

Emotional Safety Planning



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Welcome!

We invite you to **introduce yourself** in the chat with your name, position title, location/organizational affiliation, and something that you do for self-care.

Make sure you change the setting so you're sending the message **To: All panelists and attendees**

To: All panelists and attendees ▼



Type message here...

If you have a specific question or topic that you would like covered in this webinar, feel free to add it to the Q&A section.



Women's Advocates
Breaking the cycle of domestic violence

Take care of yourself!



NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

www.thehotline.org

Call 1-800-799-7233 or live chat at www.thehotline.org

Contacts to The Hotline can expect highly-trained, expert advocates to offer free, confidential, and compassionate support, crisis intervention information, education, and referral services in over 200 languages.

MINNESOTA DAY ONE

www.dayoneservices.org

Call 1-866-223-1111, text 612-399-9995

Day One is a statewide network of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, youth-and community-advocacy programs in Minnesota.

WOMEN'S ADVOCATES

www.wadvocates.org

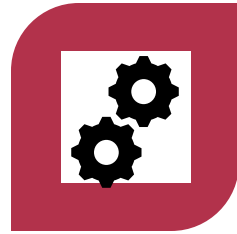
Call 651-227-8284, email resources@wadvocates.org, or live chat at www.wadvocates.org

Women's Advocates is a domestic violence shelter in St. Paul, Minnesota that provides advocacy and support programming for women and children.





Current beliefs
about safety



Elements of
emotional safety



Importance of
emotional safety



Emotional safety
planning tips



Personal emotional
safety exploration



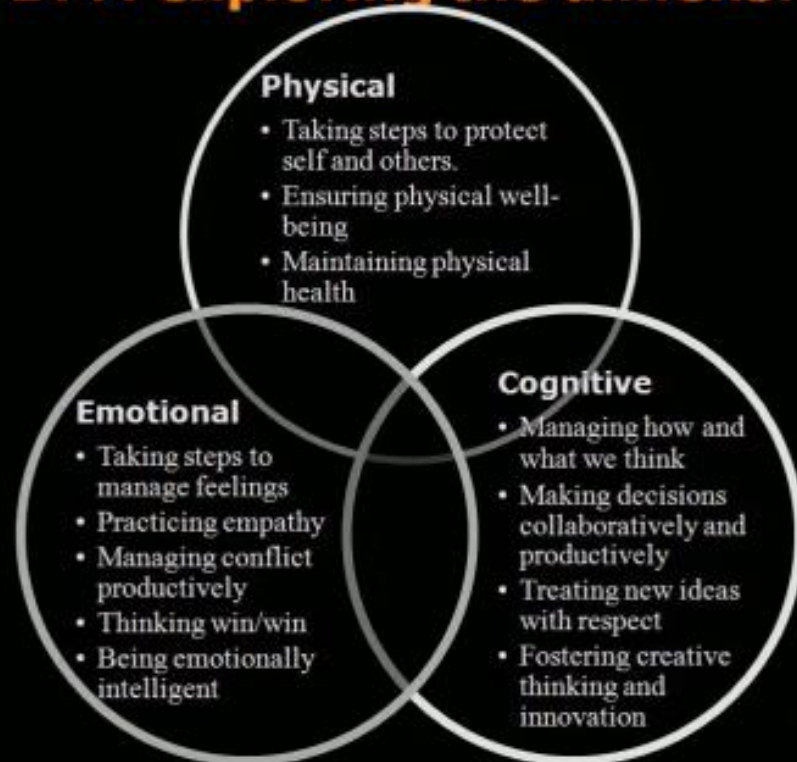
Resources

OVERVIEW OF
THE NEXT 90
MINUTES

Write in the chat: What words do you currently associate with safety?

Current Associations with Safety

SAFETY: exploring the dimensions



Emotional Safety Definition

Merriam-Webster definition of **safety**: “**freedom from harm or danger** : the state of being safe. : the state of not being dangerous or harmful. : a place that is free from harm or danger : a safe place.”

