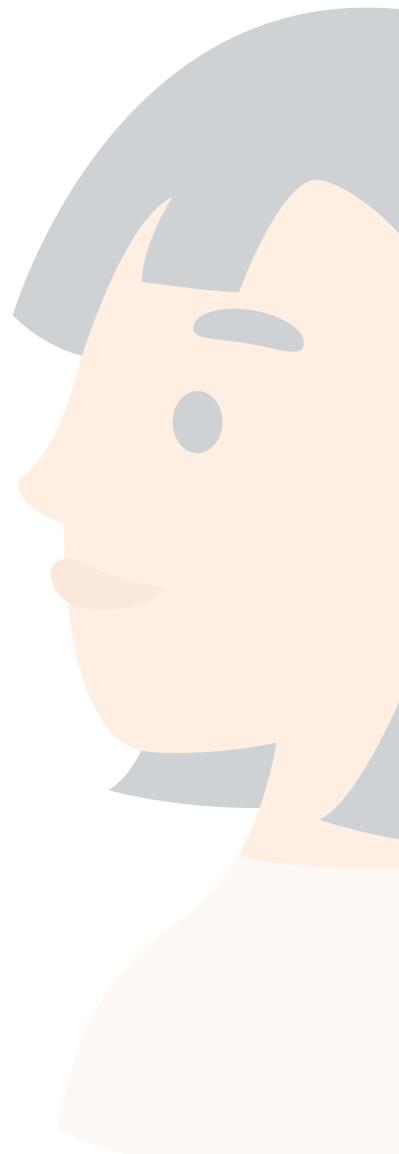
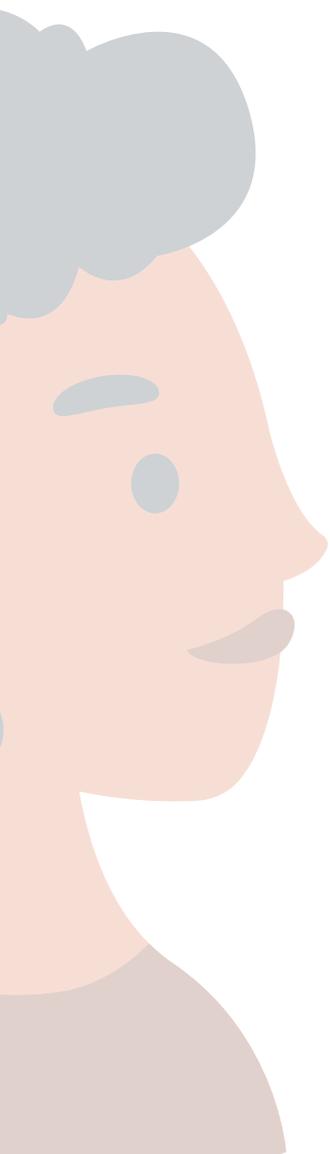


YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

**COPING WITH
VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN
DURING COVID-19**





SUMMARY



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INTRODUCTION

During the pandemic caused by COVID-19, social distancing is one of the most important ways for everyone to take care, right? Yes, right! However, even though social distancing is important to fight the virus, there has been some negative consequences.

The services of assistance to women in different countries have registered an alarming increase in the number of reports of violence against women since the beginning of the social distancing period. And that is considering only the reported cases!

Can you imagine how many cases are not even reported?

Violence against women can be perpetrated by someone who lives or frequents the same household, by people who are or consider themselves of the family and, mainly, by someone that the women has an intimate relationship with (husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend, partner...). In the examples of this guideline, it will be used the term **"partner"** to illustrate the situations.

Cases of domestic and family violence against women can go unnoticed because in our culture many people think that in a fight between husband and wife, they should not get involved and that violence in relationships is normal. This also happens because they believe (wrongly) that women must accept everything and men should be the bosses and the ones to decide important things. So, even though you are social distancing feel like it is difficult to take action, if you are suffering violence in any kind of relationship, seek help!

If you are not suffering from gender-based violence, but you know someone who does, you can help her. **Learn how on page 10.**

WHAT IS THIS GUIDELINE ABOUT?

For different reasons, it can be very difficult to perceive a violent relationship and that is why we want to share information **to help you identify** if you are experiencing any type of violence in your relationship.

It can also be difficult to know when and how to seek help. We can only think about what to do when we can identify the violence we are suffering. Therefore, we also aim to offer strategies to help you have **support, security** and to search for the services that are available for you.

FOR WHOM IT IS?

We want this guideline to reach all women that may be suffering any **kind of violence** inside their households.

WHY CAN SOCIAL DISTANCING INCREASE VIOLENCE?

