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Developed by
Maharashtra State Commission for Women



A Guide to Dealing with Abuse: Safety and Coping Strategies for Women during COVID-19

In collaboration with
International Justice Mission





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This manual also contains a 5-Step Well-Being plan that can be used by any individual who is coping with the stressors of COVID-19.

Dealing with Abuse: Safety and Coping Strategies for Women during COVID – 19

Women and children are known to suffer abuse at higher rates, around the world, and this is a particularly difficult reality during this season of being in a national lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For women dealing with abuse and domestic violence, home is not a safe place. The national lockdown order may keep women safe from a pandemic but can have other dangerous consequences- living with an abusive spouse. Abuse and domestic violence can become less predictable and more severe during times of stress and economic hardship.

This document will lay out specific safety plans, best practices, and recommended activities that will be of use for women who may find themselves in a situation of violence, feeling hopeless and helpless in the midst of a dangerous and difficult home environment.

What is Abuse?

Abuse exists in various forms. Men, women, and children around the world face various types of abuse on a daily basis. Any one member (or members) in a family can hurt or abuse another member. Any person in a position of power over another can hurt or abuse them, for example in a workplace. Abuse can look something like this in everyday life:

1. Emotional or Verbal Abuse- Living in fear, Bullying, Abusing, minimizing people, name calling etc.
2. Physical Abuse- Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence, physical restraint, hitting, slapping, etc.
3. Sexual Abuse- Rape, Sexual Assault, Molestation, Sexual Harassment, Commercial Sexual Exploitation, etc.
4. Financial or Economic Abuse- Creating dependence by isolating finances, and job opportunities etc.
5. Mental or Psychological Abuse- Creating dependence by making one believe they are “crazy”, isolation etc.
6. Cultural Abuse- Abuse based on cultural identity, race, orientation etc.

Dealing with Abuse and Domestic Violence

As mentioned before, abuse is experienced by people on a daily basis. **This does not however make abuse justifiable or tolerable.**

Victims of abuse typically go through life feeling isolated, powerless, and hopeless. This document seeks to show victims that though they may be suffering through undue violence, they are not alone. There are various ways that a victim can reach out for support and seek help, and their answer for relief is very near.

The immediate and first response that is always suggested to women experiencing abuse in their homes, or in their workplace, or even individual instances of assault or abuse (for e.g., stranger rape or eve teasing) is to **REPORT IT** to the concerned authorities. While this is a difficult step to take, in the scenario that abuse is threatening the safety, security and is dangerous to the life of the women and children involved- the highest recommendation is to **report the abuse.**

If you are unsure about reporting the abuse to authorities because of the lockdown, if you are afraid it will lead to further violence, or if you wish to wait till you are able to find support for

yourself (and your children), we hope this document is a helpful guide through the process of finding help at the right time.

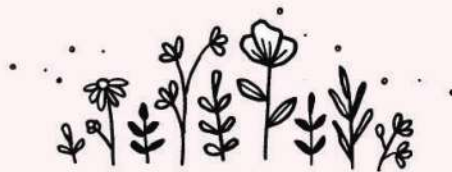
How you can reach out for help:

1. Send a complaint through post/email or in person to the MSCW
2. Call the "Suhita" Helpline number- +91 74777-22424
3. Register a complaint on the "Tejaswini" mobile app



Violence and Abuse is unacceptable. Please seek help.

WELL-BEING PLAN



SOURCES : UNICEF , and other online resources.
Content : Shalini Newbigging Illustration : Jane Kiro

WELL-BEING PLAN

1

STICK TO ROUTINES OR START NEW ONES!

☀️ WAKE UP AND GO TO SLEEP AT THE SAME TIME EVERYDAY. ✨



EXERCISE



GET READY LIKE IT'S A NORMAL DAY.



HAVE A CLEAN WORKSPACE TO GET YOU MOTIVATED.

DO THE DISHES / HELP DO THE DISHES AT HOME



This section is a guide to self-care practices as one may experience abuse and violence but may not have the opportunity or freedom to leave their homes because of the lockdown, or other more complex reasons.

Coping Mechanisms for Victims of Domestic Abuse & Violence:

1. COPING RESPONSES

a. Breathe, Breathe, Breathe

During times of stress and anxiety, our bodies feel it. To return our bodies to a state of relaxation, try deep breathing activities.

- One-minute breathing exercise: Take a deep breath in through your nose, count to three, and then let it out. Keep extending your breath by counting to 6, 9 etc. as you practice.

To help you practice breathing, check out these apps – Headspace, Insight timer, Calm.

b. Grounding

It would be good to practice a grounding exercise.

