



Domestic & family violence in the COVID-19 environment

Supporting friends or family experiencing domestic and family violence during COVID-19



Social distancing, isolation and quarantine are important government public health policy measures that will assist in the reduction of COVID-19 infections. However, these measures may also increase risk to victim-survivors of domestic and family violence, including children, where families are at home with someone who chooses to use domestic and family violence.

Social isolation is a risk factor for domestic and family violence. We already know that physical and social isolation is often used to facilitate the use of power and control over victim-survivors. When victim-survivors are isolated from friends, family and support systems, it can significantly limit their opportunities to get help.

This is an important time for activating our communities. **If you are concerned about a friend, family member, neighbour or colleague's safety and wellbeing, you should check in on them regularly and offer what support you can.**

Safety planning

Safety planning is thinking about things you can do to be safer when living with domestic and family violence. Many victim-survivors have a safety plan in place, and you may already part of someone's safety plan.

The best way to make a safety plan is with the help of a support service, particularly a specialist domestic and family violence service. However, trusted friends and family members can also play an important role in safety planning, particularly during times of increased risk like COVID-19.

You can assist by:

- Checking in regularly via phone, text or social media.
- Agreeing on a safe word, sign or signal that the person experiencing family violence can use to alert you that they need you to get help.
- Calling Police via 000.
- Keeping copies of their important documents, and/or storing an 'escape' bag for them.

If you'd like to know more about domestic and family violence safety planning, please visit the [1800RESPECT website](https://www.1800respect.org.au/).

For support

While people are encouraged to stay at home, they may feel isolated from you and other friends or family. To help them feel less isolated, try to maintain social connections online or over the phone with them, if it is safe to do so. Keep up routines such as regular catch up calls. Think of the COVID-19 restrictions as an opportunity to re-engage with your friends who might be unsafe, using your own social isolation as an explanation for why you're calling more often than usual.

It is also important that victim-survivors know that they can reach out for support and that there are specialist domestic and family violence services there to help them. Our message to all victim-survivors, family and friends, and other service providers is that even during the pandemic, specialist domestic and family violence services are open and available for support and advice for anyone experiencing domestic and family violence who is worried about how potential self-isolation or quarantine will impact on their safety and well-being.

Specialist domestic and family violence services, children and family services, services for men using domestic and family violence, WA Police and other government and community services are there to help ensure the safety of victims-survivors, including children.

If you are concerned for someone's safety, please **call 000 or contact the police**

For Police assistance call 131 444

National helplines

- For confidential phone help and referral in Australia, please contact **1800 RESPECT on 1800 737 732**, the National Sexual Assault, Family and Domestic Violence Counselling Line.
- For support for men, call **Men's Referral Service on 1300 766 491**.
- [Lifeline](#) (24-hour crisis line): 131 114
- [Relationships Australia](#): 1300 364 277
- The National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services provides culturally sensitive help to Aboriginal people who are survivors of family violence; Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander women can also call the Aboriginal Contact Line 1800 019 123 for assistance.

Western Australian help lines

- Crisis Care: (08) 9223 1111 / 1800 199 008 (free call)
- Women's DV Helpline: (08) 9223 1188 /1800 007 339 (free call)
- Kid's Help Line: 1800 551 800
- Men's DV Helpline: (08) 9223 1199 /1800 000 599
- Sexual Assault Resource Centre
Admin: (08) 6458 1830
Emergency Crisis line: 08 6458 1828
Free call number: 1800 199 888

For contact details of women's refuges and other domestic and family violence counselling services visit the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services [website](#)



For contact details of women's health centres (providers of domestic violence counselling, support and advocacy), sexual assault support and unplanned pregnancy counselling support services in your area visit the Women's Community Health Network's [website](#)

Legal/Counselling

- DVAS Central: (08) 9328 1200 / 1800 998 399
- DV Legal Unit (LEGAL AID): (08) 9261 6254 / 1300 650 579
- Women's Law Centre of WA: (08) 9272 8800 / 1800 625 122 (Country)
- To find a community legal centre in your area, follow the link: [Community Legal WA](#)

Homelessness support:

- Entry Point: (08) 6496 0001 / 1800 124 684

Tenancy Support

- Tenancy WA: (08) 9221 0088 / 1800 621 888 (Country)
- Ruah Tenancy Support: (08) 9493 5021 / 1800 065 892 (Country)

Financial abuse

For information and resources if you are experiencing financial abuse please visit

[Your Toolkit](#)

For a comprehensive list of Family and domestic violence services and supports see

[Family and Domestic Violence Help](#)

Technology safety

To learn how to use technology safely see [Women's Technology Safety & Privacy Toolkit](#)