The pandemic brought many changes to everyone's lives and the need to remain distant from others is one of them. Many people are not leaving their homes and, due to that, you and your partner probably didn't spend as much time together as you do now. Also, if you have children living with you, the new routine can be exhausting and stressful for everyone.

Being forced to spend so much time together, without leaving home, can make you two more stressed. As a result, **more fights can happen.**

Those feelings may cause your partner to be more aggressive, discharging his frustration on you. Even so, it is very important to remember that this **does not justify any form of violence!**

It can be more difficult to speak with people who could help you, like friends and other family members. Another thing that has changed is that some support services are not in the same operation that they were before. Also, you may be next to your partner most of the time, which means he can listen to your phone calls or can prohibit you to leave the house.

All of that makes it more difficult for you to seek help in violent situations, but we want you to know that there are people and services that can help you.

You may be social distancing but you are not alone!

You have the right of living without violence!

DO YOU KNOW THAT...

It is essential to know the types of violence in order to fight them. In each country there are laws created aiming to protect women and prevent domestic and family violence.

It is considered domestic violence any kind of action (attitude against others) or omission (a failure to do something) which can cause death, injuries, physical, sexual or psychological suffering and/or moral or property damage.

HOW TO IDENTIFY IF YOU ARE SUFFERING VIOLENCE

There is no abuse that is worse than the others, all of them can cause negative consequences. The five types of violence are: psychological, physical, sexual, moral and patrimonial.

PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE

Any attitude that aims to diminish your self esteem and make you feel sad, anxious, or even wanting to end your life.

Examples: call you stupid or ugly, tell you that you are doing everything wrong or that you are crazy, convince you that you sad or did things that did not really happened in order to confuse you, tell you that you are useless, that you have no value or that you will never find someone better than him.

Psychological violence can also include **threatening or harassing** situations, such as **stalking, persecuting, looking at your cell phone and/or messages and threatening to harm you or other people.**

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

Any action someone takes against your body that can harm or hurt you.

Exemples: push, pinch, slap, hit, kick, pull your hair or arm, among others.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Any sexual practice that goes against your will.

Examples: rape, forcing any type of sexual practice, introducing an object or organ into your intimate parts through violence or threats, touching you without permission, preventing you from taking birth control pills or using a condom; force abortion, pregnancy or prostitution, among others.

Remember! Just because you are in an intimate relationship, that does not mean someone has the right to force you to do any sexual act that you don't want to!

MORAL VIOLENCE

Any conversation or behavior against you that may affect your image.

Examples: telling lies that can harm you, exposing intimate photos or videos on social networks; speak ill of you to other people, among others.

PATRIMONIAL VIOLENCE

Behavior of controlling your material assets, documents, money, properties (house, car) without your approval or permission, in order to control you or cause suffering.

Example: destroy your documents and furniture, take the money that you earned, not allow you to work, make purchases on your behalf without your permission, among others.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, other activities are considered abusive, such as:

Prevent you from washing your hands, using soap and alcohol gel, or going out to buy the medicines and food you need;

Control and/or give incorrect information about COVID-19;

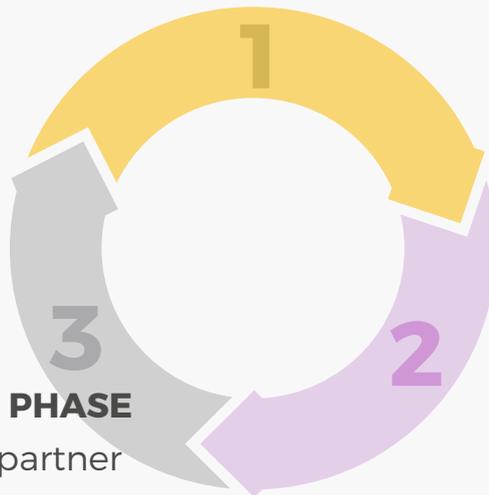
Don't allow communication with family and friends through social networks.

CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

This cycle can last for years and is not necessarily the same for all women. It is possible to break the cycle at any time. For your protection, it is important to recognize the phases. If you watch your behavior all the time to avoid assaults, you are already experiencing a form of violence.

1 TENSION-BUILDING PHASE

Your partner is easily irritated, critical, offends you and/or humiliates you. It is common for him to say that you are to blame. "Small" fights and arguments can occur in this phase.



3 CALM OR HONEYMOON PHASE

This phase is when your partner says he is sorry, apologizes, promises to change, and seeks to please you. It is common for him to try to be affectionate and considerate to win you back. This does not prevent the violence from occurring again.

