



Domestic Violence Awareness Month Guide



24/7 CRISIS HELPLINE
(559)233-HELP (4357) HELP@MMCENTER.ORG

We're honored to share our Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) Guide with you! At Marjaree Mason Center, we are dedicated to engaging our community in meaningful conversations about domestic violence, its impact, and the importance of building safe and supportive environments for all.

This guide is part of our ongoing commitment to raising awareness, providing resources, and empowering individuals to recognize the signs of abuse. Domestic violence affects people of every age, background, and circumstance, and our goal is to ensure that everyone has access to education, tools, and support systems that promote safety and healing.

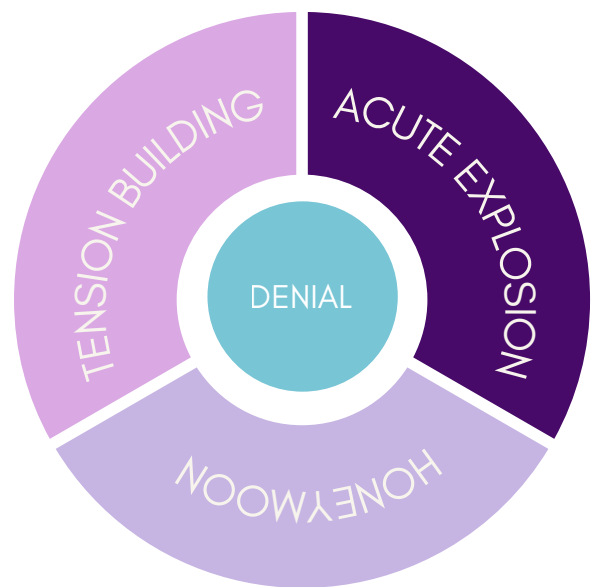
Our mission goes beyond sharing information, we want to equip our community to be part of the solution. Whether you are a survivor, a loved one, or a community partner, your voice and actions matter. Together, we can break the cycle of violence, foster resilience, and create spaces where survivors feel seen, heard, and supported.

Thank you for standing with us during Domestic Violence Awareness Month. By learning, sharing, and taking action, we can build a community where safety, respect, and compassion are at the heart of every relationship.

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner.

Cycle of Violence



TENSION BUILDING

Offender

- Moody
- Nitpicking
- Put-downs
- Yelling
- Drinking/Drugs
- Threatening
- Withdraws Affection
- Criticizes
- Sullen

Victim

- Nurturing
- Stays away from family & friends
- Keeps children quiet
- Agrees
- Tries to reason
- Cooks partner's favorite dinner
- Feeling of walking on eggshells
- Attempts to soothe partner

ACUTE EXPLOSION

Offender

- Hitting
- Choking
- Humiliating
- Imprisonment
- Rape
- Using Weapons
- Verbal Abuse
- Destroys Property

Victim

- Protects Self
- Police called
- Tries to calm batterer
- Tries to reason
- Fight back
- Leaves

HONEYMOON

Offender

- Promises to get help/Begs forgiveness
- Enlists Family's Support
- Expresses desire for intimacy
- Declares love
- Cries

Victim

- Agrees to stay
- Returns or takes back batterer
- Attempts to stop legal proceedings
- Sets up counseling for batterer
- Feels happy/hopeful

DENIAL

Denial can keep victims trapped in the cycle of abuse, with the 'honeymoon phase' making it hard to leave. Offenders often show a side that's easy to trust, rely on, and love, pulling victims back in.

Examples of Abuse

PHYSICAL

Pushing, holding, pinching, slapping, shoving, kicking, biting, burning, hair pulling, use of weapons, strangulation, trapping, retraining, blocking movements

VERBAL /EMOTIONAL

Excessive jealousy, mind games, isolation from family and friends, making the victim feel worthless or threatened. Insults and put downs, yelling, blaming, minimizing victim, denying abuse, and threatening to have the victim deported.

SEXUAL

Pressuring you or making threats regarding sexual activities. This can include kissing, hand hold or even hugging. Unwanted touching, breaking boundaries previously agreed on, forcibly engaged in sexual activity.

DIGITAL

Demanding responses or check ins, posting inappropriate content online, hacking accounts, demanding to share passwords, tracking where you are at all times, looking through phone.

