

# COVID-19 SPECIAL REPORT




On March 16, 2020, the National Domestic Violence Hotline (The Hotline) began collecting data to track how COVID-19 impacts victims and survivors of domestic violence. We know any external factors that add stress, isolation, and financial strain can create circumstances where a survivor's safety is further compromised—this pandemic has elements of all three. Even more concerning, shelter-in-place orders meant that many would be in closer and more frequent proximity to their abusers. This report is reflective of data collected March 16 to May 16, 2020.

[thehotline.org](http://thehotline.org) ■ 1.800.799.7233

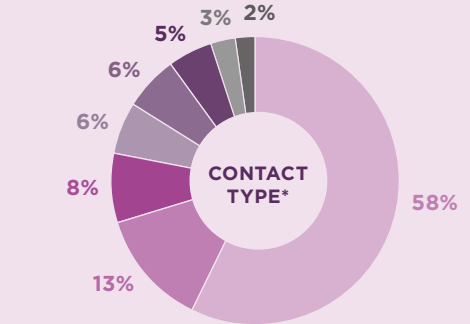
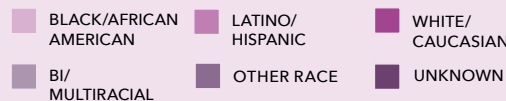
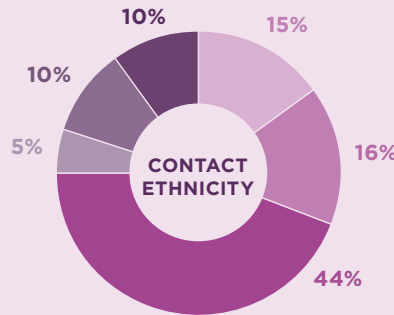
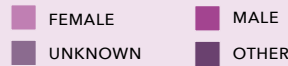
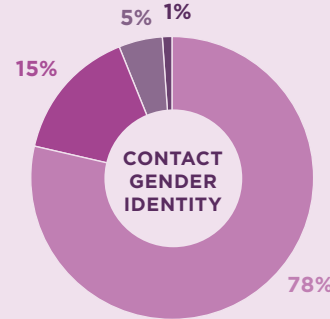
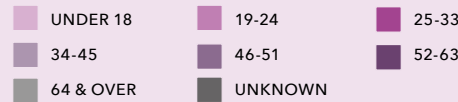
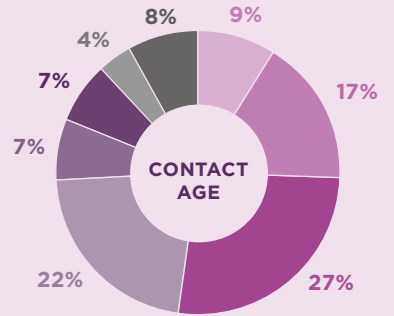
**+9%** INCREASE IN TOTAL CONTACTS RECEIVED

**6,210** TOTAL CONTACTS ANSWERED CITING COVID-19

### TOTAL CONTACTS ANSWERED

	Phone	35,937
	Chat	24,145
	Text	2,331

**Total 62,413**



### CONTACT TYPE DEFINITIONS

- **Victim/survivor intimate partner violence (IPV):** A contact who has experienced abuse by an intimate partner and is looking for information, resources, emotional or other support regarding the abusive relationship.
- **Healthy relationship inquiry:** A contact discussing intimate partner relationships who is not experiencing a pattern of abusive behaviors.
- **Victim/survivor non-IPV:** A contact who has experienced abuse from anyone other than an intimate partner (i.e. parent, sibling, caretaker), and is looking for information, resources, or support regarding the abuse.
- **Other:** A contact who is not currently experiencing violence and has needs outside the scope of healthy relationships or intimate partner violence services.
- **Abusive partner:** A contact who engages in a pattern of behavior to establish power and control over an intimate partner.

*\*Excludes hang-ups, prank calls and wrong numbers. Contacts may report one or more types of abuse.*

## WHAT CONTACTS ARE EXPERIENCING

# 90%

EMOTIONAL/  
VERBAL ABUSE

*Behavior that isn't physical, which may include verbal aggression, intimidation, manipulation, and humiliation, which most often unfolds as a pattern of behavior over time.*

# 61%

PHYSICAL  
ABUSE

*Non-accidental use of force that results in bodily injury, pain, or impairment. This may include being slapped, burned, cut, bruised, or improperly physically restrained.*

# 24%

ECONOMIC/  
FINANCIAL ABUSE

*When one intimate partner has control over the other partner's access to economic resources, which diminishes the victim's capacity to support themselves.*

# 16%

DIGITAL  
ABUSE

*The use of technologies such as texting and social networking to bully, harass, stalk, or intimidate a partner.*

# 11%

SEXUAL  
ABUSE

*Non-consensual sexual interaction through coercion, guilt, or force. This may include pressure to engage in sexual activity, refusal to use contraception, or demanding of sexual images or video.*

## COVID-19 SURVIVOR STORIES FROM THE LINES

"A caller said they could not file paperwork to remove the abuser from their home, because courts are closed due to COVID-19."

"A caller was experiencing an escalation of abuse. They had tested positive for COVID-19, and the abuser was using isolation to keep them from contacting family. The abuser threatened the survivor with deportation (survivor is currently in the process of becoming a US citizen)."



"A chatter stated that they have known for a long time that there were red flags in the relationship, but things are escalating with the pandemic, and they can't even go to therapy."

"A chatter mentioned that the abuser was using the virus as a scare tactic to keep the survivor away from their kids."

### OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The Hotline's entire team, more than 165 people, are now working remotely so that we can continue to provide critical, life-saving services 24/7. Our top priority remains keeping staff safe while continuing to serve survivors.

One of the most important services we offer is personalized safety planning – this is especially critical, as survivors navigated shelter-in-place and reduced local domestic violence support services because of social distancing.

We knew that survivors would feel less safe reaching out for support because of being in such close proximity to the abusive partner. March 2020 contact volume decreased by 6% (as compared to March 2019). As shelter-in-place began to lift, contact volume increased by 15% in April (as compared to April 2019). The Hotline anticipates sustained increases in contact volume during the remainder of 2020 and beyond due to the long-term effects of COVID-19.

### KEY PARTNERS IN COVID-19 EFFORTS

The Hotline was one of the first national organizations to deploy a COVID-19 rapid response fundraising campaign. More than \$1.4 million has been raised to date from thousands of individuals, corporations, and foundations. The Hotline also received \$2 million through the **CARES Act**.

Our thanks to the **Allstate Foundation** for funding the initial technology we needed to move our Advocate team to remote work. We would also like to thank **Verizon, Bumble, TJX, the New York Life Foundation, and Centene** for their support of our COVID-19 response efforts. This amazing generosity makes our mission possible, especially during this critical time. On behalf of the Board and Staff of The Hotline – THANK YOU!