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VIOLENCE

# Technology as a Tool for Advocacy: Accessible and Safe Use of Technology to Serve Survivors with Disabilities During COVID- 19 and Beyond

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# What are Digital Services?

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Using tech-based tools to provide services to survivors with disabilities.

# Examples of Digital Services

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- Text or chat
- Video calls with survivors
- Video or web chat for support groups
- Email (caution)

# All Tools Have Access Concerns

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- None of the digital tools we will talk about today are 100% accessible for every survivor with every type of disability.
- Customize tools used based on the survivor's access needs.
- You may have to use different tools for different needs.

# All Tools Also Have Risks

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- Even older technologies have risks.
- Decision-makers should understand the risks and benefits.
- Advocates should be able talk about those risks with survivors.

# Safety & Privacy Risks for Survivors with Disabilities

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## 1. Interception

- Personal Safety
- Loss of Privacy and Presence of Supports

## 2. Impersonation

## 3. Program Confidentiality

## 4. Advocate Safety & Capacity

# The Bottom Line

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- Offering additional communication options is crucial to survivor-centered services.
- AND, it must be done with caution and with an eye for access.

# Staying True to Core Values





# Support & Access

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- Meet survivors where they are – chat, video, text, etc.
- Offer a variety tools to meet accessibility needs.
- Offer tools with low tech barriers to access.
- Provide information so survivors can choose.
- Test in advance.

# Privacy & Safety Options

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- Anonymous use.
- No traces on survivor's device or accounts.
- Company can't see info about survivors or content of conversations.
- "HIPAA Compliant" is not enough.

# How Do We Talk about Tech with Survivors with Disabilities?

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- Make a commitment to access.
- Ask the survivor what the best way is to communicate with them.
- Ask them if they have any concerns with using the tech.
- Provide survivors with alternate ways to communicate.

# How Do We Talk about Tech with Survivors with Disabilities (2)?

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- Make sure there are clear directions how the platform will be used.
- Let the survivors know the limitations to the platforms.
- Identify if the survivor is using assistive tech or services, if the tech is compatible with their assistive technology or services.

# Stay True to Core Values

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- Just because the tech makes something possible, doesn't mean we should do it.
- Tech that is OK for our families or workplace is not necessarily OK for survivors.
- Use any new digital service temporarily – reassess once the pandemic has passed.

# Choosing the Technology



# Match Platform to Service and the Survivor

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What platform will be best working with survivors with disabilities:

- Hotlines
- Ongoing advocacy
- Online groups
- Chat, Text, Email, Video, Phone, Mail

# For Survivors with Disabilities

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- Choosing an option that will meet their need is important
  - Is the option easy to understand and install?
  - Does it offer video for survivors who may need an interpreter?
  - Is it compatible with screen readers?
  - Can you easily access resources for help when using the app?



# Chat or Instant Messaging

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- ResourceConnect - internal chat
- Semaphor - internal chat & file sharing
- Cyph - internal chat & file sharing + messaging with survivors
- Slack or similar - OK only for chat ***not*** including survivor personally identifiable information

# National Hotlines

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The National Domestic Violence  
**HOTLINE**

★  
**Polaris** Freedom happens now.



**National Sexual Assault  
Hotline.**



# Ongoing Advocacy

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- Text or chat may feel safer or more private if others are nearby.
- Video can feel more personal and be more accessible.
- Develop a long-term solution for the survivor.

# Chat

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- Survivors connect via a browser window.
- Advocates use computer-based chat system to respond.
- Your webpage can include service hours, other hotlines to contact, and resources.