LGBTQIA+

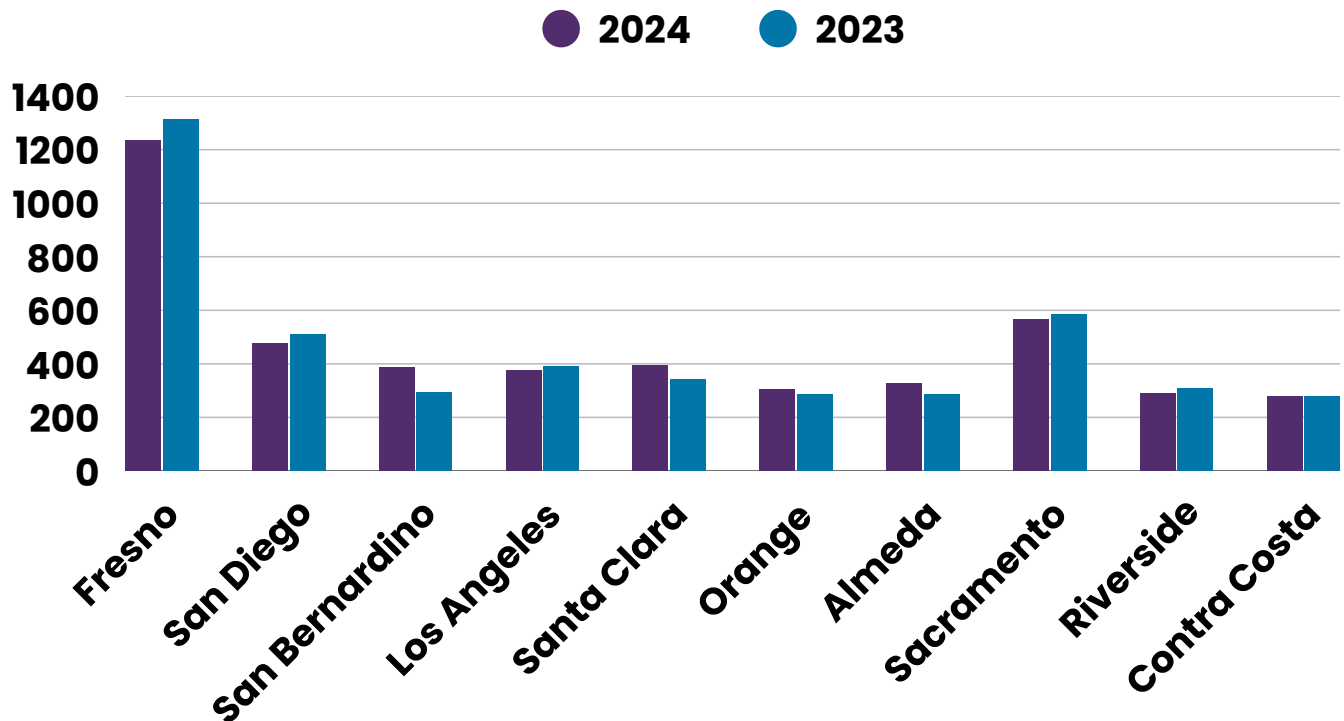
Threatening to “out” someone, referring to their partner as their “dead name” or wrong pronouns, withholding hormones, binding material etc.

FINANCIAL

Controlling access to money or bank accounts, taking or withholding paychecks, forcing partner to account for every dollar spent, opening credit cards or loans in partner’s name without consent, selling or destroying partner’s property, forcing partner to sign financial documents or contracts, ruining partner’s credit to limit independence

Domestic Violence In Fresno County

Compared to California's 10 largest counties , Fresno County had the highest rate of verified domestic violence calls to law enforcement for help in 2023-24.

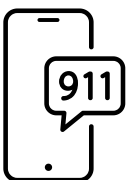


NOTE: Figures reflect per capita rate of (100,000) residents, based on calls to each county's law enforcement agency in 22-23.
Source: California Department of Justice

Since January 2023, there have been **19,360** unique reports.

- Fresno PD – 14,980 reports (77%)
- Clovis PD – 1,425 reports (7%)
- Fresno County Sheriff's Office – 1,438 reports (7%)
- Other Departments – 1,517 reports (8%)
- Some seasonality is beginning to present in the number of unique reports. Total numbers increase through summer and then decrease in the last quarter.

In 2024, local law enforcement agencies responded to over 12,000 calls reporting abuse



Data provided by the California Department of Justice and Fresno County law enforcement agencies.

Domestic Violence In the United States

1 in 3 women experience domestic violence
(stalking, physical, emotional, financial, sexual, etc.)



1 in 4 men experience domestic violence
(stalking, physical, emotional, financial, sexual, etc.)



1 in 3 teens experience teen dating violence
(stalking, physical, emotional, financial, sexual, etc.)



An estimated **3.3 million–10 million** children are exposed to violence against their mothers or female caretakers by family members each year.

Half of adolescent girls whose mothers were abused will be in abusive relationships later on in life.

Young boys who are abused are **three times** more likely to become violent offenders.

Young boys who witnessed DV in the home are **seven times more likely** to become violent offenders as adults.



WHY WOULD SOMEONE HURT SOMEONE THEY LOVE?

Domestic violence is a learned behavior. Those who are abusive learn to abuse through observation, experience, and reinforcement.

Abusive individuals come from all economic classes, races, religions, and occupations. The abuser may be a "good provider" and a respected member of his or her community.

