

Understanding Intimate Partner Technology Abuse

A comprehensive guide to recognizing, responding to, and protecting yourself from digital abuse in relationships. You deserve safety in both physical and digital spaces.



What is Technology Abuse?

Technology abuse occurs when someone uses digital tools, devices, or platforms to harass, monitor, control, threaten, or harm their partner. This form of abuse often accompanies other types of intimate partner violence but can also occur independently.

It's a serious violation of your privacy, autonomy, and safety—and it's not your fault.



Common Forms of Technology Abuse



Digital Stalking

Tracking your location through GPS apps, phone settings, or hidden devices. Monitoring your online activity, messages, and emails without consent.



Image-Based Abuse

Threatening to share intimate photos or videos. Recording you without permission or using hidden cameras in your home.



Account Takeover

Changing passwords to lock you out of accounts. Accessing your accounts without permission to read messages or impersonate you.



Harassment

Sending excessive threatening messages. Creating fake profiles to contact or embarrass you. Posting private information online.



Warning Signs to Watch For

- **Your partner knows details about your activities they shouldn't know**

They reference conversations, locations, or messages you never shared with them.
- **Unexplained changes to your devices or accounts**

New apps appear, settings change, battery drains faster, or you're locked out of accounts.
- **They demand passwords or insist on "transparency"**

Pressuring you to share access to all accounts in the name of trust or openness.
- **They react to things you only did online**

Mentioning websites you visited, searches you made, or people you contacted privately.

The Dangers of Shared Accounts



Why Sharing is Risky

Shared passwords and accounts create vulnerability. An abusive partner can use shared access to monitor your communications, track your activity, and maintain control even after separation.

Protect Yourself:

- Create separate accounts for email, banking, and social media
- Use unique, strong passwords for each account
- Enable two-factor authentication when available
- Never share passwords, even if pressured
- Review account activity and connected devices regularly

Smart Home Technology Abuse

Smart home devices—thermostats, locks, cameras, speakers—can be weaponized for control and harassment. Abusers may adjust settings remotely, deny access, or monitor your activities.

Climate Control

Changing temperatures to uncomfortable levels or turning systems on and off remotely to cause distress.

Access Control

Locking you out or tracking when you come and go through connected door locks and sensors.

Surveillance

Using cameras and microphones to monitor your conversations and movements within your own home.

- ☐ If you suspect abuse: Check device manufacturer accounts, change passwords, factory reset devices, or disconnect them entirely.

Financial Technology Abuse

Financial control extends into digital spaces through banking apps, payment platforms, and shared financial accounts. This abuse can trap you by limiting your economic independence and ability to leave.

Common Tactics:

- **Monitoring all transactions and purchases**

Demanding explanations for every expense, no matter how small.

- **Controlling access to money**

Limiting transfers, freezing accounts, or preventing you from accessing funds.

- **Running up debt in your name**

Opening credit cards or taking loans using your information without consent.



Safety step: Open a separate bank account at a different institution. Consider using a trusted friend or family member's address for statements.

Seeking Help Safely

Document Everything

Take screenshots of threatening messages, save emails, and record incidents with dates and details. Store evidence securely outside your home.

Use Safe Devices

Access help resources from a public computer, library, or trusted friend's device—never from a device your partner has access to.

Create a Safety Plan

Work with advocates to develop a personalized plan that addresses both physical and digital safety concerns.

Trust Your Instincts

If something feels wrong or unsafe, it probably is. Your safety and wellbeing are the priority.

Resources and Support

You don't have to navigate this alone. Help is available, and you deserve support.



National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-7233

24/7 confidential support, safety planning, and local resources. Text "START" to 88788 or chat online at thehotline.org



Safety Net Project

nnedv.org/safetynet

Technology safety resources specifically addressing tech abuse, including device security guides and safety planning tools.



CSNP Resources

csnp.org/resources

Free cybersecurity education, privacy guides, and digital safety tools designed to be accessible and actionable.

- ❑ When reaching out: Use a safe device, consider using private browsing mode, and clear your browser history if needed.

About Cybersecurity Non-Profit (CSNP)



Making cybersecurity knowledge accessible to everyone through education, community, and practical resources.

Our Programs

- Business & Non-Profit Security
- Family Cybersecurity
- Kids Safety Online
- Senior Digital Safety
- Women's Security & Privacy
- Parents & Educators Resources

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