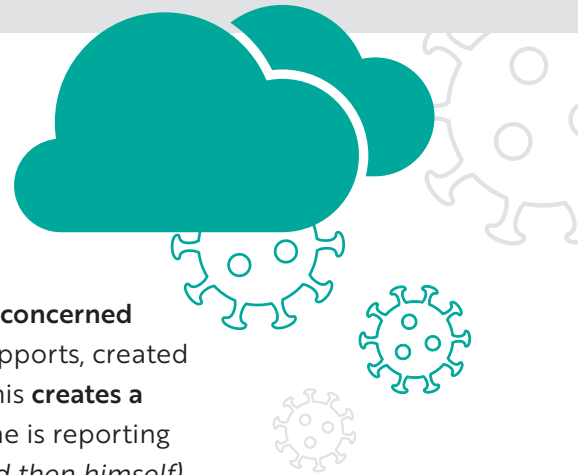


COVID Impact



Now more than ever we need your financial support.

The New England Journal of Medicine, along with our local experts, are **very concerned** that the COVID19 pandemic has increased isolation of victims from other supports, created financial stress, and with greater amounts of time with an abusive partner. This **creates a "perfect storm" for domestic violence incidents to increase**. Hopkins Medicine is reporting that the rate of murder-suicide (*where the male partner kills the female and then himself*) has increased since the same time last year.

CHALLENGES AGENCIES HAVE FACED

- Not having the funding to handle victims' needs in a flexible manner including shelter, food and transportation needs
- Keeping agencies fully staffed and managing decision fatigue
- Having the supplies needed to disinfect, and keep employees and victims safe
- Additional communication needs that required technology

AGENCIES WORKED TO BETTER SERVE VICTIMS

- Implemented practices following the CDC recommendations
- Video-conference technology implemented along with new ventures such as chat platforms
- Program advocates went to remote areas to meet with victims
- Provided additional food and resources to victims in need

BARRIERS VICTIMS ARE EXPERIENCING

- Fear of catching COVID
- Abusive partner is nearby 24/7
- Some jurisdictions are not holding offenders accountable and victims are not trusting help available
- Loss of resources and need to be more dependent on abusive partner

Mary's Story

Mary's* husband was physically, emotionally, and very verbally abusive towards her, to which her toddler often witnessed. Mary fled from her husband and once she relocated, reached out to a local advocate at a domestic violence agency. After listening to Mary's experiences, the advocate could see that she struggled with hypervigilance, low self-esteem, trauma, and she blamed herself for her husband's abusive behavior. The advocate **supported Mary in finding steady full-time employment and an apartment, and acquiring daycare**

assistance and a vehicle to meet her family's needs. Because of her traumatic experiences, Mary opted to begin telehealth counseling (a service that was offered during the pandemic). Her stress and fears have greatly decreased so she is able to go out more and engage in other activities with friends/co-workers, as well as activities with her daughter (as safely as possible with Covid). She continues to work in counseling via telehealth and soon hopes to meet face-to-face.

**To protect confidentiality, name has changed*