Typically, abusive individuals deny that the abuse is happening, or they minimize it. They often blame their abusive behavior on someone or something other than themselves.

They may tell their partner, "You made me do this."

WHY WOULD SOMEONE STAY WITH SOMEONE WHO IS HURTING THEM?

Many individuals stay with their abusive partner primarily out of fear. Fear that they will lose the person they love, fear that they will lose their children, their financial resources, or the life they've built.

When the first violent act occurs, it is common for the victim to hope and believe that it will never happen again, as their abusive partner pleads and promises to change.

When it does—many individuals believe that if they just act differently, they can stop the abuse. They may be ashamed to admit that the person they love is treating them in a harmful manner.

For many experiencing abuse, the emotional and psychological trauma impacts their ability to understand the severity of their situation.

When Someone Asks for Help

- Separate individuals for counseling prior to recommending couples counseling.
 - Screen for Red Flags of abuse.
 - Provide each person with equal-level counsel.
 - Refer them to the Marjaree Mason Center.
 - Assist the person in getting medical treatment if needed.
 - Allow the person to make their own decisions.
 - Listen. She/he needs the affirmation that you hear them and believe them.
 - Be patient. The first disclosure may not provide complete details.
-

- Never counsel a victim and abuser together.
- Never go to the scene of an incident in progress.

RED FLAGS CAN BE

- Feeling like you're being controlled. i.e. telling you how to dress who you can see or talk to, whether or not you can have a job, or restricting your access to money.
- Having a partner with a pattern of low self-esteem or who expresses feelings of inadequacy or powerlessness.
- A sense that your partner is objectifying you, treating you more like his or her property than an equal partner.
- Blames outbursts on a stressful job, family drama, drinking too much or just having a bad day.

Things to say:

- I hear you.
 - I believe you.
 - You are not alone.
 - I am concerned for your safety.
 - What do you see as the next step?
 - What can I do to help you right now?
 - What do you need?
-

Things not to say:

- What did you do to cause this?
- It will get better.
- We all have burdens.
- It could be worse.
- You must forgive and take your partner back.
- You're being dramatic
- Just try to tread lightly when they're in that kind of mood.

If there is an immediate threat of violence call 9-1-1.

If the violence occurred in the past, ask the individual if the police have been called, if she/he would like to contact police or file for a protective order. If the person doesn't want to contact the police or obtain a protective order, respect that choice.



Our Mission

Marjaree Mason Center supports and empowers adults and their children affected by domestic violence, while striving to prevent and end the cycle of abuse through education and advocacy.

Our Services

MMC is the only dedicated provider of shelter and comprehensive support services for families impacted by domestic violence in Fresno County. From humble beginnings in 1979, the Marjaree Mason Center has been dedicated to supporting and empowering adults and their children impacted by domestic violence, while striving to prevent and end the cycle of abuse through education and advocacy. We envision a community free of domestic violence.

Services Include:

- 24/7 Crisis Response
- Emergency Shelter
- Transitional Housing
- Child Advocacy
- Legal Advocacy
- Counseling (Individual and Group)
- Education & Training
- Safety Planning
- Case Management



Crisis Response

MMC's highly trained staff provides comprehensive wraparound services that meet the unique needs of each individual or household—services that begin with our 24/7 helpline and crisis drop-in center.

The Marjaree Mason Center, as well as local law enforcement, utilize a lethality assessment to assess the level of violence an individual may be experiencing. This includes includes 15 questions that help determine an individual's level of danger and risk of homicide.

According to the National Institute of Justice, women who score 4 or higher are at great risk (the average score for abused women was just over 3). Currently, the median score for a Marjaree Mason Center client is 10. Our staff remains committed to being here 24/7, 365 days a year.

Safe Housing & Shelter

The Marjaree Mason Center remains the only dedicated provider of safe, confidential emergency shelter and comprehensive domestic violence support services in Fresno County. MMC's Emergency Shelter includes 40 family rooms and 140 beds that are often at capacity.

In addition to meeting the immediate need for emergency shelter, the Marjaree Mason Center offers transitional housing for survivors and their children who continue to look for permanent, affordable housing, on their path towards recovery and long-term self-sufficiency.

Child Advocacy

The Child Advocacy Program remains a vital part of our response to domestic violence. Children who witness abuse often face lasting emotional and developmental challenges. MMC has trauma-informed services, advocacy, and partnerships to ensure these children are supported and not forgotten.

Through strong partnerships with UCSF-Fresno, Anthem Blue Cross, and the Fresno County Department of Public Health, our **Maternal Health Program** provides trauma-informed care to expectant and new mothers impacted by domestic violence. We recognize that a healthy start in life begins before birth, and that early, wraparound support can lead to long-term positive outcomes for both mothers and their children.

