

Safety Planning & Technology

You have the right to use technology. You should not be afraid to log on to social media to talk with your family and friends, post pictures of your pet or latest food creation, or post a review of a new movie. You should not be worried every time the phone rings or are notified of a new text message. Having the technology is not the problem—your partner mistreating it is!



Trust your instincts if you suspect that you are being abused, harassed or monitored.

Technology is all around us and it's always changing and growing. Whether it's a new phone app, a new online social media website, or a new household item that's connected to the internet (such as a fitness device or home automation devices), we are all immersed in the world of technology. You have the right to feel safe to use these everyday items to connect to world around you.

With all the emerging technology, it can be easy for an abusive partner to keep track of your movements, send you anonymous messages, access your personal information, and more. An abuser may also harass your family and friends as well. But that should not stop you from using technology. This guide can help you think through your safety around technology.

How does your partner use technology against you?

- Harassing emails, texts, or phone calls
- Apps that track locations, web browser history, and more
- Hacking your phone and/or accounts
- Remote control of smart devices to control lights, alarms, locks, speakers, etc.
- Isolating you by threatening visitors or cutting off resources (heat, water, etc.)
- Damaging your reputation by posting sensitive pictures, videos, or documents
- Accessing your accounts to see who they are talking to or see what they are doing



What can you do if you believe someone is tracking you online?

- Change passwords and usernames
 - Change your security settings
 - Restore devices to factory settings (NOTE: do not restore old files and accounts if resetting to factory settings)
 - Turn off location sharing on phone and in social media apps
 - Change your phone number or get a new phone, if possible
 - Document and collect evidence*
 - Check your car for any hidden location devices
 - Ask your advocate about address confidentiality programs
 - Check your home for hidden cameras
 - Turn off webcam access on your devices
 - Use caution when giving out personal information such as your address, email, phone number or zip code
 - Use an alternative device or computer that your partner can't access (i.e. library computer)
 - Turn on two-factor authentication when you can
 - Use private browsers
- * Ask your advocate for help with any of these tips!



Things to Remember When Documenting Harassment

- Remember to think about your safety first
- Consider the social media platform it was on (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, etc.)
- Document or take a screen capture of any harassment—if possible include the whole conversation with date(s) and time(s)
- Think about how your partner could be using technology against you
- Understand that not everything may be allowed in court
- Note if anyone else, besides you, have seen the message(s)
- Write down strange occurrences—things you can't explain
- Record audio or video—only if it's safe to do so!



Remember—you have a right to use technology in your daily life.

If you think that you're being stalked or tracked online, then please reach out to your local DV program to talk with an advocate about your safety!