

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Supporting women living with family and domestic violence

TIP SHEET

Women living with family and domestic violence are increasingly vulnerable during the COVID-19 virus pandemic.

Under the government's social distancing rules introduced to stop the spread of the virus, women living with family and domestic violence are facing greater isolation, loss of support networks and increased stress relating to job loss.

They may also experience interrupted access to activities and locations that might ordinarily offer some protection and safety, such as school and work environments.

Research suggests that partners and ex-partners who are using violent and controlling behaviours may use the virus pandemic as an excuse to increase the use of these behaviours. Some examples might include:

- Further restricting movements within the home and increased monitoring of phone, email and online messaging.
- Using the pandemic as an excuse to increase control over finances.
- Providing false information about the virus to control or frighten.
- Refusing to return children from access visits.
- Using the virus to excuse, blame or justify abusive or violent behaviour.

Here are some important things to remember if you are living with family and domestic violence during this time:

- You are not alone. Support and help is still available.
- You have the right to be safe.
- The person using the violence and abuse is responsible for their behaviour.
- Times of stress and hardship are never an excuse for using violence and abuse.

Seeking Help

- If you are in immediate danger call **000**. Police are still responding to calls for assistance.
- If you require support with emergency accommodation, call **Crisis Care** on 9223 1111 or 1800 199 008 .
- If you would like to talk to someone about your options and how you can be safer, call the National Sexual Assault Domestic Violence Counselling Service **1800 RESPECT**. 1800 RESPECT is available 24hrs, 7 days a week on 1800 737 732.



Relationships Australia WA

We offer programs, at no charge, for men, women, young people and children who have perpetrated, experienced or seen abuse in their families or in their relationships.

The *Family Abuse Integrated Response (FAIR)* program is based on best practice principles and guidelines, and clinical staff are trained about family and domestic violence to enable appropriate support to occur.

Djinda Service also provides support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and their children, in the Perth metropolitan area affected by family violence and/or sexual assault. They are Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women, mothers and sisters who care about the future of Aboriginal communities.

Please call FAIR on 6164 0270 or Djinda Service on 6164 0650 to let us know how we can support you and your family.