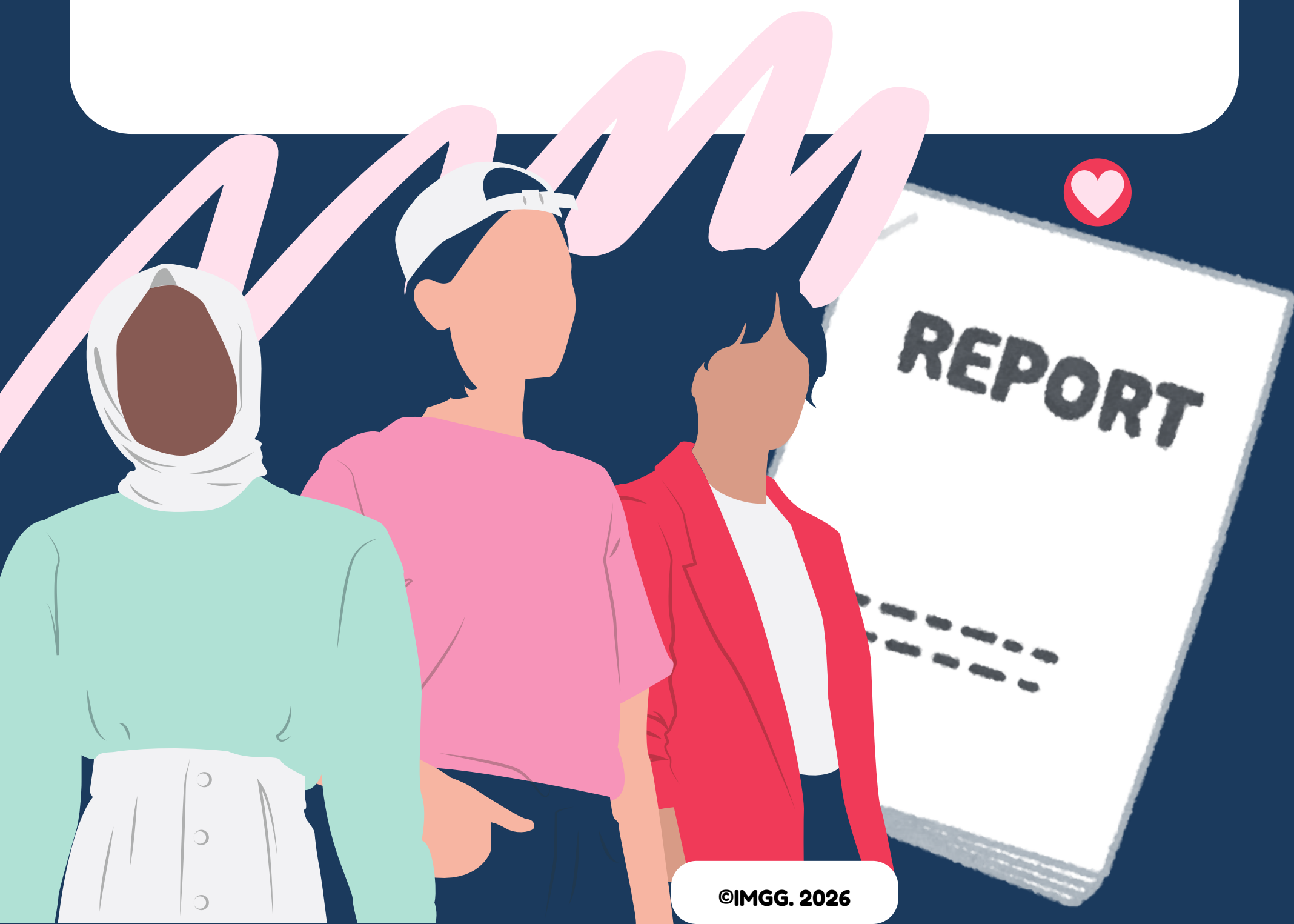


THE WOMEN'S RAILROAD™

2026

THE ROUTE:
GET MONEY. GET OUT. GET RID.

**KEEP A RECORD:
DOCUMENTATION AND
DOCUMENTING ABUSE**



WHAT'S IN THIS?

- CAN I DO THIS SAFELY
- WHY DO I HAVE TO KEEP A RECORD
- HOW CAN THESE RECORDINGS BE USED
- DO I NEED TO RECORD CERTAIN DETAILS
- DOCUMENTING DIFFERENT FORMS OF ABUSE
- TYPES OF DOCUMENTS
- WHO KNOWS ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENED
- WHAT DOCUMENTS DO I NEED WHEN APPLYING FOR HOUSING
- WHERE CAN I STORE WHAT I RECORDED
- ARE THERE WAYS OF RECORDING THAT COULD BACKFIRE

THIS GUIDE PROVIDES **GENERAL INFORMATION** AND IS **NOT LEGAL ADVICE**. WHILE EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO ENSURE ACCURACY, LAWS AND SERVICES MAY CHANGE. THIS GUIDE IS **NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR LEGAL ADVICE OR SUPPORT FROM A QUALIFIED DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICE**.

EVERY SITUATION INVOLVING DOMESTIC ABUSE IS DIFFERENT AND ACTIONS TAKEN BASED ON THIS INFORMATION ARE AT THE READER'S DISCRETION.

