



From the IIMHL and IIDL Update List

**Rapid Review on Coronavirus/COVID-19:
Actions and Resources related to Family Violence across
IIMHL and IIDL countries**

**ISSUE 9
Prepared by**

**Janet Peters
New Zealand IIMHL Liaison**

**Steve Appleton
European Regional Lead**

**Kathy Langlois
N. America Regional Lead**

April 22nd 2020

Introduction

This report is a rapid review of how IIMHL countries are addressing the impact of Covid-19 on the incidence of domestic abuse and family violence. All IIMHL countries have been included in this Rapid Review Update of Covid-19 information. The aim is to share information quickly across countries. This information focuses on countries whose governments have recently taken steps to attempt to decrease domestic abuse and family violence related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are grateful for the people from international and national agencies who have shared information with us. There are a wide range of resources contained in this briefing, and we hope you will find much of interest and use. To aid you in navigating the variety of information quickly, we have set out below the top takeaway messages from those resources, enabling you to see the key themes, and then dive more deeply into those of most relevance to you. We hope you find this document is helpful.

Top takeaways:

- International agencies are now recognising, addressing and commenting on the rise of domestic abuse and family violence
- Many countries are reporting a rise in domestic violence. This includes adults, children and in some cases, cruelty to pets.
- Perpetrators of domestic abuse may use COVID-19 infection control measures as a tool of coercive and controlling behaviour and may impose stricter and more unrealistic regimes on their families' activities and

behaviours. 'Social distancing' and 'isolation' are both core tactics of a coercively controlling partner.

- Indigenous women are likely to experience abuse more than others.
- If there was ever a time our countries needed animal welfare professionals and human welfare professionals to work together – it's right now.
- All countries have made clear statements that the instructions being issued to stay at home do not mean it is necessary to remain at home in the face of domestic violence. Domestic violence should still be reported and measures to support victims are in place.
- Some countries (e.g. Scotland) have a Police process that enables a woman (or man) to find out via the Police - the abuse history of a person.
- Communities must ensure citizens are aware of the current increased risk of domestic abuse and family violence at this time, encourage them to check on their neighbours, friends and family (while maintaining adherence to any distancing regulations) and report ANY concerns they see or hear to the proper authorities.
- All countries have a range of statutory and NGO agencies to help people in need as a result of domestic abuse and family violence
- New funding is in place in many countries in order to better support and inform people about this issue.

The Lancet E-Clinical Medicine

Social distancing fosters isolation; exposes personal and collective vulnerabilities while limiting accessible and familiar support options. The inability to work has immediate economic repercussions and deprives many individuals of essential livelihoods and health care benefits. Psychological consequences may range from stress, frustration and anger to severe depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). A recent review drawing on lessons from past pandemics shows the length of quarantine increases the risk for serious psychological consequences.

A relevant, yet frequently ignored risk during a pandemic and its socially disrupting response, is the potential increase of intimate partner violence (IPV).

IPV is defined as physical, sexual, psychological, or economic violence that occurs between former or current intimate partners. While men can also be affected, IPV is a gendered phenomenon largely perpetrated against women by male partners and approximately one in three women worldwide will experience physical and/or sexual IPV in her lifetime.

Many of the strategies employed in abusive relations overlap with the social measures imposed during quarantine. Next to physical and geographical isolation, IPV survivors describe social isolation (i.e., from family and friends), functional isolation (e.g., when peers or support systems appear to exist but are unreliable or have alliances with the perpetrator), surveillance, and control of daily activities.

During quarantine, measures intentionally imposed in an abusive partnership may be enforced on a massive scale in the attempt to save lives. Isolation paired with greater exposure, psychological and economic stressors, as well as potential increases in negative coping mechanisms (i.e., excessive alcohol consumption) can trigger an unprecedented wave of IPV. Recent anecdotal reports from Australia, Brazil, China, and the United States already indicate increases in IPV due to quarantines

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370\(20\)30092-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370(20)30092-4/fulltext)

International agencies

World Health Organisation (WHO)

What can be done to address violence against women during the COVID-19 response? Although the COVID-19 pandemic has placed an immense burden on health systems, including frontline health workers, there are things that can help mitigate the effects of violence against women and children.

This two-page document recommends action over several areas:

- Government
- Health facilities and health providers
- Humanitarian providers
- Community agencies and;
- Women at risk.

<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331699/WHO-SRH-20.04-eng.pdf>

Violence against women 15th April 2020

Gives 12 ideas for assistance

<https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/violence-against-women-during-covid-19>

Violence against children: A hidden crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic

<https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/08-04-2020-joint-leader-s-statement---violence-against-children-a-hidden-crisis-of-the-covid-19-pandemic>

United Nations

In April 2020 António Guterres the Secretary-General of the United Nations said:

“The pandemic has also led to a horrifying increase in violence against women. Nearly one in five women worldwide has experienced violence in the past year. Many of these women are now trapped at home with their abusers, struggling to access services that are suffering from cuts and restrictions.

This was the basis for my appeal to governments earlier this week to take urgent steps to protect women and expand support services.

COVID-19 is not only challenging global health systems, but testing our common humanity.

