

# Teens and Abuse During the Coronavirus Crisis

We know that not everyone's home is safe. The coronavirus crisis is causing stress, anxiety, and social isolation that may increase abusive behavior between members of a family or household, or in relationships. Abuse can include threats or the actual use of physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, psychological, or financial abuse.

Stay at home policies and social distancing can make people feel powerless and not in control of their lives. People may misuse substances like alcohol or drugs as a way to cope, which may increase the possibility of violence and abusive behaviors. Abuse can also happen online, as in cyber-bullying or cyber-harassment. Online behavior by a partner, family member or someone else can also be abusive if it makes you feel scared or unsafe.

Cyber-bullying or cyber-harassment is behavior that is intended to humiliate, control or scare the person being targeted. It's not legal, and it's not OK.

Cyber-bullying or cyber-harassment includes, but is not limited to: sending or posting hurtful messages or sexual comments, threats usually targeting one person, impersonating you or hacking into your online accounts, spreading rumors about you, stalking (following someone around or leaving unwanted messages on their phone or online), and sharing photos or videos of you without your consent.

**You Are Not Alone:  
New York City is  
here for you.**



**Here are some suggestions for what to do if you are in a home with someone who is causing you harm or if you are experiencing abuse online:**



## 1 If you or someone you know are in immediate danger, call 911

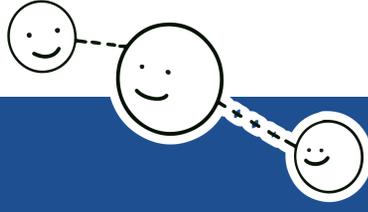


**2 If you need help or someone to talk to outside of your school, NYC Well is a free hotline that provides 24/7 support, crisis counseling and connection to mental health and substance misuse services, regardless of insurance coverage or immigration status.** NYC Well's website offers a number of wellbeing and emotional support applications (apps) that can help you cope. If your symptoms of stress become overwhelming, reach out for support and help by calling 1-888-NYC-Well (692-9355), texting "Well" to 65173, or chatting online at [nyc.gov/nycwell](http://nyc.gov/nycwell).



## 3 Make a [safety plan](#) that can work during the coronavirus crisis.

A safety plan is a personalized, practical list of actions you can take to increase your safety. For example, you can change your passwords and device settings to prevent someone who is causing you harm from accessing your social or location information, have a bag with necessities and identification packed, try to always have your cell phone with you, and identify a safe place nearby to go in an emergency. [Here is a safety planning guide](#). For support with safety planning, reach out to someone you trust, or connect with one of the resources below.



## 4 Stay in touch with people you trust.

Texting, phone calls, video chats, and social media can help you stay connected. You can also tell specific people—friends, neighbors, family members—to send help if they don't hear from you by a certain time each day.

- Call 911 in an emergency. You can create signals indicating an emergency (e.g., pounding on the floor, flickering a light in a window, or using a code word on the telephone).
- Ask a friend to provide a place for you to go in an emergency.
- On [Peer Health Exchange](#), you can connect to other young people and safe information about staying healthy and safe.



## 5 Connect to free resources for information, safety planning, and support:

- Reach out to your teacher or guidance counselor if you want to talk to someone from school.
- Learn more about the warning signs of abusive relationships from [LoveisRespect.org](http://LoveisRespect.org)
- Day One offers confidential counseling and legal assistance over the phone. [You can fill out the form](#) on this website in order to connect with a counselor or, during business hours, you can call their helpline at 1-800-214-4150 or text 646-535-3291.
- [The Trevor Project](#) offers support for LGBTQ youth. You can call their Lifeline at 1-866-488-7386, chat with a counselor online at [TrevorChat](#) or text "START" to 678678
- [The Crisis Text Line](#) is a quick way to get in touch with a counselor; text "HOME" to 741741
- Visit the NYC Hope Resource Directory at [nyc.gov/NYCHOPE](http://nyc.gov/NYCHOPE)
- **If you feel unsafe in your home and you need somewhere to go:**
  - The NYC Department of Youth and Community Development is continuing to provide services for young people in Runaway and Homeless Youth Residences and Drop-In Centers. Call DYCD Youth Connect at 1-800-246-4646 or 1-646-343-6800 or email [DYDCOCVID19@dycd.nyc.gov](mailto:DYDCOCVID19@dycd.nyc.gov).



## 6 Access remote mental health services available to support students during the COVID-19 crisis

- The School Mental Health Program offers tele-health services, which accept health insurance, Medicaid or offer a sliding scale [for billing](#). Visit this link for more information about participating providers.
- Visit the [ThriveNYC Guide to Mental Health Services New Yorkers Can Access While Staying Home](#). Follow [@MentalHealthNYC](#), for the latest updates.