

# COVID-19 AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

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People experiencing family violence can be exposed to additional risks in times of crisis like COVID-19. During periods of social distancing and increased isolation, we need our church communities to be aware of this and know where professional support is available for those who might need it.

To help you and your church, the Diocese of Melbourne's Preventing Violence Against Women Program will be hosting a Zoom session to answer your top questions and has written a message below that you can share with your church.

## Zoom session re: COVID-19 and Family violence

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Staying at home is not safe for many women in our community, including in our churches. At a time of self-isolation and social distancing, what is the impact of COVID-19 on people experiencing family violence? How can we provide pastoral care at this time? And how can we do this safely for those living with an abusive partner?

**Join us for a Zoom session to unpack these questions with experts in family violence and pastoral care. To find out more and send us the questions you would like us to address, please email Robyn Andréo-Boosey, the Diocese of Melbourne's Preventing Violence Against Women Program Manager, via: [rboosey@melbourneanglican.org.au](mailto:rboosey@melbourneanglican.org.au).**

## Message to share with your church community

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**To make sure your church community is aware of this issue and where support is available at this time, please share the message in the box below in your church's communications channels, such as your newsletter and social media.**

If you have any questions about this, please contact Robyn Andréo-Boosey (see contact details above).



In times of crisis, as a church community we seek to look after and support each other. Some people need extra support at this time. COVID-19 poses higher risk for the elderly, those with pre-existing conditions or those with jobs in certain industries. What is not so well known is that individuals experiencing family violence can also be exposed to additional dangers.

Family violence and abuse are about power and control. Perpetrators can use any tool to exert control over another person and in the face of a health concern like COVID-19, they have more tools available for this: self-isolation, social distancing, and lock downs. Greater social isolation and reduced financial income make it more difficult for a victim/survivor to get support or leave if they wish to.

Every person is created in the image of God, equally loved and equally valued. Violence and abusive behaviour is an affront to human dignity. It is never acceptable, never excusable and never tolerable.

We can support each other by being aware that this might be something that people around us could be experiencing. We are not family violence professionals and can help by knowing where to get advice from those who are when we need it.

Here are some key numbers we can call to get advice and guidance from experts:

- 1800RESPECT have a helpline (1800 737 73) or webchat support at [1800RESPECT.org.au](https://1800RESPECT.org.au). Anyone can phone this number to get information or advice. They can provide support, assistance with safety planning, and information about local services. 1800RESPECT counsellors are experienced in how to handle situations sensitively.
- If you are a man who needs help, or if you know a man who needs support, call the national Men's Referral Service on 1300 766 491 or visit <https://www.ntv.org.au/>.
- If children are involved or if the alleged perpetrator is a church worker, please contact the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne's professional standards organisation, Kooyoora, on 1800 135 246 for advice on how to proceed and what your reporting requirements are.
- In an emergency, call 000.
- To find out more about what the Diocese of Melbourne is doing to prevent violence against women and get involved, see @MelbDiocesePVAW on Facebook and Twitter or [www.melbourneanglican.org.au/PVAW](http://www.melbourneanglican.org.au/PVAW)



