

# What are the next steps when facing domestic violence due to isolation?

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Whilst it is absolutely no excuse, an unfortunate reality of isolation is that domestic violence cases have risen by 20% during the lockdown period according to a recent research study by a number of parties including Victoria University in Melbourne.

Whilst some people have been able to adapt and continue to function in a reasonably similar manner, for others, isolation has only served to agitate pre-existing relationship issues.

These issues include tensions between couples which are usually due to one or more of the three factors which cause separation – money, children and work.



When a number of these issues are thrown together as a result of, for example, job losses (or working from home) and homeschooling, situations can also quickly deteriorate causing instances of family violence.

## What is family violence?

Family violence (also referred to domestic violence), is not just physical violence. It also incorporates: controlling or coercive actions (sexually, emotionally or financially) by a family member which causes another person to become fearful.

If a couple has children, there is little doubt that as a result of the current restrictive laws requiring self-isolation that they will also be exposed to this unacceptable behaviour.

### Get urgent assistance for domestic violence

If you feel you are being subjected to family violence and need urgent assistance, there are a number of immediate services in Victoria which can assist including:

- **Victoria Police**  
(Phone 000 for urgent assistance)
- **Safe steps Family Violence Response Centre**  
(Phone: 1800 015 188)
- **1800 RESPECT**  
(Phone: 1800 737 732)

There is also the option of seeking to obtain an Intervention Order with the assistance and support of Victoria Police. Our Family Law Team can assist you with this process.

## After you are safe, consider obtaining legal assistance

In the early stages, an experienced family lawyer can assist you with:

- introducing safety measures for you and if appropriate, your children, and
- obtaining court orders to access bank accounts or other funds that you cannot easily access or have been removed from

If you require obligation-free assistance in respect to any issues relating to family law, please contact Leigh Brown directly on **(03) 8621 2853**.

Sometimes a short phone call, if nothing else, can help ease your mind.

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