

SIGNAL FOR HELP



Information provided by the Signal for Help Responders Action Guide developed by the



The Signal for Help is a simple one-handed gesture you can use to silently show you need help and want someone to check in with you in a safe way. It might be useful in a video call. It is a tool that can help some people, some of the time.

Every situation is different.

The Signal for Help was launched by the Canadian Women's Foundation and their partners in April 2020 in response to an increased risk of gender-based violence and increased use of video calls in the COVID-19 pandemic. The Signal is designed as a tool to address the violence that can happen in intimate partner and family relationships.

The Signal for Help is not meant to represent anything in any sign language. If you see someone using a gesture that looks like the Signal for Help and you are not certain what it means, consider the context in which they are using it. When it is safe to contact them, ask them to clarify if they need your help.

The Signal for Help signifies "reach out to me safely". The person using the Signal may want you to call authorities, but do not assume that is what they want or need. Let them take the lead.

An abuser might learn about the Signal. And people in abusive situations are also often closely monitored and may not feel safe to use it. There is no one-size-fits-all solution for everyone in every situation. The Signal for Help is a tool some people might use, some of the time.

HOW CAN I REACH OUT SAFELY

Reach out to them safely to find out what they need. They may ask you to listen and be there for them. They may ask for help finding services. They may want you to call someone to help them.

Reach out to them and let them take the lead. If you see someone using the Signal for Help in public or out of a window or door, calling 911 or emergency services is an appropriate response.

What Do I Do if I See Somebody Use the Signal for Help? The Signal for Help signifies "reach out to me safely." The person using it may want you to call an emergency service, but do not assume that is what they want or need in the moment.



Call them personally and start by asking them if they are alone.

Examples:

"Is this a good time to talk?"

"Is anyone home?"

"Should I call back later?"

Be ready to respond if you think they might not be safe to talk right then.
Example: "Someone is trying to get through to me. I need to call you back."

Ask questions that can be answered with a yes or no.

Examples:

"Would you like me to call a shelter or service on your behalf?"

"Should I look for services that might help you and call you back?"

"Would you like me to call 911?"



Send a text, WhatsApp message, or email message, and ask general questions.

Examples:

"How are you doing?"

"Get in touch when you can, I would love to catch up."

People in violent homes and relationships may be closely monitored. The person abusing them may watch where they go, who they call or text, what they do on social media, and more. These options can help you find out what's wrong in a safer way.

National Coalition to End Domestic Violence
Hotline: 800-799-7233
Website: www.thehotline.org (live chat available)
Text option: Text SMART to 88788

Florida Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-500-1119
FL Relay 711

Prepared by the Fatality Review Team,
a committee of the



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