

Australians are less likely to seek support at Christmas

20 December 2017

Australians experiencing violence may actually be less likely to seek support on public holidays according to data from 1800RESPECT, the national sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling service.

With reported incidences of domestic violence increasing over the holiday season 1800RESPECT saw the overall number of Australians seeking support in December was 26 per cent higher. However on Christmas Day the number of Australians needing assistance was 60 per cent lower than average.

1800RESPECT Program Specialist Inez Carey says that there are many factors that impact on people's ability to reach out for support on seasonal holidays.

"On Christmas Day there is a lot of pressure to have a fun, spend time with family and friends and share good times which may delay people from reaching out," Ms Carey said.

"People may also not feel safe to ask for support if the person who is using violence is at home or nearby.

"We often see an increase in people seeking support after the main holidays, like the day after Christmas or New Year's Day.

"If you don't feel safe to make a phone call, you can speak directly with a 1800RESPECT counsellor through an online chat counselling or seek information through the Daisy app," said Ms Carey.

1800RESPECT counsellors are available 24 hours a day, every day of the year, including public holidays and can be reached by calling 1800 737 732 or by online chat on the 1800RESPECT website.

The Daisy app is also available for download, providing information and access to the contact details of local support services.

Of the more than 70,000 contacts to 1800RESPECT each year, approximately 10 per cent are via the 1800RESPECT online chat platform.

More Australians are reaching out than ever with the 1800RESPECT website seeing a 10 per cent increase in the number of visitors over 12 months with nearly a quarter of a million people (248,000) visiting the website to access, information, referrals and/or online counselling.

If you or someone you know is impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence, call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732 or visit [1800RESPECT.org.au](https://www.1800RESPECT.org.au) In an emergency, call 000.