



Dear Health Professional Community,

COVID-19 is presenting unprecedented challenges and changing the ways that we must meet the needs of our patients and clients. For victims and survivors of domestic violence, this period of social distancing may compound the feeling of isolation already present in so many abusive relationships. CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) is actively seeking ways that we can communicate the availability of Safe Connect, CT's domestic violence resource hub. **We are hoping that you can help us spread the word to your patients, clients, and people in your community!**

Safe Connect, a project of CCADV, provides victims with extensive information, safety planning, and counseling, as well as referrals to one of CCADV's 18 member organizations for ongoing support and services locally. While our advocates are now working remotely during COVID-19, they are available via call, chat and email 24/7. Whether someone needs one-on-one counseling, services for children who have witnessed domestic violence, legal advocacy related to a restraining order or the arrest of their abuser or just someone to listen, Safe Connect advocates are on standby. The Safe Connect team is a highly compassionate, bilingual, multicultural group of advocates whose cultural backgrounds span over ten different countries and four continents. Advocates are 80% bilingual in English and Spanish with several other languages spoken. Plus, our chat and email features can respond to nearly 200 languages.

At CCADV, we take a victim-defined approach to our comprehensive advocacy, meaning we tailor our services to meet an individual or family's unique needs in a holistic way. We recognize that being a victim of domestic violence is not the most salient identity for most people, so we make their goals and priorities our own, all while providing options for enhancing safety.

We are asking that you help us spread the word to your patients and clients about the availability of Safe Connect 24/7 throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. Our goal is to ensure that everyone is being educated on intimate partner violence (IPV) resources every time. The more we can reduce isolation and help inform people about the resources available to help them during these stressful times, the better. Please consider doing at least one of the following...

- Utilize telemedicine appointments and calls to talk with every patient or client about the resources available through Safe Connect.
- Film a short, 1-2 minute video speaking to your community about helpful and healthy resources and the availability of Safe Connect. Post one of our pre-made images (available in English and Spanish).
- If you don't use social media, but send emails or electronic newsletters to your patients or clients, consider sending information about Safe Connect that way.

Below we've provided talking points, important information for survivors to consider when contacting Safe Connect, sample social media copy, pre-made images, and a sample telemedicine. We hope that this information makes it as easy as possible for you to craft a message that speaks directly to your patients and clients about the availability of Safe Connect during COVID-19.

Thank you for your consideration and time helping us reach as many potential victims and survivors as possible. Please don't hesitate to reach out to CCADV Director of Health Professional Outreach, Ashley Starr Frechette (astarrfrechette@ctcadv.org); or CCADV Director of Public Policy & Communications, Liza Andrews (landrews@ctcadv.org) with questions.

Sincerely,

The CCADV and Safe Connect Team

Social Media Videos:

Videos are a great way to connect with your community and can be a meaningful way to engage people on social media. Videos can be short, 1-2 minutes, and can encompass the sample script below or any of the talking points listed below. Simply film the video on your phone or computer and then upload it to your social media pages. We're happy to take a look at the video first and are able to trim the beginning or end of videos if that is helpful. You can send it to CCADV's Director of Health Professional Outreach, Ashley Starr Frechette, at astarrfrechette@ctcadv.org.

When you post the video to your social media accounts, please be sure to tag CCADV so that we can in turn share it with our followers. (Facebook @CTCoalitionAgainstDomesticViolence; Twitter & Instagram @CTCADV) Also, please be sure to use #CTSafeConnect!. Thank you for helping us spread the word about the availability of domestic violence advocates throughout COVID-19!

Sample Video Intro/Outro Script

Hi everyone, _____ here. COVID-19 is creating challenges all around us. When it comes to victims and survivors of domestic violence, this period of social distancing may compound feelings of isolation. First, I want you to know that you are not alone. In Connecticut, domestic violence services are accessed through Safe Connect, which is up and running throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. Advocates can be contacted 24/7 via call, chat and email at CTSafeConnect.org or 888.774.2900.

I also want to give you some tips about... *(include any health tips/resources/supports or some of the talking points below that you think would be helpful for your audience)*

Again, if you need to talk with someone about your relationship, please contact a Safe Connect advocate at CTSafeConnect.org or 888.774.2900. They're available 24/7 throughout the COVID-19 outbreak to offer information, counseling, safety planning, legal advocacy, and a safe connection to your local domestic violence organization for ongoing support and services.

General Safe Connect Talking Points:

- We know that the COVID-19 outbreak may lead to further isolation of victims and survivors of domestic violence
- Safe Connect is here to help!
- Safe Connect is CT's domestic violence resource hub
- Advocates are available 24/7 throughout the COVID-19 outbreak
- Safe Connect is available via call, chat and email to talk with you, give you options, and safely connect you to your local domestic violence organization for ongoing support
- www.CTSafeConnect.org | 888.774.2900 | SafeConnect@ctcadv.org
- All services are confidential, safe, free and voluntary.