Gender equality and women’s rights are essential to getting through this pandemic together, to recovering faster, and to building a better future for everyone”.

<https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/put-women-and-girls-centre-efforts-recover-covid-19>

The United Nations is advocating immediate global action to end all forms of violence against women and girls in the midst of a global upsurge related to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic across the world.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1061132>

Reports from countries in every region suggest that restrictions in movement, social isolation, coupled with increased social and economic pressures are leading to an increase in violence in the home.

The combination of economic and social stresses brought on by the pandemic, as well as restrictions on movement, have dramatically increased the numbers of women and girls facing abuse, in almost all countries. However, even before the global spread of the new [coronavirus](#), [statistics](#) showed that a third of women around the world experienced some form of violence in their lives.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1061052>

United Nations Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women published on 9 April 2020

https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/policy_brief_on_covid_impact_on_women_9_apr_2020_updated.pdf

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

Those living in a situation of domestic violence are likely to be going through an extremely difficult time. There are already indicators that cases of domestic violence are on the rise. Being under lockdown with one's abuser is not only unpleasant but dangerous, particularly taking into account the fact that victims of domestic violence have very limited options when it comes to receiving help and support under a lockdown.

However, many organisations continue to provide services during the pandemic through telephone helplines, online support through various websites and applications, and in some cases even face-to-face support.

Personalised safety plan: http://www.ncdsv.org/images/DV_Safety_Plan.pdf

Helplines for 46 countries: <https://victimsupport.eu/covid-19-information/>

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

"We know from previous health emergencies that children are at heightened risk of **exploitation, violence** and **abuse** when schools are closed, social services are interrupted, and movement is restricted. For example, school closures during the Ebola outbreak in West Africa from 2014 to 2016 resulted in spikes in child labour, neglect, sexual abuse and teenage pregnancies. And the most common form of violence children face takes place in the home. In a majority of countries, more than two in three children are subjected to violent discipline by caregivers.

What happens when those children can't leave home, cut off from teachers, friends, or protection services? And as millions of children turn to digital technology for a path to the outside world, how do we keep them safe from the risks and potential harmful consequences online? A social movement to stamp out violence and abuse of children, mirroring the movement to stamp out the violence experienced by women, is essential. The sooner it gets underway, the better our world will be".

<https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/dont-let-children-be-hidden-victims-covid-19-pandemic>

European Parliament

Women's Rights committee Chair, Evelyn Regner, has urged the EU and member states to increase support to victims of domestic violence during the COVID-19 crisis.

Both globally and in some EU countries, it has been [reported](#) that cases of domestic violence rose by a third in the week after lockdown was put in place. Women in

violent relationships are stuck at home and exposed to their abuser for longer periods of time. This makes it very difficult for them to call helplines, as the perpetrator is always around.

Reacting to this situation, [Evelyn Regner](#) Chair of the EP Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, declared: "These days and the weeks ahead are especially dangerous for women. We are all facing major psychological challenges through isolation or quarantine, but women and sometimes children in unsafe homes are facing a particularly gruelling stress test. We, therefore, must now pay particular attention to this issue and expand our actions to stop violence against women."
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20200406IPR76610/covid-19-stopping-the-rise-in-domestic-violence-during-lockdown>

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

To help women victims of violence – who may face even more violence when trapped at home with their abusers – governments should ensure that service providers work together, share information, and think carefully about how to support victims when their means of communication may be closely monitored by the abuser with whom they live.

<https://www.subrei.gob.cl/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Women-at-the-core-of-the-fight-against-COVID-19-crisis.pdf>

IIDL and IIMHL Countries

Australia

Australian Government COVID-19 website

<https://www.australia.gov.au/>

Last week, the New South Wales Attorney-General Mark Speakman reported that [Google searches on domestic violence are up by 75 per cent](#) since the first recorded COVID-19 cases in the state.

This is alarming given that before the pandemic, Australia's domestic violence statistics have been described as a "national scourge" with [one in four Australian women experiencing physical violence](#) since the age of 15.

While the global COVID-19 crisis is unprecedented, it's left many victims of domestic and family abuse inside their homes with their abuser – all day, every day – as people isolate to prevent the spread of the virus.

<https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/domestic-violence-isolation-and-covid-19>

Australian Government aid

More help will be given to millions of Australians battling the devastating impacts of coronavirus with a \$1.1 billion package which boosts mental health services, domestic violence support, Medicare assistance for people at home and emergency food relief.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said more support would be rolling out immediately to deal with the secondary effects of the health and economic crisis caused by coronavirus.

Australian Domestic violence support

An initial \$150 million will be provided to support Australians experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence due to the fallout from coronavirus.

Google is seeing the highest magnitude of searches for domestic violence help that they have seen in the past five years with an increase of 75 per cent and some services are already reporting an increase in demand.

