



# Technology Safety Planning with Survivors

Technology can be very helpful for victims of stalking, domestic and sexual violence. However technology can also be misused by perpetrators to abuse, monitor, stalk and impersonate victims. Here are some tips to consider if you or someone you know is in danger.

- 1. Trust your instincts.** If you suspect an abusive person knows too much, it is possible that your phone, computer, email, location or activities are being monitored. Perpetrators can use incredibly persistent and creative tactics to maintain power and control.
- 2. Plan for safety.** Navigating violence, abuse, and stalking is very difficult and dangerous. We suggest you contact domestic violence or rape crisis hotlines and support agencies to discuss risks and safety options.
- 3. Take precautions if you have a “techy” abuser.** If computers and technology are a profession or hobby for the perpetrator, trust your instincts. If you think someone may be monitoring or tracking you, talk to the police or a family/sexual violence hotline or support worker.
- 4. Use a safer computer.** If anyone abusive to you has access to your computer, he/she might be monitoring your computer activities. Try to use a safer computer when you look for help, a new place to live, etc. It may be safer to use a computer at a public library, community center, or Internet café.
- 5. Create new email or IM accounts.** If you suspect that an abusive person can access your email or instant messaging (IM), consider creating additional email/IM accounts on a safer computer. Do not create or check this new email/IM from a computer the abuser could access, in case it is monitored. Look for free web-based email accounts, and strongly consider using non-identifying name & account information. (example: [bluecat@email.com](mailto:bluecat@email.com) not [RealName@email.com](mailto:RealName@email.com) )
- 6. Check your cell phone settings.** If you’re using a cell phone provided by an abusive person, consider turning it off when not in use. When travelling secretly, you may also want to turn off any location services or settings. Many phones also let you “lock” the keys so the phone won’t automatically answer or call if bumped. Consider adding a password to your cell phone and voicemail to prevent unauthorized access. For more security, you can also turn off Bluetooth.
- 7. Change passwords & pin numbers.** Some abusers misuse the victim’s email and other accounts to monitor or impersonate and cause harm. If anyone abusive to you knows or could guess your passwords, change them quickly and frequently. Think about any password protected accounts: online banking, voicemail, instant messaging, social networks, etc.
- 8. Minimize use of cordless phones or baby monitors.** If you don’t want others to overhear your conversations, consider turning off baby monitors and using corded phones during sensitive conversations.
- 9. Use a donated or new cell/mobile phone.** When making or receiving private calls or arranging escape plans, try not to use a shared or family cell phone because cell phone billing records and phone logs might reveal your plans to an abuser. Contact your local or provincial/territorial hotline or crisis agency to learn about donation programs that provide new free cell phones and/or prepaid phone cards to victims of abuse and stalking.
- 10. Ask about your records and data.** Some court systems, government agencies and organizations publish records with personal information on the Internet. Ask agencies how they protect or publish your records and request that court, government, post office and others seal or restrict access to your files to protect your safety.
- 11. Get a private mailbox and don’t give out your real address.** When asked by businesses, doctors, and others for your address, have a private mailbox address or a safer address to provide. Try to keep your true residential address out of databases.
- 12. Search for your name on the Internet.** Major search engines such as “Google” or “Yahoo” may have links to your contact information. Search for your name in quotation marks: “Full Name”. Check phone directory pages because unlisted numbers might be listed if you gave your number to anyone.

**BC Society of Transition Houses: [bcsth.ca](http://bcsth.ca)**

▪ Email: [safetynetcanada \[at\] bcsth.ca](mailto:safetynetcanada[at]bcsth.ca)

**BC 24X7 Confidential Referral Line: [VictimLinkBC.ca](http://VictimLinkBC.ca)**

▪ 800-563-0808 or TTY 604-875-0885

**Technology Safety Resources: [nnedv.org/safetynetdocs](http://nnedv.org/safetynetdocs)**

BC Domestic Violence info: [domesticviolencebc.ca](http://domesticviolencebc.ca)

Canadian Clearinghouse on Cyberstalking: [cyberstalking.ca](http://cyberstalking.ca)

