



## Serving Survivors in Times of Crisis

At **House of Ruth**, we share the concerns of everyone about the risks and impact of coronavirus (COVID 19). Serving and supporting survivors at this time has taken on a new and more urgent dynamic. Survivors in our shelter and the advocates who help them are also thinking about ways to stay healthy and safe. Domestic violence programs must face these challenges without interrupting lifesaving services. While national and state leaders have ordered us to stay home to flatten the curve of the COVID-19 pandemic, we also know that home is not safe for many adults and children. The spread of the COVID-19 will also create housing, childcare, financial, and other barriers that impact survivors' safety.

Crises like COVID-19, reduce the options for domestic violence survivors because there are fewer services and interventions available – shelters may not have available space, courts might not be processing emergency restraining orders, doctors might not have time to make referrals.

In addition, survivors may be trapped with abusive partners if they lose their jobs or cannot work due to COVID-19. Perpetrators often act with impunity, increasing their abusive behavior because they think victims cannot leave. With minimal access to paid time off or unemployment insurance, survivors can be dependent on an abusive partner for housing and support. The majority of victims of domestic violence experience financial abuse, which is exacerbated during an economic downturn because victims may lose their jobs or be unable to find work.

House of Ruth will remain open and continue providing shelter to keep people safe. We offer crisis services and are available remotely via telephone, while maintaining client safety and confidentiality. If you, or someone you know, needs immediate help, please call our 24-hr hotline at 877-988-5559.

While this pandemic may present unique and significant concerns, the resilience of survivors and the work of domestic violence advocates, in the face of overwhelming challenges, is not new. But we need your support to help them make it through this crisis: [donate today](#).

Thank you for your support of House of Ruth and survivors of domestic violence.



*Pat Bell*

Pat Bell, Executive Director