Prevention & Education

The Prevention & Education Department encompasses both Outreach and kNOW MORE programs. Through Outreach, the team educates the community about MMC services and domestic violence, hosts community trainings, and participates in local events to raise awareness and connect individuals with support. The kNOW MORE program focuses on youth, empowering middle and high school students to recognize healthy relationships, identify abuse, and know where to turn for help. Together, these efforts strengthen community knowledge, build resilience, and help prevent violence before it begins.

Marjaree Mason Center's kNOW MORE program was created as a forum for teens to learn about teen relationships through activities, videos, real-life situations and statistics of abuse to demonstrate the seriousness of abuse and long-term effects of domestic violence. MMC's Prevention and Education Team utilizes focus-led discussions that are centered on healthy relationships and teen dating violence awareness.



The primary goal is to increase students' knowledge and empower them to become advocates and leaders on their campus.

The primary audience of kNOW MORE are middle and high school-aged youth, as well as teachers, parents, and other adults aimed at increasing awareness of teen dating violence, recognizing red flags and what to do when a teenager they know is facing this difficult issue.

Overall, the kNOW MORE program is focused on building a culture of trust and support on campus, as well as empowering youth to build healthy relationships and a strong community.

Counseling

Counseling, both individual and group, is critical for survivors of domestic violence as it provides a safe space to process trauma, rebuild self-esteem, and develop healthy coping strategies.

Counseling services offered by the Marjaree Mason Center allow survivors to explore their unique experiences and emotions in a private setting, fostering personal healing and growth, while also offering a sense of community and shared understanding, reducing isolation and empowering survivors through connection with others who have faced similar challenges.

Family Stabilization Program

The Family Stabilization Program is a collaborative effort between the Marjaree Mason Center and the Fresno County Department of Social Services designed to ensure stability for CalWORKs families impacted by domestic violence. The goal of this program is to increase participants' success by eliminating barriers interfering with self-sufficiency, stability and independence.

How to Support Survivors and Raise Awareness

At Home



Talk to your teens or teenage family members/friends/students about healthy relationships.

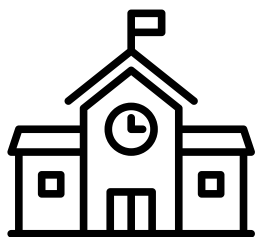
Make sure your teens know about consent.

Be a role model for healthy relationships (with your partner, friends, and family).

*Talking to teens about healthy relationships, (not just romantic relationships) can help your teen avoid unhealthy and abusive relationships in the future.

Even if your children are too young to date, you can still model what a healthy relationship looks like.

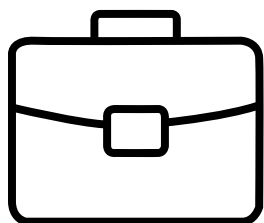
At School



If you are a teen in a Fresno County high school, you can apply to join our kNOW MORE® program to raise awareness and prevent teen dating violence.

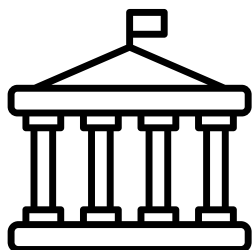
Check if your school district has a policy on intimate partner violence.

At Work



Review your employee handbook to review your employer's domestic violence policy and provide a refresher meeting and/or send a reminder email. Order a window sticker from MMC that includes our hotline and place it at the entrance of your business.

How to Support Survivors and Raise Awareness

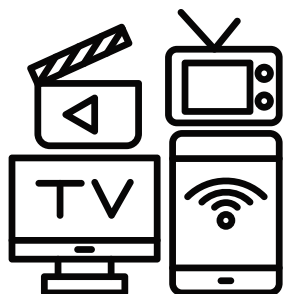


In Government

Call your representatives.

Make sure the candidates you vote for will support legislation that protects survivors and funds safety and support programs.

Contact your school board for policies on teen dating violence.



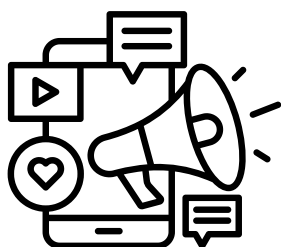
In the Media

Do not refer to MMC as a “women’s shelter” (we provide services to survivors of all genders and sexual orientations).

Refer to MMC as a domestic violence agency.

Refer to people who experienced DV in the past as survivors — not victims.

*In media such as TV and film, domestic violence is typically shown with an abusive male partner and a female victim, but the reality is that domestic violence affects people of all genders and sexual orientations. Raising awareness can make it easier for victims of all kinds to reach out for help.



On Social Media

ALWAYS ask if you can tag someone in a photo or post (you never know if the person you are with is being tracked by their current or former dating partner).

How to participate in **Domestic Violence Awareness Month**

On Social Media...

- Share the MMC 24/7 hotline phone number and email address.
- Follow us on social media and share what you learned from our posts.
- Wear purple on Purple Thursday, October 16, and tag us in your purple selfies to raise awareness.