The funding will boost programs under the National Plan to reduce Violence against Women and their Children including:

- Counselling support for families affected by, or at risk of experiencing, domestic and family violence including men's behaviour change programs which will provide a short, medium and longer term response to support men.
- 1800RESPECT, the national domestic, family and sexual violence counselling service, which already answers around 160,000 calls a year.
- Mensline Australia, the national counselling service for men that provides support for emotional health and relationship concerns for men affected by or considering using violence.
- Trafficked People Program to support particularly vulnerable cohorts such as victims of human trafficking, forced marriage, slavery and slavery-like practices.
- Support programs for women and children experiencing violence to protect themselves to stay in their homes, or a home of their choice, when it is safe to do so.

A new public communication campaign will roll out to support those experiencing domestic violence over this period and to ensure those affected know where they can seek help.

Aboriginal women and children are significantly over-represented in all [domestic and family violence statistics](#). Aboriginal women are [32 times as likely to be hospitalised](#) due to family violence as non-Aboriginal women. Aboriginal children are [seven times](#) as likely to be the subject of substantiated child protection notifications, often due to family violence.

Domestic violence, isolation and COVID-19

These higher risks are exacerbated during times of crisis and high stress, like now. Even without COVID19 [Aboriginal families face additional stressors](#) like [overcrowded housing, inequitable health care access, trauma and racism](#). With so many intersecting issues, the [psychological impact of quarantine and lockdown measures](#) will be significant.

In this context Aboriginal women generally have few supports, and the critical supports they do have are now at risk of being inaccessible or over-burdened.

Now is the time for governments to step up.

<https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/at-risk-aboriginal-women-and-children-forgotten-in-crisis>

<https://www.pm.gov.au/media/11-billion-support-more-mental-health-medicare-and-domestic-violence-services-0>

Facts about how people can access support re family violence and child support are available at the Attorney General's webpage. Domestic Violence Units are putting measures in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19 while still delivering services. We advise you to contact your local Unit in the first instance by phone or email to find out how to best engage with them.

For more advice or information, [1800RESPECT](https://www.1800respect.org.au/) is a free, national telephone service: call 1800 737 732.

<https://www.ag.gov.au/About/covid-19/Pages/family-issues.aspx>

Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWVVA)

The Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA) is one of the six National Women's Alliances funded by the Australian Government to bring together women's organisations and individuals across Australia to share information, identify issues and their solutions, to respond to and prevent violence against women and their children.

https://awava.org.au/about-us?doing_wp_cron=1586890650.9068939685821533203125

Comprehensive list of resources available in Australia

https://awava.org.au/covid-19-resources?doing_wp_cron=1586889885.3317620754241943359375

Family Court information for families related to COVID-19

<http://www.familycourt.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/fcoaweb/about/covid/covid-news-hp>

Asia and the Pacific Policy Society

PODCAST published on 9 April 2020

This podcast discusses whether Australia's coronavirus prevention measures are fit for purpose and take a look at the challenges facing victims of family violence who are stuck at home due to the pandemic.

Are Australia's COVID-19 prevention measures sustainable? How can policymakers get the balance right in the coming months and maybe years while the world searches for a vaccine? And what has been the impact of the pandemic on those living in abusive relationships? On this episode of *Policy Forum Pod*, Professor Sharon Bessell chats with infectious diseases expert Professor Peter Collignon AM about Australia's COVID-19 prevention measures, before Dr Bianca Calabria joins us to discuss family violence during the pandemic.

<https://play.acast.com/s/policy-forum-pod/8767682a-e768-461a-9bb0-5ed48c2fd6b3>

Canada

The Coronavirus Doesn't Need a Visa: COVID-19's Effect on Immigrant Populations
<https://msmagazine.com/2020/03/13/coronavirus-immigration-travel-ban/>

Government of Canada

As part of the [COVID-19 Economic Response Plan](#), the Government of Canada is supporting women and children fleeing violence by providing up to \$50 million to women's shelters and sexual assault centres in order to help with their capacity to manage or prevent an outbreak in their facilities.

- Up to \$10 million will be provided to Indigenous Services Canada's (ISC) existing network of 46 emergency shelters on reserve and in Yukon to support Indigenous women and children fleeing violence.
 - The funding will be delivered through ISC's [Family Violence Prevention Program](#).
 - The amount for each shelter will be determined based on factors such as on-reserve population, remoteness, and number of beds.
- \$40 million will go to Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) with up to \$30 million of which will address immediate needs of shelters and sexual assault centres as follows:
 - Up to \$26 million to Women's Shelters Canada to distribute to approximately 575 violence against women shelters across the country.
 - Up to \$4 million to the Canadian Women's Foundation to distribute the funding to sexual assault centres across the country.

<https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/fun-fin/shelters-refuges-en.html>

The Government of Canada also supports First Nations and Inuit communities in preparing for, monitoring and responding to communicable disease emergencies, including pandemic influenza and other emerging infectious diseases, such as the new coronavirus called COVID-19.

While provinces and territories are generally responsible for the provision of direct health care services to Canadians, the Government of Canada is ensuring that well-coordinated, effective measures are in place to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19. The Government of Canada has dedicated resources to respond to the urgent public health response including for Inuit communities.

The government has also developed the [COVID-19 First Nations Community Guide on Accessing Additional Supports](#)

They will continue to receive feedback provide guidance information and support communities.

