



Sheltering in place while living with an abuser

During this time many of us feel unsafe and uncertain about the future. But for survivors of domestic violence sheltering in place can feel familiar. Abusers often isolate and control survivors contact with family members, friends, coworkers, neighbors, etc. Going to work, picking children up from school, going shopping, even meeting with an advocate or counselor offered survivors respite away from the abuser. Abusers are now using the shelter in place as a fear tactic. Although social distancing is recommended to prevent the spread of COVID-19, abusers now have a legitimate excuse to control and isolate the survivor.

In this time of uncertain, CHOICES continue to provide safety and support to survivors. Advocates are answering the 24-hour crisis hotline and offering shelter to those in need of a safe place. The Legal Advocate is assisting survivors who are navigating the court system for protection orders. The Community Advocates are using telehealth to provide safety planning, domestic violence education and resources.

The shelter in place order does create obstacles for survivors seeking to safely leave their abuser. Below are some safety tips if you or someone you love is quarantined with an abuser:

- Keep near an exit
- Become aware of where your abuser is in the home
- Trust your instincts
- Have a packed bag ready to go
- Avoid rooms with weapons
- Create a code word (send to trusted friends/family when in danger)
- Contact CHOICES hotline **(614) 224-4663**
- Take a walk outside away from the abuser
- If safe to do so, maintain telehealth counseling and advocacy appointments
- Create a mantra
- If you have children rehearse and practice safety plan with children
- Teach children how to contact 911