

## Keeping safe

Here is some information about how to keep safe if you are, or someone you know is, being abused. Firstly, it is not your fault. The responsibility for abuse, in all cases, lies with the abuser. This section offers some advice around keeping you safe while living with an abuser. Your safety, and your family's safety, is the most important thing when considering your options. You can contact GDASS at any stage throughout your relationship, or situation, for advice, support, and to discuss your options.

## Keeping safe online

Always remember that your computer history will show the websites you have visited. To delete the website history, go through your Internet settings, choose 'history', and 'right click' on the sites individually to delete them. Deleting the full history may appear suspicious. This method only prevents someone from immediately being able to see the webpage you have visited. Your browsing history is stored on your computer and can be made available by various computer programs and/or agencies, including police.

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# SOCIAL NETWORKING

## Facebook

How to block someone from contacting you:

- Choose 'privacy shortcuts', this is the second icon in from the right on the blue bar at the top of your browser.
- Choose 'How do I stop someone from bothering me?'
- Write email address or user name in the box – select 'Block'

Blocking someone prevents them from being able to view your page or searching for you from their username or email address. They will be able to search from someone else's account if they want to.

General privacy/security settings:

- 'Privacy shortcuts' – 'See more settings'  
This then allows you to stop people being able to find you if they 'Google' you and choose who can add you as a friend.
- Select 'Security' from the left hand list  
This allows you to choose your security settings for your profile.

## Twitter

General privacy/security settings:

- Choose the icon second in from the right on the main toolbar, 'settings'.
- Choose 'Security and Privacy' from the list of options on the left hand side of the page.
- The 'settings' icon, as above, also allows you to select to deactivate your account at the bottom of the page.



Do not accept friend requests from someone you do not know, even if they share mutual friends.

Ensure that Location Settings are turned off on your phone. Updating your social networking with these on will alert your followers/friends as to where you are. Location settings vary phone to phone, please check your manual if you are not sure how to do this.

## Keeping safe at home

- Plan escape routes out of your property, if the perpetrator comes in the front door, how do you get out?
- Set up a code word with your friends and family. If they call they know when you're in trouble.
- Keep with you any important and emergency telephone numbers: eg Police DV unit, 24-hour domestic abuse helplines, emergency contacts.
- Are there neighbours you can trust? If so ask them to contact the police if they hear anything.
- Pack an emergency bag for yourself and the children. Hide it somewhere safe away from the house, maybe with a friend you can trust.
- Keep a small amount of money on you at all times – including change for the bus or phone.
- Keep your mobile phone on you and charged, with credit, at all times. If this is not possible, can you hide one somewhere?
- If you suspect he or she is about to become violent, try to avoid the kitchen or garage where there are likely to be knives or other weapons.
- Avoid locking yourself in small rooms, especially bathrooms. Always try and get out of the property.
- Give your friends or family a spare key to your house, if you are locked in they can help you escape.

## If you have recently left your property

- Does your new property have secure windows and doors? If not speak to GDASS or your landlord about making it more secure.
- Avoid places where you are isolated or alone and places you used to go with the perpetrator, at least in the immediate period of separation, if possible.
- Alter your routine as much as you can. Eg alter your working hours, walks home etc.
- If you have any regular appointments that your partner knows about (eg hospital, doctor etc) try to change your appointment time and/or the location of the appointment.
- Try to choose an alternative route or mode of transport when approaching or leaving places you cannot avoid (eg work/schools etc).
- Consider informing your employer or others at your place of work – particularly if you think your partner might try to contact you there.
- Mobile phones can be traced, so try to change your SIM card or even better get a new pay as you go phone.
- **Some mobile phones, particularly iPhones, have tracking programmes attached. Please refer to your manual or change your handset if you are not sure whether this could affect your phone.**
- If you do wish to telephone your partner, ensure it is from a number withheld phone. Dial '141' before typing the number to withhold it.
- Avoid using shared credit or debit cards because, if your partner sees the statements, it will show where you have been. Your support worker can help you open a new account if you need to.
- Make sure your address does not appear on any court papers. Speak to your solicitor or McKenzie friend about arranging this.
- Talk to your children about the need to keep your whereabouts confidential – especially if they are having contact with the perpetrator.
- Ensure schools have any relevant court orders relating to the children, and a photograph of the perpetrator if they have been told by a court that they are not to have contact.

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## Packing an emergency bag

Having an emergency bag means that, if you had to flee your house, you can take some basic belongings with you easily. This reduces the need to return to the property when it may not be safe to do so.

Here's what to pack:



- Some form of identification.
- Passports, Visas and work permits.
- Money, savings books, cheque book, credit/debit cards.
- Keys for the house, car, work etc. (You could get additional keys cut and put them in your bag.)
- Child, Family Tax and any other benefit information.
- Driving licence and car registration documents.
- Prescribed medication/repeat prescription.
- Clothing and toiletries for you and the children.
- Address book and emergency contact numbers.
- Personal items (photos etc) or favourite toys for your children.
- Copies of any legal documents, eg injunctions.

**Do not put yourself in danger getting these items, pack what you can, there may be opportunities to get things later on.**

## Contact us

**Phone: 0845 602 9035 or Email: [support@gdass.org.uk](mailto:support@gdass.org.uk) (mailto:support@gdass.org.uk).**

[Online referral form \(formreferral.htm\)](#) | [Feedback form \(formcomment.htm\)](#)

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