INDIVIDUALS SHOULD **SEEK ADVICE FROM QUALIFIED PROFESSIONALS** OR OFFICIAL SERVICES BEFORE TAKING ACTION.
THEWOMENSRAILROAD.ORG.UK



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LEAVE NO FOOTPRINTS

**IF YOU'RE VIEWING THIS
MAKE SURE TO EITHER:**

- **CLEAR YOUR HISTORY**
- **VIEW IN INCOGNITO MODE**
- **VIEW ON WORK COMPUTER**
- **VIEW ON FRIENDS PHONE**
- **VIEW AT THE LIBRARY**



HOW DO I CLEAR MY HISTORY?

- **ON MOBILE: CHROME + TAP 3 DOTS + CLEAR BROWSING DATA + FOR LAST HOUR**
- **ON MOBILE: SETTINGS + SAFARI + CLEAR HISTORY AND DATA**
- **ON COMPUTER: CTRL + H + SELECT ANY REFERENCE TO THIS GUIDE OR IF QUICKER, CLEAR HISTORY FOR THE LAST HOUR**

IF YOU BELIEVE YOUR DEVICE MAY BE MONITORED, TRY TO ACCESS THIS INFORMATION FROM A FRIEND'S PHONE, A LIBRARY COMPUTER, OR A REFUGE SUPPORT WORKER.

**IF YOU ARE IN
IMMEDIATE DANGER
CALL: 999**

**YOUR SAFETY IS
THE MOST
IMPORTANT
PRIORITY**



CAN I DO THIS SAFELY?

IF GATHERING EVIDENCE PUTS YOU AT MORE RISK AT THAT MOMENT, IT ISN'T WORTH IT.

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A FEW PRINCIPLES TO HOLD ONTO THROUGHOUT THIS GUIDE

1. • NEVER DO ANYTHING THAT COULD ALERT THE PERSON YOU'RE DOCUMENTING TO WHAT YOU'RE DOING. IF THERE'S ANY RISK THEY'D SEE IT, DON'T RECORD IT THAT WAY.

2. • DON'T USE A DEVICE OR ACCOUNT THEY HAVE ACCESS TO, OR COULD GET ACCESS TO. ASSUME ANYTHING ON A SHARED PHONE, LAPTOP, EMAIL, OR CLOUD ACCOUNT IS NOT PRIVATE.

3. • IF YOU FIND A HIDDEN CAMERA, TRACKER, OR LISTENING DEVICE, DON'T REMOVE IT YOURSELF IF YOU CAN AVOID IT. REMOVING IT CAN ALERT THE PERSON WHO PLACED IT, AND IT DESTROYS EVIDENCE OF IT BEING THERE. WHERE POSSIBLE, GET THE POLICE OR AN ADVOCATE TO DOCUMENT IT FIRST.



WHY DO I HAVE TO KEEP A RECORD OF WHAT HE DID TO ME?

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THE QUESTION IS A FAIR ONE, YOU ARE THE ONE THAT EXPERIENCED THE ABUSE. BUT THE REALITY IS THAT A WELL DOCUMENTED CASE HAS A BETTER CHANCE. SO LET'S INCREASE YOUR CHANCES AND DOCUMENT WHAT HAPPENED AS CLOSE TO BEING A FLY ON THE WALL AS POSSIBLE.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

IF YOU'RE READING THIS, YOU MIGHT NOT BE READY TO LEAVE. YOU MIGHT NOT EVEN BE SURE YET WHAT TO CALL WHAT'S HAPPENING TO YOU. THAT'S ALRIGHT. THIS GUIDE ISN'T ABOUT PROVING ANYTHING TO ANYONE. IT'S ABOUT GIVING YOU THE OPTION TO, LATER, IF YOU EVER NEED IT. DOCUMENTING ABUSE MEANS KEEPING A RECORD OF WHAT'S HAPPENED, AS IT HAPPENS, IN A WAY THAT HOLDS UP IF YOU EVER NEED TO SHOW A SOLICITOR, A COURT, OR A SERVICE WHAT YOU'VE BEEN LIVING THROUGH.



YOU DON'T NEED TO DECIDE RIGHT NOW WHETHER YOU'LL EVER USE IT. KEEPING THE RECORD IS THE PART THAT MATTERS. YOU CAN DECIDE THE REST LATER.

HOW CAN THESE RECORDINGS BE USED?

IN ENGLAND AND WALES, EVIDENCE LIKE THIS CAN SUPPORT AN APPLICATION FOR A NON-MOLESTATION ORDER OR AN OCCUPATION ORDER: THE TWO MAIN TYPES OF PROTECTIVE COURT ORDER WE EXPLAIN IN DETAIL IN OUR FULL GUIDE.

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IF YOU'RE APPLYING FOR LEGAL AID TO HELP COVER THE COST OF LEGAL SUPPORT, YOU'LL USUALLY NEED TO SHOW SOME EVIDENCE THAT YOU'VE EXPERIENCED ABUSE. THIS DOCUMENTATION IS WHAT THAT EVIDENCE LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE.



YOU DON'T NEED ALL OF THIS. A SINGLE MESSAGE, ONE PHOTO, ONE WITNESS, EVEN JUST YOUR OWN WRITTEN ACCOUNT, CAN BE ENOUGH TO START. MORE EVIDENCE OVER TIME ONLY STRENGTHENS THINGS FURTHER, IT ISN'T A BAR YOU NEED TO CLEAR BEFORE YOU'RE ALLOWED TO ASK FOR HELP.

DO I NEED TO INCLUDE CERTAIN DETAILS EVERY TIME?