- [COVID-19: Indigenous Services Canada Update](#)
- <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1581964230816/1581964277298>

England

The National Domestic Abuse helpline has seen a 25% increase in calls and online requests for help since the lockdown, the charity Refuge says.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-52157620>

At least 16 suspected domestic abuse killings in the UK have been identified by campaigners since the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions were imposed, far higher than the average rate for the time of year, it has emerged. Karen Ingala Smith, the founder of Counting Dead Women, a pioneering project that records the killing of women by men in the UK, has identified at least 16 killings between 23 March and 12 April, including those of children.

Looking at the same period over the last 10 years, Smith's data records an average of five deaths. Her findings for 2020, which are collated from internet searches and people contacting over social media, were raised during evidence to the home affairs select committee on Wednesday.

Dame Vera Baird QC, the victims' commissioner for England and Wales, told MPs at the remote session: "Counting Dead Women has got to a total of 16 domestic abuse killings in the last three weeks. We usually say there are two a week, that looks to me like five a week, that's the size of this crisis."

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/apr/15/domestic-abuse-killings-more-than-double-amid-covid-19-lockdown>

UK Home Secretary announces support for domestic abuse victims

A new public awareness raising campaign will highlight that if anyone is at risk of, or experiencing domestic abuse, help is still available. The campaign, under the hashtag **#YouAreNotAlone**, will aim to reassure those affected by domestic abuse that support services remain available during this difficult time.

The campaign will be publicising support available including the freephone, 24 hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline number – 0808 2000 247.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-announces-support-for-domestic-abuse-victims>

GOV.UK – UK government web portal

Coronavirus (COVID-19): support for victims of domestic abuse 14th April 2020

Measures announced over recent weeks to tackle coronavirus (COVID-19) have seen people's day-to-day lives drastically altered. These changes are essential to beat coronavirus and protect our NHS.

The government acknowledges that the order to stay at home can cause anxiety for those who are experiencing or feel at risk of domestic abuse. There is never an excuse for domestic abuse, no matter what the circumstances are. For anyone who feels they are at risk of abuse, it is important to remember that there is help and

support available to you, including police response, online support, helplines, refuges and other services. You are not alone.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-and-domestic-abuse/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-victims-of-domestic-abuse>

Guidance for providers of safe accommodation with support for victims of domestic abuse and their children.

This guidance will assist staff and employers in addressing coronavirus (COVID-19) in domestic abuse safe accommodation. The guidance covers:

- specialist refuge/safe accommodation (shared house)
- specialist refuge/safe accommodation (self-contained units with some shared spaces)
- dispersed, self-contained accommodation with support
- move-on accommodation
- properties within Sanctuary Schemes or with other enhanced security measures

Published 23 March 2020

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-domestic-abuse-safe-accommodation-provision>

National Charity: Refuge for women and children

The UK's largest domestic abuse charity, Refuge, has reported a 700% increase in calls to its helpline in a single day, while a separate helpline for perpetrators of domestic abuse seeking help to change their behaviour received 25% more calls after the start of the Covid-19 lockdown.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/apr/12/domestic-violence-surges-seven-hundred-per-cent-uk-coronavirus>

This agency has tips for people worried about violence in the COVID-19 environment.

<https://www.refuge.org.uk/covid19-survivor-tips/>

Ireland

Government of Ireland

Through this link you can view the latest information on how Ireland is responding to cases of COVID-19. The latest information, advice and guidelines will be published here and updated daily.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/c36c85-covid-19-coronavirus/>

Ireland Health Service Executive

This page is for the sharing of resources for Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (DSGBV) in response to Covid-19 (Coronavirus).

[Partner pack - posters, videos and more](#)

[Up to date information](#)

[Services and supports](#)

[Translations and easy read documents](#)

[Stop Domestic Violence posters in various languages](#)

[Social media accounts](#)

[Mental health resources](#)

[Community supports](#)

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/primarycare/socialinclusion/other-areas/domestic-violence/>

Domestic violence in Ireland

Woman's Aid chief Sarah Benson said a disturbing trend has begun to emerge whereby people are using the threat and dangers posed by coronavirus to abuse and manipulate their partners. *"Potential contamination of the virus is being used as a weapon against some women who are suffering from ill-health," Benson said, before adding that the outbreak has left vulnerable women "struggling and even more at risk. She revealed that the majority of calls to their national helpline have referenced Covid-19 as an aggravating factor in their abuse.*

"In all calls we are receiving, Covid-19 is being mentioned as an aggravating factor," Ms. Benson added.

<https://www.irishcentral.com/news/coronavirus-ireland-domestic-violence>

A major campaign across TV, radio and social media in Ireland

This is aimed at reaching out to victims of domestic abuse has been launched. The campaign - a collaboration between the Government and frontline services - will see adverts across those platforms to reflect the reality of domestic violence amid the Covid-19 pandemic. The campaign seeks to reassure victims of domestic abuse that services for them are still available, and that victims are being prioritised. The ads - which aired on radio today, and television tomorrow - depict the reality for victims of domestic abuse when their home is no longer a safe place.

