



Self isolation and COVID-19

For some people, home is not the safest place. Self isolation and increased stress during COVID-19 will likely see an increase in domestic violence incidents. [Research](#) has found that there is often a spike in violence against women during disasters, which have similar features to the current COVID crisis.

During self isolation people will find themselves at home with an abusive partner, and without access to their usual support.

There are a number of things you can do to try and keep safe. It's also important for people to keep in touch with their friends or family members who may be in an unsafe position

1800RESPECT has highly trained and qualified counsellors available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, via [phone](#) and [webchat](#).

Safety planning tips

- Contact 1800RESPECT by [phone or web chat](#) when it is safe to do so. Our counsellors are experienced in dealing with situations where the person using violence is still in the house, and will work with you on a [safety plan](#)
- Identify safe areas of the house where there are less dangerous items and may be ways to escape if possible
- Have a phone charged and accessible, with stored important numbers, and a back up phone if possible
- Call 000 at any time if you are in immediate danger, and teach your children how to call 000 if you are unable to do so. You will have to notify the police if there are COVID19 concerns at your home
- Let trusted friends and neighbours know of your situation and develop a plan (this might include a code word or visual signal if you need help)
- Make a habit of backing into the driveway and keeping the car fuelled
- Look through our [Escape Bag checklist](#) and make a note of things you may need to take with you (for example, phone and charger, keys, important documents, key card or cash)

- Download the [Sunny](#) or [Daisy](#) apps for more information about safety planning and services in your area.

Supporting someone impacted by domestic violence

Read through the 1800RESPECT website for information about different types of abuse, and how to recognise the signs of domestic violence, and [how to support someone](#) you know. Some key things to remember during this time are to:

- Believe them and take their fears seriously
- Never blame the person experiencing violence for what has happened to them
- Don't make excuses for the person who has hurt them
- Support them whenever they need to talk
- Be part of their safety plan: know the code words or signals if they need to escape
- Help in practical ways, for example by providing them with transport, a phone or a place to escape to
- Call 000 at any time if they are in immediate danger.

If you are in a support role and would like more information or support, you are welcome to contact 1800RESPECT at any time by phone or webchat.

What happens when you call 1800RESPECT

Given that many people at risk are now potentially in 24/7 isolation with the person choosing to use violence, we are handling more calls from people who are in the same house as person being violent.

Our counsellors are experienced in handling calls when the person using violence is still in the home. They will begin every call with an assessment of risk e.g. *"Let's have a safety check before we begin."*

If the person using violence is in the home at the time of the call, we will:

- Acknowledge with you that there is risk and you need to help them manage that risk during the phone call
- Advise you that it's fine if you need to hang up suddenly, and you can always call back
- Advise you to pretend to be speaking with someone else if the perpetrator enters the room
- Be proactive in assessing for risk and caller safety throughout the call
- Arrange a special word with you to say if you feel that they are at very high risk and need the police called to their residence. Get as many details as you can.

We will help you develop a safety plan: a safety plan is an individualised plan developed with you that takes into account your specific needs.

We are still available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by phone and web chat. Our service is [operating as normal](#) during the COVID19 crisis. The duration of our calls are as long or as short as you need them to be.

Our service is available to anyone living in Australia. 1800RESPECT is an [accessible service](#) - we can be contacted through the National Relay Service and the Translating and

Looking after your mental health

- Whatever your situation may be, it's important to look after your mental health during self isolation. There are things you can do on a daily basis to help keep your stress and anxiety levels manageable.
- Get your information from trusted sources, such as Department of Health and World Health Organisation
- Maintain your support networks however you can (for example, by text or online) and reach out to them whenever you need to talk
- Look after your general health where you can, including eating good food, getting exercise and sleeping regularly
- Try to maintain a schedule where possible (for example, waking up at the same time each day, regular meal and exercise and sleep times)
- Continue with your self care activities, and do things that help you relax
- Reach out for support: services such as Beyond Blue are still operating during COVID19, and are available by phone, chat and email. You may also like to join a [Forum](#) and have an online community to support you and provide tips.

For more information on looking after your mental health during self isolation, see articles on the [BeyondBlue](#) and [MensLine](#) web pages.

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 Interpreter: 13 14 50

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