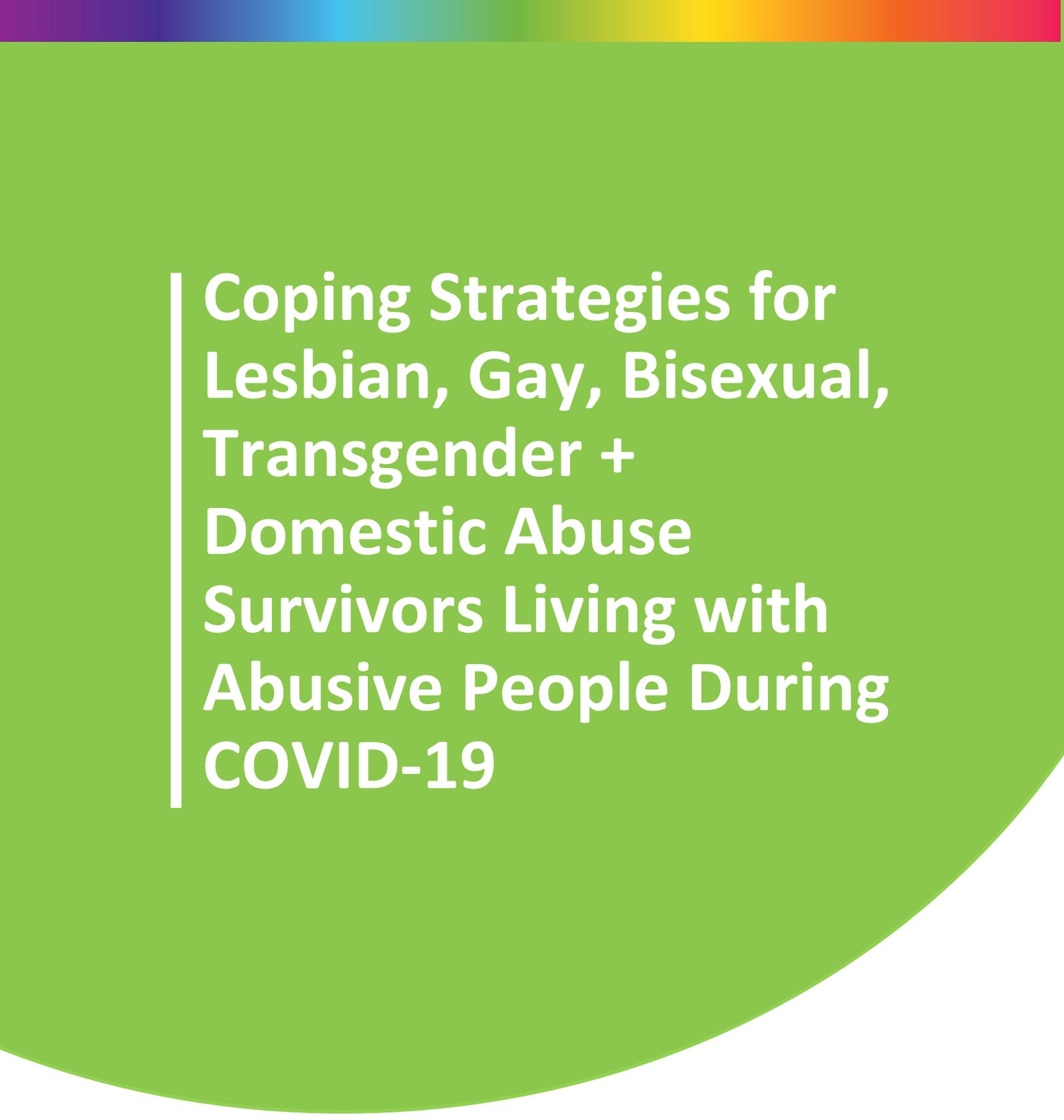




**Coping Strategies for
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,
Transgender +
Domestic Abuse
Survivors Living with
Abusive People During
COVID-19**





0800 999 5428
www.galop.org.uk

This information sheet offers some advice on coping with Social Isolation, COVID-19, and abuse during an unprecedented time. Your safety should always be your first priority and if you are ever in immediate danger, call the police on 999.

