



## INCREASED RISK OF DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE IN THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES

With families mandated to work and study from home, there are new arrangements that all family members, young and old, are coming to terms with. For some families there will be additional challenges such as unemployment and financial stress, fear and anxiety regarding illness and what's happening in the world around us, or the increased use of alcohol and potentially other drugs at this time. These factors can lead to an increased risk of domestic and family violence (DFV) occurring. This risk is heightened by social isolation and not meeting together at church or for Bible study in person, so it is much harder to see warning signs.

### **IDEAS FOR HELPING FAMILIES THAT MIGHT BE AT INCREASED RISK OF EXPERIENCING DFV AT THIS TIME:**

- Maintain good pastoral contact with the people in your church. If they are not coming to church online or attending a Bible study group (or even if they are) consider calling or contacting people electronically to care for them pastorally. Be aware that their partner may be monitoring their communications.
- Pray for and think about families who might be at greater risk at this time. Indicators are pre-existing stressors, unemployment, financial strain and substance abuse. Another risk factor is not being able to access their normal supports and extended time in isolation at home. Consider a strategy for increasing your support during this time.
- Practical help can relieve the stress a family is experiencing. Are there ways your church family can be helping with practical needs?
- For families where DFV is a risk it is recommended to have separate supports for each spouse. If one partner is at risk be careful that your contacts are not putting them further at risk – for example, when you call, ask if it is a good time to talk.
- Look out for signs online – for example, if someone goes quiet on Facebook and they are normally active, be proactive and check if they are okay.
- During this time, you may be under increasing pressure. Are you worried about your own behaviour? There is help available for you too.
- Remember that there is help available. See the Breaking the Silence DV page for access to resources and contact numbers – [www.breakingthesilence.org.au/domestic-violence](http://www.breakingthesilence.org.au/domestic-violence).

Finally, remember that DFV within your church family is a Notifiable Circumstance and should be advised to the CPU via calling Jon on 02 9690 9325 or emailing at [jflood@pcnsw.org.au](mailto:jflood@pcnsw.org.au). Situations involving DFV are always complex and you typically will need support. If in doubt or unsure, please make contact. The CPU is here to help.

Blessings,  
Jon and the CPU team