In the Community...

Consider hosting a donation drive for items listed on the MMC Wish List, or partnering during other specialty campaigns throughout the year (Valentine's Day, Easter, Mother's/Father's Day, Back-to-School, Thanksgiving, Christmas).

DAILY ACTIVITIES

You can take action every day to raise awareness and help prevent domestic violence. Need some ideas? Follow along with our DVAM Daily Activity Calendar.

Many victims feel alone, but you can show them that they are not alone and that there are resources to help them.

Daily activities such as check-ins or sharing resources online can make a difference in someone else's life.

QUESTIONS?

If you have questions or comments, reach out to our team through our Helpline.

To contact our Helpline services call 559.233.HELP (4357) or email help@mmcenter.org. All calls are confidentially safe to individuals seeking support, help and information.

Will be activity calendar

Follow us on Social!



Stay up to date with us on social media!
Where we post resources, community groups, events, and more!



@marjareemasoncenter

Donate



Scan the QR
Code to
Donate Today

With your support, families escaping abuse find more than shelter—they find counseling, legal help, education, and a path toward healing.

Your donations are tax-deductible and directly impact the lives of survivors and their children. In addition to monetary donations, we can accept gifts of securities, IRAs, life insurance, bequests, or other appreciated assets. Your tax-deductible gift allows us to provide invaluable resources to survivors and their children.

If you're interested in partnering through a foundation or family fund, or making a planned gift, please contact MMC's Director of Philanthropy and Communication, Ashlee Wolf, at 559-487-1313 or ashlee@mmcenter.org.

WHAT IS SAFETY PLANNING

Everyone deserves a relationship that is safe, supportive, and respectful. Whether you are currently living in a violent household, have already left, or are thinking of leaving, there are many ways you can improve your safety. When there is an identified potential for violence in someone's life, it is important to create a safety plan.

Safety planning is the ongoing process of looking at your specific situation and deciding what steps you need in place to help increase your safety and to prepare for any possible future violence.

This booklet will help you brainstorm ideas that you might want to include in your safety plan; you'll decide what is important for your situation. Your plan needs to be tailored to your lifestyle and specific needs.

- Although you cannot control how your partner will act or when they will become violent, you can plan how to respond to the situation to keep you and your family safe.
- It could be planning to flee a violent relationship or a plan for what to do during a violent situation.
- You are the expert on your situation, what is safest, and what is within your means to do.

REMEMBER

It is crucial that your partner not find out about your safety plan. Be sure to keep this document and the plan you create in a safe location that is unknown to your partner.

SAFETY WHEN LIVING WITH AN ABUSIVE PERSON

DURING A VIOLENT ARGUMENT

- Use your best judgement and listen to your intuition. If something in your safety plan doesn't feel right in the moment, trust your judgement and focus on what seems to most likely keep you safe in the moment.
- Try to avoid wearing scarves or necklaces that could be used by the partner for strangulation.
- Identify a room that you feel is safer to be in or go outside/into the street. These are rooms where you have an escape route, e.g. a room that has a door or window that you can use to flee to safety.
- Stay away from areas like the kitchen and garage where your partner may grab tools or items to use as a weapon.
- Keep your phone on you and flee to a room in the home that can be secured while you call for help, e.g. bathroom or bedroom. Call 911 to have law enforcement to respond out for your safety.
- If safe to do so, grab your Go Bag (see page 6) before leaving. Do not put yourself in more danger to grab your belongings.
- Once out of the home go to a safe place, hospital, shelter, police station, or trusted individual's home.
- Take photos of any injuries/bruises and save any abusive messages, screenshots, voicemails, or social media posts as evidence of the abuse. This will be helpful if you decide to file a police report or a domestic violence restraining order.

CREATING SAFETY PLANS WITH CHILDREN

- Help your children recognize the signs of danger and warn them to stay out of the conflict.
- Teach children that it is not their fault your partner is angry and they aren't responsible for stopping the abuse and violence.
- Come up with a code word to signal to your children that they need to flee for their safety. Make a plan of a safe place they can go when they are feeling unsafe and practice this ahead of time.
- Keep the conversation practical; like safety talks regarding natural disasters or fires.
- Practice and role play the safety plan so they are ready in the event they need to get to safety.

It is crucial for children in violent households to have simple safety plans so they know exactly what to do when domestic violence is occurring in the home.

Practice How to Call 911

Take time to teach your children how to call 911 in the event of an emergency and practice what information to share.

Helping children practice this skill can reduce anxiety during those crisis moments.

Important information to practice can include their name, address, phone number, and general information about the crisis (e.g. there's a fire, my mom isn't waking up, or my mom is hurting my dad).

