch and open an account in your name only, that can only be accessed by you, if you don't already have one. If your partner controls and/or monitors the finances but allows you to do grocery shopping (and doesn't check receipts) consider withdrawing \$20 or so in cash each time you shop, and visit the bank in person to place this money in your new account. Note: Open a new account in YOUR NAME ONLY and ask for a basic account that doesn't require a minimum deposit each month and doesn't attract monthly fees etc.
- Get up-to-date bank balances for all accounts, even those only in your partners name if possible. Screen shot them if you can and email them to yourself, then delete the image from your phone if you have concerns that your partner may be able to access your phone.
- All vehicle registration information (make copies or take photos if you can). This includes all cars, motorbikes, boats, trucks, trailers etc. Even the things that are in the name of your partner only. Take multiple photos of all vehicles also (that show the condition of the vehicle etc).

Regardless of anything on this list, ALWAYS PRIORITISE YOUR SAFETY AND THE SAFETY OF YOUR CHILDREN.



Separation Planning Checklist



■ Explore your options re: staying in the home versus moving out and renting a property. (It can be important to seek legal advice prior to making a decision so that you know where you stand both legally and financially).

If you decide that you would like to leave, start looking at appropriate accommodation for yourself (and your children). Will you be able to afford a private rental, or will it be possible to stay with friends/family for the short to medium term?

If you are wanting to stay in the home, and your partner be the one to move out, this will depend on whether or not your partner will willingly move out. You may be able to get the assistance of police, depending on your partner's behaviour. If you would like more clarity around this, you are advised to call 1800RESPECT and also consider calling the **non-emergency line** for the police in your state. (This is preferable to visiting your local police station).

IMPORTANT: Do not consider leaving children to stay primarily in the care of your partner. Times of separation are times of high stress and your partner may direct his uncontrolled emotions and behaviour toward your children. The first time an abuser chooses to use physical violence with a child, partner or former partner can be fatal.

If you do leave you can request police to accompany you back to the house to retrieve your personal possessions. Do not put your safety at risk to retrieve property or possessions.

■ Call and/or make an appointment to speak with someone from Centrelink/Services Australia about payments you may be entitled to as a victim of family violence. You can also do your own research online on the Services Australia website.

If eligible for financial support from Services Australia (either one-off support, or ongoing support payments) this can be helpful if your goal is to secure your own rental property.

MAKE SURE THAT ANY PAYMENTS YOU RECEIVE GO INTO AN ACCOUNT THAT IS ONLY IN YOUR NAME. Ensure that your partner/ex-partner cannot access your private bank account.

■ Consider making an appointment with a lawyer to obtain an understanding of your financial position after separation/divorce and what you could realistically expect in a financial settlement.

Before attending this appointment, ensure you have as much relevant information about the 'asset pool' as possible. (i.e the estimated value of your property, if applicable, and how much is left owing; vehicles including boats, caravans, motorbikes etc and any monies owned on them; savings, shares, investments and superannuation of both you and your partner.)

The lawyer you speak with may also want to know who is the 'primary carer' for the children as this can impact the division of assets/financial settlement.

You may like to discuss the options of moving out of the family home versus asking your partner to leave. (Regardless of this outcome, still make sure you follow the above steps in terms of securing important documents and other items to ensure these things cannot be destroyed by your partner.)

Many lawyers provide free introductory appointments for a shorter duration. You are also encouraged to speak with more than one lawyer.

If you are concerned about choosing the best lawyer for you and your situation, working with Danielle can help you with this important decision.



Separation Planning Checklist



■ Make an appointment with your GP, and talk openly and honestly with your GP about your experiences. You may feel more comfortable speaking with a female GP. Ensure that the GP you speak to is not also the same GP that your partner/ex-partner attends upon.

Having a trusted professional to support you is important, and your doctor will also be able to corroborate your experiences if this becomes necessary later on.

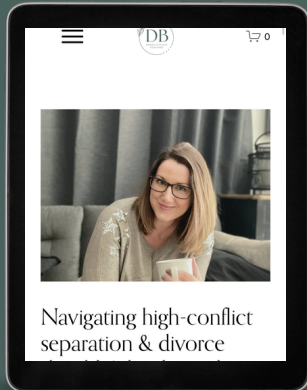
There are other steps that need to be taken after separation, including;

- talking to your children
- talking to extended family members
- informing your children's childcare and school

Danielle can provide support before, during and after separation.

This can include preparing an appropriate care plan for your children, and/or preparing for mediation to discuss your separation of finances.

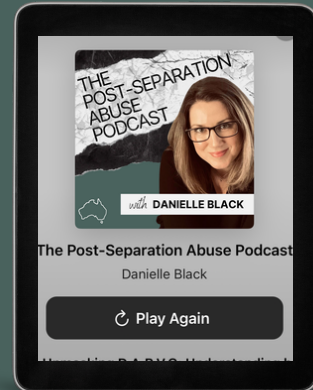
Recommended Resources



Website

danielleblackcoaching.com.au

This is a great place to get more information about how I can help you, along with extra information about high-conflict people and post-separation abuse. You can also message me directly, and book your free Discovery Call direct from the website.



The Podcast

[The Post-Separation Abuse Podcast](#)

I support Australian women who are navigating ongoing control and other forms of abuse after separation. This is a raw and unfiltered space where we can explore the often unseen issues of family violence, post-separation abuse and protective parenting. Available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify and more.



Instagram

[@danielleblackcoaching](#)

I post on Instagram most days and I am always striving to offer something informative, inspirational, educational, controversial or a combination of all of the above! I'm an unapologetic advocate for women and children, and I'd love to connect with you!



1:1 Coaching & The Membership

Coaching with me really is the best resource of all! If you're ready for more certainty and stability, I'd love to work with you. Book your free Discovery Call via my [website](#) or [here](#) and tell me about what's going on in your world. There are a variety of ways to work with me, and I'm here to help you take back your control. You don't have time to waste doing things that don't work. Let's have a chat.

