

MGH Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Resources and Safety Planning during COVID-19 *Updated 3/23/20*

This document and any policies described were prepared (in March, 2020) by and for Partners HealthCare medical professionals (a.k.a. clinicians, care givers) and employees and is being made available publicly for informational purposes only, in the context of a public health emergency related to COVID-19 (a.k.a. the coronavirus) and in connection with the state of emergency declared by the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the President of the United States. It is based on pertinent published medical literature, national and state guidelines, and/or expert consensus, which continues to evolve relative to COVID-19. It is neither an attempt to substitute for the practice of medicine nor as a substitute for the provision of any medical professional services. Furthermore, the content is not meant to be complete, exhaustive, or a substitute for medical professional advice, diagnosis, or treatment. The information herein should be adapted to each specific patient based on the treating medical professional's independent professional judgment and consideration of the patient's needs, the resources available at the location from where the medical professional services are being provided (e.g., healthcare institution, ambulatory clinic, physician's office, etc.), and any other unique circumstances. This information should not be used to replace, substitute for, or overrule a qualified medical professional's judgment. You assume full responsibility for using this information and understand and agree that Partners HealthCare is not responsible or liable for any errors or omissions or for any claim, loss or damage resulting from the use of this information.

Safety Planning During COVID-19

Safety plans are valuable tools if you are in an abusive relationship. You may have to adjust your tools to stay safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Safety in Close Quarters: *Families will likely find themselves spending most or all of their time in close quarters. There are steps that you can take to try and avoid escalating situations within the home.*

- Create scheduled time where you and your partner are in different rooms of your home.
- If possible, go on walks or exercise outside separately from your partner.
- Keep to a schedule for children's meals, wake-up, learning, and bedtime.
- Keep a phone charged and available.
- Stay with friends or family for an extended period of time.
- If you are not living with your partner:
 - You may be easier to find and/or track now that you are in your home at all times.
 - Make sure to lock all doors, contact building management to change locks if needed.
 - Notify a trusted neighbor or building security to call 911 if your partner is seen in the building.

Safety During Escalating Moments: *If an escalating situation is unavoidable, you may find yourself with limited ability to leave your home, seek help from neighbors, or stay with friends or family for an extended period of time.*

- If possible call 911 for emergency services.
- Have a code word or phrase established with a trusted friend or family member who can alert police to respond to an emergency when you are unable to call 911.
- Avoid the kitchen, bathroom, or any room where a weapon is kept.
- Try and create physical space between yourself and your partner by going into another room until things de-escalate.
- If possible, go for a walk or exercise outside to give things time to de-escalate.
- Attempt to keep children safe and in a different room with the door closed.
- Teach children not to intervene or get involved in the middle of a fight.

Internet Safety: *Many people may find themselves working from home or out of work completely. This may require more vigilance and increased safety protocols to keep sensitive information private on your computer and phone.*

- Lock your computer while not in use or when you step away.
- Log out of emails, social media, messaging, online banking etc.
- Click “no” when web-browsers ask to “save passwords”.
- Clear search histories, change passwords.

How to Seek Support: *Many programs will be operating remotely or offering limited services. Call Safelink's 24-7 Hotline at (877) 785 2020 or visit https://janedoe.org/find_help/ to find statewide access to support and services.*

- If you are seeking services from a program already and it is safe to do so, reach out via phone or email for advice and support.
- Know your local police department's non-emergency number to reach out with questions or concerns. *Text 911 is also available in Cambridge*
- Dial 2-1-1 in the state of Massachusetts for information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic

Protection Orders: *Emergency 209A Restraining Orders and 258E Harassment Prevention Orders are still available through your local police department.*

- **All active protective orders due to expire on or after March 18th, 2020 until April 6, 2020 will remain in effect until rescheduled and heard by the court. You will be notified by your local court via phone of the new hearing date.**
- If possible, call or go to local police department to file for a emergency 209A Restraining Order or 258E Harassment Prevention Order. Keep any orders issued on you at all times.

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Resources Available of 3/23/2020

As “social distancing” is encouraged we understand that domestic and/or sexual violence might increase in the home. Individuals may be isolated with an abusive partner or household member, be in fear and unable to access critical services for safety and support. As a result of the guidance issued by the Governor and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) there have been temporary shifts to many services to minimize the risk of virus transmission. This document will be updated regularly to offer up to date information about available resources in and around Cambridge for at risk individuals and families who are in need of support due to domestic violence, sexual violence, family violence, and partner abuse. Please provide any agency updates to Cambridge Police Department Victim Advocate Alyssa Donovan via email adonovan@cambridgepolice.org.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESOURCES

Individuals experiencing domestic violence, seeking resources or information, or questioning unhealthy aspects of their relationship that wish to access free, confidential, 24-7 support can call Safelink or the National Domestic Violence Hotline.

