

Bystander Guidance: Supporting survivors in your local community during COVID 19



Cymorth i Ferched Cymru
Welsh Women's Aid

Social distancing may increase violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and have an impact on survivors' safety and support networks.

Now more than ever, it is vital that we understand violence and abuse and support the needs of survivors.

This information will help you to spot the signs of abuse and offer signposting to support available.

Please Do

- Signpost to support. The most effective way to help is to share the Live Fear Free Helpline number: 0808 80 10 800. Call the helpline directly if you would like information and advice. If you think someone is in immediate danger, call 999.
- Think outside the box. Make the Live Fear Free Helpline as visible as possible. You can display the number on a poster in your window, in your car, or at your place of work. You can ask work colleagues to include the number on email signatures and on a company shared drive. You can also share the helpline number on Zoom conference calls or local Covid-19 mutual aid groups on Facebook.
- Remember that social distancing has made it harder for survivors to talk. Many will not want to be overheard disclosing abuse or won't want to discuss anything that can be overheard by children and other members of the household. Some may have their communications restricted or monitored. Be on the look-out for changes in behaviour or changes to regular patterns of communication.

Live Fear Free Helpline

For confidential information, advice or support around domestic abuse, sexual violence or violence against women anyone can contact the Live Fear Free Helpline in any language 24 hours a day 7 days a week by...

Phone **0808 80 10 800**

Text **07860 077333**

Email **info@livefearfreehelpline.wales**

Webchat <https://gov.wales/live-fear-free/contact-live-fear-free>

For more information, please visit
<https://gov.wales/live-fear-free/contact-live-fear-free>



Please Do Not

- Don't give advice or try to fix what are often very complex situations. It can be really tempting to tell survivors what they should do, make suggestions about what worked for you or try to solve their problems. Taking over can mimic the behaviour of the perpetrator. Most individuals won't be able to give appropriate advice in these unprecedented circumstances. Safely signposting to local support services or the Live Fear Free Helpline is always the best approach.
- Don't press them for information. It is natural to want to understand what has happened. But this can make survivors feel disbelieved or interrogated. Let them tell you what feels right for them.



Live Fear Free Helpline
Llinell Gymorth Byw Heb Ofn
0808 80 10 800



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Rhoi Merched a Phlant yn Gyntaf
Putting Women & Children First

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Please Do

- **Listen to and believe survivors.** Survivors are more likely to seek support from friends or family before contacting a formal agency. The response they receive when they disclose abuse can be the difference between whether they choose to get specialist support or not.
- **Acknowledge and validate.** Survivors may talk about feeling nervous, scared and worried. Validating their concerns can show that you will take them seriously.
- **Stay alongside them.** Survivors know their situation best, so be led by them. If they are not ready to fully disclose abuse, stay in contact in ways that feel safe. You may not be able to talk safely about what is happening to them but general chats, exchanging memes or other forms of communication may be safe. This will allow the survivor to know that you are still there for them if they are able to talk at a later date.
- **Research your local specialist services.** You can find information on local support services by typing your postcode or region [here](#).

Please Do Not

- **Don't make any interventions that could potentially endanger you and/or the survivor.** If you suspect someone is in immediate danger of physical violence, call 999 straight away.
- **Don't share blanket coded messages for support on social media.** Code words or coded messages shared widely on social media are not always a safe and secure way for a survivor to seek help. When shared as a generic way to flag abuse, they can cause confusion or be intercepted by a perpetrator. They can also place the safety of a survivor in jeopardy if messages on social media are only checked intermittently. Wherever possible, signpost to support via the Live Fear Free Helpline number.
- **Don't ignore a situation that doesn't feel right to you.** If you are concerned for anyone in your local community call the Live Fear Free Helpline directly for more advice.

[Click here](#) for safety information
and self-care tips for survivors.

Your support is essential in
helping to end abuse.

Now, more than ever, survivors
in your community need you.

Don't stand by.

Stand with survivors.

#StandwithSurvivors

Useful Numbers

Bawso. Providing specialist services for BME communities:
0800 7318147

Dyn Wales. Providing support to Heterosexual, Gay, Bisexual & Trans men who are experiencing Domestic abuse from a partner: 0808 801 0321

Respect. Domestic abuse organisation for work with perpetrators, male victims and young people's violence in close relationships : 0808 802 4040



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