Important Information for Survivors to Consider When Contacting Safe Connect:

Some or all of these points may be relevant to your patients and clients. Use whatever talking points you think are most important to communicate.

- Safe Connect understands that IPV can impact the health and well-being of you and your family. Services are voluntary. You can opt in or out at any time and you do not have to say your name.
- It may be difficult to reach out for resources or support when everyone is home. Safe Connect can be reached through live chat at www.CTSafeConnect.org and there is a "safe escape" button at the top right of the page. Services are free and unconditional.
- You don't have to be in crisis to reach out for yourself or a friend.
- Safe Connect does not share information with anyone unless they receive your permission
- Safe Connect will make every effort to provide physical accommodations or ensure access to meet your health needs.

- Safe Connect understands how you might be uniquely impacted by domestic violence based on your gender identity, sexual orientation or religious beliefs.
- The Safe Connect team is a highly compassionate, bilingual, multicultural group of advocates whose cultural backgrounds span over ten different countries and four continents. They can identify with many of the issues you may face.
- Your local domestic violence organization has Child & Family Advocates who can provide support and services to children who witness domestic violence.

Sample Social Media Copy:

The following is sample copy to include with any videos or images you post.

We know that the COVID-19 outbreak may lead to further isolation of victims and survivors. We want you to know that you are not alone. #CTSafeConnect advocates are available 24/7 throughout the outbreak via call, chat and email. Advocates can talk with you, give you options, and safely connect you to your local domestic violence organization for ongoing support. [CTSafeConnect.org](https://www.ctsafeconnect.org) | 888.774.2900

While COVID-19 is creating challenges all around us, we want you to know that #CTSafeConnect Advocates are here to help if you're experiencing abuse in your relationship. Advocates available via call, chat and email 24/7 to talk with you, give you options, and safely connect you to your local domestic violence organization for ongoing support. [CTSafeConnect.org](https://www.ctsafeconnect.org) | 888.774.2900

Social Media Images:

Click the link below to access pre-made images that you can share on your social media platforms. Images are sized for Facebook/Instagram and Twitter. Content is in English and Spanish. The link will auto-download a zip file with the images.

<https://bit.ly/2WFgORZ>

Sample Telemedicine Script:

During these uncertain times it is more important than ever that health professionals connect with patients and clients to offer helpful resources to cope with the increased stress and isolation brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. With so many people confined to their homes we are urging health professionals to educate all patients and clients about the resources available in CT through Safe Connect's 24/7 hotline 888-774-2900 and www.ctsafeconnect.org. Abusive partners may withhold necessary items, or share misinformation about the pandemic as a method of control, withhold medical resources or transportation, and further isolate victims from their friends and family. Isolation is one of the strongest tactics an abuser can use, so increased understanding of the resources available and ways to connect with a certified domestic violence advocate is more important than ever before.

With a large number of health professionals shifting to telemedicine CCADV created a short script to be utilized during each virtual appointment. The script outlines why intimate partner violence (IPV) is a serious concern right now, offers information on the statewide resources available, and encourages each patient/client to share this resource with anyone that might benefit from it. The script doesn't point fingers or ask any specific questions, it's simply a way to educate every patient or client, every time. Along with the telemedicine script are resources and safety suggestions to help facilitate implementation into your telemedicine practice.

Remember, you are not expected to become an expert on IPV! Safe Connect has certified advocates available 24/7 to assist with any questions, concerns or resources that you or your patients/clients might need. Implementing the IPV script below will help inform and educate individuals that might not have otherwise known where to turn. Also, if you're still seeing patients in your office, please consider displaying [this poster](#) in common areas that will let patients know about the availability of Safe Connect.

If you have any questions about the implementation of this script or would like further resources please contact Ashley Starr Frechette, Director of Health Professional Outreach, at astarrfrechette@ctcadv.org. Thank you for utilizing telemedicine to spread the word about Safe Connect during these very uncertain times.

IPV Telemedicine Script:

With increased isolation and stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic...

- We have started talking about intimate partner violence with all of our patients because it can have such a serious impact on your health.
- We want to let you know that Connecticut has a 24/7 IPV hotline, called Safe Connect.
- Safe Connect Advocates understand complicated relationships and all services are free, safe, confidential and voluntary.
- If you have anyone that might benefit from these resources please let them know that they can call **888.774.2900** or email and live chat at www.CTSafeConnect.org.

Helpful IPV Information for Health Professionals using Telemedicine:

1. Ask the patient if there is a time that would work best to call back to increase privacy.
2. Ask patients to take phone calls off speaker phone.
3. Patients do not have to say their name when they call, email or live chat with Safe Connect.
4. Disclosures are not the goal, but if they happen direct the patient to Safe Connect for safety planning.
5. IPV, in and of itself, is not a mandated reporting opportunity in the state of CT.
6. Health Professionals who need resources or have questions can also speak with a certified IPV advocate at www.CTSafeConnect.org or 888-774-2900.
7. Please contact Ashley Starr Frechette, Director of Health Professional Outreach, with any questions. astarrfrechette@ctcadv.org