



Assessing for Technology Abuse and Privacy Concerns

Best Practices for Agencies

The safety and privacy of survivors is often compromised by abusers who misuse technology, as well as the ways that the survivor's personal information is shared. As advocates, it is imperative that we take the time to educate ourselves and our clients about the various ways stalking, tracking, and monitoring through technology happens.

The following information will help you and the survivor think through how to narrow down technology misuse by the abuser so you can properly safety plan. The questions are only meant to quickly assess what might be an issue and is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all technology-related safety concerns a survivor might face. Advocates should follow up with a more thorough conversation about the survivor's specific concerns and discuss strategies to increase safety, document incidents, and get additional help. Keep in mind that survivors often attend support groups with little direct and ongoing interaction with advocates, so consider incorporating this information as a support group topic as well.

Steps to Assessing Technology Misuse & Safety:

- *Prioritize safety planning:* What are your current safety concerns?
- *Narrow down the possible technology that could be used:* What types of things have happened to make you feel unsafe or cause concern?
- *Gauge the survivor's knowledge and understanding:* How do you think this is happening?

These questions open a conversation that will explore and prioritize safety, discusses what types of technology devices or applications could be misused, and how to best safety plan to address their needs and further their knowledge.

Below are sample questions and possible technology misuses to get you started.

1. Are you concerned about the abuser knowing where you are all the time? Let's explore some common ways tracking can occur.
 - Through your cell phone?
 - Through applications on your phone that use your location?
 - Through social media?
 - Through friends & family?
 - Through your car? Some kind of tracking device on the car?
2. Are you worried that the abuser might be able to access your communication with other people? Let's explore some common ways communication can be compromised.
 - Email communication.
 - Cell phone communication.
 - Phone communication.
 - Other type of communication: _
3. Are you concerned about information that's posted about you online? Let's look at possible ways information about you could be shared online.
 - Through social media accounts that you have?
 - Through social media accounts that the abuser has?
 - Through your children/family/friends' social media accounts?
 - What specifically is your concern around those accounts? [Example: The abuser is posting terrible things. The abuser is monitoring social media accounts to find information about you. The abuser is accessing online accounts without your permission.]
 - Is there other information online about you that you are concerned about?
4. Are you concerned about your children/family/friends' use of technology and the possibility it could compromise your safety?
 - Are they using specific applications on their cell phones, iPads, tablets, etc. that you're concerned about?
 - Are there games that they are playing that you're worried about?

5. Are you concerned about your ability to continue using technology while maintaining your safety and privacy?
 - Are there specific technology devices, such as your cell phone or your laptop, that you want to go through to ensure that it is safe and secure?
 - Do you need to go through your social network accounts to figure out privacy and security settings?
6. What are other concerns that you have about your privacy and safety?

For more information on common technology misuse and specific safety planning strategies, please refer to NNEDV Tool Kit Resources: [Technology Safety Quick Tips](#).

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