The 54321 activity – This activity helps in grounding oneself after a flashback or nightmare. People who experience abuse and violence can experience this very frequently. Flashbacks and nightmares can make them think they are in an abusive situation in real time. Here is a way that you can ground yourself back into reality when you experience those fearful moments.

- a. Name 5 things you can see (“table”, “fan”, or “shoes”).
- b. Name 4 things you can feel (“chair on my back” or “feet on the floor”).
- c. Name 3 things you can hear (“children playing” or “tv”).
- d. Name 2 things you can smell (or, 2 things you like the smell of).
- e. Name 1 good thing about yourself or take a deep breath.

c. Care of Body & Mind

Staying healthy does not only mean having a gym membership. Think about some routines you can adopt to help yourself feel rejuvenated, fresh, and calm.

- Connect with a counselor or therapist, via a helpline.
- Follow a healthy diet.
- Learn the FACTS of COVID-19 and remain safe at this time.
- Practice meditation and mindfulness.

d. Move your body

Staying active helps to refocus your body and mind. Using and teaching your body new things can help reduce stress and anxiety, as well as boost energy and improve brain function.

- Take a walk.
- Practice yoga.
- Follow an exercise routine on YouTube.

e. Express yourself

The great thing about art and expression is that it can be done using all types of materials.

- Start or continue a Do It Yourself (DIY) project.

- Practice a new recipe or create one on your own.
- You can read a book, sing, write, draw, knit, bake, take photos, paint, color, play music, play video games, or play with your pet.
- Start a journal. Whether you record your whole day or just write down your feelings, this may be a good way to keep track of your thoughts.



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WELL-BEING PLAN

2

STAY CONNECTED!

FACETIME WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY WHO ARE AFAR.



ENCOURAGE THE PEOPLE IN YOUR BUILDING WITH A WAVE AND SMILE.



TALK TO A FRIEND IF YOU'RE ANXIOUS ABOUT THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES.



LOVE ON THE KIDS AND OLDER MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY.



CHECK IN ON FRIENDS THAT LIVE ALONE, ASK IF THEY NEED HELP.

2. CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

As humans, connection with others is essential to our well-being. Many of us are feeling the effects of social distancing.

- List three people who you can call, text, video chat or write this week.
- Use technology like WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger or other video calling platforms. This can give you face-to-face time and can help maintain or strengthen relationships.



WELL-BEING PLAN

3

ENGAGE IN WELL-BEING PRACTICES!

PRACTICE MEDITATION AND MINDFULNESS.



KEEP A GRATITUDE JOURNAL, AND WRITE DOWN AT LEAST THREE THINGS EVERYDAY.



CONGRATULATE YOURSELF AND OTHERS ON SMALL VICTORIES.

SHARE!

SHARE HOPEFUL STORIES YOU SEE ON SOCIAL MEDIA



PRAY FOR THE WORLD, AND PEOPLE WORKING ON THE FRONT LINES.



3. MAKING SAFETY PLANS

Safety plans are a necessary step to maintain a sense of calm and control over a situation that can easily escalate. Especially now, in this time of Lockdown, women who live with their abuser can prepare and plan the fastest route to a safe space if they keep the following in mind:

- Warning signs: An abuser has typical triggers. Women can learn to monitor these triggers and find ways to de-escalate the situation in case she is unable to leave.
- Internal coping strategies: Identify activities you can do on your own to take your mind off the difficult situation.
- People and social settings that provide distraction: Find your safe place and safe people, if you are able.
- People whom I can ask for help: Identify the people who will help you in the time of crisis. Share your plan with them. Finding Legal Support during this time would be helpful.
- Professional whom I can contact during a crisis: Identify a counselor or therapist who you can speak to.
- Keep your safety plan accessible: At all times.

I. Create a safety plan

A safety plan is a personalized, practical plan that includes ways to remain safe while in an abusive relationship. This safety plan can be made with victims, friends, family members or anyone who is concerned about their own safety or the safety of someone else. A good safety plan will have to contain all the vital information you need, will be tailored to your unique situation, and will help you walk through different scenarios.