It comes after the Government last week said that [the 2km coronavirus travel restriction does not apply to victims of abuse.](#)

<https://www.rte.ie/news/2020/0415/1130562-coronavirus-domestic-abuse/>

TV ad link address

<https://youtu.be/VTcVbHpCTVQ>

New Zealand

New Zealand Police

Police say they are "starting to see" an increase in family harm incidents, as the country enters its third week of [Covid-19](#) lockdown.

And in a statement on Friday, Assistant Commissioner Sandra Venables said police knew there could be more incidents that weren't being reported. Data provided by police show a spike in cases of reported family harm around the country to 595 on March 29, the first Sunday after the lockdown was put in place. That was between about 90 and 100 reports higher than on the previous three Sundays, the data – covering the month from March 8 to April 8 – shows.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/crime/120955033/coronavirus-police-starting-to-see-increase-in-family-harm-incidents-under-covid19-lockdown>

New Zealand Ministry of Health

The VIP (Violence Intervention Programme) supports health sector family violence programmes throughout New Zealand.

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/family-violence>

New Zealand Ministry of Social Development

Bolstering essential services for at risk groups

On this Page:

[Essential services for at risk groups](#)

[Essential family violence services](#)

[Essential sexual violence services](#)

[Essential Building Financial Capability services](#)

[Essential engagement with hard to reach communities \(*E tu whānau, Pasefika Proud*\)](#)

The Government announced \$27 million new funding on 26 March 2020 so essential social services can keep delivering for communities through COVID-19.

As part of this, up to \$16 million is now available to bolster essential services for at risk groups. This is so providers can keep supporting at-risk individuals, families, whānau and communities in uncertain circumstances while responding to increased demand.

[There's more information about the total funding of \\$27m here](#)

New Zealand Government

Family Violence and sexual violence prevention COVID-19

Family violence and sexual violence prevention

Help and support is available to those experiencing family violence or sexual violence. Key messages on this website include:

- It is okay to ask for help if you or someone else is in danger. If you think someone could be harmed or may harm themselves, call the Police on [111](#), even if you're not sure.
- Stay as connected as you can, and keep an eye out for the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults.
- Talk to friends, whānau and neighbours if you need support, or to see if they need help. Use social media to keep in touch and check-in with each other.

Helplines: many helplines are listed

<https://covid19.govt.nz/individuals-and-households/health-and-wellbeing/family-violence-and-sexual-violence-prevention/>

Advice for disabled people who do not feel safe 10 APRIL 2020

<https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/covid-19-advice-for-disabled-people-who-do-not-feel-safe-10apr20.pdf>

Chief Victims Adviser

New Zealand's Chief Victims Advisor to Government, Dr Kim McGregor, wants victims and survivors of family violence and sexual violence to know that the Police and social services are there to help them even through this period of lockdown. "My message for all New Zealanders: You are not alone. It's not ok for anyone to hurt you. Violence is still a crime," says Dr McGregor.

"Even though we are currently in self-isolation, we still want to hear from you if you, or someone in your bubble is being hurt".

A list of support agencies is posted here.

<https://www.justice.govt.nz/about/news-and-media/covid-19-news/chief-victims-advisor-support-available-for-victims-during-isolation/>

Oranga Tamariki Ministry for Children

Our role is more important than ever during COVID-19 lockdown because New Zealand's children and young people have fewer adults watching over them. Like the Police, Fire and Emergency, and doctors and nurses, our social workers and others will be at the frontline when they need to be. Use the tabs to find out what you need to know.

We have developed a new way of working so urgent cases will be dealt with first. We are working closely with the police to monitor family harm. And we have established strong cross government and NGO relationships so we can work together to keep children and families safe.

<https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/how-we-get-involved/covid-19/>

COVID-19 and Māori health – when equity is more than a word

"...we are troubled by the local proliferation of commentaries on COVID-19 within multiple fora that either intentionally ignore the existence of health inequities within our society, frame equity as an add-on to a substantial list of other 'equally'

important principles, or demonstrate “nonperformativity”¹ in reference to equity. Saying, ‘equity is important’ is different from actually making equity important via intentional actions to achieve it”.

<https://blogs.otago.ac.nz/pubhealthexpert/2020/04/10/covid-19-and-maori-health-when-equity-is-more-than-a-word/>

Scientists are predicting domestic violence will "flourish" in the stringent lockdown conditions needed for New Zealand to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr Denise Wilson, a professor of Māori Health at AUT University's Taupua Waiora Māori Research Centre says New Zealand's lockdown response to the COVID-19 pandemic has created a "perfect storm" for domestic abuse.

New Zealand will be at Alert Level 4 for a minimum of four weeks - this means all non-essential businesses such as cafes, gyms and workplaces have closed. People are urged to stay in their homes unless they need food or medicine.

"Our daily sense of normality has suddenly gone, and our world has shrunk to the size of our house," she said in a statement on Thursday.

"No longer do we have the option of escape to work, the gym or other outlets when we are stressed."

Dr Wilson says it is crucial families talk to one another and figure out how to navigate their new normal.

<https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2020/04/how-the-covid-19-lockdown-has-created-a-perfect-storm-for-domestic-violence.html>

#CatchYourself: Respect your Bubble

Le Va (a national workforce centre for Pasifika communities) aims to equip families with culturally-appropriate information, knowledge and skills to maintain respectful relationships with people in their ‘bubble’ while we stay at home in isolation due to Covid-19. We are doing this by providing a suite of practical resources and information on how people can manage their frustration or anger and maintain respectful relationships.

