



## Intimate Partner Violence and Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Response

### Introduction

The Novel (new) Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness. The virus is thought to mainly spread between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. People can be exposed to COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their face. COVID – 19 poses a serious [public health risk](#). The federal government is working closely with state, local, tribal, and territorial partners, as well as public health partners, to [respond](#) to this situation (CDC 2020). In response, one recommendation has been “social distancing.” Due to this pandemic, many businesses, government, schools, financial institutions, and other community agencies are engaging in this preventative measure to avoid further spread of this virus by temporary closure or decrease of services/hours.

### Prevalence & Relevance

In the United States, about 1 in 4 women and 1 in 10 men report experiencing IPV. Veterans may be at higher risk, with some studies finding rates up to 70% among women Veterans receiving health care in VA. For individuals experiencing IPV, any disruption to normal life or access to services can mean increased potential for harm. This often occurs during natural disasters or human-based disasters, such as fires, chemical spills, and mass violence. **It is crucial to consider how the spread of COVID19, and subsequent precautions, has the potential to negatively impact those experiencing Intimate Partner Violence (IPV).** Many current restrictions have an outsized impact on safety of individuals experiencing IPV: school and childcare closures, access to public transportation, ability to report to work, and even being quarantined with a violent partner. Seeking assistance in hospitals, court houses and other public service agencies may also be limited. Those experiencing violence may have limited access to technology and private communication with others outside of their home environment. With these restrictions and increased stressors, the use of violence may also increase without outlets to decompress due to lack of financial, occupational, relational, and social resources.

The VA IPV Assistance Program (IPVAP) is working to ensure that those served (Veterans, their partners, and VA Staff) have current information on resources and supports available via sharing resources on VA social media platforms, sharing information through internal emails, posting flyers and other materials, and working directly with patients to ensure safety is addressed.



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration



## Recommendations:

The IPVAP recommends generating awareness of current resources that are available to VA staff, Veterans, and their partners during this time. Each VA Medical Center has an IPVAP Coordinator who will assist with referral to region and community specific resources to include but not limited to shelter, health care, clinical intervention within and outside the VA, safety planning, and legal related assistance. The IPVAP Coordinator is also available to brief facility leadership on key considerations and to provide consultation and direct care. IPV requires an interprofessional effort under typical circumstances – in times of stress and crisis, partnership in these efforts is paramount in order to address the unique circumstances faced by those who are at heightened risk due to IPV and to encourage and sustain healthy relationships. VA will work diligently with local community partners and agencies to provide updated information to help those impacted by IPV.

## Resources:

Learn more about VA IPVAP and Other VA Services:

[Internal VA IPV Assistance Program SharePoint](#)

[External VA IPV Assistance Program Website](#)

[Nationwide VA IPVAP Coordinator Roster](#)

[Veterans Crisis Line](#)

[National Center for PTSD Resources for Managing Stress](#)

[Women's Veteran Healthcare Website](#)

IPVAP Produced Resources:

[Intimate Partner Violence & Novel Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) Campaign Image Files](#)

[Intimate Partner Violence & Novel Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) Response: VA Staff Fact Sheet](#)

[Staying Safe During COVID-19: Patient Fact Sheet](#)

News articles for Awareness (not VA publications):

["Home Is Not A Safe Place For Everyone"](#)

["Trapped at home: Coronavirus could be disastrous for domestic violence victims"](#)

["If You Are Locked Down with Someone Who May Become Violent"](#)

["Who's most at risk for COVID-19? It's probably not you"](#)

["As Cities Around the World Go on Lockdown, Victims of DV Look For A Way Out"](#)

Disaster Specific Resources: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

[National Domestic Violence Hotline](#)

[NNEDV Resources for Coronavirus](#)

[Futures Without Violence Information on Coronavirus](#)

[National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, Response in Times of Disaster](#)

[DV and Natural Disasters Curriculum, NNEDV Economic Justice Summit, 2018](#)

[National Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#)