THERE'S NO WRONG WAY TO DO THIS BUT THERE IS A WAY TO RECORD IT SO IT'S MORE USABLE BY LEGAL PROFESSIONALS. A NOTE ON YOUR PHONE, A VOICE MEMO TO YOURSELF, A MESSAGE TO A FRIEND DESCRIBING WHAT HAPPENED. ALL OF IT COUNTS. THE GOAL IS A RECORD THAT EXISTS, NOT A PERFECT ONE.

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TRY TO MAKE A NOTE OF THESE EVERYTIME

COURTS AND LEGAL ADVISERS GENERALLY SEE NOTES WRITTEN CLOSE TO THE TIME SOMETHING HAPPENED AS MORE RELIABLE THAN SOMETHING WRITTEN FROM MEMORY MUCH LATER. IT DOESN'T NEED TO BE FORMAL. EVEN A FEW LINES ARE WORTH MORE THAN NOTHING.

- THE DATE AND, IF YOU CAN, ROUGHLY WHAT TIME IT HAPPENED
- WHAT WAS SAID OR DONE, AS CLOSE TO THEIR OWN WORDS AS YOU CAN REMEMBER
- WHERE IT HAPPENED, AND WHO ELSE WAS THERE, EVEN IF THEY DIDN'T SEE EVERYTHING
- ANY INJURIES, HOWEVER MINOR THEY SEEM, AND HOW YOU'RE FEELING
- WHAT YOU DID AFTERWARDS, WHETHER THAT'S TELLING SOMEONE, CALLING THE POLICE, OR NOTHING AT ALL



RECORDING PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE, PATTERNS OF CONTROL AND ISOLATION

PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE AND COERCIVE CONTROL CAN BE SOME OF THE HARDEST FORMS OF ABUSE TO DOCUMENT, BECAUSE THERE'S OFTEN NO SINGLE INCIDENT TO POINT TO, JUST A PATTERN THAT BUILDS UP OVER TIME. THAT DOESN'T MAKE IT ANY LESS REAL, OR ANY LESS ABLE TO BE RECORDED.

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- KEEP A RUNNING LOG OF SPECIFIC INCIDENTS RATHER THAN A GENERAL FEELING, BEING TOLD WHO YOU CAN AND CAN'T SEE, BEING CHECKED UP ON, BEING MONITORED ON YOUR PHONE OR THROUGH LOCATION SHARING, BEING MADE TO ASK PERMISSION FOR ORDINARY THINGS. SPECIFIC EXAMPLES, WITH DATES, HOLD UP FAR BETTER THAN A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF HOW THINGS FEEL
- IF YOU'RE BEING ISOLATED FROM FRIENDS OR FAMILY, NOTE WHEN CONTACT WAS DISCOURAGED, BLOCKED, OR MADE DIFFICULT, AND BY WHOM. A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER WHO NOTICED THE CHANGE IN CONTACT CAN SOMETIMES SUPPORT THIS AS A WITNESS
- IF YOUR PHONE, ACCOUNTS, OR LOCATION ARE BEING MONITORED, NOTE WHAT YOU'VE NOTICED AND WHEN, WITHOUT CONFRONTING THE PERSON ABOUT IT OR TRYING TO INVESTIGATE IT YOURSELF IN A WAY THAT COULD ALERT THEM
- MESSAGES THAT SHOW CONTROLLING BEHAVIOUR IN THE OTHER PERSON'S OWN WORDS, BEING TOLD WHAT TO WEAR, BEING CHECKED ON REPEATEDLY, BEING TOLD WHO YOU CAN TALK TO, ARE TREATED THE SAME WAY AS ANY OTHER MESSAGE EVIDENCE.

SCREENSHOT THEM AS DESCRIBED EARLIER IN THIS GUIDE NONE OF THIS NEEDS TO BE BUILDING TOWARDS A SINGLE DRAMATIC INCIDENT. A CONSISTENT, DATED RECORD OF SMALL THINGS IS OFTEN WHAT SHOWS A PATTERN OF CONTROL CLEARLY, IN A WAY THAT ONE INCIDENT ON ITS OWN CANNOT.

RECORDING SEXUAL ABUSE

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SEXUAL ABUSE, INCLUDING WITHIN A RELATIONSHIP OR MARRIAGE, IS A CRIME IN ENGLAND AND WALES. DOCUMENTING IT WORKS DIFFERENTLY TO OTHER FORMS OF ABUSE, BECAUSE SOME OF THE MOST VALUABLE EVIDENCE IS FORENSIC AND TIME-SENSITIVE, AND IT NEEDS SPECIALIST MEDICAL SUPPORT TO COLLECT PROPERLY, NOT SOMETHING TO TRY AND DO YOURSELF. A SEXUAL ASSAULT REFERRAL CENTRE (SARC) IS A SPECIALIST NHS SERVICE THAT CAN SUPPORT YOU AFTER RAPE OR SEXUAL ASSAULT, INCLUDING WITHIN A RELATIONSHIP. YOU DO NOT NEED TO REPORT TO THE POLICE TO ACCESS ONE, AND YOU DO NOT NEED TO HAVE DECIDED WHAT YOU WANT TO DO YET.