Local domestic abuse services should be able to provide support. If you need confidential advice from an LGBT+ specific service, you can contact the National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0800 999 5428.

Contains information about:

■ **Domestic Abuse**

At Galop we usually encourage people to reflect on their relationships and come to a place where they can recognise the abuse is not their fault and people shouldn't put up with people who are harming them, emotionally or physically.

At the moment circumstances globally are unprecedented and you and many other LGBT+ survivors are currently facing a strange and difficult time. If you live with an abusive partner, family member or house mate, it's possible that during quarantine, you'll have limited opportunities to leave your home and abusive behaviour could increase.

As a survivor, you've already dealt with some incredibly difficult situations and so you will already have skills, resources and courage to have managed these. During this additionally stressful time, your skills will be key to helping you cope.

In any situation of violence and abuse, a survivor will always try to minimise, prevent and defy the abuse they experience. In difficult circumstances, you might have to rely on strategies that may not feel comfortable – such as compliance, friendship or secrecy – that millions of people have used to minimise harm towards themselves and survive a tough situation.

Anything you do, even being compliant, is an attempt to minimise and prevent abuse. You are not complicit in or responsible for what is happening.

Remember

- Your partner may try and turn the situation to their advantage to increase control over you. Quarantine and concerns around infection could be used as justification or excuses to control or punish you or minimise or deny they're doing this. This isn't true or right.
- Continually remind yourself that this is not ok, not your fault and you're doing what you need to do to survive.
- If it's all getting too much, please call 0800 999 5428, [webchat](#) or e-mail the National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline help@galop.org.uk to offload about things even if you feel like nothing can be done. We are happy just to listen and be with you.

Even if you do everything you can and your partner still harms you, this isn't your fault. An abusive partner is always responsible for their own behaviour

1. If You Need to Go ASAP

Remember if you need to walk out or you know it is getting dangerous for you or any children in your household you are totally entitled to do this and the police have said they will support domestic abuse survivors who are in this situation.

If things do get to a point where you need to call the police, call 999 and if you are unable to speak then dial 55 and the police will help you without you having to say anything.

Both [Iphones](#) and [Android](#) phones have quick step ways of alerting the police that there is a problem AND emergency contacts at the same time.

If you press the side button (not the volume) 3-5 times in a row it will bring up an option to be put through to the emergency services. If it is too dangerous for you to say anything, leave the phone open and they will put you through to the police.

You can also set up emergency contacts and it is worth making the emergency contact(s) the same people who know what is going on for you at the moment. They will get a message and your location.

You won't be 'told off' for breaking quarantine conditions.

2. Isolation

It may be easier for your partner to increase your isolation from others at this time. This might be especially true if you're now working from home and can't see your colleagues as much. They might also monitor your phone or computer more.

How can you get around this?

- If you can get out the house alone, make the most of this opportunity to talk to other people, either by phone or chat. Delete your messages or call records afterwards.
- [Learn how to improve your online safety](#) and cover your tracks when communication with other people online, on your phone, and laptop/computer
- If your partner is monitoring your phone more, switch to a new app to talk to people.
- Try apps that allow for more secrecy. Telegram and Signal let you send messages that disappear after a time and Kik and Snapchat delete all messages sent at regular intervals. You can also add additional password protections within apps.
- Get familiar with how to delete messages quickly in each app.

3. Verbal Abuse, Belittling, Degrading

It can be very hard to deal with being called names or told you're worthless. These things are not true and they're not ok. Find whatever way you can to remind yourself that what's being said isn't true, even if sometimes you struggle to believe that.

When you feel most confident that what is being said is not true, think of what is true for you. If you feel safe to do so, repeat challenges to their lies to yourself or in your mind. You know your truth.

Write these down, record them on your phone's voice recorder or e-mail them to yourself. Repeat them or listen to them at different points in the day and say them in your mind to yourself.

Here are a few you can try:

"I am not worthless. I'm an ok human being, no better or worse than anyone else. I have survived and I will keep surviving. I will do what it takes to survive this and in the future I will be free. I am a problem solving, resilient person and I can outsmart them."