A safe place requires that you do not feel as if you are at risk of harm or danger and **with emotional safety it means knowing that you will not be criticized, blamed, rejected, invalidated or dismissed by your partner.**

Emotional safety is “a feeling that your innermost thoughts, feelings and experience are, and will be, **honored** as one honors themselves. You need not prove, nor impress; you just simply are. When it is present **you feel open, even, at ease, and fluid** with the spontaneity of a healthy child.”

Emotional safety means you are:

- ▶ Safe to express themselves fully and authentically
- ▶ Safe to share **dissatisfaction** about something their partner did
- ▶ Safe to share sexual desires, displeasure, and fantasies
- ▶ Safe to share their **personal insecurities** and fears
- ▶ Safe to have a conversation **without it escalating** to a full blown argument
- ▶ Safe to share meaning that they can say any of the above **without being met with yelling, name calling, blaming, shaming, exit language, and/or rejection.**



Why Emotional Safety?

SURVIVING ABUSE CAN BREAK YOUR SPIRIT.

EMOTIONAL SAFETY PLANNING KEEPS YOUR SPIRIT STRONG.

Importance of Safety in a Relationship

- When you don't feel safe in a relationship, your focus shifts from connection to protection.



Emotional Safety in Relationships

Emotional unsafety may sound like...

- ▶ "Why didn't you tell me?" "You never share with me!" "How come you are so quiet when I try to talk to you?" "Answer me!" "You're so secretive!" "You never talk!" "Why don't you ever tell me how you're feeling?"
- ▶ "That's why I don't tell you anything!" "I can't talk to you!" "That's not what I meant" "I should've just kept my mouth shut!"

Emotional safety may sound like...

- ▶ "I can tell you about something that bothers me without fearing your response.""
- ▶ "I am allowed to express my emotions freely and this expression is met with kindness and understanding."
- ▶ "I know that was hard for you to share with me. Thank you for telling me. We will come up with a plan together to make it better."

Emotional safety is created when both partners...

Validation, non-judgment

Positive framing

Inviting body language

Collective approach

Vulnerability met with kindness

Reliability/consistency

- ▶ **Validate** the other's feelings, empathize with what they are sharing, listen non-judgmentally, do not internalize and make it about them, focus on trying to understand the other's feelings.
- ▶ Give the other an opportunity to show **something different, shift** any negative/toxic thoughts to **positive and loving thoughts**, enter the conversation open to experiencing them in a more positive light, practice trust.
- ▶ **Turn towards each other**, give eye contact, make facial expressions that show attention, sit/stand in close proximity, touch their hand. In other words, join them where they are.

- ▶ **Make “we” statements around resolutions**, talk about future hopes and goals for the relationship, speak to the commitment such as “we will get through this,” and comments/statements that show a commitment to figuring things out and continuing to work on the relationship.
- ▶ Acknowledge that **being vulnerable is not easy**, thank them for trusting you enough to share their feelings, validate what they have shared with the other, and encourage them to continue to open up and know that they will be **met with love and understanding**.
- ▶ Follow through on what they say they are going to do, **keep their word, establish trust by being consistent**. Be themselves at all times.

HAPPY, HEALTHY, & SAFE RELATIONSHIPS

Happy Relationships

In addition to being safe and healthy, **happy relationships** are joy-filled. Happy relationships offer people a nurturing source of care and support.

Healthy Relationships

The core of **healthy relationships** is built on respect, trust, safety, acceptance, freedom of choice, positive communication and conflict management, and fun.