- YOU CAN SELF-REFER TO A SARC DIRECTLY, WITHOUT GOING THROUGH THE POLICE, YOUR GP, OR ANYONE ELSE
- A SARC CAN CARRY OUT A FORENSIC MEDICAL EXAMINATION AND COLLECT EVIDENCE (SUCH AS SWABS) EVEN IF YOU HAVEN'T DECIDED WHETHER TO REPORT TO THE POLICE. MANY SARCS CAN STORE THAT EVIDENCE FOR YOU, SO YOU CAN DECIDE LATER, SOMETIMES MONTHS OR LONGER AFTERWARDS
- EVIDENCE IS BEST COLLECTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, IDEALLY WITHIN 7 DAYS, BUT IT'S STILL WORTH CONTACTING A SARC EVEN IF MORE TIME HAS PASSED, THEY CAN STILL OFFER SUPPORT AND ADVICE EITHER WAY
- A SARC CAN ALSO OFFER CONFIDENTIAL MEDICAL CARE, EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION, AND TESTING FOR SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS, SEPARATELY FROM ANY DECISION ABOUT REPORTING
- IF YOU'RE ABLE TO, TRY NOT TO WASH, CHANGE CLOTHES, OR CLEAN THE AREA BEFORE ATTENDING, THOUGH YOUR SAFETY ALWAYS COMES FIRST, AND SUPPORT IS STILL AVAILABLE EVEN IF THIS ISN'T POSSIBLE

WHERE IS MY LOCAL SARC?

[FIND IT HERE](#)

YOU NEVER HAVE TO DECIDE ABOUT INVOLVING THE POLICE TO GET SUPPORT OR TO HAVE EVIDENCE COLLECTED. MANY WOMEN CHOOSE TO HAVE A FORENSIC EXAMINATION AND LET THE SARC HOLD ONTO THE EVIDENCE, WITHOUT DECIDING ANYTHING FURTHER AT THE TIME. THAT CHOICE CAN STAY OPEN FOR YOU.

ALONGSIDE ANY FORENSIC SUPPORT, THE SAME GENERAL PRINCIPLES FROM EARLIER IN THIS GUIDE STILL APPLY: A PRIVATE, DATED NOTE OF WHAT HAPPENED, IN YOUR OWN WORDS, AND ANY MESSAGES OR COMMUNICATIONS CONNECTED TO IT, ARE STILL WORTH KEEPING SAFELY, IN THE SAME WAY AS FOR ANY OTHER FORM OF ABUSE.

RECORDING FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC ABUSE



IF MONEY IS BEING CONTROLLED, WITHHELD, OR USED AGAINST YOU, THIS COUNTS AS DOCUMENTABLE ABUSE TOO, NOT JUST PHYSICAL OR VERBAL INCIDENTS.

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- **KEEP OR SCREENSHOT BANK STATEMENTS, ESPECIALLY ANYTHING SHOWING ACCOUNTS YOU'VE BEEN SHUT OUT OF, SPENDING YOU DIDN'T AGREE TO, OR INCOME BEING TAKEN FROM YOU.**
- **PAYSLIPS OR INCOME RECORDS BEING WITHHELD OR HIDDEN FROM YOU, OR YOU BEING KEPT UNAWARE OF HOW MUCH YOUR PARTNER OR HOUSEHOLD ACTUALLY EARNS.**
- **BEING MADE TO HAND OVER YOUR WAGES, BENEFITS, OR CHILD BENEFIT TO HIM, OR HAVING MONEY TAKEN FROM YOUR PURSE, ACCOUNT, OR BENEFITS CARD WITHOUT AGREEMENT.**
- **BEING DENIED ACCESS TO A JOINT ACCOUNT YOU'RE LEGALLY ENTITLED TO, OR YOUR NAME BEING REMOVED FROM ONE WITHOUT YOUR KNOWLEDGE.**
- **DEBTS, CREDIT CARDS, OR LOANS TAKEN OUT IN YOUR NAME WITHOUT YOUR KNOWLEDGE, INCLUDING BEING PRESSURED OR COERCED INTO SIGNING FOR SOMETHING.**
- **BEING STOPPED FROM WORKING, STUDYING, OR TAKING A JOB, INCLUDING HIM CONTACTING YOUR WORKPLACE, SABOTAGING JOB INTERVIEWS, OR MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE TO KEEP A JOB, CHILDCARE SABOTAGE OR TAKING YOUR CAR KEYS, FOR EXAMPLE.**
- **BEING MADE TO ACCOUNT FOR EVERY PURCHASE, RECEIPTS CHECKED, QUESTIONED ON SMALL SPENDS, OR NEEDING PERMISSION FOR THINGS LIKE YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL TRIP MONEY.**
- **SCREENSHOTS OF BANKING APPS SHOWING SPENDING LIMITS, BLOCKED CARDS, OR A JOINT ACCOUNT BEING DRAINED SHORTLY AFTER AN ARGUMENT OR A DISCLOSURE OF WANTING TO LEAVE.**
- **A RUNNING NOTE OF WHAT HE ACTUALLY EARNS VERSUS WHAT YOU'RE TOLD, IF THIS IS KNOWN OR DISCOVERABLE, SINCE A MISMATCH BETWEEN HIS INCOME AND HOW LITTLE YOU'RE GIVEN CAN ITSELF BE EVIDENCE.**



MESSAGES, CALLS, AND ANYTHING DIGITAL

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**THREATENING,
ABUSIVE, OR
CONTROLLING
MESSAGES,
WHETHER BY TEXT,
EMAIL, OR SOCIAL
MEDIA, CAN BE
SOME OF THE
CLEAREST
EVIDENCE THERE IS,
BECAUSE THEY'RE
IN THE OTHER
PERSON'S OWN
WORDS.**

