



Safe Berks  
255 Chestnut Street  
Reading, PA 19602

Phone: 610.373.1206  
Fax: 610.372.4188  
SafeBerks.org

We work to end  
domestic violence and  
sexual assault

**Safe Berks**  
**Press Release**  
3/18/20  
[www.SafeBerks.org](http://www.SafeBerks.org)

Francine M. Scoboria  
Communications Coordinator  
Cell: 484-269-7330  
Email: FrancineS@SafeBerks.org

## **Safe Berks Announces Health Precautions**

The Safe Berks Board of Directors, our Interim CEO Angel Helm, and our Chief Operating Officer Beth Garrigan are closely monitoring new updates concerning the coronavirus (COVID-19). Our highest priority is to safeguard the health and safety of our residents, clients and staff.

In order to protect the public health, as well as the health of the Safe Berks family, we have enacted several changes. These changes are temporary; we hope to return to previous practices in the near future. We are very grateful to the community for your support of Safe Berks as volunteers, donors and advocates, and we ask for your continued support during these challenging times.

### **Temporary changes to Safe Berks policies:**

For victims of domestic violence and sexual assault who are seeking our free crisis services, we ask you to call our 24-hour hotline at 844-789-SAFE (7233) or text SAFE BERKS to 20121. Crisis services, including requests for shelter or medical advocacy, will flow through the hotline and text line. We will continue to provide free, confidential services to local survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault 24 hours each day. Anyone in immediate danger should call 911.

For Legal questions and concerns, please call 610-373-1206, ext. 107, and leave a message. Messages will be checked frequently by our legal advocates, who will call clients back.

All Counseling Support Groups are postponed at this time, but free individual counseling is still available. For requests for Counseling, or questions specific to Counseling, call Danielle Palermo, Director of Counseling, at 610-373-1206, ext 606.

Safe Berks staff will continue to work closely with Tower Health/Reading Hospital, Penn State Health St. Joseph, and Berks Community Health Center to provide medical advocacy and support for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. For questions about medical advocacy, please contact Beth Garrigan, Chief Operating Officer, at [BethG@SafeBerks.org](mailto:BethG@SafeBerks.org).

Any public events involving the Safe Berks Education and Outreach Department are canceled at this time. Our Education staff will reach out to all current community partners. For questions specific to Education, email Lisa Tumbleson, Director of Education & Outreach, at [LisaT@SafeBerks.org](mailto:LisaT@SafeBerks.org).

Safe Berks is temporarily not accepting donations of goods.

Safe Berks will limit the number of people who enter our building to residents and staff. Volunteers are asked not to visit Safe Berks at this time. If volunteers have any questions, please contact Mindy McIntosh, Director of Development, at [MindyM@SafeBerks.org](mailto:MindyM@SafeBerks.org).

Thank you for your understanding. This is a fluid situation and changes will be made as needed. Any other questions, email Interim CEO Angel Helm at [AngelH@SafeBerks.org](mailto:AngelH@SafeBerks.org). We will keep you updated through traditional media, social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter), and other communication channels. Thank you and be safe.

### **General Information about Safe Berks**

Safe Berks provides safe haven and support to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Our advocacy and education programs increase awareness of oppression and promote the prevention of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Safe Berks services include a Safe House for adults and children who are in danger, a 24-hour Hotline and Text Line, counseling, legal services, medical

advocacy, and educational programs. Safe Berks services are free, confidential, and available in English and Spanish, and will be translated into any other language needed. Safe Berks served more than 4,000 clients in the last fiscal year. Our Safe House provided a haven to approximately 800 people, including about 400 children in the last fiscal year. Our 24-Hour Hotline number is 844-789-SAFE, or text Safe Berks to 20121.



SAFE