

SAFETY PLANNING—COVID19

A GUIDE FOR SURVIVORS OF INTIMATE PARTNER 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 house, apartment, or building, such as a door or window to exit the house/apartment.

For some survivors, especially those quarantined at home with an abuser during coronavirus, no room may feel safe, so we call it the “safest rooms”. If you can at least identify the lowest risk areas, you may be able to reduce harm.

3. PLANNING WITH CHILDREN

CODE WORDS: If you have children, decide how to communicate urgency with them. For example, one survivor would open her arms and her daughter knew that meant to come running to her for safety. Some survivors create a “code word” with their children that means they should go to the “safest room” in the home that you have already decided upon.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS: If for some reason you are not able to make emergency calls, give your children the safety number/s, if they are old enough.

4. NOTIFY THE POLICE BEFORE AN EMERGENCY

Ahead of time, you can notify your local police station of your concerns. Let them know the history and your concern of being in isolation due to coronavirus. It may be useful to speak with the Domestic Violence officer.

5. EXIT PLAN

In case you have to flee, create an exit plan ahead of time with someone who could support this need. Is there a trusted friend/relative who you can stay with, if needed?

6. SUPPLIES, FOOD & MEDICATION

Check your supplies and food. If you need food and do not have the money, check your local pantry, temple/church/mosque, etc., or other community organizations.

Remember to keep your medication in the safest, easily accessible location in case of emergency.

7. EMERGENCY BAG

Pack a bag with an extra set of keys, clothes for you and your children, a pay-as-you-go cellphone, medications, copies of important documents, etc.

8. IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Make copies or take pictures of your important documents for yourself and send them to a trusted friend or relative. (IDs, social security cards, immigration documents, birth certificates, health insurance information, and Orders of Protection) Be mindful of sending anything via phone or computer. Please use whatever method is safest for you.

9. SEEKING SOCIAL SUPPORT

With social distancing and quarantining, survivors can feel even more isolated, and abusers may use further isolation as a power and control tactic.

Identify trusted friends, relatives or online support groups where you can still connect virtually. If you have a friend who may be experiencing abuse, be sure to reach out to them even more during this time.

10. CREATE A “PEACEFUL SPACE”

If you cannot leave your home, try to create a “peaceful space” for yourself in your home (if that is safe for you). You can draw pictures of a more peaceful place and put them on a wall to help you take an emotional break to visualize a more peaceful place. This is also an activity you can do with your children. You can also write positive affirmations and put them up on the wall to remind yourself of your worth.

11. HOLDING ONTO YOUR PLAN

Consider keeping a list of your safety plan in your phone or wherever might be safe for you. Please consider what is safest for you.

If you choose to write your plan somewhere, consider listing only key words that help you remember the plan, but that would not be clear to your abuser. If this is not safe, try to memorize your plan, focusing on memorizing at least one key emergency number on your list of resources.

FOR MORE INFORMATION & RESOURCES, PLEASE VISIT
www.sffny.org/lgbtq-safety