- **SCREENSHOT MESSAGES AS SOON AS YOU SEE THEM. MESSAGES AND POSTS CAN BE DELETED, SOMETIMES QUICKLY.**
- **MAKE SURE THE SCREENSHOT SHOWS THE PHONE NUMBER OR ACCOUNT IT CAME FROM, NOT JUST A SAVED CONTACT NAME. A SAVED NAME ALONE CAN BE DISPUTED LATER.**
- **IF YOU'RE GETTING REPEATED CALLS OR MISSED CALLS, A SCREENSHOT OF THE CALL LOG SHOWING THE PATTERN CAN MATTER AS MUCH AS ANY SINGLE MESSAGE.**
- **SAVE COPIES SOMEWHERE THE OTHER PERSON CANNOT REACH. A CLOUD STORAGE ACCOUNT THEY DON'T KNOW ABOUT, SET UP WITH A FRESH EMAIL ADDRESS, WORKS WELL. SO DOES EMAILING THINGS TO A TRUSTED FRIEND OR TO YOURSELF AT A SEPARATE ADDRESS.**
- **NEXT TO EACH ONE, NOTE THE DATE, ROUGHLY WHAT TIME IT CAME THROUGH, AND HOW IT MADE YOU FEEL. THE MESSAGE SPEAKS FOR ITSELF, BUT YOUR OWN REACTION ALONGSIDE IT HELPS BUILD THE FULLER PICTURE.**

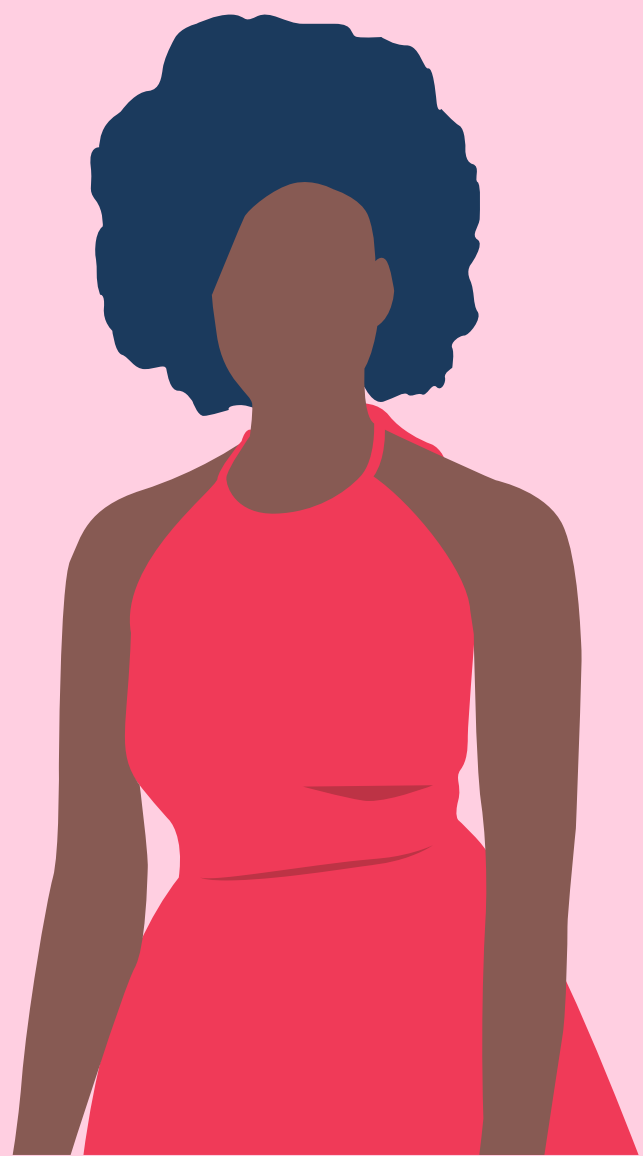
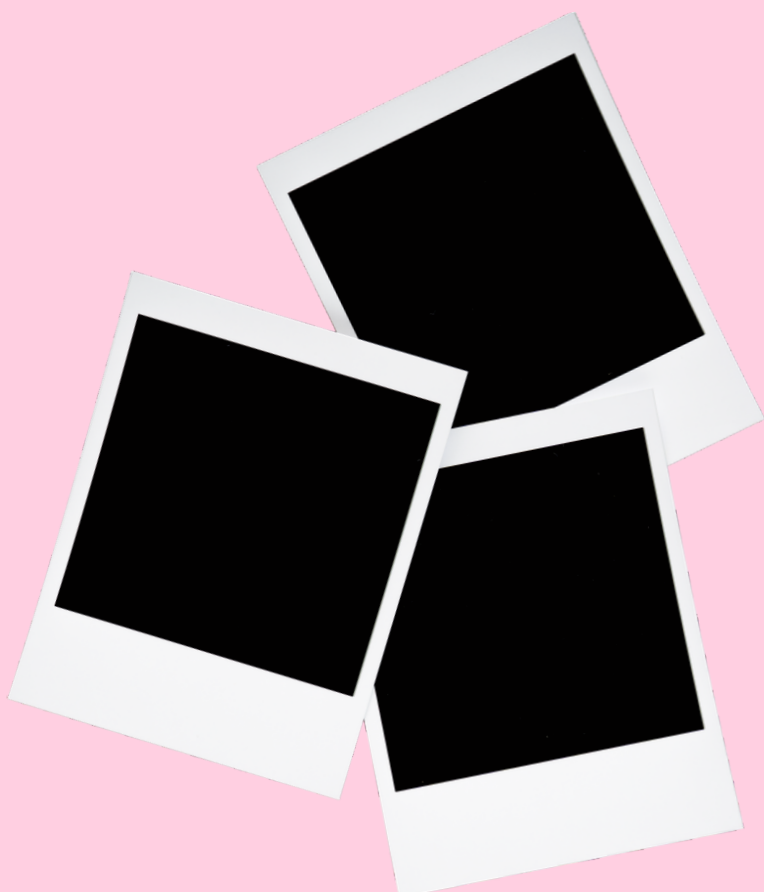


