

We are being advised to stay home to be safe, but what if home isn't a safe place?



The reality for individuals experiencing domestic violence is that social isolation may escalate their situation.

The World Health Organisation describes domestic violence as “the most widespread but among the least reported human rights issues”. Statistics are already shockingly high with 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men reported to experience domestic violence in their lifetime and two women killed every week in the UK at the hands of a partner or ex-partner. However, during times of crisis we see these figures escalate even further. In China, there has been a surge in reporting to police, with triple the amount of cases compared to this time last year.

For many individuals being isolated in the home with their abuser can be terrifying. Isolation is a common tactic used by perpetrators of abuse and many may now use the Corona Virus epidemic to further isolate their partners by claiming to have symptoms so that they cannot leave the house. This can remove the little ‘respite’ from abuse that individuals might have at work, when taking children to school or when their abusive partner is out of the house. The added stress of financial difficulties, having children home from school or general anxiety about the virus could further exacerbate violence in the home.

If you are experiencing abuse and you are not yet in social isolation, seek assistance as early as possible as it may be more difficult to call later. If you know someone in an abusive relationship, encourage them to reach out for help and stay in touch with them if safe to do so.

If you are in danger or believe someone else is - call 999.

If you need advice or support you can call:

The National Domestic Violence Helpline - 0808 2000 247

The Men's Advice Line, for male domestic abuse survivors – 0808 801 0327

The Mix, free information and support for under 25s in the UK – 0808 808 4994

National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0800 999 5428

Samaritans (24/7 service) – 116 123

Remember that there is also online support available:

You can, phone, chat online or email Womens Aid - <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/>

Victim Support have a live chat helpline - <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help/support-near-you/live-chat>