

# Keeping Up

WITH KINNEY MASON



## Intimate Partner Violence During COVID-19

As COVID-19 cases surged in the U.S. in March 2020, stay-at-home orders were put in place. Schools closed, and many workers were furloughed, laid off, or told to work from home. With personal movement limited and people confined to their homes, advocates expressed concern about a potential increase in intimate partner violence.

Those of us at Kinney Mason anticipated this uptick in intimate partner violence, as well. In fact, we ran an ad in the *Omaha World-Herald* last March that read in part, “As our local community takes collective action to prevent the spread of COVID-19, social distancing will impact all of us in countless ways. In addition to separation from coworkers and friends, people may experience support networks that are strained and unavailable.” The reality was, stay-at-home orders, intended to protect the public and prevent widespread infection, left many intimate partner violence victims trapped with their abusers.

Though restrictions on movement have been lifted, the pandemic and its effects rage on.

### The Shadow Pandemic

Violence against women during COVID-19 has been called the “shadow pandemic” lurking in the background as healthcare systems have been drained and shelters have reached capacity.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 1 in 4 women in the United States experience intimate partner violence, a form of abuse aimed at gaining power or control over another. It can include physical, sexual, emotional, or financial abuse, or a combination of all the above.

As the pandemic continues and many support networks remain strained, it’s critical that everyone learn more about intimate partner violence, its red flags, and how to support victims.

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