PHOTOS OF INJURIES OR DAMAGE

TAKE PHOTOS AS SOON AS IT'S SAFE TO DO SO. BRUISING IN PARTICULAR CAN LOOK DIFFERENT, AND SOMETIMES WORSE, A DAY OR TWO LATER, SO A FOLLOW-UP PHOTO CAN HELP TOO.

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- **WHERE POSSIBLE, INCLUDE SOMETHING THAT SHOWS THE DATE, EVEN A NEWSPAPER, A PHONE SCREEN SHOWING THE DATE, OR SIMPLY NOTING THE DATE SEPARATELY ALONGSIDE THE PHOTO.**
- **PHOTOGRAPH ANY DAMAGE TO PROPERTY AS WELL AS TO YOURSELF. BROKEN ITEMS, DAMAGED LOCKS, OR A HOLE IN A DOOR CAN ALL SUPPORT A WIDER PATTERN.**
- **STORE THESE THE SAME WAY AS ANY OTHER DIGITAL EVIDENCE, SOMEWHERE THE OTHER PERSON CAN'T ACCESS.**
- **ALONGSIDE EACH PHOTO, NOTE THE DATE, ROUGHLY WHAT TIME IT WAS TAKEN, AND HOW YOU WERE FEELING. A PHOTO SHOWS WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR BODY, YOUR OWN WORDS SHOW WHAT IT MEANT TO YOU.**
- **THE PHOTOS YOU TAKE ON YOUR PHONE WILL ALREADY HAVE A TIMESTAMP SCREENSHOT THE IMAGE WITH THE TIME STAMP SHOWING ALSO, THIS WILL HELP SHOW MORE ACCURACY AND TRUTH OF WHAT YOU ARE SAYING**



IF YOU GO TO YOUR GP OR A&E, WHETHER OR NOT YOU TELL THEM THE REAL CAUSE OF AN INJURY AT THE TIME, THAT VISIT STILL EXISTS ON YOUR MEDICAL RECORD. IF YOU'RE ABLE TO, TELLING A DOCTOR OR NURSE WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED MEANS IT'S RECORDED CLEARLY, WHICH CAN MATTER LATER, BUT THERE'S NO SHAME EITHER WAY IN NOT BEING READY TO SAY IT OUT LOUD YET.

MEDICAL RECORDS

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• **YOU CAN REQUEST YOUR OWN MEDICAL RECORDS AT ANY TIME, EVEN ONES FROM A WHILE AGO.**

• **A VISIT FOR SOMETHING THAT SEEMS UNRELATED, LIKE ANXIETY, SLEEP PROBLEMS, OR STRESS, CAN STILL FORM PART OF A WIDER PICTURE OVER TIME.**



• **YOUR GP RECORDS CAN ALSO BE A RISK, NOT JUST A RESOURCE. IF HE CAN FORCE YOU TO SHOW HIM YOUR PHONE OR THE NHS APP, HE CAN SEE WHAT YOU'VE TOLD A DOCTOR. YOU'RE ALLOWED TO ASK YOUR GP PRACTICE TO SWITCH OFF ONLINE ACCESS, RESTRICT WHAT'S VISIBLE, OR FLAG YOUR FILE, AND YOU DON'T HAVE TO EXPLAIN EVERYTHING TO DO IT.**

• **WATCH OUT FOR PROXY ACCESS TOO, WHERE A PARTNER IS GIVEN THE ABILITY TO MANAGE YOUR GP APPOINTMENTS OR ORDER YOUR PRESCRIPTIONS ON YOUR BEHALF. THIS HAS BEEN FLAGGED AS A SPECIFIC COERCIVE CONTROL RISK, SO IT'S WORTH CHECKING WHETHER THIS HAS BEEN SET UP ON YOUR ACCOUNT WITHOUT YOU REALISING.**

• **AFTER ANY APPOINTMENT CONNECTED TO THIS, NOTE THE DATE, ROUGHLY WHAT TIME IT WAS, AND HOW YOU WERE FEELING, IN YOUR OWN SEPARATE RECORD, ALONGSIDE WHATEVER THE CLINICAL NOTES SAY**



WHO KNOWS ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENED?

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IF THE POLICE HAVE BEEN CALLED, WHETHER BY YOU OR SOMEONE ELSE, ASK FOR OR NOTE DOWN THE CRIME REFERENCE NUMBER GIVEN TO YOU. THIS MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO TRACE THE REPORT LATER, EVEN IF NOTHING FURTHER HAPPENED AT THE TIME.