SafeLink: Massachusetts’ statewide 24/7 toll-free, multi-lingual domestic violence hotline and a resource for anyone affected by domestic violence can be accessed by calling **(877) 785 2020**.

National Domestic Violence Hotline: Advocates are available 24/7 at **1-800-799-SAFE (7233)** in more than 200 languages. All calls are free and confidential.

Transition House

24/7 Hotline (617)-661-7203

www.transitionhouse.org

DV Program providing services to individuals and families in Cambridge.

- 24/7 Hotline Advocates are available to provide support and help to safety plan. If services beyond crisis support are needed, hotline advocates will refer to the Community Team. All new referrals must go thru the hotline advocates
- Community Team available to provide support during regular business hours (M-F 9a-5p). The office is closed to the public. Staff is providing counseling and advocacy to current clients remotely via teleconference.
- Emergency shelter at capacity.

RESPOND Inc.

617 623 5900

www.respondinc.org

DV Program providing services to individuals/families in Somerville-Malden Area.

- RESPOND’s 24-hour hotline is always available to provide emotional support, safety planning, resources and referrals.
- Staff will continue to provide 1-1 support, counseling and emergency assistance to community based clients via telephone, web-based product (Zoom) and in person (on a limited basis).
- Survivors should contact RESPOND’s 24-hour hotline for intakes and to discuss options.

REACH Beyond Domestic Violence

24/7 Hotline 1-800-899-4000

<http://reachma.org>

Domestic violence support for several communities including Belmont and Arlington.

- The office is closed until April 6th.
- REACH staff are all working remotely and continuing to provide advocacy by phone.
- For new referrals and intakes: Individuals may call the main line at **781-891-0724 9:00a.m.- 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday**. If leaving a message survivors should indicate if it's safe to receive a voicemail message from an advocate who will return their call.

Asian Task Force (A-TASK)

24/7 Hotline 617-338-2355

<https://www.atask.org>

Domestic violence support for pan-Asian survivors in New England

- Main Offices in Boston and Lowell are closed, and all advocates are working remotely.
- Shelter program is open and running at capacity; no new shelter clients are currently being accepted.
- New referral process: call the hotline and the advocate will continue the intake process as normal via phone.
- Past/Current clients can call to speak with their advocate/case manager directly or call the hotline.
- ESOL, community engagement and other in-person services are suspended at this time.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE RESOURCES

Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC)

24/7 Hotline 1-800-841-8371

<https://barcc.org>

Offers free, confidential services to sexual assault survivors 12+ and their families.

- **Counseling, Legal Advocacy, and Case Management:** Survivors currently receiving services will continue receiving services remotely, either online or by phone.
- **New Referrals:** Survivors who are looking to begin services should submit a request online: barcc.org/help/make-appointment or by phone at 617-492-8306, and the service access team will explore individual needs with the survivor.
- **Hotline:** Running as usual! Survivors or professionals can still reach the hotline for support by phone/consultation 24-7 at 800-841-8371 and online 9:00 a.m.–11:00 p.m. at barcc.org/chat.
- **Medical Advocacy:** In consultation with the Department of Public Health, hospital accompaniment services are suspended until further notice. Survivors at the hospital will have the opportunity to connect with an advocate over the phone. For survivors with questions about the sexual assault exam and evidence collection, contact the hotline or visit surviverape.org/ for more information, and reach out to the Forensic Information Line at 866-463-3799 (Mondays, 3:00–5:00 p.m., and Thursdays, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 noon; if you leave a message, they will call you back within two business days.)
- **Incarcerated Survivor Support:** The hotline for incarcerated survivors is still available seven days a week.

All of this information, as well as any updates, will be made available on BARCC's website as soon as possible in English and Spanish at barcc.org/serviceupdate.