PREPARING TO LEAVE

Who to ask for help

- Let a supportive person know what is happening. Create a plan with them so that you can quickly contact them when you need help.
 - Develop a code word to use when you need that person to get you to safety or call 911.
 - Stress the importance of keeping this plan secret.
 - Reach out to law enforcement if there is immediate concern for your safety.
 - Connect with Marjaree Mason Center for safety planning, emergency housing, and other supportive services.
-

Contact Numbers

- Keep a list of emergency contacts stored in a safe and private place or a phone that your partner doesn't have access to.
-

When to Leave

- Try to think about various times and scenarios when it might be safest to flee.
 - For example when your partner goes out, is at work, when you are taking the kids to school, etc.
-

Where to Go

- Have a safe place in mind where you can quickly flee such as a friend's home, police station, or domestic violence shelter.
- Make sure to disable location services on all phones, tablets, cars, etc.

Transportation

- Brainstorm how you will flee to safety, such as driving, public transportation, trusted individual, or paying for an Uber/Lyft/Taxi.
-

Getting Away from the Home

- Reverse your vehicle into the driveway for easy access when leaving or park where you can't be blocked in.
 - Have a bag, keys, and phone where they can be quickly and easily grabbed.
-

Finances

- Keep an emergency fund in a safe place to help with expenses or transportation after fleeing.
 - Be aware that any shared bank accounts/credit cards could be used as a way to track your location.
-

Important Items

- Place a "Go Bag" in a secure location where it can be easily accessed, but where your partner can't find it. Keep any spare medications, phone charger, valuables, and children's essentials in the bag. If possible, make copies of important documents and phone numbers just in case you can't grab the originals.
- A list of suggested items can be found in this packet

REMEMBER

Spend time reviewing your safety plan as often as possible to make sure it still works

SAFETY AFTER LEAVING

Making the decision to leave an abusive relationship can be a difficult and highly emotional one. A range of feelings from relief to worry, fear, and doubt can arise during this time. Having a plan in place prior to this moment can help alleviate some anxiety and increase feelings of safety for you.

It may not be possible to plan for everything that the future holds, but the following suggestions are a starting point. Over time, new steps can be added to your plan to overcome any additional barriers or safety concerns that come up.

You are not alone in this journey.

Safety Around the Home

- Inform your neighbors/landlord that your ex-partner is no longer living with you and what to do if they are seen at the property.
- Change/install new locks on the doors and windows and keep them locked at all times.
- Install security systems or cameras for additional safety.
- Apply for Safe at Home to help keep your mailing address confidential and secure. Speak with an Advocate at the Marjaree Mason Center for more information.

Safety in Public and at Work

- Change your daily travel habits. Switch up the route that you take to work, which stores you shop at, and avoid areas that you know your partner frequents.
- Pay attention to your surroundings.
- Have a plan if you feel you are being followed, such as going straight to the police station.
- Talk with your employer about a safety plan in the workplace. This could include plans to have security/coworker walk you to your vehicle and what to do if your partner shows up at your work location.

SAFETY AND PROTECTION ORDERS

Emergency Protective Order

This order is issued by a judge at the request of law enforcement, who has been called out to respond where there is a danger of domestic violence. An EPO can include orders for care and control of a minor, residence move-out orders, and a stay away order. EPOs are granted for 5 to 7 days and cannot be extended once they expire.

Domestic Violence Restraining Order

A victim may request this type of order against anyone who they have dated or had an intimate relationship with. A Judge can grant a restraining order to protect someone, their children, their property, or their pets. This type of order can include but is not limited to no contact, stay away, move out, not have access to or own firearms or ammunition, and child custody for children in common. Once a judge has granted the order, law enforcement can be called to enforce the order if there are any violations.

Gun Violence Restraining Order

This court order prohibits someone from owning, possessing, or having access to firearms or ammunition if they pose a significant risk of harm to themselves or others. Family members, household members, employers, colleagues, teachers, and law enforcement can request this order. If an order is granted, the restrained person will be ordered to turn in, sell, or store any prohibited items. Law enforcement will remove items, or the person can store them with a licensed gun dealer while the order is in effect. The restrained person also cannot buy any of the prohibited items during this time.

Safety Tips

- Contact victim service agencies, such as the Marjaree Mason Center, to get assistance with applying for a DVTRO.
- Keep a copy of your DVRO on you at all times and provide a copy to a trusted individual or family member.
- Call law enforcement immediately if your abusive partner violates the order.
- Keep a record of every time your partner violates the order. Keep copies of all messages, emails, voicemails, etc. as proof of the violations.
- Provide a copy to your work, children's school, landlord, etc.
- Plan ways to stay safe if law enforcement can't respond out immediately.

SAFETY AROUND TECHNOLOGY

Technology can be a useful tool to connect you to loved ones and other individuals in your support system. It can be utilized to access resources and agencies to assist in your journey, but it is important to be mindful of the risks.

