

KEEPING SAFE: FAMILY VIOLENCE DURING COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

Fact sheet

It is expected that incidents of family violence will rise as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Research and data confirm that family violence can become more frequent and severe during periods of crisis and emergency. Stress, anxiety and uncertainty associated with COVID-19 has allowed for the severity of family violence to escalate.

Whatever the reason may be - times of stress and hardship are never an excuse for violence.

WHAT IS FAMILY VIOLENCE

Family violence is used as a means to gain power and control. It is a pattern of behaviour that controls or dominates a person and causes them to fear for their safety or well-being or safety and well-being of another person.

Family violence can include any abusive behaviour that is; physical, sexual, emotional, economical, threatening or coercive. A child hearing, witnessing or otherwise being exposed to family violence is also a form of family violence, whether it is deliberate or not.

A family member includes any member of a family, domestic or intimate relationship, or former intimate relationships. The definition of family is very broad and many factors such as scultural, social and emtional ties can be taken into account.

USING COVID-19 AS AN EXCUSE FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE

With the current social distancing and stay at home directives from the government, some perpetrators may be using these measures to increase their controlling behaviour. These may include:

- Controlling who you speak to by phone or email
- Stopping you and/or the children from leaving the house
- Giving misguided information about the pandemic to frighten you
- Using COVID-19 as a form of excuse or justification for their abusive behaviour towards you and the children
- Breaching an intervention order

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HOW TO KEEP SAFE DURING COVID-19

Domestic Violence Victoria has provided some useful information on keeping safe during COVID-19. See www.dvvic.org.au

Victim survivors:

- create a safety plan
- stay in safer rooms within the home
- teach children their address and to know how to call police
- call police if at immediate risk

Family and friends can help by:

- checking-in on family and friends via phone, text or social media
- Keeping copies of important documents
- storing an 'escape' bag

Neighbours can help by:

- Looking out for one another
- calling police if there is immediate risk
- providing shelter for women and children until police arrive or immediate risk is gone

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS

Call us (03) 9376 7929

Email admin@mvl.org.au

Complete our online form: <https://bit.ly/2xW3M8c>

We are aware there have been some phone and internet service disruptions, and ask you to please be patient and try again if you have difficulty contacting us.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Police: 000 - if at immediate risk

Safe Steps: safesteps.org.au

1800 RESPECT - 1800737 732

Men's Referral Service - 1300 766 491

IMPORTANT NOTE

This information is of a general nature only and does not constitute legal advice.

For advice relevant to your specific circumstances, please contact us.



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