POLICE & RESTRAINING ORDER/HARASSMENT PREVENTION ORDER ASSISTANCE

Cambridge Police Department Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Unit

For all emergencies dial 911

Non emergencies dial 617 349 3300

Victim Advocate: Call/Text 617 875 7842 or Email: adonovan@cambridgepolice.org

- Victim advocate and/or detectives will continue to follow up via phone on all domestic violence, domestic dispute, and sexual assault reports to help address safety concerns, provide information about protective orders, identify and assist survivors access available services. In-person response, including interviewing to be conducted by detectives only under emergency circumstances.
- Victim advocate is available by phone M-F 8:30 a.m.-5:00pm to discuss options, provide support, and safety plan with residents experiencing domestic and/or sexual violence. Will also assist plaintiff's in determining when their next scheduled RO/HPO extension date is.
- Per the Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) all trial courts in MA are closed to the public until at least April 6, 2020. During this time, CPD officers, detectives, and advocates (on a limited in-person basis) will be available to assist with new protection orders applications. **See below.**

Massachusetts Trial Court/Middlesex District Attorney's Office/Cambridge District Court

Middlesex District Attorney's Office: 781-897-8300

<https://www.middlesexda.com>

Cambridge District Court Clerk's Office: 781 306 2710

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/executive-office-of-the-trial-court>

From Middlesex DA's Office:

- The SJC issued an order limiting in-person proceedings in Massachusetts state courthouses until at least April 6, 2020, during this time, physical locations are closed and the staff of the MDAO will be working remotely. Assistant District Attorneys and Victim Witness Advocates will continue to conduct follow-up with victims via phone for any new arraignments.
- For questions call 781-897-8300. Staff will be answering calls during regular business hours, and voicemails left on this line will be checked and calls will be returned.
- Victims and witnesses in upcoming cases should be advised that the Massachusetts Trial Court has suspended all trials until April 21, 2020. All other court dates have also been suspended. The office is in the process of reaching out to individuals directly regarding the status of these cases.

From the Cambridge District Court:

- Any existing RO/HPO expiring between March 19, 2020 and April 8, 2020 will be extended until April 8, 2020. Any party that has a hearing rescheduled during this time will be expected to call the **Cambridge District Court Clerk's Office prior to April 6, 2020 at 781 306 2710** for new date.
- If a plaintiff wishes to vacate/modify an existing RO/HPO, they must appear in-person with proper identification at Cambridge PD to make the request via tele-conference with the Judge.
- From 8:30a.m-4:30pm M-F, any new RO/HPO will be treated as an emergency application using tele-conference with a Judge until at least April 6, 2020. **Cambridge residents can appear in-person at the Cambridge Police Department, 125 Sixth Street, Cambridge, MA to file. If residents cannot appear in-person they should call 911 or non-Emergency CPD line 617 349 3300 for assistance.** Officers will continue to utilize the Emergency Response Judicial System for any emergency 209A/258E applications that are requested after business hours and on weekends/holidays.

SERVICES FOR HOMELESS WOMEN

On the Rise

617-497-7968

<http://www.ontherise.org>

Day program offering support and services to homeless women in the Cambridge area.

- **THE SAFE HAVEN** will NOT be operating as a drop-in but it will be staffed 8:00am - 1:00pm, Monday - Friday to distribute carry-out, packaged foods and bag/box lunches and offer limited access to the building for brief visits. For example, to use the bathroom, get access to belongings stored in our lockers, etc.
- Visitors may be asked to answer questions about their health and they may be asked to allow staff to take their temperature if they need to enter the building.
- Hours for breakfast distribution: 8:30am - 10:00am Monday-Friday
- Hours for lunch distribution: 11:00am - 12:30pm Monday-Friday
- Participants can still receive/check their mail at On The Rise. Staff will deliver mail to participants on the porch (Monday-Friday from 8:00-1:00).
- Advocates are available to offer phone support and advocacy. **Please call 617-497-7968 if you would like to speak to an advocate.**
- We will be closed on Saturdays and holidays.
- **KEEP THE KEYS for housed program participants:** All groups, events and outings have been suspended until further notice. Advocates are available to offer phone support and advocacy. **Please call 617-497-7968 if you would like to speak to an advocate.**

Rosie's Place: 889 Harrison Ave, Boston, MA

617 442 9322

www.rosiesplace.org

Day program and overnight shelter offering services for homeless women in Boston area.

- As of 3/17/2020, Rosie's Place will remain open while incorporating social distancing throughout each service. Additionally, multiple portable hand washing stations have been installed throughout the building to encourage hand hygiene. Each guest is asked to wash as they enter our building, before and after meals, and as they leave.
- **Emergency Programs:** The showers, phones, computers, laundry, and sitting room are open daily for homeless women.
- **Dining Room:** Lunch and dinner service remains active. Guests may take their meals to-go or sit one-to-a-table.
- **Overnight Shelter:** Extended stays are being offered to the current shelter clients.
- **Pantry:** Will provide a week's worth of pre-bagged groceries so that those who are housed can remain indoors for longer.
- **Stabilization Program:** Delivery of food and other essentials is offered to the currently housed clients.
- Remote advocacy is available so that women seeking services are able to connect with expert help by phone by calling **617 442 9322** and requesting to be connected to an advocate.

