

# Members Advisory

## Wednesday, 25 March 2020



## Risk of domestic violence increases during lockdown

Kia ora

Sadly, Aotearoa New Zealand has alarmingly high rates of domestic violence and family harm. Rural Women New Zealand has spoken out against this violence while supporting campaigns and measures to curb violence against women and children for decades.

For many families confined to home during the Level 4 response to COVID-19, there will be increased stress and anxiety around the physical, financial, emotional and psychological impacts of the virus. For those living with domestic violence, this increased stress and anxiety will lead to an increased risk of violence. It has been reported that there has been a significant rise in people seeking support to escape domestic violence in China, the United States and Australia in recent weeks.

New Zealand has embarked on a period of enforced isolation and domestic violence support groups and the police advise that the lack of the ability to take time out will create extra tension in confined and isolated households. The Government has announced a support package today which includes resourcing agencies and groups which help victims of domestic violence.

**Here is what you need to know:**

- Help is still available to escape a dangerous situation during the COVID-19 lockdown period.**
- As always, if you fear for another person's safety, you should call 111 and report your concerns to the police.**
- Women's Refuge continues to offer emergency accommodation for those seeking safety from domestic violence during lockdown. Support can be accessed by calling 0800 REFUGE or 0800 733 843.**
- Shine provides support and advice about helping someone experiencing domestic violence by calling the Shine Helpline on 0508 744 633 between 9am and 11pm, 7 days a week or through [www.2shine.org.nz](http://www.2shine.org.nz). It is important to keep communications lines open to anyone that may be at risk. Be mindful and sensitive to their situation, perhaps tell them how you are managing in lockdown and that you are contacting others to see how they are.**

If you know someone who is isolation with a violent family member, here are some things you can advise:

- Identify safe areas and/ or ways to get out if they need to;
- If possible, keep a charged phone and numbers to call for help with them;
- Call the police on 111 if they are afraid for any member of the household's physical safety;
- Let trusted friends or neighbours know of the situation and develop a plan on how to tell

others they need help;

- If possible, check that they have access to a car with adequate fuel.

**During the period of Aotearoa New Zealand's Level 4 response to COVID-19, it is essential that any person who needs to leave their home for safety reasons tells whoever they call if they are unwell so that the plan to stamp out COVID-19 is not compromised.**

**Sincerely**

**Liz Pennington and the National Office team**