# ResourceConnect



## ResourceConnect

About >

Demo >

Pricing >

FAQs >

Contact >

Join >

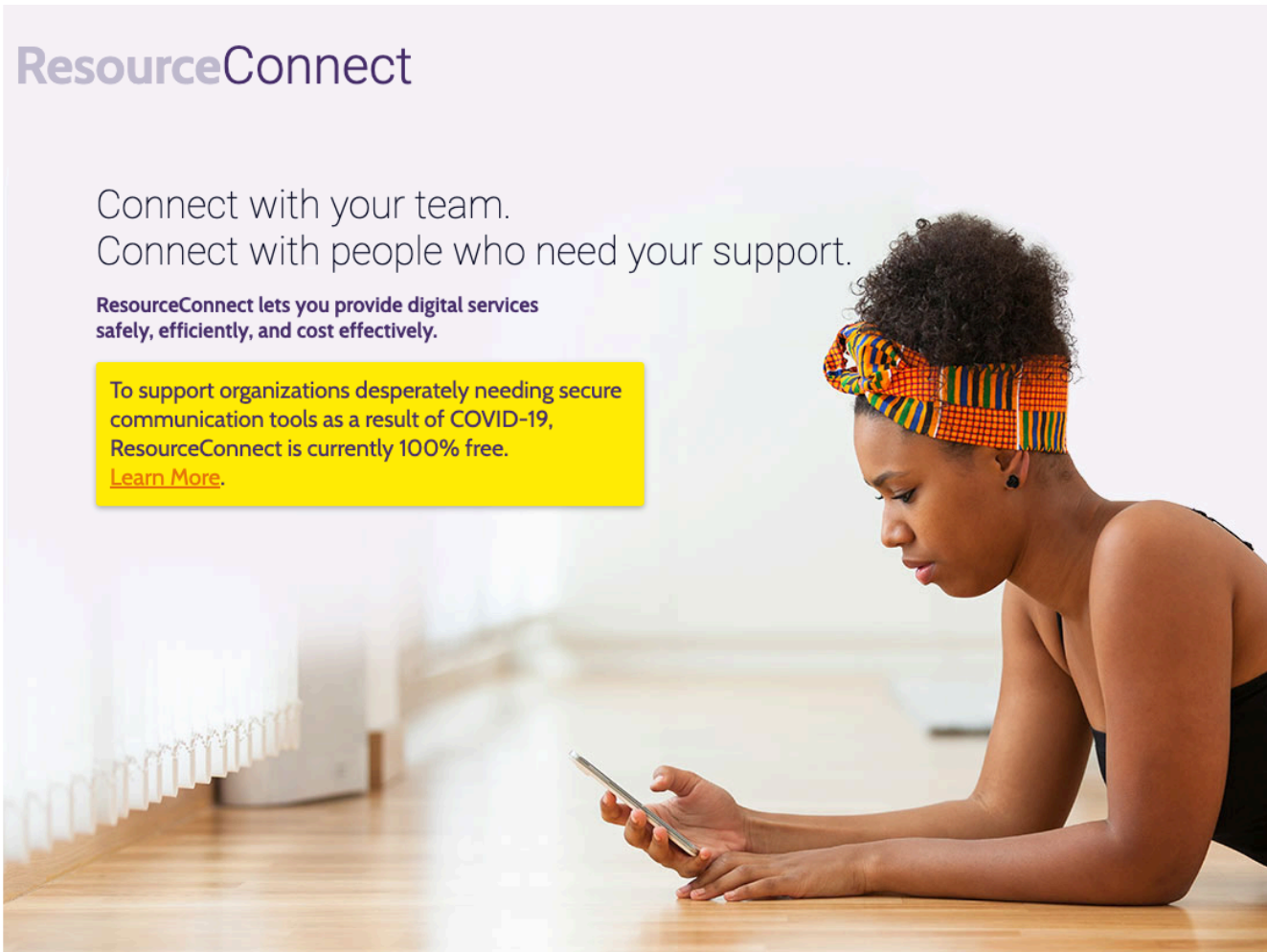
Log In >

Connect with your team.  
Connect with people who need your support.