4. Physical Violence

Aggression might increase during this time because your partner knows it's harder for you to get away or get help. If it feels like tension is building towards an incident of some kind, think back to times like this in the past and what has helped to de-escalate or diffuse the tension.

This might include agreeing with your partner, remaining calm yourself, praising them, or something else.

*If you can, schedule a phone appointment with your doctor to get some medical help after violence, or attend an urgent care unit. Don't allow Coronavirus to put you off doing this – **you need and deserve care at these times**. Medical records of injuries could also be very valuable if you decide to leave your relationship and you need legal help as part of this*

If your partner might destroy your belongings (or your children's belongings), try hiding anything that's very important to you. This can lower the risk of them being targeted. If you can take them to a nearby neighbour or friend for safe keeping, even better.

Important items could be sentimental like family photographs, or practical like identity documents or medication, you know what is most important for you.

5. Food & Money

While it's harder to get to work or shop for necessities, this could make it easier for your partner to disrupt your income, monitor your spending, take your cash or cards, or otherwise financially harm you.

- This resource from [Surviving Economic Abuse](#) has lots of information and resources around how to manage this
- Local government or borough websites have a lot of local information about how to get food and resources in your area.
- You can access food parcels by calling [Citizen's Advice Bureau](#) on 0300 330 1187 (Monday-Friday 9am – 5pm).
- There are [mutual aid groups](#) across the country helping people get what they need.
- The Outside Project has a '[London LGBTIQ+ COVID19 Mutual Aid](#)' Group on Facebook

6. Children

Depending on their age, create a safety plan with your children about where to go in the event of an argument (to their bedrooms or bathroom).

Give them a code word/sentence such as '*it is feeling really warm in here*' that lets them know they need to leave the house or go to a designated room and call the Police.

Try and move away from your children if the abuser starts to attack and try and move the argument away from dangerous areas with access to weapons e.g. kitchen/bathroom.

- [Familylives](#) has a helpline and information about coping at home in COVID 19.
- [Surestart](#) have some useful information about family life during Covid 19 which can help you cope.

As a survivor, you've already dealt with some very difficult situations and so you will already have incredible skills, resources and courage to have managed these.

7. Medication & Care

If you need medication or care to manage everyday life and your partner is preventing you getting this or controlling your access to it, then this is something to feel seriously concerned about. We define this as a safeguarding issue and would want to support you in accessing services that could help you get the medication or care you need.

You can email help@galop.org.uk call 0800 999 5428 and leave your contact details so we can confirm with you the situation and what is needed.

Some [pharmacies](#) do deliver. [Boots](#), for instance, do deliver if you request it online and there is no charge for repeat prescriptions. Lloyds Pharmacy use an online pharmacy service called [Echo](#), and that is also free for repeat prescriptions. Visit the pharmacy websites linked for instructions on how to set this up.

If you need support on CoronaVirus information in the [following languages](#) (Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Mandarin, French, Gujarati, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Urdu, Welsh).

What would happen if you got the virus? Here are a few questions for reflection:

- Can you stock up on the food and medicine you need to keep yourself going without relying on your partner or a family member?
- Do you need to hide these items to keep them safe?
- Is there anyone you could connect with in advance to agree to help each other if needed?
- If you have children, who would care for them? Or could they care for each other if you get symptoms?

See if you can organize in advance, even if you never need it.

HIV Medication

- If it is difficult for you to have your medication delivered to your home. The clinic can arrange for medication to be delivered to certain pharmacies near your home. You can call your clinic for a confidential conversation about living with an abusive person. They may allow you to come and pick up your medication from their clinic.
- If you have to travel long distances to your regular HIV clinic, it might be worth asking your regular clinic if you can be linked to an alternative HIV clinic nearer your home for the time being.

If you are forced to stop taking HIV meds, it's important to speak to your clinic, or call the freephone [THT Direct Helpline](#) 0808 802 1221 or read their [online portal](#).

