

An illustration of a person with dark skin and short, curly hair, seen from the back and side. They are wearing a light blue tank top and are brushing their teeth with a green toothbrush. In the background, a mirror reflects their face as they brush. The background of the entire page is a solid orange color, with a large, dark blue circle on the left and a thick, curved teal and blue line sweeping across the bottom right.

LGBTQ+
DOMESTIC
ABUSE
SERVICE

LGBTQ+ **SURVIVOR** **CHRISTMAS** **GUIDE**

LGBTQ+

DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICE

WE SEE YOU. WE HEAR YOU. WE SUPPORT YOU.

The year is drawing to a close, and we're reflecting a lot at Switchboard on the things we need for the coming months. Something that has become abundantly clear is that we need connection, community care, liberation and acts of kindness. A question we want to bring into the new year is: **what does it mean to exist radically and fully with each other?**

Christmas can be a particularly dangerous time of year of domestic abuse survivors. Many services close, meaning that people are stuck without means of support if they're in danger, or particularly struggling with something.

There are a number of reasons why this happens, including financial pressures, being stuck in a house with perpetrators over an intense period and increased alcohol use. If you're in an abusive situation it's

really important that you know what to do to maintain your safety over the festive period.

Being around abusive family members as an LGBTQ+ person can be particularly dangerous and triggering, especially during times of year where there is an emphasis on family and togetherness. We've put some helpful affirmations and reminders in this guide if you need them, as well as safety advice and tips to identify and reduce your risk of domestic abuse. We've also included tips to help you to respond if abuse happens.

If you know anyone who would benefit from reading or having this guide, please pass it on. We're here for all LGBTQ+ domestic abuse survivors.



TOP TEN SAFETY TIPS

01

Identify the risk: clearly identify the risks you face, so you know what to look out for.

02

Identify triggers: are there specific triggers that have caused conflict previously over festive periods?

03

Be safe when using alcohol or drugs: be around people who you trust, and that know you're at risk of violence. If you're using substances to cope, try to monitor how much you're taking.

04

Have a practiced escape route: if you're worried an abusive incident will happen, make sure you have a safe place you can go and that you know how to get there at all times.

05

Pack an emergency bag: if you think you may need to make an escape at short notice, make sure you have a bag somewhere private and easy to access containing medications, money, ID, documents and sentimental things.





TOP TEN SAFETY TIPS

06

Tell someone who you trust: whether this is a neighbour, a friend, a colleague or family member, make sure someone is aware of your wellbeing over this period.

07

Agree a safety word: have a phrase or word you can use with your support network that will tell them you're not safe- this should be a word that doesn't alert the abuser.

08

Use the 999 silent solution: you may need to call emergency services for help when it isn't safe to speak. If the call handler can't decide if an emergency service is needed, you will hear an automated message which asks you to press 55 to be put through to the police.

09

Register to text emergency services: text register to 999 now & follow the instructions sent. You can't use this service unless you're registered, so don't wait for an emergency.

10

Arrange regular check ins: if you're going to be isolated from your support network over the festive period, arrange to have check ins at regular times and stay connected.





HELPLINES OPEN OVER CHRISTMAS

Whilst the Domestic Abuse service is closed over the festive period, you may want to speak with a helpline who can hold space for you and help you to get support. Switchboard's helpline will be open as usual during the holiday season.

BRIGHTON & HOVE LGBTQ SWITCHBOARD HELPLINE

01273 204050

Open Wednesdays and Thursdays 7pm-9:30pm

GALOP: NATIONAL LGBT+ DOMESTIC ABUSE HELPLINE

0800 9995 428

Open Monday to Friday 10am-5pm

Wednesday and Thursday 10am-8pm

SAMARITANS

116 123

Open 24/7

BRIGHTON & HOVE MENTAL HEALTH RAPID RESPONSE

0300 304 0078

Open 24/7

REFUGE: NATIONAL DOMESTIC ABUSE HELPLINE

0808 2000 247

Open 24/7



YOU DESERVE SAFE, HEALTHY & RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS



YOU DESERVE YOUR IDENTITY AFFIRMED & RESPECTED

**LGBTQ+
DOMESTIC
ABUSE
SERVICE**

If your family continually make jokes, threaten or ignore your sexuality or gender identity you may be experiencing domestic abuse.

Abuse from family members is sometimes not recognised as abuse and written off as a 'family dispute' or having 'different values'. Whether others recognise it or not, **help is available**. Our domestic abuse service is an **LGBTQ-led service**, supporting survivors in a **safe, inclusive and affirmative community space**.



Switchboard
Connecting you to LGBTQ support



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