



## GENERAL

# Say No to Family Violence

🕒 AUGUST 31, 2020

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*Ms Georgette Tan serves on the Taskforce on Family Violence and is the President of United Women Singapore.*

A colleague comes to work looking distracted. She has been performing poorly, and you spot bruises that she tries to hide with long-sleeved clothing.

If her employer, someone from the human resources department or a fellow colleague could recognise such possible signs of family violence, she could receive the appropriate help and support.

As Ms Georgette Tan, President of United Women Singapore (UWS) points out, “If employees are in distress, it’s not good for their welfare, and this could have an impact on their productivity, and affect the organisation.”

“It is in the employer’s interest to ensure their employees’ welfare are well taken care of,” she adds.

Workplace outreach is one of several focus areas which Georgette and other members of the Taskforce on Family Violence are looking to address, as they tackle family violence in a multi-disciplinary way.

Formed in February 2020, the various partners across the Taskforce include hospitals, family violence specialist centres, crisis shelters, and family service centres. Co-chaired by Ms Sun Xueling and Associate Professor Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim (Ministers of State for Social and Family Development, and Home Affairs respectively), the Taskforce has been studying the challenges faced by various vulnerable groups experiencing violence, and aims to identify ways in which the Government – working hand-in-hand with community partners – can empower victims and perpetrators to break the cycle of violence.

The Taskforce has been holding virtual engagements via videoconferencing, with members discussing ways to better combat family violence, including keeping a close watch on the COVID-19 situation, and putting in place various initiatives. These range from strengthening support for spouses facing abuse to enhancing collaboration amongst stakeholders.

Under the ambit of the Taskforce, its members work together to identify key areas for improvement, and develop initiatives to better support those affected by family violence.

“This is how the Taskforce really helps, because before this, I wouldn’t know what someone else was doing,” Georgette says, noting that it would be a waste of resources if UWS were to duplicate what another organisation is already doing.

Our focus has been on how to “pull together the various stakeholders, gather critical ground-up information on what is experienced by survivors, find out the pain points, reassess what needs to get done and how to do so in a practical, timely fashion”, Georgette says.

With the support of the Taskforce, UWS hopes to also work with the private sector to provide training to human resources departments of multinational corporations to recognise signs of family violence and refer victims to appropriate help channels.

Adding urgency to the Taskforce’s collective work, individuals and families may experience more stress due to COVID-19.

Being more cooped up at home, along with job insecurity and dwindling income, fuels an “exacerbated environment where tempers flare and stress takes its toll”. This may lead to an uptick of family violence, says Georgette.

Complementing efforts to tackle family violence during this global pandemic, another member of the Taskforce, social service agency PAVE piloted a mobile app called Community Guardian in June 2020. The app provides a platform for individuals to report suspected cases of family violence and quickly connect to responders.

As the Taskforce deepens its discussions, members will “need to be practical, prioritise and share the responsibilities, while ensuring everything dovetails together”, says Georgette.

“It’s a major task, but I’m fairly confident that people will view this as a real opportunity to speak openly, talk about barriers, pain points and what is really needed.”

“It all starts with having frank conversations and open dialogue.”

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Read more about the **Break the Silence** campaign and do your part to end family violence.

If you or someone you know needs help, please contact:

Big Love Child Protection Specialist Centre: 6445 0400	National CARE Hotline: 1800-202-6868	PAVE Integrated Services for Individual and Family Protection Specialist Centre: 6555 0390
ComCare Call Hotline: 1800-222-0000	Police (Emergency): 999 /SMS 71999	
HEART @ Fei Yue Child Protection Specialist Centre: 6819 9170	Project StART: 6476 1482	TRANS SAFE Centre: 6449 9088

If you are a social service agency or community group that would like to partner with the Taskforce on initiatives to address family violence, please reach out to us [here](#).



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