

# STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



## COVID-19 and Domestic Violence

Domestic or intimate partner violence happens globally in the best of times. The World Health Organization has warned that COVID-19 creates a situation—due to stress, the disruption of social and protective networks, and decreased access to services—that increases the risk of violence in the home. Are you worried about your neighbor, yourself, or your partner being the victim or even the perpetrator of domestic violence?

### What can you do if you are living with domestic violence?

Violent behavior can escalate fast. It can start as verbal abuse and change to yelling and then to hitting things, pets, or people. Remember that the violent behavior ends when the person who is having the behavior works on it. This is beyond your control.

### Make an emergency plan.

Prepare a bag with your important documents, keys, clothes, and other important items. If you have children or pets, think about them and how to protect them in case of an emergency. Have a list of phone numbers you can call, including the police, domestic violence services, and people you can count on, like friends and family.

### What can you do if you realize that your neighbors are living with domestic violence?

Violence at home can have serious physical, emotional, and psychological consequences. If you realize that your neighbors or anyone you know are living an event of domestic violence, the recommendation is to call the local special services or emergency number.

### What can you do if you realize that when you get angry, you feel that you can't control yourself and you hurt others?

You can learn to control your emotions and express them in healthy ways. First, however, you need to take action to keep everyone safe. Recognize the physical warning signs of anger, such as changes in body temperature, tension in your muscles or jaw, or stomach aches.

### Take a time out.

That means that you stop, go to another room, or take a walk. The important thing is that you put some distance between yourself and others but stay in a safe space. If you stop at the beginning of a situation, you will be able to avoid escalation and avoid hurting others. During the time out, think about yourself, your feelings, and your thoughts. Try to identify if you are angry or if you feel anything else: stress, pain, fear, etc. Come back to others when you don't feel angry anymore. If you start feeling angry again, take more time out.

**If you or someone you know are struggling with domestic violence or mental health, contact your BHS Care Coordinator to discuss your EAP benefits and make an appointment with the appropriate provider.**



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