

Greetings,

With the circumstances involving COVID-19, concern regarding domestic violence is on the rise. Social distancing has caused an increase in abuse across the globe. According to *TIME*, "the National Domestic Violence Hotline reports that a growing number of callers say that their abusers are using COVID-19 as a means of further isolating them from their friends and family." Some callers also report their perpetrators are withholding financial and medical resources and even threatening to throw them out on the streets so they will get sick. It is imperative that victims are given the resources they need in order to leave during critical times such as the one we are facing.

Domestic violence victims are usually at the greatest risk from their abuser when they decide to leave their situation. As a mental health counselor, you have the opportunity to point clients to programs that will allow them to remain safe if they choose to distance themselves from their unhealthy situation.

One resource that is available statewide is Safe at Home, an address confidentiality program for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and trafficking. It provides a legal substitute address, mail forwarding and confidential absentee voting for participants. The program allows those enrolled to live active lives without having their actual address listed on public records.

Safe at Home has produced a booklet for those that may be looking for a way to assist a friend, family member, or client who is facing domestic violence. Entitled "Someone You Know Needs Help," it provides practical suggestions and a list of local programs and resources across the state.

I hope that this booklet proves to be a valuable resource for you and your clients. Please consider placing copies in your waiting area. I've also included brochures, program cards, and a removable sticker that could be placed in a window or restroom stall. If you would like to receive additional complimentary materials, or more information please contact me at safeathome@sos.iowa.gov or visit the website at safeathome.iowa.gov.

Thank you for partnering with us to help victims become survivors in the state of Iowa.

Sincerely,
Melanie Shellenberger
Safe at Home Program Administrator
Office of Iowa Secretary of State Paul Pate
515.725.SAFE (7233)



An Address Confidentiality
Program Helping Victims
Become Survivors

What is Safe at Home?

A free state-sponsored program that allows survivors of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and trafficking to keep their address confidential.

Provides participants a legal substitute address, mail forwarding service, and confidential voter registration.

Actual physical address of participants will not appear on public records.

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