Pasifika cultures are traditionally collective and communal and family connectedness is a core cultural value. A ‘bubble’ for Pasifika families is more likely to include many generations and extended family. However, this may mean an increased risk of transmission of infectious diseases – over 40% of Pasifika people experience household crowding compared to 10% of other New Zealanders. This also may mean higher levels of conflict within relationships, and potentially, violence. We know we can prevent violence.

Videos <https://www.leva.co.nz/our-work/catchyourself/catchyourself-videos>
Resources <https://www.leva.co.nz/our-work/catchyourself/catchyourself-resources>
<https://www.leva.co.nz/our-work/catchyourself/trouble-in-your-bubble-factsheet>

New Zealand Family Violence Clearing House

This page provides information specific to:

Māori communities <https://nzfvc.org.nz/covid-19/specific-communities#Maori>
Pacific communities <https://nzfvc.org.nz/covid-19/specific-communities#pasifika>

- **Asian communities**
- **Disabled people**
- **Older people**
- **LGBTQI | Takatāpui communities**

Information on the importance of **human rights during COVID-19**
<https://nzfvc.org.nz/covid-19/specific-communities#Maori>

New Zealand's Women's Rights Commissioner

She is pleading for a reduction in domestic violence as some family bubbles become more dangerous. Commissioner Saunoamaali'i Karanina Sumeo said abusers must call for help before intentionally hurting family members.

"In many ways, we all are feeling stressed, anxious, or even angry. Losing a job, a business, hours of work, sleep, connections with friends are not reasons to lose control and abuse those who care for you," Dr Sumeo said.

"There is absolutely no excuse for violence."
<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/413941/covid-19-domestic-violence-concerns-prompt-lockdown-plea>

Scotland

Equally safe: Scotland's Strategy to Eradicate Violence against Women
<https://www.gov.scot/policies/violence-against-women-and-girls/equally-safe-strategy/>

Chartered Institute for Housing (CIH) Scotland launches new housing guidance on domestic abuse and COVID-19 Published 15 April 2020

Scottish Women's Aid (SWA) and **CIH Scotland** have published [new guidance](http://www.cih.org/resources/PDF/Policy%20free%20download%20pdfs/CV19%20Scotland%20Domestic%20Abuse%20guidance.pdf) for social landlords to assist them in responding robustly to domestic abuse as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. The five page document is here:
<http://www.cih.org/resources/PDF/Policy%20free%20download%20pdfs/CV19%20Scotland%20Domestic%20Abuse%20guidance.pdf>

Scotland

You have the right to check if someone has a history of domestic abuse. This right is called the 'Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland'.

A disclosure means sharing confidential information. The information here is given to help protect a potential victim of domestic abuse. How to apply

To check if your partner or someone else's partner has a history of abusive behaviour, you can ask the police to tell you. [Fill out a domestic abuse disclosure form to start the application.](#)

You can also speak to the police about your concerns by:

- phoning **101** – the non emergency number
- [visiting a police office](#)
- speaking to a police officer on the street

<https://www.mygov.scot/domestic-abuse/check-a-partners-history-of-abuse/>

Scottish Justice Secretary: “You are not alone.” April 2020

The safety and well-being of women and children who are at risk of experiencing violence during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is being supported with funds for key organisations.

Grants from the Scottish Government’s £350 million Communities Fund have been made to Scottish Women’s Aid and Rape Crisis Scotland to ensure that access to these key support services is maintained and victims still have access to methods of reporting crimes during the crisis, including using online video platforms, text messaging and phone calls.

“These are enormously difficult times, but the safety of women and child victims who experience abuse in the home is paramount – the message to stay at home does not mean that they should not seek urgent help, advice or support.

The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018, which came into force on 1 April 2019, reflects the full spectrum of abuse that victims may suffer, providing police and prosecutors with greater powers to target those who engage in coercive or controlling behaviour towards their partners or ex-partners. Further information on the law can be found at <https://safer.scot/>

The Scottish Government has provided an additional £825,000 to Police Scotland to support the training of officers and frontline staff to respond to and investigate the new domestic abuse offence.

<https://www.gov.scot/news/support-for-victims-of-domestic-violence-during-covid-19-outbreak/>

The Scottish Women's Rights Centre

The SWRC is a collaboration between Rape Crisis Scotland (Scottish Charity No SCO25642), the University of Strathclyde Law Clinic and JustRight Scotland.

Many organisations have made adjustments to continue offering support to women and children experiencing domestic abuse and other forms of gender-based violence. We have [compiled a list of services here](#) with contact details during the coronavirus outbreak.

If you feel you are in immediate danger, call the Police on **999**.

During this pandemic, Police Scotland will continue to respond to and investigate reports of criminal activity, this includes domestic abuse and it covers any manifestation of this abuse (not just physical).

If you are not in immediate danger but would like to report domestic abuse, call the Police on **101** or **999**. Alternatively, you can fill out [Police Scotland's online form](#), which you can also use to report stalking and harassment.