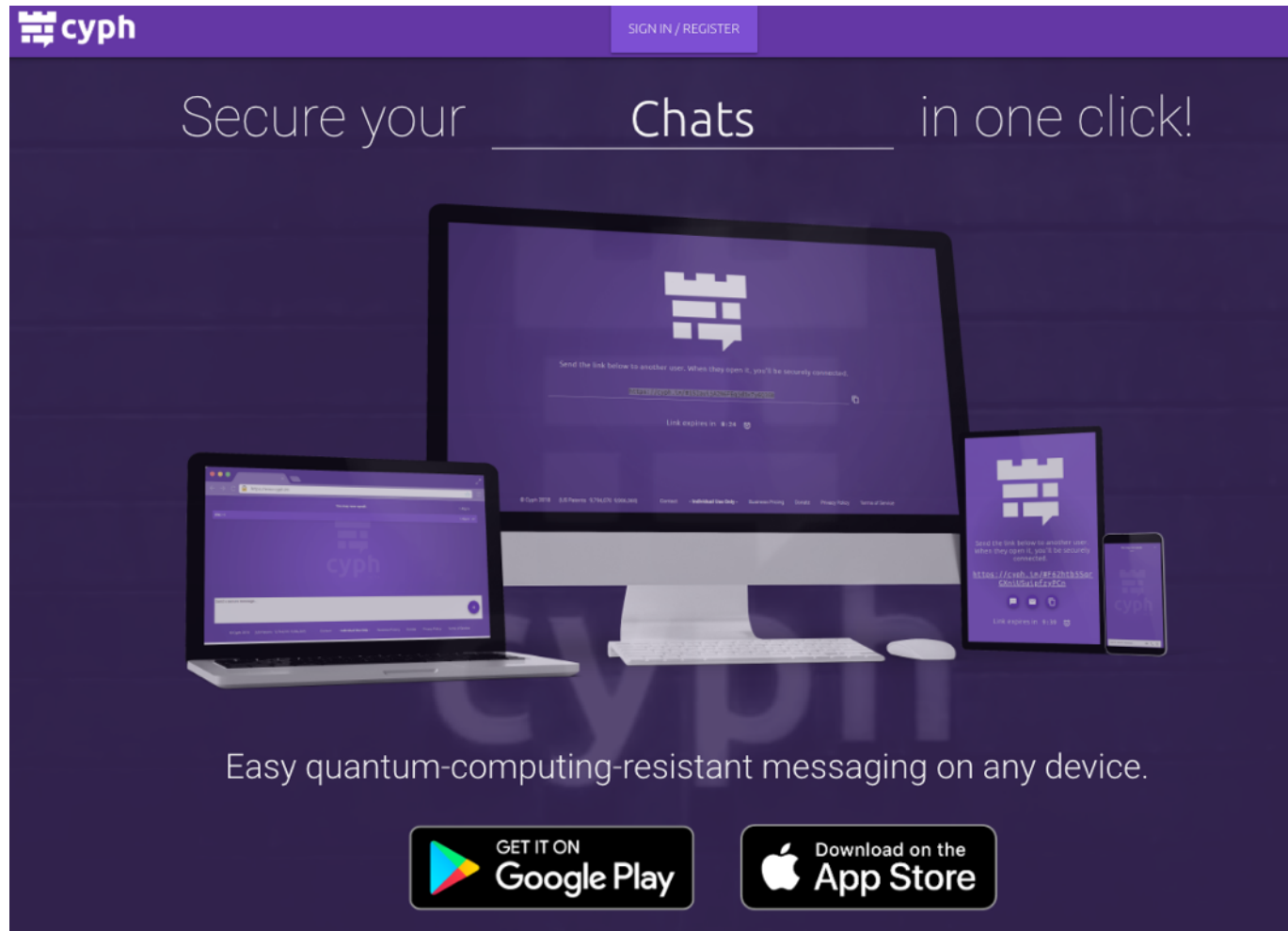
ResourceConnect lets you provide digital services safely, efficiently, and cost effectively.

To support organizations desperately needing secure communication tools as a result of COVID-19, ResourceConnect is currently 100% free.

[Learn More.](#)



# Cyph part I



The image shows a promotional banner for the Cyph messaging application. At the top left is the Cyph logo, and at the top right is a 'SIGN IN / REGISTER' button. The main headline reads 'Secure your Chats in one click!'. Below this, a desktop monitor, a laptop, a tablet, and a smartphone are displayed, each showing the Cyph interface. The desktop screen features a large chat icon, a text input field with a generated link, and a countdown timer for the link's validity. The bottom of the banner contains two buttons: 'GET IT ON Google Play' and 'Download on the App Store'.

cyph

SIGN IN / REGISTER

Secure your Chats in one click!

Send the link below to another user. When they open it, you'll be securely connected.

[https://cyph.la/FFA20135ec60a18a1nfrvEca](#)

Link expires in: 8:24

Easy quantum-computing-resistant messaging on any device.

GET IT ON Google Play

Download on the App Store

# Accessibility Options for Cyph

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- Provides ARIA for links.
- Working towards WCAG AA compliance.
- Supports Apple voiceover and Slack voiceover.

# Texting

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- Texting is not high-tech
- All mobile phones have a default texting app – no separate download required
- Convenience of texting whenever there is time, pausing if needed



# Texting Risks

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- A survivor's device might be monitored or accessed by someone else.
- Text preserves a record of the entire conversation by default on all devices, and sometimes in the Cloud.
- Billing records may include details.
- Not all survivors with disabilities will have access to phones.

# How Programs Text

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- Basic approach: Use a cell phone
  - Requires juggling multiple conversations on a single device
- Better: Computer-based messaging
  - Allows multiple staff members to triage, assign, and respond to messages that come in
  - Can more easily protect confidentiality

# Chat vs. Text

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- **Benefit:** Chat conversations aren't stored on survivor's device.
- **Benefit:** Options to auto delete content, and/or close the chat on survivor's device.
- **Risk:** Survivor's device may still be monitored by spyware.
- **Challenge:** Survivor may be unable to write or use written English or have difficulty reading.

