

Technological Safety FAQ

Technological Safety

Technology-facilitated abuse (tech abuse) refers to the misuse of technology by one person to harm, threaten, coerce, stalk, harass, or control another person. This form of abuse can include using text messages, email, or phone calls to monitor, humiliate, or punish; tracking someone's location or online activity; or distributing private or sexual photos or videos without consent.

Studies show that for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence (DFV), tech abuse can amplify feelings of fear and anxiety. The constant presence and control enabled by technology may lead to hypervigilance, chronic stress, and deteriorating mental health.

Technological safety is the principle that everyone has the right to use technology without experiencing harassment or abuse. There are practical steps you can take to enhance your safety and privacy online.

Many victim-survivors consider getting rid of their devices to stop the abuse. However, for some perpetrators, this can escalate their behavior if they feel their power and control are being threatened. It's important to carefully consider the risks of removing technology such as smartphones, cameras, or GPS trackers, and to factor these into your safety planning.

Some survivors choose to **secretly use a safer device or create new accounts** while continuing to use the monitored ones to avoid arousing suspicion or escalating abuse.

Safety Plan for Technological Safety

Use a safer device. If you're in danger, try to use a computer or phone that the abusive person does not have access to—either directly or through remote tools like spyware.

Assume you're being monitored. If you suspect your online or device activity is being watched, you're likely correct. Abusers often use programs like spyware, keystroke loggers, or hacking tools to track their victim's activities.

Be cautious with your digital footprint. You can't erase all traces of your online activity. For example, suddenly deleting your entire browser history can raise suspicion if it's not something you usually do.

Use the monitored device strategically. If you suspect monitoring, continue to use that device for neutral activities (like checking the weather), and use a safer device for critical tasks like researching escape plans, housing, jobs, or transportation.

Avoid unsafe communication channels. Email and text messaging are not secure ways to discuss abuse or seek help. If possible, use a phone to call a trusted hotline from a secure device.

Understand what your device stores. Devices may keep records of internet searches, emails, messages, calls (including VoIP), purchases, banking activity, and more.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The eSafety Commissioner offers helpful tools and “how-to” videos to improve your technological safety, including:

Restricting privacy settings on social media apps like Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook

Turning off location tracking on Apple and Android devices

Securing email accounts with multi-factor authentication

To access these resources, visit: [Video library](#) | [eSafety Commissioner](#)

SOURCES:

DVNQ

[What is domestic and family violence? | Need to know | Queensland Government](#)

[Technology Safety Australia - TechSafety](#)

[Video library | eSafety Commissioner](#)

[Domestic violence | eSafety Commissioner](#)

[WESNET – Women's Services Network](#)