



Joint Venture Communications Advisory

COVID-19 Alert Level family violence and sexual violence safety messaging

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Welcome to this COVID-19 advisory update with need-to-know information in the family violence and sexual violence space.

Please share this information far and wide, through your agency or organisation's websites, social media, newsletters and other communications channels. The more of your stakeholders you can reach with this messaging, the more New Zealanders we can all help keep safe!

The Joint Venture response to COVID-19

- Family violence and sexual violence (FVSV) escalates in times of crisis including isolation.
- From the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic last year, the Government has categorised family violence and sexual violence services as essential services in the COVID-19 response.

Safety Messages for wide distribution

Top line messages:

- Crisis services are open
- You can leave your bubble if you're not safe
- Family violence and sexual violence support lines are open for people to call, email or text
- If someone is in danger call Police on **111**
- When dialling 111 follow the operator's instructions if you can't speak

Family violence and sexual violence support available during lockdowns

Stay Safe in Your Bubble

If someone makes you fearful, threatens, harasses or hurts you, seek help as soon as possible.

Support services are still open.

You can leave your bubble if you're worried about your safety.

If you or someone else is in danger, call the Police on 111. Police take family violence and sexual abuse seriously.

If you can't call for help, get out of the house, and ask a neighbour or someone else to call 111.

If you can't speak when dialling 111, follow the operator's instructions.



If you're worried about sexual abuse or sexual violence

What is sexual violence?

Sexual assault can take many forms. It can be someone touching your body or forcing you to touch theirs without your consent.

You have been sexually assaulted if someone makes you participate in any type of sexual activity without your consent, including kissing and fondling.

Child sexual abuse includes exposing a child under 16 to any sexual acts or sexual material.

Sexual assault includes unwanted sexual contact made using coercion, intimidation, threats or the use of force, or when you were intoxicated and could not say no.

What can you do if you or someone else has been sexually assaulted or is at risk during lockdown?

If you have been sexually assaulted or abused during lockdown – or even if it happened a long time ago – you can seek specialist help now or whenever you are ready.

If you or someone else is in danger, you can leave where you are and **call the Police**.

You can also call a specialist sexual violence service for counselling, support, resources and information, or just to talk.

If you're hurting someone or worried about what you might do

Overview approaches:

Messaging for those already engaged with stopping violence programmes:

If you are getting help or have previously got help for behaviour that worries you and others, reach out there is still help available.

Messaging for those not connected to services and who use violence or are at risk of doing so:

If you are worried about your behaviour and those close to you feel frightened of you, reach out and ask for help.

General messages:

Are people in your bubble scared of you?

Are you having inappropriate sexual thoughts about the children or young people in your bubble? Support is available – call [Safe to Talk](https://www.safetotalk.nz) sexual harm helpline 0800 044 334, text 4334, email support@safetotalk.nz

Do you:

- Threaten people (e.g. threaten to take the children, hurt someone or yourself)?



- Call them names and put them down?
- Damage property?
- Get jealous and control what your partner does?
- Hit, kick, punch or choke people?
- Force people to do sexual acts they don't want to do?
- Expose a child to any sexual act or sexual material?
- Are you thinking about doing any of these things?

If you can relate to any of the above, get help now. It's ok to leave your bubble and find someone to talk to.

There are steps you can take to keep you and others safe if you are worried about your behaviour or thoughts:

- If you're worried about family violence, call the Family Violence info line 0800 456 450 9am-11pm, seven days a week
- If you're worried about sexual abuse, call [Safe to Talk](#) sexual harm helpline 0800 044 334, text 4334, email support@safetotalk.nz
- For men, call [Hey Bro](#) a phone line supporting men to be free from violence 0800 HeyBro (439 276)

For children and young people at risk during lockdown

If you feel scared of people in your bubble, there is help available for you and it's only a text message away.

You have the right to be safe and you deserve to be safe – from violence or from sexual harm.

As a child or young person, adults should keep you safe from family violence and sexual harm. People who are using violence or abuse against you can get help to stop.

Do you feel pressured or forced to do anything sexual in your bubble or online? Sexual abuse online from a stranger, or in your bubble from someone you know, is completely wrong. None of it is ok! It is ok to ask for help.

You can reach out for help from:

- [Youthline](#) – 0800 376 633, free text 234, email talk@youthline.co.nz, or webchat <https://www.youthline.co.nz/web-chat-counselling.html>
- [Safe to Talk](#) sexual harm helpline 0800 044 334, text 4334, email support@safetotalk.nz
- 0800 Whats Up – 0800 942 8787 – (includes Kidsline)

It's Ok to take children to supermarkets

It's important that parents can take their children to supermarkets if they choose to.



None of us know what their situation is, and it may be that the safest option is to take the children with them when they need to leave the house, or shop for groceries.

Parents and children may be living in unsafe circumstances. Leaving a child or children at home may mean leaving them in an unsafe situation.


Also, at Alert Level 3 or 4, a visit to the supermarket could be the only break a person and their children may get from an abusive situation.

It can be easy to jump to judgement, especially if you're worried about COVID-19 implications, but a parent may decide it's the safest option for their children.

If you know a child is in immediate danger or if you believe children or young people might be unsafe at home in their bubbles, call Police on 111. If you have ongoing issues about a child's safety, please call Oranga Tamariki on Freephone 0508 326459 (available 24/7).

Support services are listed on <https://safebubble.org.nz/>

Or you can call, message, or email the services below:

- [Safe to Talk](#) sexual harm helpline 0800 044 334, text 4334, email support@safetotalk.nz
- Family violence help line 0800 456 450 9am-11pm 7 days a week
- [Women's Refuge](#) – 0800 733 843, info@refuge.org.nz, or Facebook message
- [Shine domestic abuse services](#) free call 0508 744 633
- Rape Crisis 0800 883 300
- [1737, Need to talk?](#) Free call or text 1737 for mental health support from a trained counsellor
- [Hey Bro helpline](#) – supporting men to be free from violence 0800 HeyBro (439 276)
- [Oranga Tamariki line](#) for concerns about children and young people 0508 326 459, email: contact@ot.govt.nz
- [Youthline](#) – 0800 376 633, free text 234, email talk@youthline.co.nz, webchat <https://www.youthline.co.nz/web-chat-counselling.html>
- Shakti – for migrant and refugee women 0800 742 584 – available 24 hours
- Elder Abuse Helpline 0800 326 6865 – available 24 hours
- Look for this symbol  at the bottom on websites like The Warehouse, TradeMe, Countdown and others- including the Joint Venture website, www.violencefree.govt.nz – these shielded sites let you safely contact Women's Refuge.

For further information on the whole-of-government approach to family violence and sexual violence issues in a COVID-19 environment, including a fuller list of support services, see <https://covid19.govt.nz/health-and-wellbeing/family-and-sexual-violence-prevention/>



You can also find further information on the government's work on family violence and sexual violence at the Joint Venture, Family Violence and Sexual Violence website at www.violencefree.govt.nz (**Note:** this is a general information website, and not a crisis response website.)