

Safety Planning — COVID19

Times of extra stress can greatly increase risks to your safety. Plan ahead and think about how to stay as safe as possible

A Guide for Women impacted Domestic Violence

1. BUDDY SYSTEM CODE WORD

Identify at least two people that you can contact with a “code word” to let them know if you are in trouble. Plan in advance what they should do if you send them the code word.

2. “SAFEST ROOM”

If there is an argument, identify an area of the home you can move to where there are no weapons and there are ways for you to leave the building such as a door or window.

No room may feel safe, so at least identify the lowest risk areas, to reduce possible risk of harm.

3. PLANNING WITH CHILDREN CODE WORDS

If you have children, decide how to communicate urgency with them. A sign that tells them to come to you for safety and/or a “code word” that means go to the “safest room” you have already told them about .

If children are old enough, give them safety numbers to call if you are not able to.

4. NOTIFY POLICE BEFORE AN EMERGENCY

Talk to the DVLO office at your local police station or a service you trust of your concerns ahead of time. Tell them the history and your concern of being in isolation due to coronavirus.

5. EXIT PLAN

In case you have to flee, create an exit plan ahead of time with someone who can help you. A friend, relative you can stay with, or a worker to help you.

6. EMERGENCY BAG

Pack a bag with extra set of keys, clothes for you and your children, mobile phone, medications, copies of important documents (also see #7). Along with some food that is long lasting / easy to prepare if needed.

7. IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Make copies or take pictures of your important documents and send them to a trusted friend, relative or worker. (ID , birth certificates, MyGov and DSS / Pension Card, Family Law documents and past / present Apprehended Violence Orders). Be mindful of sending information via phone or computer. Please use the method safest for you.

8. SEEKOUT SOCIAL SUPPORT

With social distancing and quarantining you may feel very isolated. Abusers may also increase isolation even further as a power and control tactic. Identify trusted friends, relatives, workers or online support where you can still connect virtually.

If you have a friend who may be experiencing abuse, reach out to them even more during this time.

9. CREATE A ‘PEACEFUL’ SPACE

If you cannot leave home, try to create a “peaceful space” for yourself (if that is safe for you). Put up pictures or symbols to support yourself emotionally and remind you of safety and connection. You can do this with your children. You can also add words and affirmations remind yourself of your self worth.

10. HOLDING TO YOUR PLAN

Keep a list of your safety plan in your phone or somewhere safe for you. If you write your plan down somewhere, consider listing only key words that help you remember but that would not be clear to your abuser. If this is not safe, try to memorise your plan, focusing on memorising at least one key emergency number on your list of resources.

The Women’s Cottage

Is open during COVID-19.
Please call first: **02 45784190**
If we can’t help over the phone we will arrange other options.
Your safety is important to us.

