



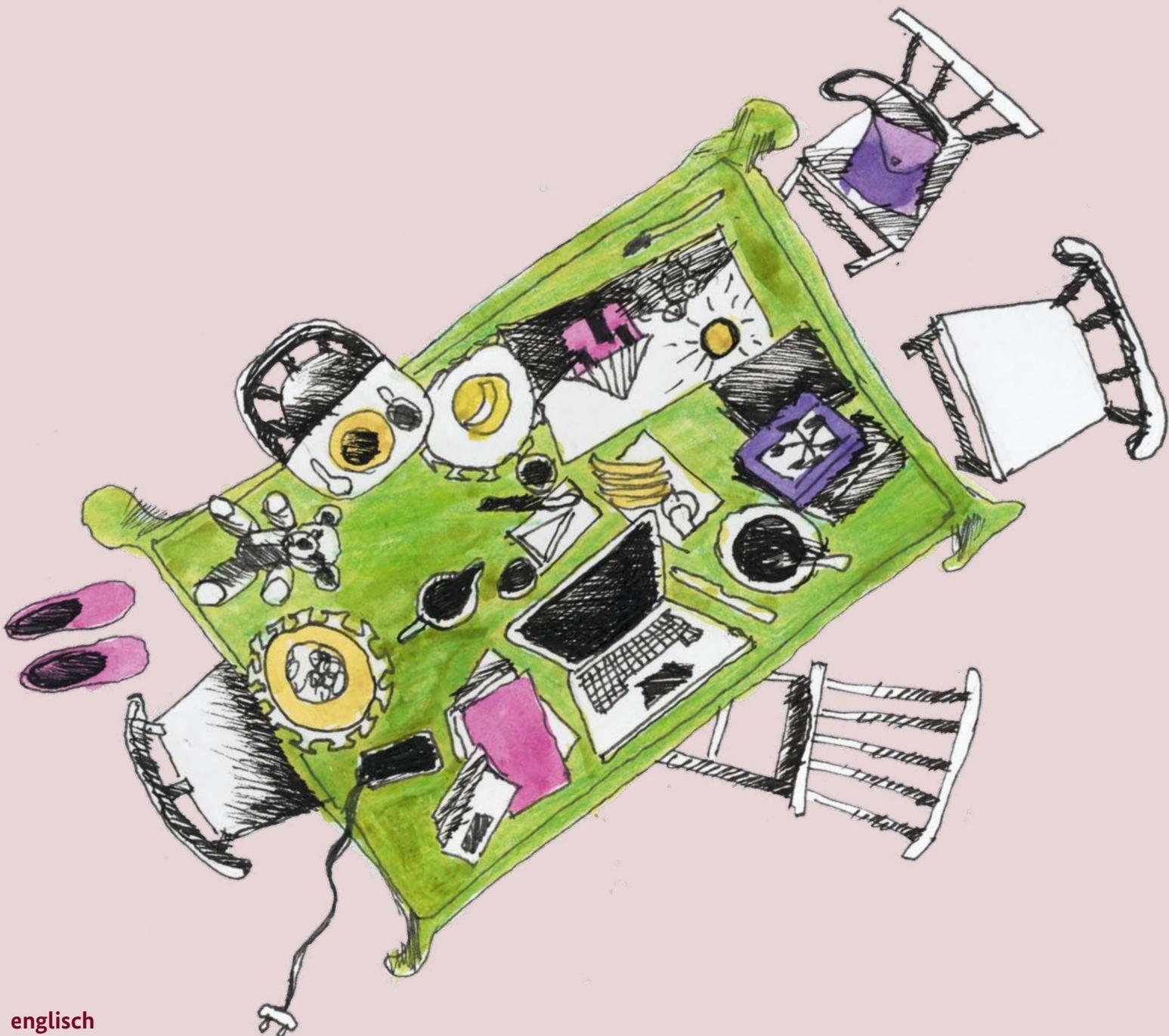
Federal Government
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*Ethno-
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An exceptional situation for the whole family

Suggestions for preventing family violence triggered by
social restrictions during the coronavirus response



Social restrictions to fight coronavirus

The coronavirus has spread rapidly around the world. In Germany, governments have taken a variety of measures to prevent or slow down its spread. These include extensive restrictions to public life, and limiting social contact.

