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**Cell phone guidance during Covid-19 public health emergency**

Different centers have different practices and resources around whether or not staff use “work” cell phones (provided by the center) or they use personal cell phones when serving clients/survivors. The following are some safeguards to protect advocates and clients/survivors during this time when services are offered most often by cell phone.

**Personal cell phones:**

1. Protect access to the phone with use of a passcode/password/biometric (fingerprint). Set the time when the phone “locks” to the minimum number of seconds.
2. Choose a method that ensures that your cell phone number does not register on a client/survivor’s phone. We recognize that this is happening already, but it will prevent the person from calling you back without your permission or at times you are not working. There are two options; each option is presented with its associated risks so you can choose which will work best for you.
   1. If you have U. S. Cellular, contact them to ask that they designate your number as “restricted.” This means that when you call a client/survivor, your name and number will not appear on their end, just the word “restricted.”
   2. Utilize \*67. While this works in most cases, it is possible to identify your number and gain access to your personal phone number. Do not text a client/survivor from your personal cell phone as \*67 does not hide your phone number when texting.
   3. Utilize a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) which assigns you a randomly generated number unassociated with a name or organization. These are relatively easy to use and can be utilized over data or WIFI. It also allows survivors to call or text with you (if they feel that it is safe for them at the time). There are many VoIP services which incur a monthly fee and are secure and confidential; free versions are far less secure and confidential. Free versions include Google Voice <https://voice.google.com/u/0/about> and 3CX Phone system <https://www.3cx.com/>.
      1. There are a couple of risks with this option that you should understand. One is that the number is assigned to you until you erase it. If you do not want clients/survivor to use that number for more than one interaction, you will need to discuss that with them or get assigned a new number every time you make a call.
      2. We recommend that you do not text with clients/survivors even when using the VoIP option.
      3. In addition, the VoIP provider may use your information for marketing purposes.
      4. Finally, for clients/survivors whose phones are being monitored, it is relatively easy to hack into the free VoIP systems.
3. Delete any contact information (i.e. phone number) of a survivor you call as soon as the call ends.
4. Do not share your phone with other people in your household until you have deleted any and all client/survivor information.
5. Plan for remote wipes of the data on your phone if you were to lose the phone or it got stolen. This will be different and in the settings of each individual phone.

**“Work” cell phones (provided by the center)**

1. Protect access to the phone with use of a passcode/password/biometric (fingerprint). Set the time when the phone “locks” to the minimum number of seconds.
2. When calling a survivor **on the helpline**, choose a method that ensures that your cell phone number does not register on a client/survivor’s phone. We recognize that this is happening already but it will prevent the person from calling you back without your permission or at times you are not working. There are two choices:
   1. Utilize \*67.
   2. Utilize a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) which assigns you a randomly generated number unassociated with a name or organization. These are relatively easy to use/free and can be utilize over data or WIFI. It also allows survivors to call or text with you (if they feel that is safe for them at the time). There are many VoIP services which incur a monthly fee but free versions include Google Voice <https://voice.google.com/u/0/about> and 3CX Phone system <https://www.3cx.com/>
3. When calling aSART client **outside the helpline**, you do not need to hide your phone number. It is helpful and part of the work for client/survivors to have direct access. However, when you have stopped work for the day, turn the phone off; make sure clients/survivors know that this is your practice.
4. Don’t share your work phone with other people in your household, even at times when your child’s phone runs out of battery and they just want to “borrow yours for a sec.”
5. Plan for remote wipes of the data on your phone if you were to lose the phone or it got stolen. This will be different and in the settings of each individual phone.