

Family, Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence During COVID-19

Update from Sue Webeck, Senior Manager - Respectful Relationships Unit

One of the many considerations we must have during this pandemic is the reported increase in rates of **family, domestic and intimate partner violence** globally. At ANU, we are not immune to these complex societal issues and we must face them with our eyes wide open as a community. These increased rates of violence are not only about instances in households and families who have prior to this pandemic experienced violence. It is also about violence being used in relationships and households who have not seen this before. Each individual deserves access to care and support which will meet their needs and their specific circumstances. Everyone deserves to understand what family, domestic and intimate partner violence is so that they can identify what is happening in their home, within the homes of people they care about and within the community. To understand what is meant by family, domestic and intimate partner violence please see

here: <https://www.1800respect.org.au/violence-and-abuse/domestic-and-family-violence/about>.

We can all play a part in supporting our communities during these difficult times. Here are a few key tips on how you can play your part:

1. Promote wellbeing in your community. This principle applies whether it's your work team or social group. Actively engage in conversations about people's wellbeing, ask what people are finding as valuable ways of looking after themselves, and share what you are doing. This promotes an environment of holistic discussion which will send an indication to your community that you are a resource to come to if something is not going ok.
2. Have regular check ins, book them across different times and days of the week and utilise mixed mediums. Phone calls, video calls and text messages all provide different levels of engagement and opportunity for someone to open up or for you to notice something is not ok or has changed.
3. Know what to do if an incident occurs while someone is at home during this time. It is reasonable and legal to leave the house to seek medical, legal, police or support service interventions or to relocate to another residence. Support services are still operating and are actively available to provide assistance to you. If you are in immediate danger call 000.
4. Support services providers like the Domestic Violence Crisis Service, 1800 Respect, Victims Support ACT, Respectful Relationships Unit or Canberra Rape Crisis Centre. Follow them on social media, and share their posts and information for your community to see. A person may never directly tell you that they are experiencing violence at home but they may reach out to a confidential service because you provided that connection.
5. If you are supporting someone through a difficult time, always reach out for support for yourself. This may be through telephone lines like DVCS, 1800 RESPECT or Lifeline, or it may be through the ANU Employee Assistance Program. Looking after yourself is one way you can ensure you can support others.

Below is a list of support services available so you can get that information for yourself and your communities.

What support is available for you if violence is being used in your home:

If you are in immediate risk of danger please call 000

If you need a discreet solution to accessing support 1800 RESPECT has the Daisy App which is downloadable for android and IOS devices here:

<https://www.1800respect.org.au/daisy/>

<https://dvcs.org.au/our-services/safety-planning/>

<https://www.1800respect.org.au/help-and-support/safety-planning>

ANU-Specific Resources:

The Respectful Relationships Unit can connect you with care and support options within the University or within the broader community.

<https://www.anu.edu.au/students/health-safety-wellbeing/violence-sexual-assault-support>

Human Resources have information located here:

<https://services.anu.edu.au/human-resources/wellbeing>

What can I do to support someone experiencing abusive and violent behaviour:

<https://dvcs.org.au/our-services/supporting-someone/>

We are in this together so let's look after ourselves, each other and lean on the services and support available in our communities.

Sue