



Number of Domestic Violence Calls Surging during “Shelter in Place”

Monarch Services Encourages Community Members to Seek Help

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Delphine Burns, *Communications Lead*
Email: delphineb@monarchscc.org
Phone: (831) 707.2206
Website: www.monarchscc.org

Overview:

As quarantines are implemented globally and locally to mitigate the impact of COVID-19, those in abusive relationships are increasingly vulnerable. This increased risk of violence is primarily the result of the “shelter in place” [order](#), mandating that Santa Cruz County residents self-isolate and quarantine in their homes. While this order is necessary to protect our community from further spread of the virus, home is not the safest place for those being abused domestically.

In fact, increased time spent isolated with partners who abuse increases opportunities for further control and abuse of their partners. Mandatory social isolation has also fractured support networks of family or friends that domestic violence survivors may rely on, making it more difficult for them to seek help or escape violence. This dynamic not only increases instances of violence, but also makes it difficult for survivors to seek help or escape violent households.

Monarch Services encourages individuals experiencing violence to call our 24-hour, confidential, bilingual crisis line for support. While individuals are physically isolated and may feel emotionally isolated as well, we want to remind them they are not alone. Additionally, we encourage third-party individuals to call if they witness or hear domestic abuse. For example, if you believe there is violence happening in your neighborhood, we encourage you to report it.

“Essentially, if you see something, say something,” Associate Director Kalyne Foster-Renda said. “We want survivors and community members to feel comfortable coming forward about violence so that we can help support survivors looking to escape it.”

According to [The New York Times](#), institutions internationally are struggling to meet the increased demand for help and shelter from domestic abuse, observing that globally the increase in domestic violence has followed a similar grim path. First, reported cases of COVID-19 increase, causing governments to impose mandatory lockdowns. Then, around 10 days later, calls to crisis lines and support agencies spike sharply.

Santa Cruz County is no exception. Monarch Services has seen a swift uptick in the number of clients we are serving. In fact, we have served an average of 15 new clients weekly since the “shelter in place” was mandated. The number of crisis line calls we receive has also significantly increased; recently we received around 30 calls on just one day. Our 24-hour confidential, bilingual crisis line (1.888.900.4232) remains fully staffed and we encourage anyone who needs help escaping violence, safety planning or emotional support to call us any hour of the day.

About Monarch Services:

Monarch Services has a 43-year history in Santa Cruz County of providing advocacy and resources to community members affected by violence. Services include court accompaniments, restraining order assistance, counseling, emergency shelter, 24-hour crisis line, outreach, education and support groups. Monarch Services is the only rape crisis and human trafficking center in Santa Cruz County and includes an emergency response team. All services are available in Spanish and English and are free or low cost.