SERVICES AT HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

Victim Resource Center (VRC) at Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA)

617-665-2992

www.challiance.org/VictimResourceCenter

A free service that provides confidential clinically informed advocacy services to violent crime victims.

- Services are being provided only thru telephone at this time. If seeking crisis services and to reach staff call VRC general line 617-665-2992. Calls will be responded to during business hours 9am to 5 pm Monday through Friday. *Situation is fluid, changes to protocol may be frequent.*
- CHA primary care offices are open, however patients are strongly encouraged to stay home and communicate with doctors via phone unless it's an emergency or high risk.
- The tele-medicine system is supposed to be implemented very soon.
- All the individual appointments at the sites are cancelled (except for a few high risk cases) at the Outpatient Psychiatry Department and the patients are being reached by their therapists via phone. Outpatient Psychiatry televisits will begin Monday, March 23.
- All our emergency rooms are open.
- COVID-19 Virus Testing for CHA Patients only at this time.
- In addition to general services, VRC is offering supportive counseling to crime victims via phone to provide coping skills to manage anxiety related to COVID-19.

Fenway Health

Office line 617-927-6250 acting as a hotline during regular business hours M-F.

<https://fenwayhealth.org/>

Free counseling, advocacy, information for LGBT survivors of DV, SA, and hate violence.

- All services for the Violence Recovery Program transitioning to over the phone.
- Continuing to accept new clients using a phone intake process and will begin services over the phone as needed. Once things return to normal, they will transition new clients into regular in-person services.
- Certain public health services that require on-site interaction with clients are suspended, including: sexual health prevention, community-based case management (including the Lynn office), housing services, legal services, and the homeless youth drop-in center, Youth On Fire. These programs will be suspended until at least Friday, April 3, at which time they will determine whether it is appropriate to reinstate them.
- Fenway Health is NOT a COVID-19 Virus Test S at this time
- Syringe and NARCAN distribution will remain in operation through our teams at Amory Street in Jamaica Plain, Green Street in Cambridge, and the mobile outreach van. For these services, clients will be admitted to the facility one person at a time to eliminate congestion. Clients may be provided with up to one month of supplies in order to minimize the need for return visits.
- New study enrollments are suspended for the time being, using video interviewing and internet-based assessments whenever possible, and conducting face-to-face visits only to assess the safety of experimental vaccines and medications, and/or to dispense study products.
- All Fenway Health staff, clients, and patients will participate in a brief screening protocol immediately upon entry to facilities every day, at all locations. The screening is designed to reduce the risk of anyone entering the buildings who may have been exposed to the virus.

LEGAL AID

De Novo (Formerly Community Legal Service and Counseling Center)

617-661-1010

www.denovo.org

Provides legal representation in areas of domestic violence, child custody, and family law. Offers mental health counseling.

- All clinics, in-person client meetings, and walk-ins are suspended until March 31, 2020. See individual unit info detailed below.
- Intake and referral line is open, with legal and counseling services being provided by video and conference call from 9:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. Monday- Friday.
- Staff is available to all current clients by phone and email to ensure that they stay up -to -date on all case information and potential changes in scheduling and/or format of any scheduled court appearances.
- **Family Law & Housing Unit:** All clients/referrals should continue to call the main line 617-661-1010 for intakes as usual and our intake specialist will follow up. Intakes are open for phone advice and counsel only. Intake for full representation cases are suspended at least until 4/1
- **Disability Unit:** Intakes are closed until 4/1.
- **Immigration Unit:** Intakes for Asylum seekers is currently closed. Intakes for VAWA, SIJs and U/T Visas are closed until 4/1. The March Immigration Clinic has also been cancelled.

Greater Boston Legal Services

<https://gbls.org/>

Provides free civil legal aid to low income individuals and families.

- GBLS offices are closed to the public due to the Coronavirus crisis. The staff is working remotely providing limited critical services. If you are a current client, please contact your advocate directly. If you are seeking services for the first time, please contact the Eastern Region Legal Intake at 617-603-1700.

Victim Rights Law Center (VRLC)

617 399 6720

www.victimrights.org

Provides legal representation for victims of sexual assault.

- The entire VRLC team is currently working remotely and continuing to provide legal advice over the phone.
- Call 617 399 6720 ext. 19 or email legalhelp@victimrights.org for all intakes. Phone is preferred.
- Staff will strategize on a case by case basis depending upon the survivor's need, VRLC capacity, and if the court is open and/or allowing video or phone conferencing.
- VRLC encourages all of it's partners to continue referring survivors for legal assistance and will continue to do their best to meet the survivors needs.

