

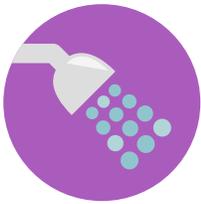
An Advocate's Guide to Safety Planning during COVID-19

While social distancing and staying at home is the best practice to limit the spread of COVID-19, for some individuals this can mean more harm. For some, staying at home means being isolated with the person(s) causing them harm. This could be a partner, a roommate, or a family member. If a survivor is unsafe, help them consider what their options are and remember that ACESDV is here to help with navigating available resources.



You can advise survivors to call you, the ACESDV Helpline, or other hotlines from a separate room if it is safe to do so.

Staying Safe When Home is Not Safe



Going to the bathroom or a closet can provide an added layer of privacy. If a survivor is on the phone and unattended, they can **run the shower or faucet to make some noise during the call**, if they feel comfortable doing so. If the survivor has safe access to the internet, they can chat with the ACESDV Helpline at www.acesdv.org/helpline.



If going outside is accessible, social distancing still permits walks, while maintaining a physical distance of six feet from other people. **Going outside can give the survivor a break from a tense situation**. It can also remove them from and/or deescalate an unsafe situation. Remind them to take this time to ground themselves, call a social support, or reach out to a hotline.



Help survivors identify a network of people in their building or digital community for continued support. **Creating a code word or sentence with people in their supportive network to indicate that they need an immediate interruption or immediate help can be useful**. They should discuss with their support network what help would look like if they use the code word or sentence (e.g., deescalation, calling a specific individual, calling 911).



Discuss with the survivor about hiding resources in safe places and create a plan for escaping. Speak to them about keeping their ID on them as much as possible. **Create a go-bag of essentials including their medication, money, phone charger, food, and IDs**. Help them think about the easiest and safest routes for them to get out of their home quickly.

There is no perfect plan of safety, especially right now.

We understand not all of these tips will work for, or apply to, everyone. Ultimately, ACESDV believes survivors know what they need, and we trust survivors to use the strategies and tools that work best for them and their situation. Please remind them that they don't have to do this alone, and you are here to help them - to listen, to create a personalized safety plan, or for other support.

Other Safety Considerations

Technology

If a survivor is using technology to reach out for help, consider the following to enhance their security:

- Clear browser history
- Clear recent calls
- Delete text messages
- Delete emails
- Use a different phone number (e.g., Google Voice)
- Use safety planning apps or resources (e.g., myPlan App)
- Check location sharing settings



Daily Routines

Help a survivor think about their daily routine. Where can they find 10 minutes to seek help? Some ideas:

- Going to the laundry room or laundromat
- Going for a walk or walking the dog
- Taking the children to the park
- Grocery shopping or getting water
- Taking the trash out
- Making calls to family, friends, their supervisor, etc.
- Exercising outdoors
- Getting gas
- Washing the car
- Going to a convenience store
- Picking up medications
- Getting take-out food
- Doing yard work



Emotional Safety

Being in an abusive home or relationship takes a toll on a person's emotional well-being. Consider the following to help a survivor be emotionally safe during this time.

- Share self-care techniques (e.g., positive self-talk, breathing exercises, etc.)
- Encourage the survivor to reach out to their support network and/or spiritual support systems
- Brainstorm ways the survivor can regulate themselves if they are feeling anxious, stressed, overwhelmed, or scared