Having a safety plan laid out in advance can help you protect yourself and help you get out of a dangerous situation.

i. Safety while living with an abusive partner

- Identify your partner's use and level of force so that you can assess the risk of physical danger to you and your children before it occurs.
- Identify safe areas of the house where there are no weapons and there are ways to escape. If arguments occur, try to move to those areas.
- If possible, have a phone accessible at all times and know what numbers to call for help (**like 1091/103/ 100/ 181**). Know the phone number to your safe person (a friend or a relative). If your life is in danger, call the police.
- Let trusted family, friends and neighbours know of your situation and develop a plan and visual signal for when you need help.
- Teach your children how to get help. Instruct them not to get involved in the violence between you and your partner. Plan a code word to signal to them if they should get help or leave the house.
- Teach your children that violence is never right, even when someone they love is being violent. Tell them that neither you, nor they, are at fault or are the cause of the violence, and that when anyone is being violent, it is important to stay safe.
- Practice how to get out safely. Practice with your children.

- Plan for what you will do if your child tells your partner of your plan or if your partner otherwise finds out about your plan to leave or escape.
- Keep sharp objects like knives or belts locked away and as inaccessible as possible.
- Memorize the bus numbers, and route to your safety location or a friend's house. Have apps like m-indicator (in Mumbai) which gives you easy access to routes.
- Keep your cash, and debit cards etc. in a safe place, as much as possible. This will be essential for when you need to exit your home quickly.
- Try not to wear scarves or long jewellery that could be used to strangle you.
- Create several plausible reasons for leaving the house at different times of the day or night. This helps you work on and plan your escape route when in times of need.

ii. Safety planning with children

If you are in an abusive relationship, a safety plan should always include ways that your children can stay safe when violence is happening in your home. It is key to remember that if the violence is escalating, you should always avoid running to the children because your partner may hurt them as well.

How to have these conversations with your children?

Let your child know that what is happening is not their fault and that they did not cause it. Let them know how much you love them and that you support them no matter what. Tell them that you want to protect them and that you want everyone to be safe, so you must come up with a plan to use *in case of emergencies*. It is important to remember that when you're safety planning with a child, they might tell this information to the abusive partner, which could make the situation more dangerous (ex. "Mom said to do this if you get angry.") When talking about these plans with your child, use phrases such as "We're practicing what to do in an emergency," instead of "We're planning what you can do when dad/mom becomes violent."

- Teach your children when and how to call 1091/103/100/181.
- Instruct them to leave the home if possible when things begin to escalate, and where they can go.
- Come up with a code word that you can say when they need to leave the home in case of an emergency — make sure that they know not to tell others what the secret word means.
- In the house: identify a room they can go to when they are afraid and something they can think about when they are scared.
- Instruct them to stay out of the kitchen, bathroom, and other areas where there are items that could be used as weapons.
- Teach them that although they want to protect their parent, they should never intervene.
- Help them make a list of people that they are comfortable talking with and expressing themselves to.
- Enroll them in a counselling program. Local NGOs and authorities like the Child Welfare Committee could help you get access to a counsellor for your child.

Safety planning during pregnancy

Pregnancy can be an especially dangerous time for women in abusive relationships, and abuse can often begin or escalate during the pregnancy.

- If you are pregnant, there is always a heightened risk during violent situations. If you are in a home with stairs, try to stay on the first floor. Getting into the foetal position around your stomach if you are being attacked is another tactic that can be instrumental in staying safe.
- Doctor's visits can be an opportunity to discuss what is going on in your relationship.
- If your spouse goes to these appointments with you, try to find a moment when they're out of the room to ask your doctor or nurse (or even the front desk receptionist) about coming up with an excuse to talk to them one-on-one.

Emotional safety planning

Often, emphasis is placed on planning around physical safety, but it is important to consider your emotional safety as well. Emotional safety can look different for different people, but ultimately, it is about developing a personalized plan that helps you feel accepting of your emotions and decisions when dealing with abuse. Below are some ideas for how to create and maintain an emotional safety plan that works for you.

- **Seek Out Supportive People**
- **Identify and Work Towards Achievable Goals**
- **Create a Peaceful Space for Yourself**
- **Remind Yourself of Your Great Value**
- **Remember That You Deserve to Be Kind to Yourself**



Violence and Abuse is unacceptable. Please seek help.

WELL-BEING PLAN

4

ENGAGE IN HOBBIES!

~ Don't stop believin'
hold on to the feelin' ~



KARAOKE AT HOME



PLAY INDOOR GAMES /
BOARD GAMES

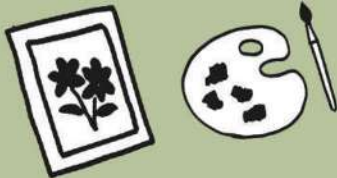


READ OR LISTEN TO AN
UPLIFTING PODCAST

WRITE SONGS /
STORIES / POEMS



COOK AND
SHARE RECIPES



PAINT / BE CREATIVE

DO SOMETHING YOU NEVER
GOT THE TIME TO DO BEFORE

4. CONNECT WITH HEALTH SERVICES/ HELPLINES – **Reach out for help!**

For any victims and survivors who need support, we are here for you. Please reach out to 1091, 103, 100 or 181.