<https://www.scottishwomensrightscentre.org.uk/news/covid-19coronavirus-info/domestic-abuse-during-covid-19coronavirus-what-can-i-do/>

Reporting Domestic abuse – Police

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/keep-safe/advice-for-victims-of-crime/domestic-abuse/reporting-domestic-abuse/>

The Netherlands

Government of the Netherlands

General information about the approach taken to decrease the spread.

<https://www.government.nl/latest/news/2020/03/12/new-measures-to-stop-spread-of-coronavirus-in-the-netherlands>

Marjonneke de Vetten - McMahon, Policy Advisor Dutch International Mental Health Hub and IIMHL Liaison notes:

“There are no reports that show hard numbers indicating that domestic violence has gone up. However, teachers, youth, social and mental healthcare workers lose contact with their clients and they have great concerns over the situation. Also social care facilities have concerns over the expected increase of registrations and the rising tensions in their services as they have to stick to the strict COVID-19 measures. Valente (umbrella organisation for social care) calls for central coordination of monitoring and planning as part of the national corona strategy as it is certain that the situation has an impact on domestic violence.

Some key statistics:

- Monthly there are 11000 notifications of domestic violence (2/3 from the police) and they have not seen a significant overall increase. However they have seen a stark increase in some regions. This raises a lot of concern. A lot is happening now out of sight since community teams (including child, youth, social and mental healthcare workers) are not visiting the families and children are not going to school.
- The number of calls to the hotline for children who want to talk about something that bothers them has risen from 1000 to 1500 calls a day (in the end of march)
- A chat service set up in the corona times by a expertise and treatment centre for victims of domestic violence saw an increase from 943 to 1333 chat requests between January and March”.

Other organisations besides Valente that call for action are:

- The national foundation safe at home (landelijke vereniging veilig thuis)
- Kindertelefoon
- National Psychotrauma Centre

Organisation for Children and young people: Reporting Centre for Domestic Violence and Child abuse “Safe at Home”

In recent weeks, numerous measures have been taken in the Netherlands to prevent the further spread of the COVID-19 virus (corona). Following on from this, the Safe Home organizations have also taken measures. In the various regions, hard work is being done on protocols, measures and practical agreements on how to deal with the situation that arises from Veilig Thuis and the regional partners. Check the Veilig Thuis website in your region to see which steps have been taken regionally.

https://veiligthuis.nl/?gclid=CjwKCAjwkPX0BRBKEiwA7THxiMdpobZKINXnO_c4Dm-mCdhJ0a9j6niwqfWa9IYgE-aUaJiK6oOw-RoCqV4QAvD_BwE

What if it is safer at school than at home?

<https://academiepratenmetkinderen.nl/wat-als-het-op-school-veiliger-is/>

Child abuse, elder abuse & partner abuse – COVID-19

<https://www.ikvermoedhuiselijkgeweld.nl/>

Kindertelefoon and National Psychotrauma Centre

The sudden change to structure and stress brought on by coronavirus Covid-19 and the measures taken to curb its spread may be leading to more domestic violence in the Netherlands. Both the National Psychotrauma Center at UMC Utrecht and children's hotline Kindertelefoon noticed a sharp increase in calls.

The Kindertelefoon is receiving around 50 percent more calls than usual since the schools closed nearly two weeks ago. Under normal circumstances, children seek contact around 1 thousand times a day. Now it's around 1,500 times, director Roline de Wilde said to RTL Nieuws. "We receive calls from children dealing with sexual abuse, domestic violence and arguments," she said. "That huge increase in telephone calls is worrying us. It is important that we send a signal that this is happening. Especially because this may go on a while."

De Wilde believes this is connected to families suddenly being forced into constant close contact with each other. All structure changed completely in a matter of days, she said. Tensions are rising in 'problem families', but also in 'ordinary families' who did not have problems before the coronavirus crisis, she said. "It is a very unreal and troubled time. It all creates tension."

Iva Bicanic, head of the National Psychotrauma Center, agrees that this crisis situation is causing increased stress and tension in families, she said to RTL Nieuws. "Parents face stress and are suddenly worried about their job, for example. That's an impulse for child abuse," she said. Feeling powerless makes people irritable, she said, stressing the importance of staying alert to this. "We must actively approach people and reach out".

<https://nltimes.nl/2020/03/27/covid-19-measures-stress-may-leading-domestic-violence-experts-warn>

Sweden

Government Offices of Sweden

Sweden has new funding for violence against women. Minister for Gender Equality Åsa Lindhagen announced:.

"I am proud to lead the world's first feminist government. International rankings show that we have come a long way in our gender equality efforts. But we are not finished yet – we will continue our work until women and men have the same power to shape society and their own lives. Today is International Women's Day. This is an important day that reminds us that we cannot rest on our laurels", says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

"So far during this electoral period we have conducted major initiatives to combat men's violence against women and honour-based violence and oppression. In 2019, more than SEK 460 million was invested, and for 2020 the Government has so far taken decisions on investments amounting to over SEK 300 million in this area.

