Stay At Home Is Not Safe For Everyone

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For many folks, home is not friendly or safe to start and the order to “Stay At Home” can make an already volatile or unstable living situation worse. The order to “Stay At Home” for the safety of everyone means a big sacrifice of safety for some.

I am on day 14 of working from home and self-isolating. It sucks. I’m feeling the isolation and the boredom of being stuck inside and by myself. I am also privileged to be safe and secure in my own home, and I know that not everyone has access to this privilege at this time.

Domestic Violence

Many people are staying in homes that are not safe or secure. Going to school might have been an escape from an abusive home. You may have been planning to leave an abusive partner or from another kind of unsafe living situation, and now you’re stuck. Incidences of domestic violence have increased over the past weeks of self-isolation and shelter-in-place¹. And it’s important to remember that services are still available. Governor Walz has tweeted that hotlines are available in Minnesota at 866-223-1111 or text 612-399-9995. Use these numbers to get connected to local resources and support. You deserve to be safe.

There is also the National Domestic Violence Hotline (https://www.thehotline.org/help) or you can call 800-799-SAFE (7233). They are available 24/7 and can be available to help you make a safety plan and connect you with local and national resources.

At Minnesota State University, Mankato the Violence Awareness and Response Program (VARP: https://www.mnsu.edu/varp/) is still available to students. Reach out and you can virtually meet with the program coordinator and access support.

**Other forms of violence or lack of safety**

There are many ways in which people can be made to feel unsafe in their own homes. If you are trans and your family refuses to recognize and use your pronouns and name – that threatens safety. If you are living with a disability and the place where you are staying has barriers to access or care – that threatens safety. If you practice a religion or faith that the people you are staying with have judgments about – that threatens safety. Not having enough food, or access to medication, or access to care and support – these are all threats to safety. You deserve to be safe.

Please reach out to safe supports. Call the Counseling Center to get some support in managing the stress and hurt that you may be experiencing. Try to get some alone time or some time with someone who you feel safe with. Take care of yourself, keep breathing, and remember that this is temporary – life will return to “normal” in the future. Ultimately, trust yourself that you know best how to stay as safe as possible when you are stuck in your unsafe home.

**Remember to take care of yourself and to take care of others by washing your hands and remembering that your mental health is important! If you need some additional support from the Counseling Center, call (507) 389-1455 (M-F 8:00 am – 4:30 pm) and ask to talk with a counselor about your concerns.**