

Helping your clients during quarantine or lockdown
to stay safe from others in their home,
or be safe to others in their home
BROCHURES - PRACTITIONER GUIDE



Introduction

Due to COVID-19, people may be required to stay in their home due to a lockdown because of an outbreak in the community or a quarantine because a family member has tested positive to COVID-19.

There is extensive advice available for people regarding their health, mental health and movement restrictions during a COVID-19 lockdown or quarantine. However there is very little advice available regarding family and domestic violence (FDV) in the home. This is a concern, as FDV can continue to occur during this time and increase in severity and frequency.

To address this need, SFV has developed two brochures for use in Kimberley communities in the case of a lockdown or quarantine. One brochure is intended to support potential victim-survivors of family and domestic violence, and one is intended to support men who are using, or who are at risk of using violence in the home. These have been developed with thanks to funding from Lotterywest, with advice, guidance and support from No To Violence and Kimberley stakeholders, and using the Blurred Borders resources from Legal Aid (copyright, Legal Aid).

SFV acknowledges the highly sensitive nature of the brochures and recommends their use in this specific circumstance only. The brochures have been developed after extensive consultation, and with careful consideration of a range of factors.

SFV continues to advocate for a high quality, systemic response to family and domestic violence which:

- appropriately, and with dignity, supports victim-survivors and effectively meets their short, medium and long-term needs;
- keeps men who use violence accountable for their behaviour and provides good quality interventions to support them to change their behaviour;
- is culturally safe;
- appropriately works with other supports being provided to clients;
- considers individual needs and takes into account issues such as age, gender, location, education level, immigration status, cultural background and others; and
- keeps children central to the focus of any interventions.

The brochures consist of a component only of this overall approach.

This guide provides some basic information about the approach taken in the brochures, as well as a quick guide for use by practitioners in the FDV sector, as well as people providing support and interventions in non-FDV-specific agencies, such as health, mental health, alcohol and other drugs, child protection, housing, community development, employment and others.

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About the brochures

Consultations

The brochure was developed after extensive consultations with Kimberley community service providers as part of the Lotterywest-funded project exploring the impact of COVID-19 on the provision of family and domestic violence services to the Kimberley. Specific cultural and FDV advice was provided by No To Violence for the project. Additional advice on cultural, FDV and local issues was provided by stakeholders interviewed during the project, as well as advice on the readability, applicability and content of the brochures.

Use of Blurred Borders

The brochures include the Blurred Borders graphics (copyright Legal Aid), as they are a commonly-used tool for explaining complex legal, tenancy, child protection and family violence matters among Aboriginal communities in the Kimberley. As much as possible, the text relating to each diagram is consistent with other uses of the Blurred Borders resource, which should aid in interpretation by clients. Some additional Blurred Borders cards were developed especially for this project, specifically: keeping cool and dry in hot weather; looking after country; and indoor relaxation. These were developed to reflect the particular challenges inherent in isolating at home in the Kimberley, including in remote communities.

Font and text

The brochures were designed to be as accessible as possible to all users. The brochures use a large, sans serif font to assist those with vision impairment, and simple language to assist those whose first language is not English, or where a person has low level of literacy. Text is supported by pictures.

Person who can 'step in'

A concern raised by multiple stakeholders was a situation where Aboriginal community members were reluctant to intervene in family violence situations due to a range of barriers. One key barrier was that in some locations, for cultural or other reasons, community members feel they are not permitted to interfere in a family violence situation, depending on the particular relationship between the community member and either the perpetrator or the victim-survivor.

These brochures have addressed this issue in multiple ways. Firstly, both brochures state categorically that family violence is not part of Aboriginal culture. Second, victim-survivors are encouraged to have a safety plan, which may include acceptable pathways for actively seeking help during a crisis situation. Third, the brochures include an encouragement to plan in advance with their partner to nominate suitable people who can have permission to 'step in' if violence is escalating. These people should be agreed by both partners in advance and should be someone who is willing to step in (where it is safe), and take actions such as calling the police, removing weapons, alcohol, or car keys, or removing the perpetrator, or assisting the victim-survivor to leave safely with the children. The persons can be relatives, community members or service providers. Both partners need to agree in advance that each person is a safe person and that there can be no repercussions or consequences for the person for taking those actions from either partner, or their family members or friends.