We also recently appointed a commission on gender-equal lifetime earnings. But at the same time, much remains to be done before we have achieved gender equality. Women generally have lower wages than men, take more sick leave and take greater responsibility for unpaid household and care work.

Far too many are also subjected to violence by men with whom they have close relationships. This is why we must continue to move gender equality work forward" <http://www.government.se/articles/2020/03/the-same-power-to-shape-society-and-their-own-lives--the-work-of-swedens-feminist-government-continues/>

The coronavirus and the Swedish Police

The recent coronavirus developments present a challenging and uncertain situation that changes quickly.

The Swedish Police Authority is responsible for maintaining public order and security and protecting the public. This includes ensuring that infectious diseases do not spread.

The Swedish Police Authority closely follows the instructions and recommendations of the [Public Health Agency of Sweden](#).

The Swedish Police Authority works to keep Sweden safe and secure, and has great experience in handling complex situations and crises. Our core mission is to ensure public safety and security, and we work continuously to prevent and combat crime in order for the public to feel as safe as possible.

<https://polisen.se/en/the-swedish-police/the-coronavirus-and-the-swedish-police/>

USA

In the United States the National Domestic Violence Hotline reports that a growing number of callers say that their abusers are using COVID-19 as a means of further isolating them from their friends and family.

<https://time.com/5803887/coronavirus-domestic-violence-victims/>

SAMHSA

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, Americans are required to stay home to protect themselves and their communities. However, the home may not be safe for many families who experience domestic violence, which may include both intimate partners and children. Violence in the home has an overall cost to society, leading to potentially adverse physical and mental health outcomes. To help families and communities address intimate partner violence and child abuse health concerns, see SAMHSA's new document:

<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/social-distancing-domestic-violence.pdf>

The American Psychological Association (APA)

Beck also encourages clinicians to adopt a long-term view and be prepared for an uptick in demand for care and social services related to domestic violence and child abuse. The country may not feel the full weight of the ramifications of the pandemic for months or years to come. "We all need to be vigilant and mindful that our clientele may have increased mental health issues as a result of domestic violence," she says.

Other health-care providers should also be on the lookout for patients potentially in crisis. In several European countries, those in abusive situations are being told by the government to report the abuse to their local pharmacist, using the code word "mask 19" if they can't speak openly.

If you or a loved one needs help for a domestic abuse situation, consider these resources:

- [National Domestic Hotline](#) | (800) 799-7233

- [Crisis Text Line](#) | Text HOME to 741741
- [Intimate Partner Violence](#) (fact sheet)
- [Psychological Wellness Guide for Survivors of Domestic Violence](#)
<https://www.apa.org/topics/covid-19/domestic-violence-child-abuse>

The frequency and severity of [domestic abuse](#) will likely increase while Americans stay home for weeks or months during the pandemic, said Katie Ray-Jones, president and CEO of the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#), a service that connects victims of domestic violence with local resources.

[Gun sales surge as coronavirus pandemic spreads](#)

[Gun sales are surging nationwide](#), as they did after 9/11 and the stock market crash of 1987. It's a symptom of uncertain times, industry analyst Rob Southwick told CNN last week. When people are afraid of the unknown, they'll buy a gun -- even if their enemy is a virus.

Abusers often use firearms to frighten victims, whether or not they use them, Ray-Jones said. But even an abuser's possession of a firearm makes it five times more likely that a domestic violence victim will be killed, according to the [Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence](#).
<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/27/health/domestic-violence-coronavirus-wellness-trnd/index.html>

Center for Disease Control (CDC)

Covid-19 and stigma

Public health emergencies, such as the outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), are stressful times for people and communities. Fear and anxiety about a disease can lead to social [stigma\(1\)](#) toward people, places, or things. For example, stigma and discrimination can occur when people associate a disease, such as COVID-19, with a population or nationality, even though not everyone in that population or from that region is specifically at risk for the disease.

Some groups of people who may be experiencing stigma because of COVID-19 include:

- Persons of Asian descent
- People who have travelled
- Emergency responders or healthcare professionals

Stigma hurts everyone by creating fear or anger towards other people.

Stigmatized groups may be subjected to:

- Social avoidance or rejection
- Denials of healthcare, education, housing or employment
- Physical violence.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/reducing-stigma.html>

In addition to adult victims of family violence, children and pets reside in 60 % or more of households where domestic violence is perpetrated and are also at risk of

suffering significant physical and/or emotional harm. Given current school and library closures and shelter in-place mandates, children are likely to be spending significantly more time than usual in the home. Domestic violence abusers may often target children or pets in the home as a means of furthering control over the household.

Researchers estimate children residing in a home where domestic violence occurs are at as much as 60 times the risk of child abuse or neglect compared to the general U.S. child population. Additionally, when domestic violence abusers also harm animals in the home, it is often an indicator of increased risk for both human and animal members of the household. Nearly 80 % of victims residing in a home where domestic violence and pet abuse co-occur report daily fear they will be killed by the perpetrator.

Communities must ensure citizens are aware of the current increased risk of family violence at this time, encourage them to check on their neighbors, friends and family (while maintaining adherence to any distancing regulations) and report ANY concerns they see or hear to the proper authorities.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7152912/>