



## **COVID-19 PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLNESS GUIDE:**

### **SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

**Version 3, 5/23/20**

During the COVID-19 crisis, domestic violence survivors may be at increased risk of being emotionally, physically, and/or sexually harmed for several reasons. They are often trapped at home with their abusers and the stress of the situation may lead perpetrators to exert more power and control. They may do so by withholding necessary items, sharing misinformation to frighten their partner, preventing them from seeking medical attention, or being more aggressive even to the point of using deadly violence. Survivors may be blamed if someone in the family gets the virus, or they may be put out on the streets if they become infected themselves. Survivors may be more isolated from their family, friends, and other people in their support system. Because they often are trapped in the same space with their partner, they may be less able to reach out for help and when they do so, they may be at greater risk of being harmed. Survivors may be afraid to go to the hospital if they are harmed due to concerns about increased risk of becoming infected. Because many people cannot leave their homes due to travel restrictions, survivors may not be able to use their safety plans and domestic violence services may be less accessible. Shelters may be full or not taking in new people due to concerns about the virus, and survivors may be fearful of going to a shelter and being near other people, especially if they are at high risk for developing severe COVID-19 symptoms. Early reports indicate that courts are processing fewer protective orders. To help domestic violence survivors maintain their well-being and be safe, here are some tips for survivors and people who care about them. Helpful resources also are included.

### **Tips for Survivors**

#### **Seek Support and Create a Plan**

- Remember
  - You are not alone, and supports are available to you
  - Physical distancing does not mean social isolation, so connect with others and try to maintain your social connections
  - Someone may be able to stay with you and your family during this shelter-in-place time, which can diffuse the tension
- Reach out to a family member, friend, co-worker, or community member who you trust and who can check in on you about your safety and support needs
- Make or modify your safety plan (personalized practical plan) to make it feasible during COVID-19 - <https://www.loveisrespect.org/for-yourself/safety-planning/inter-active-safety-plan/>
- Practice self-care as much as possible



- Do a daily gratitude activity to boost your self esteem and sense of hope
- Take control of what you can control
- Prioritize making a list of available resources and reach out to them when it is safe to do so
  - **YOU CAN STILL CALL 911 or GO TO YOUR NEAREST EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT OR FIRE STATION**
  - **YOU CAN STILL REACH THE NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE:** available 24/7 and in 200+ languages
    - Call 1-800-799-SAFE or 1-800-799-7233
    - Text LOVEIS to 22522
    - For Live chat: <https://www.thehotline.org/what-is-live-chat/thehotline.org>

### **Protect Yourself from Cyber Abuse During COVID-19**

- Save domestic violence helplines in your phone under a different name to throw off your partner
- Purchase a prepaid burner phone to stay in touch with loved ones, if you have the means and are concerned that your partner is cyber monitoring your device
- Update all of your privacy and security settings on social media to ensure that your partner cannot access your location
- Enable passcodes on your devices if you have not already done so
- Change notification settings so that the content of a message is not revealed until you log into your device
- Be aware of any shared accounts with your abusive partner, which your partner may be able to use to track or control you during this pandemic
- Contact the [National Network to End Domestic Violence](#) for comprehensive information about recording abuse, safeguarding your devices, and protecting yourself

### **Tips for Concerned Parties**

- Reach out to someone you are concerned about
- Check in on them periodically
- Let the person talk and listen to them compassionately
- Ask them what they need
- Figure out how to help them obtain safety
- Advocate on a survivor's behalf
  - Call a domestic hotline
  - Contact law enforcement
  - Help the person get to a domestic violence shelter – they are essential businesses and permitted to stay open even with shelter-in-place and stay-at-



home orders

### **Helpful Resources**

- Womens Law resources on abuse using technology <https://www.womenslaw.org/about-abuse/ways-abusers-mis-use-technology/evidence-issues-cases-involving-technology>
- Technology safety resources for individuals in domestic violence situations <https://www.techsafety.org/>
- **News Article:** From CNN “Visits to New York City’s domestic violence website surged amid coronavirus pandemic” <https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/07/us/nyc-domestic-violence-website-surg-ing/index.html>
- **News Article:** From the New York Times “Domestic Abusers Can Control Your Devices. Here’s How to Fight Back” <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/06/smarter-living/wirecutter/domestic-abusers-can-control-your-devices-heres-how-to-fight-back.html>
- **Partnership Against Domestic Violence:** Georgia’s largest nonprofit serving domestic violence survivors  
Metro Atlanta Crisis Line: 404-873-1766 V/TTY  
National Crisis Line: 800-621-4673  
<https://www.padv.org/>
- **The National Crime Victim Helpline:**  
1-800-FYI-CALL or 1-800-394-2255
- **Georgia’s 24-Hour Domestic Violence Hotline:**  
1-800-33-HAVEN or 1-800-334-2836  
<https://www.padv.org/>
- **For DeKalb County:**
  - **Women’s Resource Center to End Domestic Violence**  
Hotline available 24/7: 404-688-9436  
<https://www.wrcdv.org/>
  - **Dekalb County Courthouse:**  
**Closed through April 13**  
Call 404) 370-7670 for help to electronically file temporary restraining orders



Link for TPO forms: <http://dksuperiorclerk.com/tpo/>

- For Fulton County:

- **Fulton Family Violence Taskforce**

- Website has education on domestic violence, safety planning

- [http://fultonfvtaskforce.com/?page\\_id=50](http://fultonfvtaskforce.com/?page_id=50)

- **Fulton County Superior Court: Family Division Domestic Violence**

- THE ONE STOP!

- 136 Pryor Street, S.W.

- 8th Floor, Suite C-826

- Atlanta, Georgia 30303

- Office: 404-613-4579

- Fax: 404-612-5582

- Reduced hours to apply for a Temporary Protective Order: Monday-Friday 10:00am-2:00pm

- Protective Order 12-month hearings suspended until further notice. All current orders are to be continued, tolled, or extended until further order (expirations during COVID crisis aren't valid until courts address it when operating normally)