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- **KEEP A NOTE OF THE DATE, AND ROUGHLY WHAT WAS DISCUSSED OR WHAT HAPPENED WHEN THEY ATTENDED.**

- **IF YOU CALLED 999 OR 101 BUT THE POLICE DIDN'T ATTEND, THE CALL ITSELF IS STILL USUALLY LOGGED AND CAN SOMETIMES BE RETRIEVED LATER.**

- **NOTE THE DATE, THE TIME, AND HOW YOU WERE FEELING ALONGSIDE THE CRIME REFERENCE NUMBER. THE REFERENCE NUMBER PROVES IT HAPPENED, YOUR OWN ACCOUNT OF IT EXPLAINS WHAT IT WAS LIKE.**

FRIENDS, FAMILY, NEIGHBOURS, OR COLLEAGUES WHO'VE SEEN OR HEARD SOMETHING, EVEN JUST RAISED VOICES THROUGH A WALL, OR NOTICING YOU WERE UPSET OR INJURED AFTERWARDS, CAN MATTER MORE THAN YOU MIGHT THINK.



- **YOU DON'T NEED TO ASK THEM TO WRITE ANYTHING DOWN STRAIGHT AWAY. SIMPLY KNOWING WHO WAS AWARE OF WHAT, AND ROUGHLY WHEN, IS USEFUL TO HAVE NOTED FOR YOURSELF.**

- **IF YOU EVER NEED A WITNESS STATEMENT, IT'S FAR EASIER FOR SOMEONE TO WRITE ONE ABOUT SOMETHING THEY REMEMBER CLEARLY THAN TO RECALL IT FROM A LONG TIME AGO.**

- **NOTE THE DATE, ROUGHLY THE TIME, AND HOW YOU FELT IN THE MOMENT THEY WITNESSED OR HEARD SOMETHING. IT HELPS YOU, AND THEM, PLACE IT ACCURATELY LATER.**

WHAT DOCUMENTS DO I NEED IF I'M APPLYING FOR HOUSING FROM MY LOCAL AUTHORITY?

IF YOU EVER APPLY TO YOUR COUNCIL AS HOMELESS OR AT RISK OF BECOMING HOMELESS, HAVING CERTAIN DOCUMENTS READY IN ADVANCE CAN MAKE THE PROCESS MUCH SMOOTHER AND FASTER, ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE APPLYING AT A POINT OF CRISIS. NONE OF THIS NEEDS TO BE GATHERED ALL AT ONCE, AND YOU DON'T NEED EVERYTHING ON THIS LIST TO START AN APPLICATION. BUT KNOWING WHAT'S LIKELY TO BE ASKED FOR MEANS YOU CAN BEGIN COLLECTING IT NOW, QUIETLY AND IN YOUR OWN TIME, WELL BEFORE YOU MIGHT NEED IT.

A CHANGE IN THE LAW WORTH KNOWING

VICTIM SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE ARE TREATED DIFFERENTLY ON SOME COUNCIL HOUSING REGISTERS. THE REQUIREMENT OF SHOWING YOU'VE LIVED IN THE AREA FOR A SET NUMBER OF YEARS IS NOW WAIVED FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE SURVIVORS.

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WHAT WILL COUNCILS GENERALLY ASK FOR?

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- A COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM (THE COUNCIL WILL PROVIDE THIS ONCE YOU MAKE CONTACT)
- ID DOCUMENTATION, SUCH AS PASSPORTS OR BIRTH CERTIFICATES, FOR YOU AND EVERYONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD
- IF YOU'RE NOT A UK NATIONAL, EVIDENCE OF YOUR IMMIGRATION STATUS AND YOUR HOME OFFICE SHARE CODE
- PROOF OF INCOME, SUCH AS A CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT AND RECENT PAYSLEIPS, IF THIS APPLIES TO YOU
- PROOF OF ANY BENEFITS YOU RECEIVE, SUCH AS UNIVERSAL CREDIT. YOU CAN USUALLY GET THIS BY LOGGING INTO YOUR ONLINE ACCOUNT AND TAKING A SCREENSHOT OR SAVING A PDF OF YOUR LATEST STATEMENT
- YOUR LAST THREE TO SIX MONTHS OF BANK STATEMENTS
- ANY MEDICAL INFORMATION YOU'D LIKE THE COUNCIL TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT
- A LETTER OF SUPPORT OR ADVOCACY FROM A DOMESTIC ABUSE CHARITY OR AN IDVA (INDEPENDENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVISOR) SERVICE, IF YOU'RE ALREADY IN CONTACT WITH ONE
- ANY POLICE CAD (COMPUTER AIDED DISPATCH) REFERENCE NUMBERS, IF THE POLICE HAVE EVER BEEN INVOLVED

THE COUNCIL WILL ONLY ASK FOR SOME OR ALL OF THESE.

WHERE CAN I STORE WHAT I RECORDED ?

- **SAVE RECORDINGS AND COPIES OF DOCUMENTS AS UNSENT DRAFTS IN A PRIVATE EMAIL ACCOUNT OF YOUR OWN. NOTHING GETS SENT, SO THERE'S NO NOTIFICATION AND NOTHING APPEARS IN A SENT FOLDER, AND DRAFT FOLDERS ARE EASY TO OVERLOOK IF ANYONE EVER LOOKED THROUGH YOUR ACCOUNT. NAME IT SOMETHING UNINTERESTING.**

COLLECTING ALL OF THIS ONLY HELPS YOU IF IT'S SOMEWHERE SAFE, AND SOMEWHERE YOU CAN ACTUALLY GET TO WHEN YOU NEED IT. WITHOUT RISK YOUR ABUSER WILL FIND IT.

AVOID STORING EVERYTHING IN ONE SINGLE PLACE ONLY. IF ONE COPY IS FOUND OR LOST, YOU DON'T WANT IT TO BE THE ONLY ONE.