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WELL-BEING PLAN

5

5 MINUTE WORRY WINDOW!

WRITE DOWN YOUR WORRIES AND MULL OVER IT FOR ONLY FIVE MINUTES IN THE DAY, THEN MOVE ON!



REMEMBER THE THINGS THAT HAVE NOT BEEN CANCELLED -
READING , MUSIC , FAMILY , FUN , FAITH , LOVE ,
AND ABOVE ALL ELSE HOPE.

= SOURCES : UNICEF , and other online resources. =
Content : Shalini Newbigging Illustration : Jane Kiro

5. FOR CHILDREN WHO WITNESS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THEIR HOMES

What can your children do to keep themselves safe? Some activities are recommended to be done with a counsellor.

- i. When there is no fighting, they can talk to their parents about how it feels when one parent hurts another.
- ii. Plan with their parents to have a “safe” house or place where they can go when their parents are fighting.
- iii. Come up with a safety plan with the battered parent in case of emergencies.
- iv. Talk to a grandparent, aunt or uncle, a grownup friend, a friend’s parents, or a family helper about how they feel when their parents fight.
- v. Draw pictures of what they are feeling.
- vi. Do things that make them happy, such as reading their favourite books, playing board games or video games, watching TV shows, and talking to friends on the phone (or visiting them).
- vii. Remember that they are not the reason one parent is abusing the other.

What can children do when they are afraid even after they have been removed from a violent situation? Some activities are recommended to be done with a counsellor.

- i. Talk to the abused parent or other trusted adult about how it felt when they saw or heard the violence in their home.
- ii. Talk to the abused parent or other trusted adult about what it feels like now that things are different, even if the feelings are confusing.
- iii. Talk to a family helper about all of these confusing feelings.
- iv. Do things to help them feel happy, such as drawing, reading, colouring, playing board games, playing video games, watching TV, playing sports, and spending time with family and friends.
- v. Remember that no matter what has happened between their parents, it was not their fault.

Name of the organization	Helpline Number	Website	Address/ Location	Specialization
Maharashtra Police Services (Govt. toll free helpline)	103	http://www.mhpolice.maharashtra.gov.in/Citizen/MH/Women.aspx	Mumbai, Thane & Navi Mumbai	
Maharashtra Police Services	1091	http://www.mhpolice.maharashtra.gov.in/Citizen/MH/Women.aspx	Maharashtra	
Maharashtra Women's Helpline	022-26111103, 1298	https://indianhelpline.com/WOMEN-HELPLINE/	Maharashtra	
Maharashtra Women Commission	07477722424 022-26592707	http://mscw.org.in	Gruha Nirman Bhawan Mhada Building, Kalanagar, Bandra	
Majlis – Maharashtra	91-22-750632641 (9am-9pm)	http://majlislaw.com/en/top/about-us/contact-us/ Email: majlislegal@gmail.com	A 2/4 Golden Valley, Kalina, Mumbai 400098 India	Legal Help

Helpline Name	Contact Number	Operational Area	Area of Expertise
Women's Helpline	181/ 103	All over India	For Domestic Abuse
National Commission for Women	011-26942369, 26944754	All Over India	
All in one emergency helpline number	112/1090	All Over India	Directs to police, fire, health, women's safety and child protection
Women Helpline	1090/1091		For Women in Distress
iCall	022 -25521111 (Monday to Saturday, 8AM to 10PM) Email: icall@tiss.edu Chat Based Counseling: nULTA app Website: http://icallhelpline.org/ Facebook: iCALL Psychosocial Helpline Twitter: @iCALLhelpline		Free Counseling

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Location of Special Cell for Women & Children	Address
Police Commissioner's Office	Police commissioner's office, Room no. 36, A block, Police quarter colony, near Social Service Branch
Dadar	Dadar Police Station, Bhavani Shankar Rd, Shaitan Chawki, Dadar W., Mumbai 400028
Kandivali	Kandivali Police Station, Swami Vivekanand Rd., Opp. Shatabdi Hospital, Kandivali W., Mumbai 400067
Vikroli	Vikroli Police Station, Kānnamvar Nagar no. 2, Vikroli E., Mumbai 400083
Kurla	Kurla Police Station, Near Bhabha Hospital, Sarveshwar Marg, Mumbai 400070
CBD Belapur	CBD Belapur Police Station, Sector-1, Opp. CBD Belapur Bus Depot, Navi Mumbai 400614
Vakola	Vakola Police Station, Nehru nagar Rd., Vakola E., Mumbai 400055
Nasik	Gangapur Police Station., Anandwali – Gangapur Rd., Nasik 422013
Pune	SP Office, Pune (Rural), Chavan Nagar, Pashan Rd., Pune 411008
Wardha	SP Office, Wardha
Yavatmal	SP Office, Yavatmal
Aurangabad	SP Office, Aurangabad (Rural) Near Hudco T.V. Center, Aurangabad 431003
Nanded	SP Office, Local Crime Branch, Vazirabad, Nanded