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Brochure supporting victim-survivors to be safe

Target group

The brochure for victim-survivors, entitled 'KEEPING SAFE FROM OTHERS IN YOUR HOME DURING LOCKDOWN OR QUARANTINE' has been designed to support victim-survivors who, due to the lockdown and quarantine, feel they have no choice but to remain in their home with their family member who uses violence. This is also suitable for victim-survivors who, after assessing their own safety, and balancing the options available to them, feel they should remain in their home in the short term.

Contents of the brochure

The brochure has been designed to balance a need for simple, straightforward, practical information against the complex and challenging task facing women who experience violence in their home. The brochures should be used within a wider range of services which provide safety and support.

The victim-survivor brochure contains the following aspects:

- Reassurance that victim-survivors are capable of assessing their own risk (page 1)
- Reassurance that they are strong and that any violence is not their fault (page 1)
- Simplified information about the main forms of family violence (pages 2-3)
- Practical and achievable tips for basic safety planning (page 4)
- Practical and achievable tips for staying mentally healthy, building on the Act, Belong, Commit approach but focused on keeping relaxed and active, keeping connected, looking after others and focusing on something important to them (pages 5-6)
- Practical and straightforward advice on ways to ensure their home is a comfortable space to reduce stress and increase safety during isolation (page 7)
- Some prompts for thinking about the future, focusing on building independence and seeking supports (page 7)
- Phone numbers to call if seeking support (page 8)
- Dedicated space on the back page to enable service providers to add their own stamp, sticker or contact details (page 8)

Suggested supporting activities

- This is a potentially life-threatening situation, and every effort should be made by services to ensure the victim-survivor's safety and her children's safety at all times.
- Practitioners can work with victim-survivors to recognise their strengths and capabilities, and support them to maintain their work towards their own goals and lifestyle choices.
- Where possible, a victim-survivor should be supported to have a safety plan in place, including an emergency kit and a phone.
- A victim-survivor and her partner can together nominate safe people who can 'step in' if a situation is escalating, without fear of consequences from the perpetrator or other family members.

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Brochure supporting men to be safe to others

Target group

The brochure entitled 'HELP FOR BEING SAFE TO OTHERS IN THE HOME DURING LOCKDOWN OR QUARANTINE' has been designed to support men who are using violence, or are at risk of using violence in the home, and who, due to the lockdown and quarantine, will be required to stay at home with their partners, children and other family members.

Contents of the brochure

The brochure has been designed to balance a need for simple, straightforward, practical information against the challenging task of reducing the risk of men using violence in their home. These should be used in the wider context of supports and services that promote safety to women and children and accountability for men who use violence.

The brochure contains the following aspects:

- Clear statement that they are responsible for their actions (page 1)
- Clear statement that family violence is not a part of Aboriginal culture (page 1)
- Simple tips for staying mentally healthy, building on the Act, Belong, Commit approach, focusing on keeping relaxed, active and connected, improving relationships, taking responsibility for household tasks and childrearing, looking after others and doing something important to them (pages 2-3)
- This includes encouragement to talk to a 'safe mate who can relate', which should be someone who can relate to their efforts and activities to stop using violence in the home (page 3)
- Simple advice on ensuring their home is a comfortable space, to help reduce stress and increase safety during isolation (page 4)
- Simple tips and encouragement regarding looking after their body and health (page 5)
- Practical tips for taking immediate action if they are at risk of harming someone (page 5)
- Encouragement to seek counselling and support (page 5) and plan for the future (page 7)
- Encouragement to plan in advance with their partner some suitable people who can have permission to *step in* if violence is escalating (page 6)
- Space for a practitioner to write any specific actions that need to be taken by the man (page 7)
- Phone numbers to call if seeking support (page 8) and dedicated space on the back page to enable service providers to add their own stamp, sticker or contact details (page 8)

Suggested supporting activities

- This is a potentially life-threatening situation, and every effort should be made by services to ensure the adult and child victim-survivor's safety at this time.
- A victim-survivor and her partner can jointly nominate safe people who can 'step in' if a situation is escalating, without fear of consequences from the perpetrator or other family members.
- Men should be encouraged to find a '*safe mate who can relate*'. This is not necessarily a person to turn to in crisis, but rather a person who can encourage them in positive actions towards not using violence, and improving their relationships with their partner, children and family members.
- Men should be encouraged to use appropriate methods to calm themselves if they feel they are, or are at risk of, acting in a controlling or violent way.
- Men should be encouraged to abstain from using alcohol or drugs.