



The Coronavirus spread is a worrying time for everyone, but being housebound with your abuser is a terrifying and potentially dangerous time.

Following the instruction to self isolate in China, reports of domestic abuse doubled. This secondary effect of the pandemic needs to be addressed and people with no choice but to remain in their homes need to be aware of the risks and plan for their safety. Below are our suggestions for keeping yourself as safe as possible.

## SAFETY PLANNING WHEN SELF ISOLATING WITH YOUR ABUSER

- **ALWAYS** keep your mobile phone charged and with you.
- **USE** a code word with friends & family so they know, if you call or text them and use that word, they need to contact the police. Or agree with them you will send a blank text if you are in need of the police. If neighbours are aware of your situation, ask them to call police if they hear sounds of an attack.
- **USE** a code word with children to let them know they should leave the house. Agree with them before where they should go.
- **DON'T** drink alcohol together as the probability of abuse increases. If your abuser insists you drink, add lemonade or have a soft drink in between alcoholic drinks. Alcohol reduces your ability to think clearly and it's difficult to reason with a drunk person.
- **IF** you are drinking, make sure you both are eating properly. Keeps snacks available and don't skip meals.

- **USE** your judgement and intuition with your abusers mood. Keep a close eye on their body language. Nobody knows them better than you know them. If a situation is escalating, try to leave the room.
- **IF** the situation is likely to escalate, stay out of the kitchen, bathroom, garage, or rooms where there are possible weapons. Stay away from the top of the stairs.
- **IF** you can't get out of the house, go to a safe room that you can lock. Consider purchasing a Howsar Quick Lock from Amazon or eBay. They can be slipped into a pocket and they will give you enough time to call 999. Alternatively, put a door wedge under the door once you're in the room.
- **THINK** about the quickest route out of your house. Consider risks that are unique to your home. Make sure children's toys are not blocking routes and exits.
- **KEEP** your bank card & car keys (if you have a car) in a safe place where you can access them quickly. Keep a little cash in your pocket if you can.
- **PACK** an overnight bag and hide it somewhere if it's safe to do so - e.g. with a neighbour for example. Ensure you pack ID etc.

## **Important numbers**

**IF YOU ARE IN DANGER CALL 999**

**Wish Centre 01254 260465**

**Refuge Helpline 0808 2000 247**

**Samaritans 116 123 - if you are experiencing emotional/psychological abuse and feel low.**

**Shelter 0344 515 1831**

**Housing Needs Blackburn 01254 585444 - If the tenancy of your home is in the abusers name and they are threatening to make you leave or have locked you out.**