# Risk of Impersonation

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- This risk exists across text-based platforms: text, messaging, chat, and email.
- Establish a method to verify identity.

# Gaps Exist

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- Think through approaches for survivors with disabilities who do not have access to phones or computers.

# Quick Notes on Email

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- Email can be easily intercepted.
  - Abusive person may know account password.
  - Abusive person may have access to devices.
- Email is saved by default in many places.
- Email is often backed up on servers, and sync'd across devices through the Cloud.

# Online Communication with Survivors with Disabilities

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- Check in often about meaning and tone.
- Stop and clarify if there is any confusion.
- Avoid Internet slang, acronyms, and emojis.
- Consider closing the conversation after a certain amount of time passes.

# Video Calls

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- Video offers visual and audio cues.
- It is easier to add in a third party, including live interpreters to increase accessibility for:
  - Survivors who are Deaf or hard of hearing, and
  - Survivors who speak a different language than the advocate.
- Video calls help with connection for people with disabilities.



# VRI, VRS and TRS

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- Assess the equipment, connectivity and the area for which interpreting will take place
- Using Video Remote Interpreting(VRI), Video Relay Services (VRS), Telecommunication Relay Service

# Remote Interpreting

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- Pros:
  - Interpreters no longer have to travel to perform job duties.
  - Quick access to help survivor.
- Cons:
  - Interpreter may not be trained on intimate partner violence.
  - Survivor may be concerned with being monitored, or the abuser having access to them or their technology.

# Video Calls for Survivors with Disabilities

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- May be better for working with Deaf survivors, offers video streaming.
- Closed Captioning can be utilized.
- Fosters connection.

# Communicating with Survivors: Video

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- Survivors with disabilities may be less likely to have access to the technology needed for video, and may have difficulties in understanding how to use the technology.

# Communicating with Survivors: Video part 2

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- If using video conferencing to communicate with a survivor who is using a personal or public computer, it's important to be aware that their computer/device could be monitored by the abusive person.

# Communicating with Survivors: Video part 3

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- If a survivor has a disability and uses assistive technology, their assistive tech may not be compatible with the video conferencing platform, or they may not be able to utilize all of the features the video conferencing program offers.

# Communicating with Survivors:

## Video part 4

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- To manage poor internet connections, use a combination of web conferencing for video and a landline or cell phone for audio. In the event that the internet fails, the audio connection will remain.

Make a call:



To join a call room, remove the @ and enter its name.

## There Comes a Time When Your Video Conferencing Finally Has to Become Usable.

Eliminate the hurdles and let customers get face-to-face with you with a single click on your video call link.

Try Now Free



As featured on:

**TechCrunch**

**Forbes**

**lifehacker**

**Google Play**



# Gruevo and Accessibility

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- No accessibility features currently offered, though they are working fast to get these features added.

We have developed resources to help you through this challenging time. [Click here](#) to learn more. ×

## Expanded Zoom Phone Global Availability!

Learn More



# Zoom and Accessibility

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- Offers built-in options for captioning, ASL interpretation and screen reader support.

## Accessibility Features

### Closed Captioning

Capture every word said with closed captioning. Zoom integrates seamlessly with 3rd party closed captioning providers through our [Closed Captioning REST API](#).

### Automatic Transcripts

Facilitate your understanding with [automatic transcripts](#). Transcripts are automatically generated and synchronized to make it easy to search and review meetings recordings.

### Keyboard Accessibility

Accomplish all major workflows with ease using a keyboard. Zoom supports [Keyboard Shortcuts](#) for easy navigation of Zoom features.

### Screen Reader Support

Use Zoom without a screen. We follow the latest accessibility standards to ensure that the product is fully accessible to the latest screen readers.

# Adapting Policies, Practices & Forms



# Start with What You Know

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- Begin with the same access, safety and privacy protocols that you use on phone hotlines – then update for digital services.
- The technology is different, but survivors' informed choices, access, safety, and privacy are all still the goals.

# Survivor's Devices, Accounts and Assistive Technology

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- Inform, educate, empower.
- Talk to the survivor about access concerns and potential privacy and security risks.
  - Delete message threads.
- Find safer options when possible.
  - Use safer, unmonitored device
  - Call instead of text

# Safety Planning Around Technology

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- Add emergency words to communication devices
- Create alternate voice command to contact police for speech activated devices
- Record an emergency message for someone with a communication disability.
- Identify other devices that increases a person's safety

# Best Practices for Client Data

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- Collect the least amount of information needed to provide the service requested and keep that information for as short a period of time as possible.
- Do not collect more information than you would for a traditional hotline call or in-person conversation.



