

COVID-19

IMPACTS ON GENDER-BASED SEXUAL VIOLENCE,
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEX TRAFFICKING

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

COVID-19 AND DOMESTIC HARM

During the COVID-19 outbreak, there has already been a sharp increase in the risk of domestic violence (DV) and intimate partner violence (IPV) due to restrictions on movement.

COVID-19 is not the cause of domestic violence, but it can escalate an already abusive situation. Those who use violence do so because they believe they are entitled to power and control in a relationship.

Social isolation is a common tool used to maintain this dominance.

Abusers frequently hold deep-seated beliefs that their will should prevail over all others in a household. Because women and children are spending more time near the abuser, their daily demands to do things "their way" and the "right way" will be intensified.

Resistance or perceived "misbehavior" will likely lead to increased incidents of domestic violence.

In a climate of fear, survivors are even less likely than before to come forward and seek help .

we are in a pandemic within a pandemic.

SEX TRAFFICKING

COVID-19 AND SEX TRAFFICKING

Victims of sex trafficking face the impacts of exploitation and abuse every day at the hands of sex buyers, traffickers and pimps. The physical and psychological harms these perpetrators inflict on victims are lifelong. The impacts of this trauma are only amplified by COVID-19. The economic effects of this virus will increase some of the vulnerabilities that make people susceptible to sex trafficking in the first place - economic need, unstable living conditions, and substance use issues among others.

A PERSON BEING TRAFFICKED DURING PHYSICAL DISTANCING MAY:

- Be dressed in inappropriate clothing for the context or the weather; wandering outside late in the evening
- Be unable to speak for themselves; an accompanying person speaks or translates for them
- Not be allowed to contact friends or family; phone was taken away/disconnected
- Have experienced acts of violence or threats against themselves/ friends/family/pets (or threat of informing others of their activities), they may be punished for discussing their activities with outsiders
- Be taught to distrust outsiders, especially law enforcement. They have a sense of fear and distrust toward the government and police (i.e. fear of deportation in international cases)

"Young people are sleeping during the day to avoid their abuser... There are no confidential spaces."

~ Lisa Clarke, Executive Director, Kawartha Sexual Assault Centre

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GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

RISK FACTORS

As self isolation and physical distancing measures are put in place, people at risk of violent abuse - such as women, children, people living with disabilities or racialization, members of LGBTQ2S+ community, or people living in financial or immigration status precarity - may experience increased coercion, stigmatization, or all forms of abuse.

- Perpetrators of abuse may use restrictions due to COVID-19 to reduce access to services, including psycho-social supports, in formal and informal networks
- Perpetrators may restrict online or phone access with family, friends, teachers, and coworkers
- Perpetrators may restrict access to going outdoors, to safety equipment like soap and hand sanitizer
- Perpetrators may use the opportunity of social isolation to increase financial abuse and sexual abuse, create restrictions to basic needs, use more physical and psychological violence, create more emotional manipulation about school and work, and use more alcohol and substances in the home

SURVIVOR REALITIES

SUPPORTS AND SERVICES ARE LIFE SAVING

Survivors may not realize that medical services, police services and support services are still available. They may be in extremely unsafe spaces that are not confidential and may not reach out until the violence is extreme and seeking help outweighs the risk of contracting COVID-19. Most of all, for survivors who are isolated due to stay-at-home orders, coupled with the stress of the socio-cultural impacts of a global pandemic, are at heightened life threatening danger from abusers.

THERE ARE SERVICES READY TO HELP



Monday to Friday, 9:30 am to 4:30 pm
Office Phone: 705-748-5901 and Office Text Line: 705-710-5234
24/7 Crisis Support Phone Line at 1-866-298-7778
Weekend Webchat at www.kawarthasexualassaultcentre.com



YWCA Administrative Office Phone: 705-743-3526
24 Hour Support & Crisis Phone Line at 1-800-461-7656
Text Line at 705-991-0110
Crossroads Shelter (Peterborough): 705-743-4135
HERS (Haliburton): 705-286-6442
www.ywcapeterborough.org

- Victim Services Peterborough Northumberland: victimservicespn.ca
- Peterborough Police Services and Victim Services: peterboroughpolice.com
- Ontario Provincial Police - Peterborough County: opp.ca
- Nijikiwendidaa Anishnaabekwewag Services Circle: nijiki.com
- Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Response Team - Peterborough Regional Health Centre: prhc.on.ca
- Nogojivanong Friendship Centre: nogofc.ca
- Survivortoolkit.ca
- Protect Children: protectchildren.ca
- Internet Child Exploitation (ICE): boostforkids.org
- PARN.ca

“Women around the world are relying on code words, like requesting ‘Mask-19’ at their pharmacy, to ask for help while the abuser is present. If something you hear doesn’t make sense, create a safe space where she can speak privately.”
~ Kim Dolan, Executive Director, YWCA Peterborough Haliburton