Safety Concerns

- Technology can be misused by an abusive partner to continue the cycle of intimidation and harassment even after leaving the relationship.
- GPS and Bluetooth tracking devices are easily obtained and can be hidden in vehicles, bags, and children's toys. These devices can then be misused to send your location back to the abusive partner.
- Spyware is becoming easier to install on computers, phones, tablets, etc. Once installed, this software allows abusive partners to track and access data on devices including messages, call logs, and location.
- Cameras may be installed in your home or accessed through your devices by utilizing spyware.
- Internet browsers collect certain information each time you search for something on the web. If an abusive partner has access to your devices or accounts, they can access your search history and other data.
- Social media may collect location information when making posts or sending messages.

TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

If you suspect that your abusive partner is tracking your location or misusing technology to continue the harassment and monitoring, it is possible they are. Ask yourself what information your partner seems to know and what they currently have access to. The following pages will discuss basic safety tips regarding technology and the internet.

Speak with an advocate at your local domestic violence agency for a more thorough tech safety assessment.

Prioritizing Safety

There isn't one correct approach to addressing safety regarding technology and abuse. Some things may fit your situation and needs, while others may not. Always make sure you to prioritize your safety and be aware of how changes might alert your partner.

General Safety Tips

- Consider what items you have that are connected to the internet. Do you have a smart phone/watch? Smart locks and cameras? Amazon Alexa?
 - It is best to always use a computer/phone/device you know is safe and that your partner will not have access to. Be aware of devices that were given as gifts by your partner as they may have stalkerware you.
 - Be mindful of the information that you are allowing technology and the internet to collect.
 - Cameras and security systems may help some individuals feel safer. Make sure you are taking the necessary steps to secure these devices.
 - Create your own tech privacy toolkit. See page 13 for more information.
-

Location Tracking

In order to safety plan regarding location tracking, it is important to assess how that person might be finding your location.

- Look for patterns. Think through what ways that might be tracking your location. Are your travel habits the same as when you were together? Did you mention to someone where you were going? Is there a possibility that technology is being misused?
- Make sure to turn off location services on all internet connected devices.
- Search for any unknown Bluetooth trackers.
- Apple and Android phones are updating features to make detection of bluetooth trackers more accessible.
- Be aware of the pros and cons to disabling a tracker. Disabling a tracker while still in an abusive relationship can cause your partner to become reactive.

Safer Internet Use

- Utilize a secure internet connection or VPN.
 - Understand the impact that blocking an abusive partner can have. Do you feel it will cause them to escalate the abuse? Would you feel more comfortable knowing when they are trying to reach out?
 - Delete your internet browser history and any cache information that might show what you were doing online, especially if you were making plans to leave.
 - Educate your family and friends on the risks of posting photos or information about you online.
 - Review the privacy settings on your social media accounts and be mindful of the information that you are sharing.
-

Online Accounts

- Change log-in information for pre-existing accounts that you need to continue using.
 - Create new email, social media, and other accounts if possible.
 - When creating passwords for your accounts, make sure to choose one that is secure and not easy to guess. Adding various numbers, symbols, lowercase and uppercase letters can increase the strength of your password.
 - Create new or fake answers to security questions that your partner won't be able to guess with information learned during the relationship.
 - Password managers can help to keep your log-in information for all your accounts in a safe and secure place.
-

Storing Evidence

- For some individuals, storing photos of physical abuse or examples of restraining order violations may be beneficial.
- Be mindful of who has access to the location, account, website, etc. where you are storing the evidence.
- Consider storing copies of the evidence in more than one secure location in the event one copy is lost.

Safer Phone Use

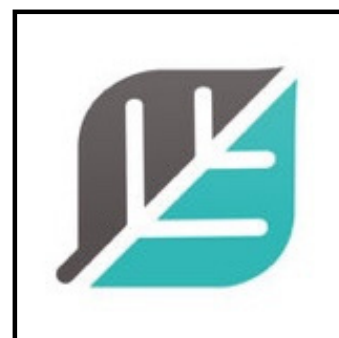
- Reset your phone to factory settings or obtain a new phone if possible to ensure safety of your device.
 - Avoid connecting a new device to old accounts or transferring data from an old device as this could potentially reinstall stalkerware.
 - Think strategically if there is concern about your phone being monitored by your partner. Will your abusive partner escalate their abusive behaviors when their access and control of your device is cut off? Keeping the phone may prevent raising the suspicion of your partner.
 - You may consider hiding a spare phone in a secure and hidden location. Be mindful that the phone is turned off or the battery taken out when not in use to prevent any notifications or noises giving away its location.
 - Turn off location services to avoid unintentional location sharing.
 - Consider using virtual phone numbers (VOIP Numbers) to make calls and send messages without sharing your device's actual phone number.
 - Try to avoid storing sensitive information on your phone if possible.
-

Helpful Apps



Tech Safety

This app contains information that can help someone identify technology-facilitated abuse and includes tips on what can be done.



myPlan App

This app allows users to assess the level of safety in their relationship and provides tools for creating a safety plan and accessing resources.

