

Family violence during COVID-19

Support and information in the Wimmera

Evidence tells us that in times of crisis, family violence can increase in frequency and severity. Specialist family violence services in the Wimmera region are open and continue to provide specialist family violence services to people impacted by family violence during COVID-19.

We encourage anyone that needs support or advice to contact the relevant support services via telephone or email.

What is family violence?

Family violence occurs when a family member intentionally uses violence, threats, coercion or intimidation to control or manipulate another family member, partner, or former partner. It happens in all kinds of family or intimate relationships and across all ages, communities and cultures.

Family violence may include:

- Violence from one partner toward another partner, inclusive of same-sex and heterosexual relationships
- From an adult child toward an elderly parent
- From parent to a child
- From an adolescent to a parent
- From one sibling to another
- Between extended family members
- And by those providing care in diverse home environments

Forms of Family Violence

- Emotional and psychological
- Sexual
- Social
- Systems
- Spiritual
- Children exposed to all forms of family violence
- Physical
- Verbal
- Financial
- Reproductive

People who use violence might use COVID-19 as a way to justify, coerce and control another person. For example:

- Provide misleading information about the risks of COVID-19 to further isolate a person or family, or to prevent them from seeking medical care
- Threaten to intentionally contract COVID-19 to then infect that person and a family member
- Increasingly monitor parenting and behaviour of children
- Increasingly monitor communication devices (phone, email and messaging)
- Restrict access to finances for adequate household supplies and food

Social isolation and family violence

With significant changes to the way we live, learn and work, these changes may compound the underlying conditions that drive family violence. You may have noticed that the behaviour of your partner or family member may have changed.

Despite the need for social distancing, this does not mean you need to live with someone who is violent. While social distancing restrictions are in place, it is important to know that it is your right to feel and be safe. You will not be fined for leaving your home to access support, seek safety or emergency accommodation during COVID-19.

If you need an Intervention Order, the Magistrates' Court is open and responding to family violence matters during COVID-19. If safe, you can apply for an [Intervention Order online](#) or contact your local Police station or family violence specialist service for assistance.

Support services

Support services

Call Police on 000 in an emergency

Victoria Police will continue to respond to family violence matters during COVID-19.

Wimmera region family violence specialist support

The Sexual Assault & Family Violence Centre

Wimmera 03 5381 1211 wimmera@safvcentre.org.au

Grampians Community Health 03 5358 7400

Uniting Wimmera 1800 195 114

Salvation Army Horsham 03 5382 1770

headspace Horsham 03 5381 1543

Additional supports

Victoria Legal Aid Horsham 03 5381 6000

Victoria Legal Aid 1800 081 719

State-wide and national sexual assault and family violence support

safe steps Family Violence Response Centre (24/7)

1800 015 188 or 03 9322 3555

1800 RESPECT (24/7) 1800 737 732

Sexual Assault Crisis Line (5pm-9am) 1800 806 292

Victims of Crime Helpline (8am-11pm) 1800 819 817

After Hours Crisis Accommodation 1800 825 955

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support

Goolum Goolum 03 5381 6333

Victoria Aboriginal Legal Service 1800 064 865

Men's support

Grampians Community Health 03 5358 7400

No to Violence Men's Referral Service 1300 766 491

MensLine Australia 1300 789 978

LGBTIQ community support

WithRespect 1800 542 847

Thorne Harbour Health 03 9865 6700

Drummond Street Services 03 9663 6733

Switchboard/Q/Life 1800 184 527

Trans Gender Victoria 03 9020 4642

Women's Information Referral Exchange Inc (WIRE)

1300 134 130

Family violence during COVID-19

Support and information in the Wimmera

Seeking support during COVID-19

Spending more time in isolation with a person who is using violence may influence your sense of safety in the home and your ability to access support online or via phone. It is important to consider your safety when seeking support or information, as it may increase the risk of family violence occurring.

We encourage you to:

- Create a reason to leave the house - going to the supermarket or the pharmacy and call while you are out.
- Contact trusted family and friends and set up a code word that you can text them in case you need them to contact the police on your behalf.
- Email specialist family violence service, who will contact you as soon as possible from a private number. Remember to delete the email you send from your sent folder.
 - The SAFV Centre - wimmera@safvcentre.org.au
 - safe steps - safesteps@safesteps.org.au

Online Safety Resources

It is important to consider online safety when seeking information and support online or via telephone. If required to leave a website quickly, family violence service webpages have a 'quick exit' button on the top right-hand page. This does not always delete from your browsing history.

For more information regarding online safety

- Family Violence Law – Online Safety
- eSafety Women
- 1800 Respect – National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service - Technology and Safety (1800 737 732)

What is Safety Planning?

A safety plan is a personalised, practical plan developed with a specialist family violence practitioner and aims to increase personal safety within a relationship, to increase safety when planning to leave a relationship or when separated from the person using violence.

Having a safety plan can help you and other professionals to support your safety. A family violence specialist can undertake a risk assessment and develop a safety plan with you.

Are you supporting someone impacted by family violence?

Community members and practitioners are encouraged to contact a family violence specialist, to get advice and guidance in how best to support a friend, family member or client impacted by family violence.

Hearing assistance

Women with Disability Victoria 03 9286 7800

Support services for women from diverse language and cultural backgrounds

If you need an interpreter call 131 450 or visit the Translating and interpreting service website

inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence
1800 755 988

Support for older people

Seniors Rights Victoria 1300 368 821

Better Place Australia 1800 639 523

Better Pride 1800 531 919

Mental Health and Wellbeing support

Mental Health Services Horsham 03 5362 1300

Ballarat Mental Health Services 1300 661 323

headspace Horsham 03 5381 1543

Beyond Blue 1300 223 636

LifeLine 13 11 14

Gambler's Help 1800 858 858

Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800

QLife 1800 184 527

Directline 1800 888 236

References

Domestic Violence Resource Centre (2020) COVID-19 and Family Violence

Family Violence Protection Act (2008)

Parkinson, Debra & Zara, C.. (2013)

Victorian State Government (2020) Family violence support during coronavirus (COVID-19)