SO, WHERE?

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- **YOUR LOCKER AT WORK**
- **A CLOUD STORAGE ACCOUNT (SET UP FRESH, WITH A PASSWORD THE OTHER PERSON HAS NEVER SEEN) IS ONE OF THE SAFEST PLACES, SINCE IT ISN'T TIED TO A PHYSICAL DEVICE THAT COULD BE TAKEN OR CHECKED.**
- **A TRUSTED FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER, YOUR SAFE PEOPLE, CAN ALSO HOLD PHYSICAL COPIES OR A SPARE PHONE FOR YOU.**
- **IF YOU'RE WORKING WITH A SOLICITOR, THEY CAN HOLD COPIES TOO, AND THIS CAN ADD A LAYER OF PROTECTION SINCE IT'S OUTSIDE YOUR HOME ENTIRELY.**

IF YOU CAN TRY TO HAVE MORE THAN ONE COPY



ARE THERE WAYS OF RECORDING THAT COULD BACKFIRE?

REAL LIFE WAY IT WENT WRONG FOR ONE WOMAN

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ONE WOMAN DESCRIBED BEING TOLD BY A SUPPORT WORKER TO DOWNLOAD A SPECIFIC APP TO RECORD HER ABUSER, ONLY FOR A DIFFERENT SERVICE, SOCIAL CARE, TO SAY THEY NEVER ADVISE RECORDING AND THAT ANYONE WHO SUGGESTS IT SHOULD BE STRUCK OFF. SHE WAS LEFT LOOKING UNTRUTHFUL TO HER OWN SOCIAL WORKER, THROUGH NO FAULT OF HER OWN. THE LESSON ISN'T THAT RECORDING IS WRONG, IT'S THAT RELYING ON ONE PERSON'S ADVICE AS IF IT'S A FIXED STANDARD CAN LEAVE YOU EXPOSED IF ANOTHER SERVICE SEES IT DIFFERENTLY. KEEPING YOUR OWN PRIVATE, CONSISTENT RECORD, RATHER THAN FOLLOWING A SINGLE RECOMMENDATION, TENDS TO BE THE SAFER PATH.

APPROACHES THAT CAN CAUSE PROBLEMS

- PLANTING A HIDDEN DEVICE TO RECORD SOMEONE WHEN YOU'RE NOT PART OF THE CONVERSATION, A BUG IN A ROOM, A HIDDEN RECORDER, ANYTHING PLACED ON A CHILD. RECORDING A CONVERSATION YOU'RE ACTUALLY IN, ON YOUR OWN PHONE, IS GENERALLY LAWFUL IN ENGLAND AND WALES, BUT COURTS TREAT A PLANTED DEVICE VERY DIFFERENTLY, AND WITH FAR MORE SUSPICION.
- EDITING OR CUTTING A RECORDING DOWN TO A HIGHLIGHTS VERSION. COURTS EXPECT THE WHOLE, UNEDITED RECORDING IF YOU RELY ON ONE. A VERSION THAT LOOKS SELECTIVELY TRIMMED CAN UNDERMINE YOUR CREDIBILITY EVEN IF EVERYTHING IN IT IS TRUE.
- RECORDING IN A WAY THAT RISKS THE ABUSER FINDING IT, SUCH AS LEAVING EVIDENCE ON A SHARED DEVICE, EVEN HIDDEN. IF IT'S FOUND, IT CAN ESCALATE THE RISK TO YOU AND DESTROY THE EVIDENCE'S USEFULNESS AT THE SAME TIME.
- REMOVING A HIDDEN CAMERA, TRACKER, OR LISTENING DEVICE YOURSELF BEFORE IT'S BEEN DOCUMENTED BY SOMEONE ELSE. THIS CAN TIP OFF THE PERSON WHO PLACED IT, AND DESTROYS THE PROOF THAT IT WAS THERE AT ALL.
- WAITING UNTIL YOU FEEL IT'S "BAD ENOUGH" TO START WRITING THINGS DOWN.

MEMORIES FADE, AND A RECORD WRITTEN A LONG TIME AFTER THE FACT CAN BE TREATED AS LESS RELIABLE THAN ONE WRITTEN CLOSE TO THE TIME. RECORD IT ASAP.

REMEMBER: BEING LAWFUL TO RECORD DOESN'T = WELL RECEIVED IN FAMILY COURT, PARTICULARLY RECORDINGS INVOLVING CHILDREN, SO USE JUDGEMENT AND IDEALLY GET ADVICE BEFORE RELYING ON ONE

AS YOU'VE READ ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE, NOT ALL APPROACHES TO DOCUMENTING EVIDENCE ARE EQUAL, AND SOME APPROACHES CAN WORK AGAINST YOU. HERE'S WHAT TENDS TO HOLD UP, AND WHAT TENDS TO CAUSE PROBLEMS.

WHAT ARE THE WAYS THAT GENERALLY HOLD UP WELL?

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SCREENSHOTS

A CRIME REFERENCE NUMBER FROM THE POLICE

A PRIVATE, DATED NOTE WRITTEN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER EACH INCIDENT

COPIES STORED SOMEWHERE THE OTHER PERSON CANNOT REACH

PHOTOS OF INJURIES TAKEN AS SOON AS IT'S SAFE, WITH A FOLLOW-UP PHOTO A DAY OR TWO LATER

REPORT



GET MONEY GET OUT *GET RID™

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02/09/2026