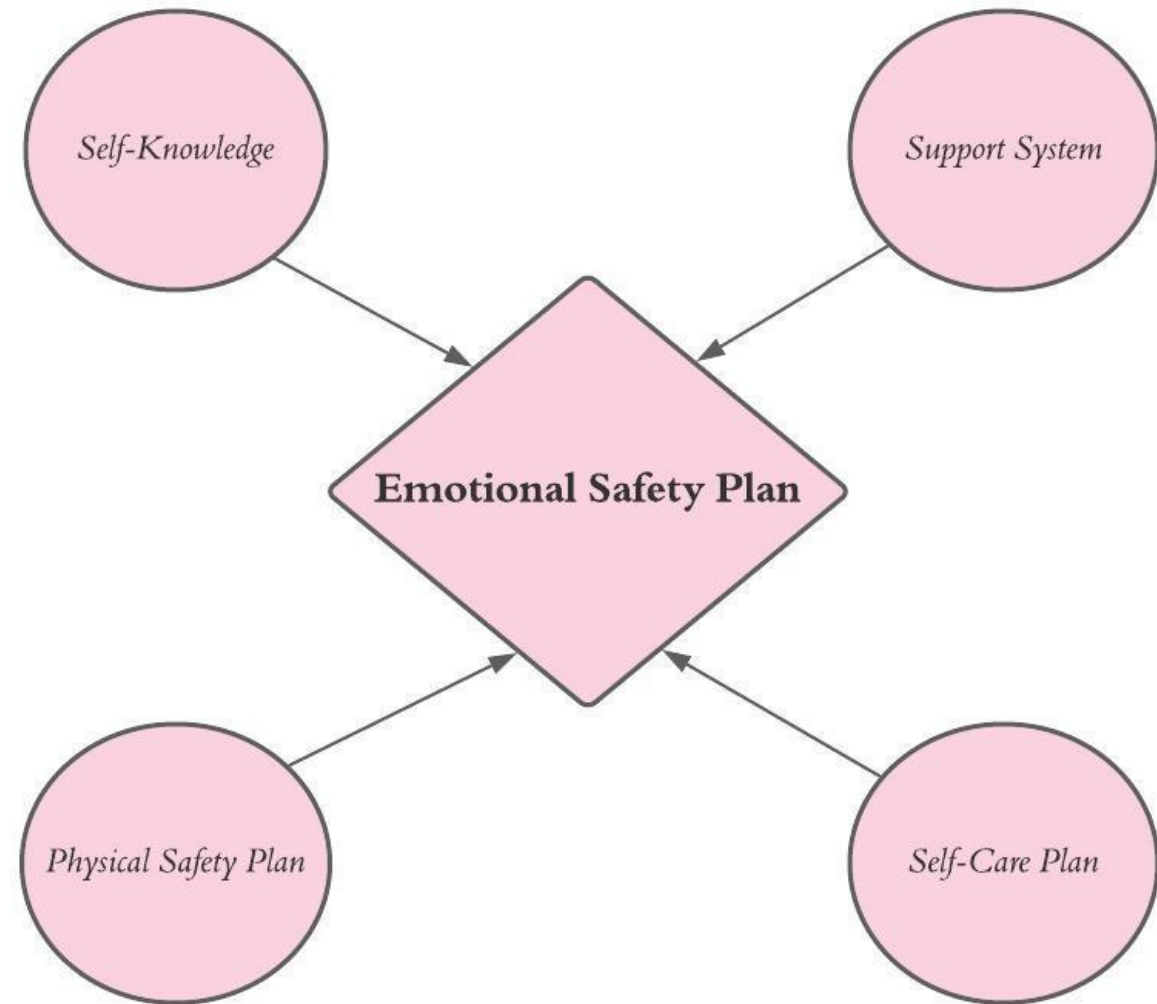
Safe Relationships

Safe relationships are free from all forms of abuse, neglect, and any other threats to one or more person's physical or emotional safety, well-being, and development.





What's in an Emotional Safety Plan?





Assessing Emotional Safety: Tools for Advocates

Isolation and support system

- How often does the victim-survivor communicate with people outside of the home?

Emotional and/or verbal abuse

- Does the abusive person criticize, gaslight, dismiss, or threaten the victim-survivor?

Self-talk

- Is the victim-survivor's self image solely based on what the abusive person says?

Poll: How comfortable do you feel with promoting emotional safety in the 7 ways displayed on the screen?



[Source](#)

Promoting Emotional Safety: Tools for Advocates

Understand
emotional
safety.

Help survivors
manage
feelings.

Provide a
soothing
place.

Provide
information
about trauma.

Provide clear
information
and avoid
surprises.

Help survivors
feel comforted
and in control.

Support
emotional
safety for staff.