HOUSING

**Cambridge Housing Authority Central Office is closed until further notice.
Staff is working from home, minimized site staff still available.**

****CHA residents or voucher participants that have had a change in income or expenses, may contact a Leasing Officer or Property Manager directly to request an Interim Recertification, or click [here](#) to make the request and someone will follow up directly with the resident****

The CHA is working hard to ensure all essential functions performed at the Central Office will continue during this period without affecting the timely delivery of our core operations, and this includes the development of precautionary efforts geared toward their sites as well. With this in mind, please make note of the following adjustments:

- Effective 3/16/20 at 5pm, the Central Office will be closed to the public until further notice. Central Office functions however, will continue with employees working from home.
- All CHA staff members are available and will respond to voicemails left on direct lines.
- In addition to the central office shutting down to the public, the main operating phone line (617-864-3020) will transition over to an answering service as of 3/16/20 at 5pm. An assigned CHA staff member has been tasked with sorting through messages that are left with the answering service to then distribute to appropriate staff at sites.
- The CHA will be implementing a staffing plan to ensure sites are staffed on a rotating basis and are following new protocols in being able to respond to emergency work orders only.
- CHA is taking great responsibility in protecting our 1,200 elderly residents living at CHA properties and is committed to promoting safe spaces, new cleaning measures, social distancing, and proper signage to keep our elderly communities safe.
- CHA is halting construction at Millers River Apartments, Burns Apartments, Porter Road, Roosevelt Towers, and St. Paul's Residence in Harvard Square. Construction will begin to wind down tomorrow 3/17/20, but may take a day or two to cease entirely.

Message from The CHA: "The CHA is considered "essential" and must make strides to not abandon entirely the services provided to residents, especially the elderly. We are appreciative of our community partners for their collaboration in working toward our shared goal of making sure no one in Cambridge gets left behind during this public health crisis. Thank you for your understanding during this time."

OTHER INFORMATION

From the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA): Offices are closed to the public - all access and applications must be done telephonically or electronically.

Apply for SNAP or TAFDC cash benefits: call the DTA assistance line 1-877-382-2363

DTA connect: <https://dtaconnect.eohhs.mass.gov/> to apply for benefits, submit documents, check benefits.

Food Source Hotline: 1-800-645-8333 is Project Bread's toll-free line that provides info on food pantries, resources, student meal sights, etc. **Check with individual school district's online sites** for info about "grab and go" meals for students.

Visit: www.foodpantries.org for list of food pantries (searchable by area/city)

Parental Stress Hotline: 1-800-632-8188 visit <https://www.parentshelpingparents.org/> for online support group information.

From the Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA): <https://www.challiance.org/help-center/covid-19-alert>

- If you feel sick with a fever or dry cough, or other flu-like symptoms, call your primary care provider. In most cases, you should just stay home. Always tell your medical team if you have been in contact with someone with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19.
- If you have a high fever, trouble breathing or severe flu-like symptoms, call 9-1-1 or go to your closest Emergency Department.
- Please do not come to the Emergency Department if you have mild symptoms or are looking for COVID-19 testing. The ED is for patients with serious health needs.
- CHA primary care sites are discouraging walk-in visits. Please call to schedule a visit.
- CHA cannot provide medical clearance for return to work or school after foreign travel.
- CHA is working on expanding COVID-19 testing in the near future (see below).

Drive Thru Testing: CHA is launching a drive-thru COVID-19 testing tent beginning Wednesday, March 18.

The service will be offered to CHA patients from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., seven days a week, until further notice.

Testing will be provided to CHA patients who have fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath symptoms. The drive-thru service will be expanded as testing becomes more widely available.

From the City of Cambridge: To help mitigate the effect of COVID-19, the City of Cambridge has closed all municipal buildings and asked non-essential staff not to report to the office beginning Tuesday, March 17th until further notice.

A list of all city services you can access online can be found on www.cambridgema.gov/online

Updated information on the City's response to COVID-19 (coronavirus) as well as contact information for the Public Health Department can be found at www.cambridgema.gov/covid19

General questions should be directed to 311@cambridgema.gov or by dialing 311.

From the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV): All Class D and Class DM driver's licenses, ID cards, and Learner's Permits that have expired or are expiring between March 1, 2020 and April 30, 2020, will have a 60-day extension applied to the current expiration date.

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rmv-covid-19-information>