8. Substance Use

You may have a partner who uses substances or alcohol and this time has changed how they would usually use or means you are increasingly exposed to it as they are in with you more.

You or your partner may change your relationship with substances or alcohol at this time. You may be exposed to your partners use while together more. You may also feel yourself more drawn to use within the context of COVID19.

There are services to help, whether it is your partner, yourself or a family member.

If your partner uses alcohol or substances

- [Al-Anon](#) helps families and friends of drug and alcohol users. They also have family groups: 0207 403 0888
- [Know the Score](#) has a Helpline 0333 230 9468 and a ton of info to understand substances.

- [Adfam](#) has guides, leaflets and a forum for supporting parents and family members which address specific issues you may be facing because of your relationship with a substance user.

- [ACA \(Adult Children Of Alcoholics\)](#) is still hosting anonymous meetings over zoom. 07786 930357

If you are using substances and alcohol

- [Eight Step Recovery](#) is an alternative recovery program to the 12 step program of Alcoholic Anonymous. It uses the Buddhist teachings to overcome addiction.

- [Know the Score](#) has a Helpline 0333 230 9468 and a webchat service to get remote support while isolating.

- If you are an opiate user make sure you have access to a [naloxone kit](#). You can still ask your drug service, doctor or chemist for this.

- [Antidote](#), London Friend's service for people using substances is still providing support over the phone. They have outlined a home self-care plan [resource](#) for those struggling in isolation.

Needle exchanges:

In the UK, they are town, city and borough specific. *Ask your drug service, chemist, or doctor.* [Scotland](#) has its own system.

Chemsex:

- [London Friend](#) has information about chemsex use and coronavirus.
- [Burrell Street Sexual Health Centre](#) is a free sexual health and HIV clinic, phone for an appointment to get free

12 Step Recovery Groups

Many 12 Step groups are now running zoom meetings so people can have the opportunity to talk with others about the issues they are facing at the moment. Look on these websites for updated Zoom Meetings.

- [AA \(Alcoholics Anonymous\)](#): 0800 9177 650
- BME Black Minority Ethnic AA
<https://zoom.us/j/8188897186> Meeting ID: 818 889 7186
- [NA \(Narcotics Anonymous\)](#): 0300 999
- [CA \(Cocaine Anonymous\)](#): 0300 111 2285
- [CMA \(Crystal Meth Anonymous\)](#)
- MA (Marijuana Anonymous): 07940 503 438
- [OA \(Over Eaters Anonymous\)](#): 07798 587 802
- [ABA \(Anorexic & Bulimics Anonymous\)](#)
- LGBTQ+ Daily Reflections Meeting
Tuesdays at 7.30pm Via: [Zoom Meeting](#)
Meeting ID: 271 628 066

9. Resilience & Well Being

Here are some resources about self-care to help people increase their emotional and physical strength and resilience. It may be helpful for you to cope with the current context by using remote resources to support your personal wellness.

- [NHS self-help guides](#) for sleep, anxiety and much more
- A [Mediation app](#) by and for people of colour.
- Mind remote [support for mental health and wellbeing](#)
- [Self-care for trans people in Isolation](#)

- [Yoga](#) on YouTube led by plus-size instructor Edyn Jacks
- Trauma tips and resources from the [Trauma Geek](#)
- LGBTQI+ London COVID19 & Social Distancing Survival [Guide](#)
- Survivors Network [Online Resources](#) for Survivors
- Free [Black-Trans Archive](#)
- [The Outside Project](#) now doubles as a virtual community centre for LGBT+ people.
- House of rainbow [inclusive church](#)
- Free [Trans Archive](#)
- Imaan [Muslim LGBTQ group](#)
- Sarbat for [Sikh LGBT+](#)
- [The Clare Project](#) – listening service for trans/Non-binary and intersex people.
- The British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy put together [tips and strategies](#) to help you cope with coronavirus-related anxiety
- If you have displaced emotions you can try this [interactive flow chart](#)
- The [Inclusive Mosque Initiative](#), is an intersectional feminist and queer-friendly mosque
- Online “crafternoons” for LBT+ women with London Friend. Email: clare@londonfriend.org.uk to join.