As a result, most people are experiencing a period of physical and personal isolation. It is not yet apparent when this period will finally be over.

In some cases, social restrictions have led to families spending more time together and using this opportunity to their advantage. In other families, however, serious conflicts arise – influenced, for example, by unemployment, financial difficulties, or already existing domestic problems.

What can be the effects of social restrictions on families and couples in everyday life?

It can be a great challenge to spend the majority of the day at close quarters with your family or partner – at home, in a shared accommodation facility, or at a reception centre. Many people get stressed in this situation.

Family conflicts and arguments between parents and children, but also between partners may become more frequent or more intense.

Since the current social restrictions have been in place, domestic violence against women and children has increased markedly. **Don't wait until the restrictions are relaxed before seeking help!** You can find an overview of support services at the end of this brochure.



Here is what you can do about it:

- Address problems early and look for solutions together.
- Go out to get some fresh air by yourself, e.g. take a walk or a bike ride.
- Have a 'time out' rule, where each family member can be alone and undisturbed for a while.
- Discuss each person's wishes and needs regularly as a family. Make sure you also take your children seriously in these discussions.

Families under stress

Caring for children and keeping them busy can become stressful, especially if they only go to kindergarten or school infrequently, or not at all.

There are things you can do to reduce your family's stress levels! To make sure that families are able to handle this period of coronavirus restrictions in the best way possible, the Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance (Bundesamt für Bevölkerungsschutz und Katastrophenhilfe) has published some helpful hints.

You can support your children

- by setting up a daily schedule, with fixed times for learning, playing, eating, and sleeping. It can help to write down a plan for the whole week and put it up for everyone to see.
- by explaining the ban on social contact in age-appropriate language, e.g. why they can't visit their grandparents.
- by talking to your children about their fears and feelings. Listen patiently, even if your children repeat themselves.
- by making sure that you limit the amount of media reporting that your children are exposed to, or by using age-appropriate information sources.
- by ensuring that your children can let off steam outside in the fresh air.

Keeping your patience and focusing on the positive

The best way to get through this time is for all of us to be patient with ourselves and with others, and to realise that everyone is finding this state of emergency difficult to handle.

At the same time, it is important not to lose sight of the positives, and to make good use of the increased amount of time you are now spending with your children.

The following tips may be helpful to you:

- Make a commitment to plan at least one pleasurable activity for each day. This may be a video call with friends or relatives, reading out a good story, cooking a favourite meal, playing a joint game, or whatever nurtures your and your family's wellbeing.
- Try to consciously notice what your children are doing well, and praise them for it.
- In the evenings, take note of at least three things that went well that day. What contribution did you make to them?

More tips for parents are available at

www.bbk.bund.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/BBK/DE/Publikationen/Broschueren_Flyer/COVID_19_Tipps_fuer_Eltern.html



Partnerships under stress

For many people, crisis situations such as the current coronavirus pandemic trigger existential fears about health, the family, and job security.

Negative emotions such as anger and annoyance may be stronger and arise more frequently than usual. In such situations, the risk of domestic violence also increases. Often, it is men who are the source of the violence. Women, however, may also perpetrate family violence against their children or their partner.

How can I better control my aggressive impulses?

Stress must never be released in the form of violence towards others. The umbrella organisation Federal Forum Men (Bundesforum Männer) has, in collaboration with its partner organisations, published tips for dealing with your own aggressive impulses.

