

The Safety & Sanity Starter Kit

The Brave Hearts Guide: Finding Your Safe People and Your Big Voice

Scenario: Living with children and an abuser.

"You are the shield and the anchor for the lives that lean on you. This guide is designed to support the incredible work you do every day to protect your children while navigating a difficult world. We know that your first thought is always for them, but this space is for you, too. It is a place to find practical strategies that turn 'family routine' into 'family safety.' You are building a fortress of love in a hard place, and we are here to help you strengthen those walls, one quiet step at a time."



© 2026 Staying Safe and Sane Limited. The SAFE & SANE Frameworks are proprietary methodologies for trauma-informed recovery.

The SAFE Framework (My Environment)

Focus: Implementing collective protection and child-centered safety through "Safe Adult" identification and clear "Exit Cue" protocols

S – Sanctuary: Shared Safety Zones

- The "Quiet Box": Keep a bag in a safe room (with a lock) containing books, a tablet, or toys to keep kids occupied during tension.
- No-Go Drill: Teach children which rooms are "Off-Limits" during loud arguments, focusing on the kitchen or garage.
- Safe Exit Practice: Teach kids how to unlock the front door and windows in case they need to run to a neighbor's house.

A – Agency: Empowered Kids

- The Family Secret Word: Create a code word (e.g., "Find the blue teddy") that tells kids to go to their safe room immediately.
- Dialing 111: Practice with children how to dial 111 and clearly state their name, age, and home address to the operator.



- Device Privacy: Ensure older children know not to share "Live Locations" on apps like Snapchat that a parent could monitor.

F – Foundations: The Silent Signal

- The "Safe Adult": Identify one neighbor or nearby friend the children know they can run to if they ever must leave the house.
- School/Daycare Liaison: Ensure teachers have a clear "Safe Pickup" list and are aware of who is not allowed to collect the children.
- The "Check-In" Buddy: Have a friend who calls at a specific time daily to speak to the children, acting as an external welfare check.

E – Ease: Emotional Shielding

- The "After-Storm" Routine: Have a plan to soothe kids after an event with reassurance like, "It's not your fault," and "We are safe now."
- Co-Regulation: Use your own calm breathing to help steady the children's nervous systems; they look to you for the "safety signal."
- Neutralizing Language: Privately remind kids that the "loud" behavior belongs to the adult, helping them not to internalize the trauma.



The SANE Framework (My Inner Self)

Focus: Prioritizing co-regulation and emotional shielding through constant validation to ensure children know "scary feels" are never their fault.

S – Shared Soothe: Using your own breath to steady the children

- Belly Breathing: Practice "The Balloon Breath" with the kids. When you regulate your breathing, their nervous systems will mirror yours.
- Gentle Touch: A hand on a shoulder or holding hands provides a physical anchor of safety for a child during a stressful time.
- Humming Together: Hum a low, steady note with the children. The vibration helps calm the vagus nerve for both you and them.

A – Anchor the Truth: Keeping the family grounded in reality

- The "Secret" Reassurance: Use quiet phrases like "I am right here" or "We are a team" to act as an emotional shield.
- Validating the Kids: If a child is scared, silently acknowledge it: "It's okay to feel wobbly; I'm holding the anchor for us."



- **Mental Storytelling:** Mentally narrate a positive future memory you want to create with them to keep your mind focused on hope.

N – Non-Reaction: Practicing the "Gray Rock" method for protection

- **Internal Fortress:** Visualize an invisible wall between your family and the tension. Stay calm and "boring" on the outside to de-escalate.
- **Focus Inward:** Keep your eyes and attention strictly on the children's needs, creating a "micro-sanctuary" within the room.
- **Monotone Response:** Use short, emotionless answers (e.g., "Okay," "I see") to avoid giving the abuser emotional "hooks."

E – Externalize the Blame: Keeping the trauma from sticking to the children

- **The "Grown-Up" Label:** Privately remind the kids: "That behavior belongs to the adult, not to us."
- **Rest Together:** When things are quiet, snuggle or read with the kids. This "repair time" is essential for their emotional equilibrium.
- **Positive Reinforcement:** Tell the children: "I am so proud of how you looked after each other today."