Promoting Emotional Safety Sounds Like This:

"We want you to know that whatever you are thinking and feeling, **you are welcome here.**"

"You may just want to sit and relax for a bit. This room is set up for that and open whenever you need to use it."

"For many people, this can all be overwhelming. We don't have to solve every problem right away. Let's take the time to **sort things out together** and then decide which thing you want to work on first."

"All of us are affected by the work we do. **Everyone's emotional safety is important.**"

"We want you and your children to feel safe and welcome. **If something doesn't seem right to you, please do let us know** and we'll work on it with you."

"Many people have trouble turning their minds away from frightening experiences. Sometimes people feel anxious, worrying about how to make things turn out better."

"A lot of us live and work together in the small space here. That's why we meet twice a week to talk about how things are going for each of us and what we each need to be as comfortable as possible. **We ask all the community members who live or work in the shelter to be present.**"

EMOTIONAL SAFETY TIPS

SAFETY PLANS SHOULD BE...

Individualized

Addressing the
fears/concerns
of survivor

Realistic for
survivor's
situation, practical

Always open for
revisions

Revisited
frequently

Shared with one
other person



Emotional Safety: Tips for Staying

- Journaling: an antidote to gaslighting
- Keep your sense of perspective: practice reframing

Verbal insult from an abuser...	...Reframed to reflect the truth
<i>"Look what you made me do,"</i> <i>"It's your fault that I [hit you/broke this/said that]"</i>	"They're responsible for their own actions." "I'm not responsible for someone else's behavior."
<i>"You're worthless"</i>	"I'm important, even when other people can't see my worth."

Special Considerations for the COVID-19 Holiday Season

Holiday Related Tips

- Anticipate & plan for possible distressing situations. Try to set boundaries in advance.
- Confide in & collaborate with a trusted person in the same physical space as you and outside.
- Brainstorm ways to get out of the house if possible and things that you can regularly do to promote your physical, emotional, mental, spiritual wellness. Try to follow a routine. Try to tend to the body (walks, breathing exercises, mindful eating, etc.)
- Know how to contact a trained advocate & determine when you would utilize this phone number, website, text line.

COVID-19 Specific Tips

- Identify your strengths and protective personal and/or parenting efforts
- Look for patterns or triggers of abuse or violence
 - What time of the day is most difficult to navigate? What usually happens during that time?
- Gauge your level of social, cultural and spiritual connectedness
- Physical safety planning
 - Location considerations
- Emotional safety planning
 - Routine after a difficult time (music, walk around the house, stretch, prepare a specific snack)
 - Scheduling time for yourself / release your emotions (take a bath, folding the laundry)
 - Affirmations/ visualizations