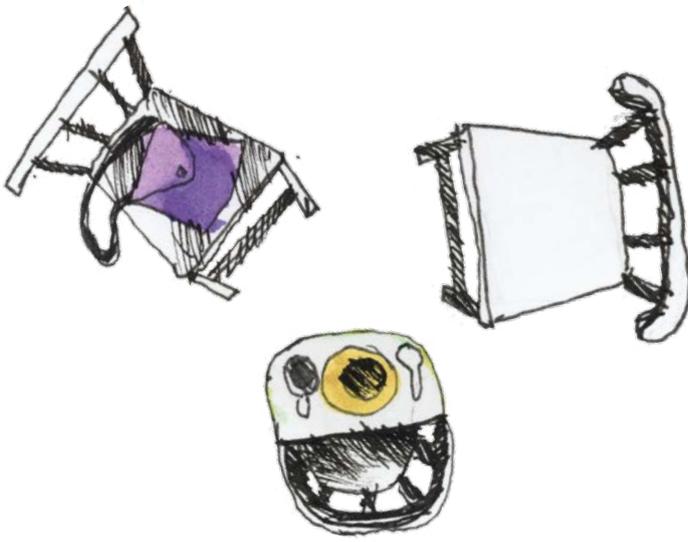
It is recommended to

- talk with another person on the phone about how you are doing.
- pay attention to internal alarm signals such as yelling, trembling, or swearing, which indicate that you may be about to lose control.
- step away from stressful conflicts when you notice such alarm signals. It is fine to tell your loved ones that you need a moment to yourself.
- think about how best to calm yourself down in such situations. They can be simple things such as physical exercise, a glass of water, or taking some deep breaths.

Find out more at

www.bundesforum-maenner.de/corona-krise-survival-kit-fuer-maenner-unter-druck
Information for men in 20 languages

By the way: although most people affected by family violence are women and children, men can also become victims of violence!



Don't hesitate to seek and accept help. Victims of violence are never to blame for the violence. Those affected have no reason to be ashamed.

Multilingual support services

Are you affected yourself? Do you have a suspicion that domestic violence or violence against children may be occurring somewhere in your social environment? Please ask for help. Get advice on how best to protect yourself and others.

Who can help me?

Hilfetelefon Gewalt gegen Frauen (Violence Against Women Helpline) 0800 116016

Free and anonymous, 24 hours every day, counselling in 17 languages other than German
www.hilfetelefon.de/das-hilfetelefon/beratung/beratung-in-17-sprachen.html

English: www.hilfetelefon.de/en.html

Live chat available daily from 12 noon to 8 pm

www.hilfetelefon.de

Online counselling via email or by appointment

www.hilfetelefon.de

Hilfetelefon Schwangere in Not (‘Pregnant and in Need’ Helpline) 0800 4040020

Free and anonymous, 24 hours every day, counselling in 17 languages other than German
www.schwanger-und-viele-fragen.de/en.html

Hilfetelefon sexueller Missbrauch (Sexual Abuse Helpline) 0800 2255530

Free and anonymous, Mon, Wed, Fri 9 am – 2 pm and Tue, Thu 3 pm – 8 pm
www.hilfetelefon-missbrauch.de

Jugendtelefon (Youth Helpline) online services

www.save-me-online.de

Telefon Seelsorge (Telephone Pastoral Care) 0800 1110111 or 0800 1110222

Free and anonymous, available 24 hours every day, online counselling by email or live chat available at online.telefonseelsorge.de

Elterntelefon ‘Nummer gegen Kummer’ (Parent Helpline) 0800 1110550

Free and anonymous, Mon – Fri 9 am – 11 am and Tue, Thu 5 pm – 7 pm
www.nummergegenkummer.de/elterntelefon.html

Kinder- und Jugendtelefon (Children and Youth Helpline) 116111

Free and anonymous, Mon – Sat 2 pm – 8 pm and Mon, Wed, Thu 10 am – 12 noon, online counselling by email or live chat also available at www.nummergegenkummer.de/kinder-und-jugendtelefon.html

Current coronavirus information

in a range of languages is available at
www.integrationsbeauftragte.de/corona-virus
www.zusammengegen corona.de/en
www.covid-information.org
www.mimi-gegen-gewalt.de

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References

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