

# Working Well: Domestic Violence during COVID-19

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Across Canada, crisis lines, shelters, and transition homes have reported spikes in usage since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Measures to protect from COVID-19—such as physical distancing, staying home and reducing travel—may contribute to gender-based violence, which may include domestic violence.

In the recent Psychological Health & Wellness survey taken by PHSAN employees, staff shared their experiences of coping during COVID-19:

For those working from home, the first two weeks were a challenge that for most, turned into a productive and well supported routine. We also heard about loneliness, isolation and domestic violence.

Domestic violence refers to a range of violations that happen within a domestic space. Although women are disproportionately affected by domestic violence, it is important to recognize that domestic abuse also happens to men and occurs in same-sex relationships. Children and their mothers are particularly vulnerable to intimate partner violence, child and elder abuse.

B.C. Human Rights Commissioner [Kasari Govender says](#) that “Family violence rises in times when families are in close contact and experiencing great economic pressure and uncertainty”. Now is the time to be vigilant regarding this [shadow pandemic](#). We all have a role to play to better understand, identify, and address the impacts of domestic violence.

## Register for a free learning series

Interested to learn more how you can help? Register for the free four-course learning series called [Gender-Based Violence: We All Can Help Improving the Health Sector's Response](#) on the Learning Hub.

## Service providers that can help

Advocates are encouraging victims and anyone concerned about someone to contact service providers:

- **VictimLinkBC** is available 24-7 in 130 languages, including 17 Indigenous languages. It can be reached toll-free by calling 1-800-563-0808 or emailing [VictimLinkBC@bc211.ca](mailto:VictimLinkBC@bc211.ca). The service is confidential and available across B.C. and Yukon.

- Children experiencing violence can also call the **Helpline for Children** at 310-1234. No area code is required. That line is also available 24-7, and children are not required to give their names.
- For **Status First Nations Peoples**, there are mental wellness and counselling support through First Nations Health Authority. Please call Health Benefits at 1-855-550-5454.
- **KUU-US Crisis Line** is available to support Indigenous peoples including First Nation (Status and Non-status), Inuit and Metis. This is available 24/7 and can be accessed toll-free: 1-800-588-8717, Youth Line: 250-723-2040, Adult Line: 250-723-4050

### **Additional resources**

- [Poster: Help Is Available During COVID-19 - Ending Violence Association of BC](#)
- [EVA BC COVID-19 Resources - Ending Violence Association of BC](#)
- Addressing Domestic Violence in the Workplace: [A Handbook for Employers](#)
- [How to talk to an employee](#) who might be experiencing domestic violence
- Learn about the [national hand symbol to silently signal for help in a video call](#) from the Canadian Women's Foundation
- "Are you co-quarantined with your abusive partner?" – Join in the facebook, twitter, and Instagram [campaign to support women and families](#).
- [BC Women's webpage lists resources to find help](#) (ie. Sexual assault service, anti-violence services, transition homes, safety plan)
- BC government's webpage of [virtual mental health supports during COVID-19](#)

Looking for information and resources to support you during COVID-19?

Visit PHSA's [Supporting Our Workforce page](#) for articles, resources, and tools that provide psychosocial support during COVID-19.

Don't hesitate to call Homewood Health, PHSA's [Employee & Family Assistance Program](#) provider, to speak with a clinical counsellor at 1-800-663-1142 or [www.homeweb.ca](http://www.homeweb.ca). Homewood Health offers free and confidential coaching and counselling services for staff through video, phone, private online chat, or private messaging.