2 ACUTE OR CRISIS PHASE

In this phase, a more serious aggression of any kind occurs, and does not necessarily include physical violence. The situation generally tends to get worse over time.

CONSEQUENCES

Suffering any type of violence can generate other damages and harms. So you may feel:

Anxiety, even with small things (accelerated heart, agitation, too many thoughts at the same time, chest tightness)

More depressed mood (lack of will or motivation, feeling sad or irritated most of the time, thinking that your life is not worth it)

Difficulty to sleep or getting plenty of sleep and still not feeling like you've rested enough

Changes in appetite and food intake compared to the amount you ate before

Feeling that you are not good enough or has no value

Difficulty to pay attention and to make decisions

Forget important things

Feel more distant from family and friends

Difficulty to do **common tasks**

Difficulty to **work or study**

Difficulty to **take care of yourself** or children

Body aches

Stomach problems

Headaches

Injuries in different parts of your body

Risks of having sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

Go through a **pregnancy or unwanted abortion**

Don't judge yourself if that's happening. It is difficult to go through such a complicated experience and feel the same as before. You are not going to feel that way forever!

Seek the support of people you trust, such as friends, neighbors, family, and look up for professional help!

SEEK SUPPORT! ASK FOR HELP!

You may feel ashamed or afraid to tell someone that you have experienced violence. Some people may even criticize you for that. It is common to be afraid of being judged. Unfortunately, you can come across people who judge you or you can watch TV reports that blame women for the violence.

Despite this, you must remember that this is not true and that **you are not guilty of the violence you have been through**. Talk to someone you trust. Tell that person what has happened and ask for help! Seek protective services!

Surely you are not alone!

PROTECTIVE MEASURES

In each country there are emergency protection measures that can be requested after you file a report. See if they exist in your city. Some measures you can request are:

The person who assaulted you may be forced to move away from your home

If you need to leave the house, the police can accompany you while you look for your personal belongings like clothes, documents and other important objects

If the person has a firearm, you can request that the police remove the firearm from your home

The person can be prohibited from contacting you (either in person, by messages, calls and social networks)

If the person is violent towards children or family members, they can also be prevented from contacting them

If you have children in common and eventually have to communicate about the child, in some situations this can be done. Confirm with authorities, ask a judge, advocate, or lawyer to help you

In case of rape, seek the police or other health services specialized in sexual violence as soon as possible. Preventive medications and some tests can be done within 72 hours of sexual violence

SAFETY PLAN

If you are being suffering any kind of violence, try to **tell people you trust** what is happening and **create an emergency plan** to follow, if the violence escalate. Here's how to make the plan:

Write down the phone number and address of neighbors, friends and family who can help you and the women's protection services in your city and national lines.

Hide a bag with your ID, keys, medications and other important items in a safe place in case you need to leave the house in a hurry. If you have children, also keep the children's document there. If you have police reports against the person who assaulted you, photos of injuries, videos, or messages of threats or assaults, try to keep them in a safe place or send them to someone you trust. This can help if you need proof. **It is important to be very careful with these documents, so that the person does not find them!**

Let someone of your confidence know that it is possible that you need to stay in their house for a while. Plan how you will leave your house and go there. You can agree on a "code" to let them know you need help. For example, when you send a message written: "What is the chocolate pastry recipe?", that means you are in danger. Be careful that the attacker does not discover this agreement. Don't forget to notify the person by message before leaving home.

If you can get out of the house, but are being followed on the street, try to get into some store. Markets, bakeries, and pharmacies may be open. Come in, explain what's going on, and ask them to call the police.

If you have a protective measure, always carry the document or a copy of it with you.

Inform those who work in the building or condominium that the person who attacked you cannot enter and show a photo so that they can recognize him.

Don't forget:

Try to be discreet so that the person who attacked you doesn't find out. Delete messages and calls if there is a risk that the person can read them. If you need to get out of the house, try taking the children with you. If you have already left the relationship, make sure the person does not discover current information about you, such as where you are living.

IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT!

It is very common to feel guilty about having a relationship with someone violent. Often this feeling is a consequence of psychological violence, since whoever assaults you makes it seem like you did something to deserve it.

You didn't start your relationship believing it would go wrong. You are not to blame for the violence you suffered!

No matter what you do, even if you make someone feel angry, there is no justification for someone to behave in a violent and abusive way! Violence is a form of violation of rights and it is a behavior that can not be justified. You don't cause the violence you suffer!

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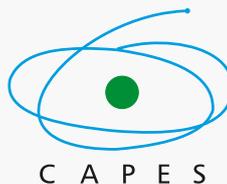
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