



# Keeping Homes Safe for Our Children

Help Protect Vulnerable Children  
During This COVID-19 Crisis



Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, prolonged periods of staying at home may give rise to unsafe situations for vulnerable children. Increased stress **during** and even **after** the circuit breaker may contribute to the rise of violence and abuse at home.

### **Everyone can play a part to help**

- Children need adults to take what they say seriously. They find it difficult to disclose when they have been harmed and often do not know how to get out of unsafe situations.
- Abuse/violence is not a private matter. **Each of us has a part to play to keep children safe.**
- You do not need to confirm that harm has been done before stepping in.

More information about family violence can be found here: [www.msf.gov.sg/policies/Strong-and-Stable-Families/Supporting-Families/Family-Violence/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.msf.gov.sg/policies/Strong-and-Stable-Families/Supporting-Families/Family-Violence/Pages/default.aspx)



# Early Warning Signs

Child's appearance, feelings and behaviours

## Observe for Early Warning Signs

- Children may display one or more of these warning signs when they have been harmed. Although the list is non-exhaustive, these warning signs raise concerns about possible harm.
- Pay attention to children's appearance, behaviour, emotions and verbal cues. Keep in mind that each child is unique and will be affected differently.
- Look out for children with a history of child abuse or family violence, and those you had previous concerns for.
- Check in regularly with the children through calls, texts, and if possible, video call regularly to observe the child.



Child has an injury which does not look accidental.



Child behaves in sexually inappropriate ways or speaks, draws and writes in a sexually explicit manner.



Child shows distress/fear that he/she or another household member will be significantly hurt.



Child drops hints that he/she has been harmed and/or feels unsafe at home.



Child displays behavioural changes such as becoming withdrawn and aggressive, having low moods or avoiding certain people.



Child hears or witnesses adults yell or throw things at home, or sees one household member threatening or controlling another in an extreme way.



**NOTICE**

NO LIGHTING IS PROVIDED IN THIS NATURE AREA

For your own safety, please do not enter this area during night time.

1800-477308

## How Can We Help?

All of us can play a part to help a child in distress. Here's what we can do in our various roles.

## If you're an educator...

Overseas studies showed that 20% of child protection calls come from educators. You can be the trusted adult who can help a child in his or her time of need.

### **A** Be Available

Be available to your students and let them know it is okay to share their troubles with you. Let them know how they can contact you in times of need.

### **B** Believe the Child

Believe what the child says and provide assurance.

### **C** Check in

Be curious and ensure that care is given to the child. Ask in private: "Is there anything that is making you worried or scared? What do you hope the adults will do differently?"

### **D** Direct Them to Those Who Can Help

A child might need your assistance to seek help. Discuss with your school counsellor or with professionals from the resources listed on the last page.



## If you're a friend, relative or neighbour...

You are the eyes, ears, and voice of the community. You could be the trusted adult who can lend a helping hand.



### Faith

Know that when you seek help or interrupt, you are acting in good faith.

### Ask

Find a safe opportunity to ask the family members privately if there is anything that they are worried about.

### Interrupt

During an incident, interrupt. A simple "Hello, is everything okay?" could help diffuse an intense situation.

### Tell

Tell someone on their behalf or provide a safe place for the child or neighbour to turn to should they need help.

### Help

If you notice repeated incidents, or an escalation of harm, discuss with professionals and the family on the resources available.

## If you're a parent or a caregiver...

You can take these steps to keep you and your family SAFE.

### **S** Safety Plan

Everybody needs a plan to keep themselves safe.

Ensure that you have at least three contacts whom you can call for help, and that you have access to your phone at all times.

### **A** Avoid Unsafe Places and Secrets

When there is increased tension at home, avoid places where dangerous items can be found, such as the kitchen.

It is okay to talk to someone if you feel unsafe or notice the warning signs in your family. Talk to someone privately and share what is making you feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

### **F** Family and Friends Care

Make sure you share and discuss with your three contacts on what you can do and what they can do when you need help.

### **E** External Help

Seek professional help from resources listed on the last page. Keep calling and telling until you get the help you need.



# Helplines

## Child Protection Issues

### Tinkle Friend (for primary school students)

Helpline: 1800 2744 788  
(Mon to Fri: 2.30pm to 5.00pm)

Online Chat: [www.tinklefriend.sg](http://www.tinklefriend.sg)  
(Mon to Thu: 2.30pm to 7.00pm;  
Fri: 2.30pm to 5.00pm)

### Big Love

Tel: 6445 0400  
(Mon to Fri: 9am to 6pm)  
Facebook: @BigLoveCPSC

### HEART @ Fei Yue

Tel: 6819 9170  
(Mon to Fri: 9.30am to 5.30pm)  
Facebook: @FeiYueCommunityServices

### PAVE Integrated Services for Individual and Family Protection Specialist Centre

Tel: 6555 0390  
(Mon to Fri: 9am to 1pm, 2pm to 6pm)  
Facebook: @PAVEitsaboutrespect

### Ministry of Social and Family Development Child Protective Service

Tel: 1800 777 0000  
(Mon to Fri: 8.30am to 6.00pm;  
Sat: 8.30am to 1.00pm)  
Facebook: @MSFSingapore

## Family Violence Issues

### Care Corner Project StART (Family Violence Specialist Centre)

Tel: 6476 1482  
(Mon to Fri: 10am to 1pm, 2pm to 5pm)  
Facebook: @carecornersg

### PAVE Integrated Services for Individual and Family Protection Specialist Centre

Tel: 6555 0390  
(Mon to Fri: 9am to 1pm, 2pm to 6pm)  
Facebook: @PAVEitsaboutrespect

### TRANS SAFE Centre

Tel: 6449 9088  
(Mon to Fri: 9am to 5pm)

## Other Resources

### AWARE Women's Helpline

Tel: 1800 777 5555  
(Mon to Fri: 10am to 6pm)  
Facebook: @awaresg

### National Care Hotline

Tel: 1800 202 6868 (24 hours)

### Singapore Association for Mental Health

Tel: 1800 283 7019  
(Mon to Fri: 9am to 1pm, 2pm to 6pm)  
Facebook: @singaporeassociationformentalhealth

## IF THERE IS IMMEDIATE DANGER, CALL THE POLICE

1. Call **999**. If it is not safe to call, text **71999**. Inform them of the location and what is happening.
2. When the police arrives, speak with the officer **privately**, away from the person who caused harm.
3. Explain what happened **and** the history of harm (if any).
4. If you are the victim, the police can assist you and your children to go to a safe place. This could be a relative's or friend's home or a crisis shelter.