

How COVID-19 may impact those living with domestic violence



Forced isolation may be harder to recognize during physical distancing. An abusive partner may limit social interaction with colleagues, friends, and family during working from home arrangements.

Reduced accommodation options make it even harder to leave an abusive partner. Physical distancing makes it harder to stay with friends, and many landlords have temporarily stopped taking new applicants.

Survivors may have been given frightening misinformation about COVID-19 by their abusive partner to control or manipulate them.

Abuse tactics can increase or worsen in emergencies like this. This may show up in signs not apparent before - like bruises or burns, or in sharing about instances of sexual or emotional abuse.

Most instances of sexual assault are from someone the survivor knows, and sexual violence may increase as families are confined in their homes for longer periods of time.

It may be more difficult for someone in an abusive relationship to communicate during social isolation because their partner may be more closely monitoring or limiting their technology use.

With children now at home all day, every day, there may be more incidences of child abuse happening in the home. Be mindful of communication that indicates signs of child abuse are present. If you suspect a child is at risk, you are legally required to report it. 1-800-387-5437 (KIDS)

Abusive partners may withhold necessary items, such as hand sanitizer or disinfectants.

Abusive partners may prevent survivors from seeking medical attention if they need it or find ways to control access to extended health benefits.

An abusive partner may make the survivor go outside of the home. The abuser may blame her if she or the children get sick.

Travel restrictions and fewer travel options may impact a survivor's escape or safety plan – it may not be safe for them to use public transportation or access flights or buses.

An abusive partner may use COVID-19 scare tactics to keep a survivor away from their children.

An abusive partner may make it difficult or impossible for the survivor to work from home.

An abusive partner may block their partner from applying for employment insurance benefits or other forms of COVID-19 financial assistance, making them more dependent on the abuser.

*If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 911.
To speak with a women's shelter, call our 24/7 hotline at 1-866-331-3933.
To locate a shelter near you, visit acws.ca/shelters or sheltersafe.ca.
If you suspect a child is at risk, you must report it. 1-800-387-5437 (KIDS)*