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One Stop Centers in Maharashtra

S.NO.	DISTRICT	ADDRESS
1	Mumbai City	K.E.M. Hospital Old Building, Acharya Donde Parel, Mumbai
2	Mumbai Suburb	Balasaheb Thakre Troma Care Hospital, West Drugati Road, Jogeshwari(E), Near S.R.P.F. Camp, Mumbai Upnagar
3	Thane	Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Hospital, Kalva, Dist. Thane
4	Palghar	Matoshri Bangla, Near Aayam Ground, Vishnu Nagar Road, Lokmanya Pada, Palghar (W)
5	Raigad	Sakhi One Stop Center, Old Blood Bank, Dist. General Hospital Building, Ailbag, Dist. Raigarh.
6	Ratnagiri	Dist. Govt. Hospital
7	Sindhudurg	District Hospital, Oros-Sindhudurg Nagar
8	Nashik	Govt. Girls After Care Home Area, Nasardi Pool, Infront Nashik Club, Nashik
9	Ahmednagar	Govt. Residential Quarters, Aurangabad Road Ahmednagar
10	Dhule	Govt. State Home for Women, Dhule
11	Jaigaon	Govt. Ashadeep State Home, Plot No- 6, Vijay Colony, Near Ganesh Cony, Infront Ashok Bekary, Jaigaon
12	Nandurbar	Dist. Hospital, Sakri Road, Nandurbar.
13	Pune-1	Dalvi Hospital, Shivaji Nagar, Pune 411005
14	Pune-2	Rajiv Gandhi Hospital, Fule Nagar, Yerwada, Pune
15	Satara	Govt. Male Beggars Home, Satara Lonand Road, Dist. Satara
16	Sangli	Shri. Datt Krupa Apartment, Infront Onkar Jewellers, Vijay Nagar Sangli.
17	Kolhapur	Government Quarters, Q Building, Rajesh Motors, Vichare Mal, Kolhapur.
18	Solapur	Govt. Junior Children Home Premises, Solapur
19	Aurangabad	Municipal Corporation Primary Health Center, Behind Hotel Shallmar, Nehru Nagar, Katkat Gate, Aurangabad.
20	Jalna	Infront Of Govt. Hospital, Serve No. 488 Jalna
21	Beed	Ward No. 6, District Govt. Hospital, Beed
22	Parbhani	District General Hospital, Subhash Road, Parbhani.
23	Hingoli	T-1-1/1&T-1-1/2 Govt. Residential, infront of State Bank Of Hyderabad, Akola Road, Hingoli
24	Osmanabad	District Govt. Hospital Area, Dist-Osmanabad
25	Latur	Govt. Vidya State Home, Netaji Nagar, Latur
26	Nanded	Ravidas Nagar, House NO- 1/12/849, Shashtri Nagar, Shashtridev Sabhagruha Samor, Near Bhagynagar, Nanded
27	Amaravati	Dist. Women Hospita Area, Dist.Amravati
28	Akola	Lady Harding Hospital, Durga Chowk, Akola
29	Washim	Sicura Hospital, Malegaon Road, Washim
30	Yavatmal	Shri Vasanttrao Naik Govt. Medical College, Ward No.3, Yavatmal
31	Buldhana	Sakhi One Stop Centre, Govt. Hospital Buldhana
32	Nagpur	Bharosa Cell, Subhash Nagar, Near I.T. Park, Near BSNL Office, Nagpur.
33	Wardha	Dist. Govt. Hospital, Sevagram Road, Wardha
34	Bhandara	NSV Building, Dist. Govt. Hospital
35	Gondia	Manohar Chowk, Behind Shivaji Statue, Ganesh Nagar, Gondia
36	Chandrapur	Krishna Nagar Chowk, Mul Road, Dist. Chandrapur
37	Gadchiroli	Govt. Boys Observation Home Building, Behind Pratiksha Guest House, Dist. Gadchiroli.

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