

Are You Worried About Increased Intimate Partner Violence During COVID-19?

Your Risk Might Change During COVID-19

This pandemic is a difficult time for many, with orders to stay home, uncertainty, money concerns, and stress, all of which can increase risk of domestic violence. According to Statistics Canada, almost 1 in 5 Canadians are concerned about violence in the home during COVID-19. If you are experiencing violence at home, you may be worried about the risk of violence increasing now. Victim services and anti-violence support workers are here to help, and talk to

you about your safety during COVID-19.

In BC, police, child protection and anti-violence support workers use the [BC Summary of Domestic Violence Risk Factors](#) to assess and manage cases of domestic violence. Many people who use violence in relationships will increase their violence when they are stressed, when their employment is unstable (when they lose their jobs), when their mental health is poor and/or when they are mis-using alcohol or drugs. If they are using violence, expressing thoughts of suicide, or threatening to

harm you, others, or your animals, this can be a sign of possible increased or more severe future violence. Victim services and anti-violence support workers are here to help.

Risk May Increase During the Pandemic

It is well known that during times of crisis, such as natural disasters and pandemics, there is an increase in domestic violence. Changes in your relationship (like a separation, a new partner, child custody changes) are a time of high risk for increased violence, even up to 18 months after such changes.

If you have had changes in your relationship, victim services and anti-violence support workers are here to help you assess your risk.

Below are some important risk factors to pay attention to:

- Is your partner preventing you from being safe during COVID-19 (e.g., preventing you and others from social distancing, limiting or controlling access to products you need to keep you and your family safe?)
- Is your partner monitoring where you go inside and outside the home?
- Are they limiting who you speak to, including family, friends, or other supports?
- Are they limiting your access to information about COVID-19?
- Has there been an increase

in emotional abuse, threats of violence, or more episodes of violence in your home?

- Is your partner displaying more controlling behaviour or jealousy?
- Has your partner strangled or choked you? Even during COVID-19, it is important to seek medical attention if you have been strangled or choked.
- Is your partner pressuring or forcing you to have sex when you don't want to?
- Does your partner have access to weapons either inside the home or through family or friends?

because of their own circumstances. If you have a disability, are geographically or socially isolated because you live in a small town/remote area/rural area, living in poverty or have temporary or no formal immigration status, it may be more difficult to access supports that will help to keep you safe. You know your situation best and manage your safety on a daily basis – victim services and anti-violence support workers are here to help if you need additional information or support services.

[Victim Services Programs Across BC](#) are still available to provide emotional support, help with safety planning, help you assess risk to you, and provide assistance to access other services (e.g., child protection, emergency housing, financial benefits). These services may be able to support you and/or your children remotely (e.g., online, by phone, text messages). Referral pathways may be a bit different right now as agencies are trying to best meet client needs through remote options.

How to Get Help

VictimLinkBC is a toll-free, confidential, multilingual telephone information and referral service for victims of crime that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Call 1-800-563-0808, email VictimLinkBC@bc211.ca, or visit www.victimlinkbc.ca.

Be mindful of online and phone safety right now since the abusive partner is in the same space 24/7 (e.g., clear your phone log if calling for help or support, clear search history more frequently). Keep your phone with you at all times as you move through your space. Remember that some home areas may be safer than others when you are in the same space all the time (e.g. living room may be safer than bathroom, bedroom safer than basement).

Some people may be at increased risk of experiencing violence

**To get help, call
VictimLinkBC at
1-800-563-0808**