

# COVID-19: Are you worried about domestic and family violence?

FACTSHEET

This factsheet is part of a series from Legal Aid NSW that aims to help answer your questions about COVID-19 and family law.

**You may be worried or confused about how COVID-19 will affect you and your family. Sometimes a crisis can make legal problems worse or new problems might develop. Legal Aid NSW understands that there will be a lot of questions about family law issues, parenting and staying safe. This series of factsheets will give you helpful information and contacts to support you and your family to manage all the changes that are happening in our community.**

## How do I stay safe at home?

Domestic and family violence can become worse during a crisis. During the COVID-19 pandemic, you might be worried about your safety, or the safety of someone you know. Domestic and family violence can include any behaviour that pressures you, controls you or makes you feel afraid. It is not always physical violence.

You might also be worried about being able to live at home if you have to self-isolate or there is a 'lockdown' in your area or across the state. If you leave your home to protect your safety or the safety of anyone else in your home, you will not be fined by police. If you leave for safety reasons, this is a reasonable excuse.

There are things you can do to stay safe at home or leave home if that is what you need to do.

## Who can help me?

The Legal Aid NSW Domestic Violence Unit is a specialist domestic violence service. Our lawyers, social workers and financial counsellors work together to support people to sort out their legal and non-legal problems and make plans to safely leave home.

You can contact the Domestic Violence Unit by calling (02) 9219 6300 or emailing [domesticviolenceunit@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:domesticviolenceunit@legalaid.nsw.gov.au).

## I need to plan for my safety

The Domestic Violence Unit can help you plan to stay safe.

- For information about how to make a safety plan and to access online safety planning support, visit the [1800 RESPECT "Safety planning" web page](#).
- For general information about staying safe, visit the "Staying safe" page on the [Family Violence Law Help website](#).
- In a crisis, there may be other safety tips you should consider. If you need to leave your home during the COVID-19 period, you should view the ["COVID-19: It's not safe for me to stay at home. What should I do?"](#) factsheet.

## I have a matter in court, what should I do?

If you have a matter in court and you are not sure what you need to do or if you need to go to court, you should contact the Domestic Violence Unit on (02) 9219 6300 and speak to one of our lawyers for advice.

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## Where can I find more information?

You will find a list of useful contacts for people in NSW at the [“Get help” page](#) on the Family Violence Law Help website. There are contacts for legal services, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal services, courts, counselling services, emergency accommodation providers, financial help and more.

## How can I get help?

For free legal help call 1300 888 529 or [call your local Legal Aid NSW office](#). You can contact the Legal Aid NSW Domestic Violence Unit by calling (02) 9219 6300 or emailing [domesticviolenceunit@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:domesticviolenceunit@legalaid.nsw.gov.au).

If you need an interpreter, call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 and ask for LawAccess NSW. If you find it hard to hear or speak, call the National Relay Service on 133 677 and ask for LawAccess NSW or visit [www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au).

This factsheet is intended as a general guide to the law. Do not rely on this information as legal advice. We recommend you talk to a lawyer about your situation. This information is correct at the time of writing, however, it may change.

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