# Collect Minimal Information

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- Don't require user accounts for survivors.
- Don't save documentation of abuse.
- Don't import info from the platform into client databases.
- Choose a platform that doesn't store the content of conversations.

# Use Caution with Big Companies

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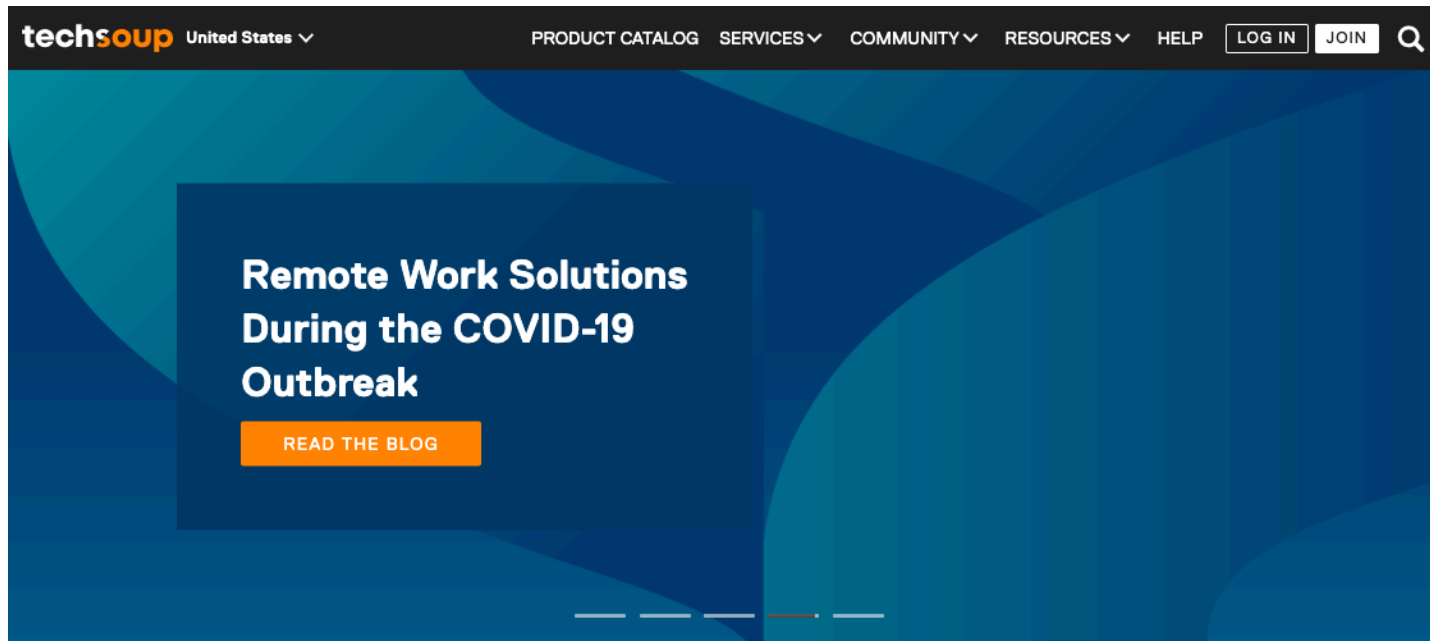
- Big companies are less responsive to concerns about access.
- Many companies collect, retain, and synthesize too much data for marketing.
- This is problematic for survivors' privacy and your program's confidentiality obligations.

# Provide Devices for Advocates

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- Mobile devices can help advocates reach survivors, use files from the office, send and receive email, and more.
- Program can better manage data security: deleting messages, call logs, bills, or the whole device if lost or stolen.

# TechSoup



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[BROWSE CATALOG](#)

# COVID-19 Resources

## Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

ESPAÑOL

- **Using Technology to Communicate with Survivors During a Public Health Crisis**
  - Resource: in [English](#) or en [Español](#)
  - Recording of [Webinar for Decision-Makers](#)
  - Recording of [Webinar for Advocates](#)
- **Working Remotely During a Public Health Crisis**
  - Resource: in [English](#) or en [Español](#)
  - Recording of [Webinar for Decision-Makers](#)
  - Recording of [Webinar for IT Staff](#)
- **Video Conferencing & Digital Communication Platforms: Comparison Chart**
  - Resource: in [English](#) or en [Español](#)
- **Digital Written Consent to Release Information**
  - Resource: in [English](#) or en [Español](#)

# Contact Information

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Safety Net Project

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# Thank you!

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- Please take our survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QR8Q9GT>