

# Worried About Wearing a Mask?

Covering our faces is uncomfortable for all of us, but it's especially hard for people hurt by their partners.

If you have been hurt in a way that made it hard to breathe, like being choked or strangled, it might seem impossible to wear a face mask because it triggers that painful memory. You also might be uncomfortable seeing others in face masks.

But remember how many things you have done that at one point you probably believed you couldn't do. You are strong and brave and can figure this out too.

## Why is it so important to be able to wear face masks?

Face coverings can help protect you from getting or spreading coronavirus. They also are required by a statewide mask order and in many places—like the court, government or county resources, and many types of businesses like grocery stores.

You deserve to get the help you need and stay as safe as possible during the pandemic. While the statewide mask order has exceptions, including one for mental health, businesses and places like courts can make their own rules—like NO SHIRT, NO SHOES, NO SERVICE. Without a mask, it's likely you won't be permitted to go into a building, participate in a court appointment, or get services you might need without wearing a mask. This could hurt your court case or you might not be able to get the help you need. Others might also treat you badly if they see you without a face mask.



## How can I find a way to do this without it upsetting me so much?

Here are some ideas to help you find a face covering that works for you. Consider:



1. Noticing your reaction when you put on a face covering. What does your body feel like? What do you think? How do you feel?
2. Ask yourself what has helped you manage those feelings or reactions in the past—when you were triggered. Practice those things and see if they help.
3. Identify something you can tell yourself that will help you better handle wearing a face covering.
4. Try different types of face coverings—including face shields, different types of masks, masks made of different types of materials, etc—to find one that might work for you.
5. Practice wearing your face covering in a space where you feel calm and safe. Little by little, you can practice wearing it for a longer period of time.

Contact your domestic violence program for support, resources, and to help you think this through. We care about you and believe in you!

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