

Guide 3:

The red flags... are you at risk?

Your phone and computer can help you stay in touch with trusted friends and family, and get help when you are in difficult situations. However, technology can also be misused.

An abusive partner or ex-partner may use technology to attack, humiliate or control you. They may also use technology to monitor your activities without your knowledge. This kind of abuse through technology and it can cause you serious distress, making you feel frightened and isolated.

Remember! Being abused, threatened or stalked through technology is not OK.

Be aware of the 'red flags' ... the warning signs that tell you when things are not right.

What are the red flags?

- Your partner wants to control your use of technology or limit your access to it.
- Your partner seems to know too much about you and what you are doing.
- Your partner seems to know things you have shared with other people online that you have not shared with him.
- Your partner seems to know where you or your children are when he would not usually.
- Your partner constantly checks on you by texting or through your social media pages, asking questions like: 'What are you doing?', 'Who are you with?', 'Where are you?'.
- Your partner sends frequent and unwanted texts or messages, or make calls that hurt, humiliate or threaten you.



- Your partner starts contacting your friends or family to check up on you or to tell them damaging stories about you.
- Your partner pressures you to send him intimate pictures, then shares them with other people without your consent.
- Your partner threatens to upload intimate photos or videos of you if you do not do what he wants.

Other signs that your technology is being misused

- Access to your accounts is suddenly restricted or your passwords seem to have been changed.
- Strange posts are made on your social media accounts.
- Your partner seems to be accessing your devices more than he used to.
- Your partner is requesting that you share passwords to your devices or accounts.
- Your partner has set up a new camera or security system in the home, particularly if it seems unnecessary.
- Your phone or computer is slower to load or doesn't work normally.
- You or your children have been given new electronic gifts, and your partner insists on you using them.

- A fake social media account has been set up in your name.
- Fake email or SMS messages being sent from your accounts.
- Unknown financial transactions are appearing on your bank statements or online accounts.

If you are not sure what is happening, **trust your instincts**. You are in the best position to know if things are not right and if you need to get help.

eSafety checklist

If you are in danger call Triple Zero (000) immediately.

If you think you are being followed, stalked or controlled online, here's what you can do:

Use a safe device to search for help, do your banking and any safety planning or personal communication. Do not use your own device — use a library computer or a friend or family member's device that your partner does not have access to.

Set up a new email account for safety planning and setting up new online accounts. Only access your new email account from a safe device, in a safe place. Do not use your real name in your new email address. Use something unrelated to you like: whitelilies@email.com, not YourRealName@email.com. Keep using your old email accounts for everyday communications that will not put you at risk.

Trust your instinct if you think the person abusing you has access to the information in your new email account. Set up another new email account on a safe device if you are suspicious. Change how you use your regular device: do not access anything important on it or say anything that might put you at risk.

Create new passwords and passcodes for all devices and accounts, if it is safe to do so. The passwords should not be easily guessed by the person abusing you. Using a phrase that only you know is a great way to make strong passwords, for example, 'C@tsareb3tterthand0gs!'.

Be careful about who you 'friend' online — only add friends on social media that you know and trust not to communicate with the person abusing you.

Use the privacy settings on all your social media accounts and check them regularly, especially after software updates.

Always sign off and log out of social media and email accounts rather than just closing the window.

Turn off location services on your phone and other devices and do not post your location or photos on social media.

Install anti-virus protection on all your devices as this can help block spyware.

Check your child's device to make sure all of these steps are completed on their devices as well as your own.

Check all accounts such as credit card or direct debit payments that may reveal your location. Accounts such as eToll, eTag and public transport travel cards may be linked to the credit or debit card of the person abusing you. Contact these agencies to have your car and cards removed from the accounts so the person abusing you cannot track your movements.

Get help

Remember! Abuse through technology is not OK and not your fault. Help is available. If you are feeling unsafe, contact police and emergency services by calling Triple Zero (000) immediately.

If you do not speak English

Call Triple Zero (000) from a landline phone and ask for '**Police**', '**Fire**' or '**Ambulance**'. Stay on the line and you will be connected to an interpreter.

If this is not an emergency, call or visit your local police station.

For further help, contact **1800RESPECT** from a safe phone or device as soon as possible:

1800 737 732

1800respect.org.au

1800RESPECT offers 24-hour, free and confidential safety planning, counselling and support for all types of abuse, including family abuse and sexual abuse. They can also connect you to other services in your area. Go to 1800respect.org.au/languages/ for more information, advice and videos in other languages.