Emotional Safety Tips for Leaving



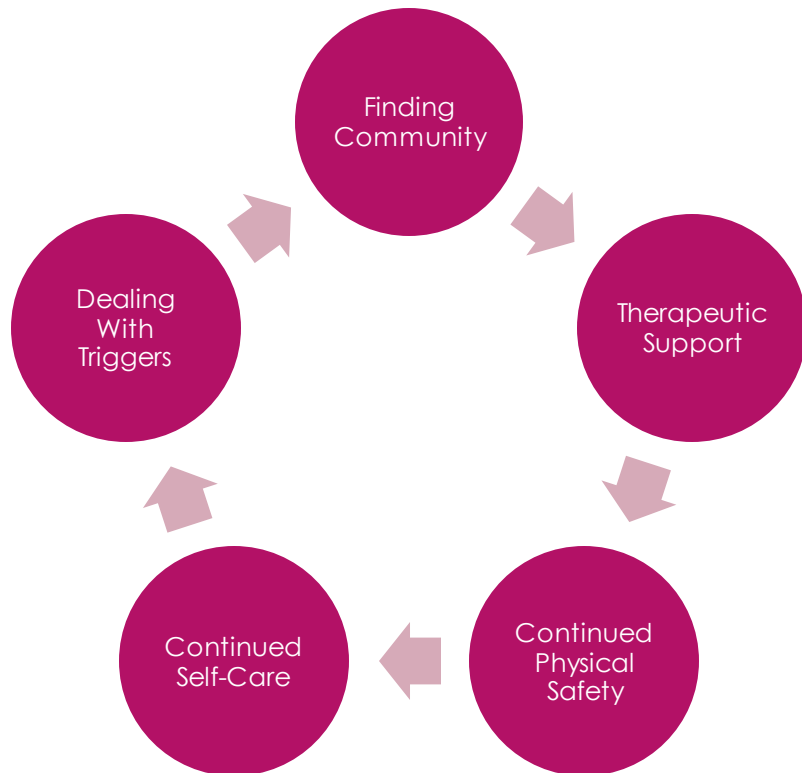
Combatting
anxiety

Grounding
techniques

Preparation

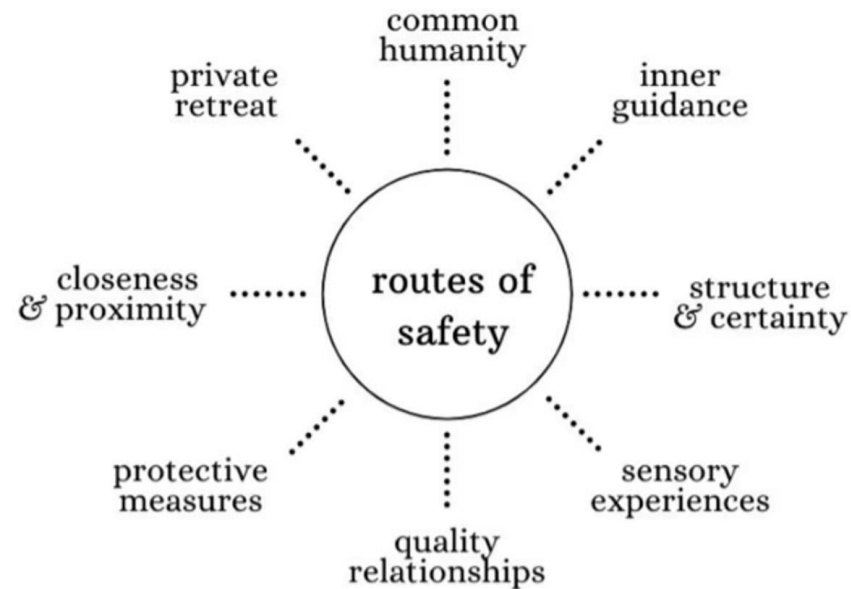


Emotional Safety Tips for After Leaving



Struggle	Possible Solutions
Flashbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grounding techniques• Therapeutic support
Feelings of guilt or regret about leaving	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support groups• Shame-free zone• Reminder: you deserve safety
"Abuser brain"	Reframing

Exploring your personal emotional safety considerations



- ▶ When have you felt emotionally unsafe?
- ▶ When have you felt that your emotions, reactions, thoughts, feelings etc. would be met with kindness, patience, and understanding?
- ▶ What components of safety are especially important to you?

Inner Guidance

- Meditation
- Self compassion
- Reparenting yourself
- Building self-trust
- Having a sense of self
- Relying on personal experience & inner wisdom or intuition
- Grounding practices
- Cultivating presence
- Self confidence
- Writing & journaling
- Guidance from guides & ancestors (tapping into outer guidance)
- Freedom to make decisions
- Having a religious or spiritual practice
- Soothing inner child
- Meeting own needs
- Relying on strengths & personality traits
- Feeling your feelings

Structure & Certainty

- Keeping busy
- Maintaining a routine, getting enough sleep
- Having more choice and control
- Increasing predictability in your life
- Having money in the bank, affording life
- Carving out space & time
- Having a consistent hobby
- Making a calendar or schedule to follow
- Knowing what's coming & having a plan
- Having an answer or solution
- Reading and making this list

Sensory Experiences

- Grounding through the 5 senses
- Lighting a candle, smelling a calming scent
- Scratching head, feeling body parts
- Wearing soft clothing
- Listening to nature, being in nature
- Putting on music or TV for background noise
- Self-holding or self-brushing exercises
- Using a weighted blanket
- Cuddling your partner, pet or stuffed animal
- Eating your favourite food, listening to music
- Folding warm laundry
- Breathwork, taking deep breaths
- Basking in the sunlight

