

CANADIAN DENTAL  
ASSISTANTS ASSOCIATION



ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE  
DES ASSISTANT.E.S DENTAIRES

May 21, 2020

An important message to CDAA Members,

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on many aspects of our daily lives. As individuals struggle to manage family responsibilities; loss or significant changes to their employment; finances; their health and the emotional impact of isolation from their loved ones and their community, Canadians are experiencing stress levels unprecedented in the post-WWII era.

As lockdowns are put in place and families struggle with the added stress of the pandemic, an increase in domestic violence and abuse is occurring worldwide. Recently, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. António Guterres, called on “all governments to put women’s safety first as they respond to the pandemic” and the UN Women organization has referred to the increase in violence against women and girls during COVID-19 as the “shadow pandemic.”<sup>1</sup> Canada is not immune. Reports of increases in domestic violence are a daily occurrence across media channels, from coast to coast.

As dental assistants return to practice over the coming weeks and months, it is important to provide tools to help should you be confronted with patients who exhibit signs of family violence. The VEGA (*Violence, Evidence, Guidance, and Action*) Project has created evidence-based guidance and education resources to assist healthcare and social service providers (including students and residents) in recognizing and responding safely to family violence (child maltreatment and intimate partner violence). VEGA developed these resources with funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada in collaboration with 22 national organizations. The resources are comprised of learning modules (e.g., care pathways, scripts, how-to videos), interactive educational scenarios and a handbook. VEGA resources are free and are now publicly available by registering at:

English version: <https://vegaeducation.mcmaster.ca/registration/>

French version: <https://vegaeducation.mcmaster.ca/registration/index-fr.php>

If you have any questions and/or comments about VEGA’s resources, please contact the VEGA Project Lead, Dr. Harriet MacMillan, McMaster University at [vega@mcmaster.ca](mailto:vega@mcmaster.ca).

If you, or someone you know is a victim of family violence please visit:  
<https://endingviolencecanada.org/getting-help/> for a complete list of services in your area.  
And if you are in immediate DANGER or fear for your safety, please CALL 911.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors of the CDAA



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/4/statement-ed-phumzile-violence-against-women-during-pandemic>