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COVID-19 Emergency Operations Center PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LA COUNTY RESOURCES AND SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR PEOPLE WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILD ABUSE CONCERNS DURING COVID-19 CRISIS

Los Angeles, CA (Monday, April 20, 2020)—Los Angeles County recognizes that staying home is not always a safe option for victims experiencing domestic violence during the COVID-19 crisis. According to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, from 2019 to 2020, domestic violence calls for services have risen in LA County from 863 to 933, an 8.11 percent increase. For people experiencing domestic violence amid the [Safer at Home Order](#), there are services and resources available 24/7 for those who need it. You are not alone.

L.A. County's Domestic Violence Services remain available. Shelters are open and accepting people. If you are a victim of domestic violence and need help, resources include:

- Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-978-3600, or
- You can also dial 2-1-1 any time to get connected with services and support in your area or visit 211la.org/domestic-violence.
- Domestic violence [legal services](#).
- Dial 9-1-1. Law enforcement is still responding to domestic violence calls, and

Emergency Protective Orders are still being issued.

The [Violence Against Women Act](#) allows certain non-citizens who are in abusive situations to petition without the assistance of the abusive spouse or parent, for lawful permanent residency. These persons may include:

- The spouse of a US citizen or legal permanent resident when the abuser is the US citizen, legal resident spouse or a member of his/her family living in the home.
- The child of a US citizen or legal permanent resident when the abuser is the parent/parent's spouse or a family member of the parent or parent's spouse living in the home.
- The child of the battered spouse.
- The parent of the battered child.

More information is available at the Department of Public Social Services [website](#).

Many victims of domestic violence do not leave abusive situations because domestic violence shelters do not accept pets, and they and their pets are forced to endure abuse. For pet owners, LA County Animal Care and Control (DACC) can assist people who are experiencing safe housing issues. To find safe animal centers near you, DACC has provided a [map](#) of their locations.

- The COLA-HI program provides temporary sheltering for pets belonging to people experiencing homelessness.
- The Ani-Safe program provides temporary housing to pets belonging to victims of domestic violence.
- DACC will provide confidential and safe housing for these animals so victims can get the services they need and move into safe living arrangements.
- The pets are later reunited with their owners when they have found permanent safe housing.
- DACC has greatly expanded its fostering program so people can quickly and safely choose a pet to take into their home for a period of time, providing that animal with a calm and nurturing home environment.
- [Contact DACC](#) for more information.

The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic has created the conditions that allow for child abuse to go undetected. Educators are the primary source of reports (20 percent) to child protective services nationwide. However, teachers, guidance counselors, and day care providers who usually serve as lifelines for vulnerable children are no longer in a daily position to witness and report suspected abuse. There are ways everyone can do their part to protect children:

- People who are concerned about a particular family can help by doing small things to ease the stress that comes with this time. Whether in the form of food, toilet paper, coloring books or just an empathetic ear, these acts of support while keeping social distancing can make a difference and ease parents' stress.
- Make use of technology for virtual check-ins. Look for signs of distress and be a

supportive presence.

- Form parent groups to conduct remote learning for children under 5, because those younger children are at highest risk for abuse.
- How to report child abuse in LA County: The LA County Office of Child Protection is a policy-making body and does not handle any direct cases. All inquiries or reporting of specific cases should be made to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). To report child abuse in LA County, CA, please contact the Child Protection Hotline at 1-800-540-4000 or visit the [DCFS website](#).
- If you have an immediate emergency, call 911 or your local police department; otherwise, call DFCS Child Protective Services to [report child abuse](#) and/or neglect.
- For parents and caregivers: Find the Community-Based Organization offering preventive and support services in your [Service Planning Area](#) to call them directly, or [call your Regional Office](#) to get connected. You can also call (213) 336-2854 to speak to DCFS Preventive and Support Services staff.

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