Quality Relationships

- Held space
- Relational attunement
- Coregulation with humans and pets
- Responsive and caring relationships
- Having a strong, positive role model
- Loving-kindness and compassion with others
- Experiencing repair after rupture
- Someone helping you meet your needs
- Intimate touch, sex and play with someone else
- Strong sense of community and togetherness
- Connecting with others, healing in relationships

Protective Measures

- Being physically protected
- Feeling a sense of security
- Survival strategies you use to cope & stay alive
- Self-sufficiency and being pragmatic
- Someone defending you & defending yourself
- Meeting your own needs first
- Radical honesty and radical vulnerability
- Apology accompanied with changed behaviour
- Someone clearly stating their intentions
- Not being constantly watched or monitored
- Reconciliation & restorative justice
- Advocacy work & policy changes

Closeness & Proximity

- Receiving a hug, giving a hug
- Experiencing close physical contact
- Needing to be near someone else
- Having someone there just in case
- Knowing you can count on someone
- Being by yourself with someone else available
- Having help available if you need it
- Reaching out to others if/when you need it
- Doing activities you enjoy with someone else
- Texting a friend to ask them about their day
- Having friends who will reach out to you first

Private Retreat

- Quiet time, alone time, down time
- Watching a movie alone under a blanket
- Gravitating to small, dark spaces
- Enjoying being home by yourself
- Doing something independently
- Night time, finding solace in darkness
- Lying in bed by yourself, journaling alone
- Reading, listening to music, making art
- Privacy, keeping something to yourself
- A locked door with the curtains closed
- Shutting down, checking out, dissociation
- Day dreaming, focusing on your thoughts

Common Humanity

- Being heard, seen, recognized and known
- Allowing mistakes, being good enough as you are
- Knowing another person isn't going to judge you
- Being able to be yourself, laughing with others
- Shared experiences (good or bad)
- Reciprocity in vulnerability
- Normalizing hardship and sharing feelings
- Empathy, connection and play
- Being listened to, believed and understood
- Verbal reassurance and positive praise
- Someone respecting your boundaries
- Having your accessibility needs met
- Advocacy and meaningful change

Poll: What are some signs that emotional safety may be jeopardized?



A GUIDE TO

Emotional Safety Planning

BY WOMEN'S ADVOCATES
WWW.WADVOCATES.ORG

 **Women's Advocates**
Breaking the cycle of domestic violence



Comprehensive Safety Planning Goes Beyond Physical Safety



Staying Safe Emotionally:

My abuser often makes me feel bad by saying this: _____.

When he/she does this, I will think of these reasons why I know my abuser is wrong:

_____ and _____.

I will do things I enjoy, like:

_____ and _____.

I will join clubs or organizations that interest me, like:

_____ or _____.

#1: Create an activity list organized around different parts of your life (e.g. work, physical fitness, emotional life, relationships/community)

#2: Note any barriers that may be in your way and how to shift them.

SELF-CARE PLAN BASICS

#3: Print out your plan, or write it on a piece of paper to display in your room or office. Share your plan with your closest friends.

Encourage them to create their own plan and share it with you!

Source: mindful.org



What are my warning signs?

Warning signs are in your body and you can feel them when you get a little scared or worried about something. If you get a balloon and someone pops it in front of you, you might feel shocked and a little scared. These feelings are called the warning signs.

Can you draw a picture of a boy or girl and list where these early warning signs might be on the body? Butterflies in the tummy, wobbly legs, faster heartbeat, sweaty palms, sweaty head, goosebumps. Can you think of any more warning signs that you might like to draw too?



**Are you unsafe at home
and unable to make a call
for help or support?**



**Live chat with a trained safety crisis and
resource advocate TODAY at:**



Contact Live Chat Now Donate Emergency Exit Search Site...

www.wadvocates.org



Chat with an advocate if:

- Someone you are living with or in a relationship with is causing you harm
- If you are scared for your safety and need somewhere to go
- If you need resources (legal, financial, housing, safety)
- You do not need to be in immediate danger to reach out to help. We want to help in any way that we can.

