



To: Community Partners

From: Debbie Feinstein, Chief, Special Victims Div, State’s Attorney’s Office;
 Chair, Montgomery County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council
 Caroline Sturgis, Asst. Chief Admin. Officer, Office of the County Executive

Re: Protecting Victims of Family Violence During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Date: April 22, 2020

Thank you for supporting Montgomery County’s family violence prevention initiative. We are hoping that you can share the attached information with your networks. This package includes graphics for social media, a short summary for correspondence, resource links, handouts, a video, and stickers/cards for distribution. Please let us know if you are able to participate.

Objective: To raise public awareness around the identification and incidence of family violence; to provide information to individuals who may be experiencing family violence while social distancing and staying at home; to guide individuals on how to support a friend or family member who is experiencing family violence; and to identify available community resources.

Slogan: “Do You Feel Unsafe at Home? Are you concerned about a neighbor or loved one? Free Help Is Available.” (printed in English/Spanish and materials available in other languages as well, please email for more information).

Media Event: Via Zoom on Thursday, April 23, 2020 at 12:00 p.m. The event may be live streamed (link pending) and/or available for viewing after its conclusion. To gain access to the zoom call, RSVP to Kristina Laboy at kristina.laboy@montgomerycountymd.gov.

SUMMARY

The public health crisis surrounding COVID-19 has magnified the dangers that victims of family violence face every day. Victims are often isolated, manipulated, and controlled by their abuser. They may be intimate partners, children, seniors, or vulnerable people and unable to seek help on their own. Their isolation often cuts them off from potential support systems, which is why it is so difficult for them to come forward and seek help even in normal times.

There are natural stressors that come with times of fear and uncertainty, and the COVID-19 public health crisis in particular is triggering financial and occupational concerns in many homes. This, in combination with self-quarantine and social distancing, puts family violence victims in an incredibly volatile and dangerous situation, with limited access to any support system.

Please know that county resources remain free, open, available and ready to assist in any language. County service providers do not inquire about immigration status. County service providers are

taking every precaution to maintain safe, healthy, and socially distanced environments for those that seek services. The courts are open for those that need to seek protective and peace orders. If you have a neighbor, friend, or family member that you are concerned about, encourage them to reach out for help, or you can make the call or send an email and receive guidance on how to support them.

MATERIALS FOR DISTRIBUTION

Stickers/cards for distribution: The stickers can be used on plexiglass at open stores (for example, Montgomery County Liquor and Wine Stores are affixing the sticker to the plexiglass at their cash registers). The cards can be distributed electronically or in person (for example, Founding Farmers in Potomac and Giuseppe’s Pizza in Rockville are including the cards in their take-out order boxes).

Do you feel unsafe at home?
 Are you concerned about a neighbor or loved one?
 Free help is available.

¿Te sientes inseguro en tu casa?
 ¿Estás preocupado por su vecino o ser querido?
 Ayuda gratuita disponible.

The Montgomery County Family Justice Center
 240-773-0444
 safe@montgomerycountymd.gov
 The Montgomery County Crisis Center
 240-777-4000 (24 hours/horas)


 SCAN ME

Warning signs of family violence

- ◆ Insults, demeans, or shames you with put-downs
- ◆ Controls every penny spent in the household
- ◆ Controls who you see, where you go, or what you do
- ◆ Intimidates you with guns, knives, or other weapons
- ◆ Threatens or causes physical harm

Signos de advertencia de violencia familiar

- ◆ Le humilla haciéndole sentir vergüenza o deshonra
- ◆ Controla como se gasta cada centavo en la familia
- ◆ Trata de controlar con qué personas usted se reúne, a dónde va o lo que hace
- ◆ Le intimida con armas de fuego, cuchillos u otro tipo de armas
- ◆ Amenaza o causa daño físico

Posters or yard signs: Posters or yard signs can be displayed in or in front of your business (for example, several grocery stores have committed to placing signs in or in front of their stores).

Graphics and language for social media: Please consider utilizing the attached graphics for your social media posts (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram attached). You can post the graphic, alert people to the issue, and include language that says for more information go to <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/fjc/> (and incorporate the link in your post). The FJC website includes information about all of the resources listed below. You can also repost social media posts from the county executive, MCPD, and the Sheriff’s Office.

Do you feel unsafe at home?
 Are you concerned about a neighbor or loved one?
 Free help is available.

¿Te sientes inseguro en tu casa?
 ¿Estás preocupado por su vecino o ser querido?
 Ayuda gratuita disponible.

The Montgomery County Family Justice Center: 240-773-0444 • safe@montgomerycountymd.gov
 The Montgomery County Crisis Center: 240-777-4000 (24 hours/horas)


www.montgomerycountymd.gov/fjc/

Websites, emails, and other means of communicating with your networks: Please feel free to utilize any or all of the information provided in this document. If you need additional information or clarifying language, please let us know.

Handouts: Several handouts and videos are attached for your use and distribution.

- Helping Domestic Violence Victims During the COVID-19 Health Crisis (English and Spanish)
- Video link: FJC Video informational video at <https://youtu.be/P44XK1tepLA>
- Resources for Gun Safety At Home
- Extreme Risk Protective Order Information Sheet
- Secure Gun Storage Fact Sheet (English and Spanish)
- Child Physical Abuse Fact Sheet
- Child Sexual Abuse Fact Sheet

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- The Family Justice Center (FJC) and its network of advocates and service providers is available FREE OF CHARGE Monday-Friday, 8:30am - 5:00pm. Call them at 240-773-0444, walk-in to 600 Jefferson Plaza, Suite 500, Rockville, MD 20852, or email safe@montgomerycountymd.gov for assistance (email checked during business hours). Free transportation to/from the Center may be available if needed.
- The advocates and therapists at the Abused Persons Program are available FREE OF CHARGE during regular business hours at 240-777-4195.
- For 24-hour assistance:
 - Call the Montgomery County Crisis Center at 240-777-4000 or walk-in 24/7 to 1301 Piccard Drive, Rockville, MD 20850.
 - Go to the District Court Commissioners Office to file for a Protective Order at 191 E. Jefferson Street, Rockville, MD 20850.
- Montgomery County Child Welfare Services is staffed 24 hours a day at 240-777-4417 or childprotection@montgomerycountymd.gov (email is checked during business hours).
- Childhelp USA has a 24-hour hotline to report suspected child abuse. People can either call or text (800) 4-A-CHILD ([800] 422-4453 for help. Childhelp also has a chat feature allows abuse to be reported online: <http://www.childhelp.org/childhelp-hotline>
- Adult Protective Services is staffed 24 hours a day at 240-777-3000.
- The Tree House Child Advocacy Center provides services for child abuse victims at 240-777-4699 and www.treehousemd.org.
- The Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program (VASAP) is available at 240-777-1355 and vasap@montgomerycountymd.gov.
- For specialized medical care, including domestic violence, sexual assault exams and child abuse, please contact Adventist Healthcare Shady Grove Medical Center at 240-826-6225.
- As always, those in immediate danger who need emergency assistance should dial 911.

To request posters, stickers, yard signs or cards, or for any questions, please contact Smita Varia, Domestic Violence Coordinating Council Program Manager at Smita.Varia@montgomerycountymd.gov.