

Don't give up. You are not alone

Domestic abuse and coercive control can and does happen to anyone. It is not fair and it is not your fault. You do not deserve to live in fear.

Where you can access support:

Victim Support 24 hour Supportline:
08 08 16 89 111

National 24 hour Domestic Abuse Helpline: **0808 2000 247**

Men's Advice Line: **0808 801 0327** or email: **info@mensadviceline.org.uk**

LGBT Domestic Violence Helpline: **0300 999 5428** or email: **help@galop.org.uk**

ChildLine: **0800 1111**



Living with abuse or control during Coronavirus



Contact your local Victim Support:

Supportline: 08 08 16 89 111
FREE CONFIDENTIAL INDEPENDENT



Registered office: Victim Support, 1 Bridge Street, Derby, DE1 3HZ
T: 020 7268 0200 Next Generation Text: 18001 020 7268 0200 Registered charity no. 298028
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www.victimsupport.org.uk

VictimSupport @VictimSupport victimsupport_uk

Living with abuse or control during Coronavirus

In this unprecedented situation you might feel more at risk, or not able to reach out for help.

The police have confirmed that any restrictions in place must come second to keeping yourself, and your children, safe. If you need to leave the home do so, if you need to ring 999 you should.

You should do what you need to in order to stay as safe as possible in your situation. Remember you are the expert in your relationship.

If you're working with a supporter, it's important to let them know if your situation at home has changed due to coronavirus, so we can help you in the best way.

There's a lot more information on our website, with more sources of support, and information to help keep you safe. If you can safely do so please visit: victimsupport.org.uk

Crisis point

Do not threaten to leave. Research shows that you are most at risk when you separate. Please ask for help to leave as safely as possible, from a professional or support worker. Call the Victim Support 24 hour Supportline on **08 08 16 89 111** for advice or the police on **101**.

If you feel that you, or someone else, is in danger please always call **999**. If you can't speak try to make a noise, like coughing, and then listen to the instructions the operator gives you, you'll be asked to tap **55** on the keypad and follow instructions.

Stay safe

We know that if you are living with an abusive partner or family member then you probably know them best, and you may have been adapting your behaviour in response to theirs for a long time.

At the moment, here are some things you may like to consider:

- If the choice is between you or your children being harmed then, in some instances it's OK to play along with your perpetrator.
- Do you recognise the pattern the abuse takes, is it worse at different times or in different situations? Can you avoid contact at these times or during these situations?
- If you need to get away remember that even under the current guidelines going out to exercise or to buy food or medicine is allowed, and you can take your children with you if necessary.
- Consider what to do if things go wrong at home or where you would go if you absolutely had to leave. Many public places are now closed so your new 'safe place' may be a shop, or a pharmacy, in order to contact the police.

Plan ahead

Keep your phone charged and with you at all times.

If you are self-isolating due to illness then could you pass a note to a helper, carer or volunteer delivery driver who is providing support or help with shopping? Consider how you could safely get a message to someone if it became necessary for you to raise the alarm.

Agree a code word now with a trusted family member/friend or neighbour to let them know you are safe or to signal that you need them to call for help. If your children are mature enough to understand how the 'code word' works then share this with them; knowing that they can play a part in keeping everyone safe might help them to cope and recover better.

Show your children how to call **999** and how to ask for help. Tell them not to let the perpetrator in (if practical). If they can't speak then cough or make a noise then tap **55** on keypad and follow instructions.

Stay in touch

If it's safe to do so, talk to someone you trust about what is happening to you. Don't underestimate how important it is to have someone to talk to, and of someone else knowing what is going on at home.

If you are not sure who to trust, then there are helplines and live chat services available, for support or just a listening ear.

Look after yourself

Don't forget to look after yourself. You may think that you don't have the time for self-care, especially if you have children or other family at home. But looking after yourself is really important too.

Here are some other ways, which are free and completely confidential, to look after yourself:

The **Mental Health Foundation** has loads of advice about looking after your mental health during the Coronavirus outbreak including some advice for those in an abusive relationship: mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/abusive-relationships

Samaritans is a free and confidential 24 hour phone and email service, providing emotional support for anyone who needs someone to talk to, about anything. Call them anytime on **116123** or email jo@samaritans.org

Bright Sky is a free to download mobile app, providing support and information to anyone who may be in an abusive relationship or those concerned about someone they know. hestia.org/brightsky

Hollie Guard is a smartphone app which can generate an alert, automatically sending your location and audio/video evidence to your emergency contacts: hollieguard.com

Remember, if you do access online information you might want to delete your browser history when you are finished or use 'private browsing'.