What we provide:

- Safety planning / response
- Emotional support
- Connection to helpful relevant resources
- Access to available shelter/housing programs



Women's
Advocates
has a LIVE
CHAT
feature on
our website

Resources Available

<https://www.wadvocates.org/our-services/violence-prevention-education/safetyresources/>



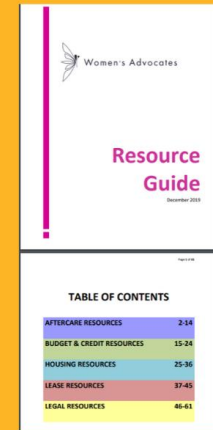
Downloadable Resources Specific to Minnesota



Minnesota Resource Tri-Fold



YOUTH Specific Tri-Fold



60 Page Resource Guide

Resource Categories include:

- Domestic Violence Service Programs/Survivor Support Groups
- Sexual Assault/Stalking/Sex Trafficking Victim Resources
- Legal Services
- Medical & Mental Health Services
- Emergency Shelters/Supportive Housing
- Emergency Assistance Services
- Child Services, Youth Services, Senior Citizens/Older Adults
- Disability Services, LGBTQ+ Services, Services for Men,
- Transportation, Furniture, Childcare Resources,
- Clothing Resources, Community Advocacy
- Family Support Services, Employment Services, Debt Management
- And more!



**Comprehensive
Searchable
Resource
Guide**
100+ PAGES :
CONTINUALLY
UPDATED

Downloadable Resources SPECIFIC TO WOMEN'S ADVOCATES



Women's Advocates Flyer



Women's Advocates
Tri-Fold



Women's Advocates
Crisis Cards



Emotional Safety Planning Resources

- [Grounding Techniques Worksheet](#)
- [For Advocates: Tip on Enhancing Emotional Safety](#)
- [**Safety Planning Tips for Domestic Violence Victims during COVID-19**](#)
- [Kidpower Emotional Safety Tips for Families during the Pandemic](#)
- [5 things you can do to enhance your child's emotional safety](#)
- [Insights from the Hotline Room: Planning for Holiday Gatherings](#)
- [DayOne NY Safety Planning for the Holidays](#)
- [Reach Beyond Domestic Violence: Tips for Supporting Survivors During the Holidays](#)
- [Family violence safety planning during COVID-19](#)

CONNECT WITH US ONLINE

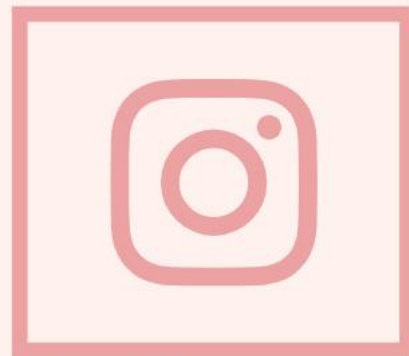
Live chat at: www.wadvocates.org

24/7 Crisis Resource Line: 651-227-8284



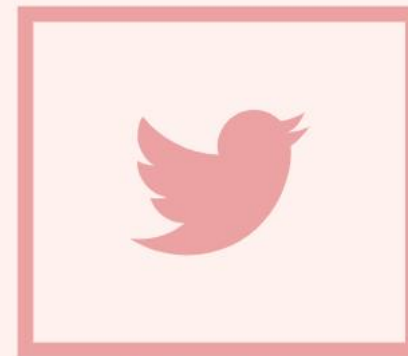
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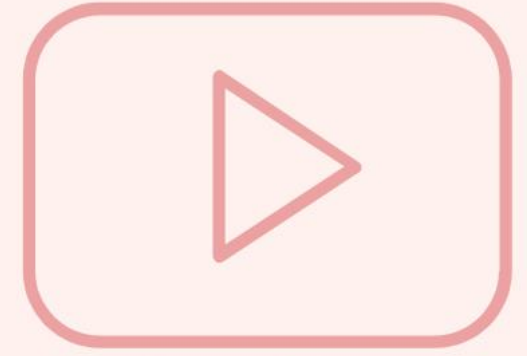
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