TECH PRIVACY TOOLKIT

For those individuals that believe their partner is misusing technology to continue the cycle of abuse, it may be beneficial to create a tech privacy tool kit. These toolkits can be used to address some of the risk factors surrounding technology in your life. Below you will find a short list of tools that may be useful to include in your toolkit, but for more information on protecting yourself from the misuse of technology **visit TechSafety.org**

What to include?

- Virtual Private Network (VPN)
 - This service can help to hide your IP address (specific location) from websites that you visit and increase your privacy surrounding what information can be collect while surfing the web. There are many options to choose from, but generally speaking paid options may be less likely to be a scam. Reputable options include but are not limited to NordVPN, ProtonVPN, and Private Internet Access.
- Password Managers
 - Password managers are useful and secure tools to help keep track of your passwords. It can be difficult to remember secure passwords or your alternative answers to security questions. This tool can keep all of that information in a secure place for easy access when needed.
- Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) Numbers
 - VOIP numbers can be used to make calls and send texts from a secure number that is not assigned to a physical location. Using a VIOP number along with a VPN can help hide your location data from an abusive partner. Companies such as MySudo, Google Voice, Moxilla, and TextNow all offer VOIP services that may be useful.
- Pre-Paid Credit Cards/Virtual Credit Cards
 - These can be used to minimize the opportunity for abusive partners to use transaction information as a tool of locating you. Pre-paid credit cards can be purchased at most stores and preloaded and reloaded with a set amount of money. Virtual credit cards, such as the one offered by Privacy.com, will generate a quick one-time use card number for online purchases to limit the personal information that is being collected by websites.
- Faraday Bags
 - These bags are created with material that prevent signals from being sent or received by your devices. This can help limit location tracking and data collection from unwanted parties.

SELF CARE AND YOUR WELL-BEING

A crucial aspect of safety is taking care of your emotional wellbeing. Experiencing abuse and trauma can have a negative impact on your physical and mental health. It can be exhausting to live in a constant state of fight or flight. Additionally, many people see changes to their relationships with their support system.

It is important to understand the impact that these experiences have had and ways to address those needs. People who experienced abuse share feeling a range of emotions from fear and confusion, to isolation and anger. Learning different skills and tools to address your physical and emotional wellbeing can assist in lessening the impact of the abuse.

You are not to blame for any of the abuse you or your children experience while living with your abusive partner.

Tips

- Remember that your needs are valid and it is important to make taking care of them a priority.
- Try to take care of your daily needs including eating balanced meals and getting enough sleep.
- Take time for yourself to do things that can bring you joy (read, play music, paint, meditate, journaling, etc.)
- Attend individual or group therapy sessions to begin processing the experiences you've had.
- Connect with community resources to help navigate barriers that you might be facing along your healing journey.
- Join support, spiritual, or cultural groups to help you feel belonging to a community
- If you are considering returning to a potentially abusive partner, try calling your support system, a domestic violence counselor, therapist, etc. for support.

Important Numbers

Emergency	911
Suicide and Crisis Life Line	988
Marjaree Mason Center: 24 Hour Hotline	559.233.4357
Fresno Police Department Non-Emergency	559.621.7000
Clovis Police Department Non - Emergency	559.324.2800
Fresno Sheriff Office Non-Emergency	559.488.3111
District Attorney	559.600.3141
National Domestic Violence Hotline	1.800.799.7233
Crime Victim Assistance Center	559.600.2822
Other:	

Useful Websites

- **MMCenter.org**

- Marjaree Mason Center - Victim service agency provide support to survivors of intimate partner violence in Fresno County. Provides supportive services to victims including housing, counseling, legal assistance, etc.

- **CPEDV.org**

- California Partnership to End Domestic Violence - Coalition of agencies across the state of California focused on serving those impacted by domestic violence. This site has a map that can be used to find DV organizations in your community.

- **TechSafety.org**

- Safety Net Project - Project of the National Network to End Domestic Violence that focuses on intersection of technology and abuse. They provide education, tips, and guides to navigating technology related abuse.

- **Stopncii.org** and **Takeitdown.org**

- Both of these websites can be utilized when someone fears their intimate images will be shared non-consensually. This tool will generate a digital fingerprint unique to the image in question that can then be used by various platforms to search for and take down the photo without the victim needing to share the actual intimate photo. Stopncii.org is for individuals over 18 years old; Takeitdown.org is for individuals under 18.

- **Vinelink.com**

- VineLink is the leading victim notification network allowing survivors of DV access to information about abuser's custody status and release information.

- **1800Victims.org**

- California Victim Resource Center is dedicated to helping victims across CA find necessary resources and learn about their rights in the criminal justice system

[illegible]

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, typical of notebook paper. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

Guide



24/7 CRISIS HOTLINE:

(559) 233-HELP 4357 help@mmcenter.org