

A GUIDE TO

DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Keeping our families safe and strong.



DV Connect Womensline

1800 811 811

Womensline provides 24/7 confidential advice and counselling as well as referral to crisis accommodation for women and children escaping domestic violence. Call free number for help.

DV Connect Mensline

1800 600 636

Mensline provides counselling, information and referral to men affected by domestic violence. This service is available 9.00am -12 midnight, 7 days a week.

Men's Referral Service

1300 766 491

This service offers assistance, information and counselling to help men who use family violence.

Call 1300 766 491 if you would like help with male behavioural and relationship concerns. They are available 8am-9pm during Monday to Friday, and 9am-6pm on weekends.

Kids Helpline

1800 551 800

Kids Helpline is Australia's only free, private and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25.

If you are in immediate danger or life-threatening situation call '000' (Triple Zero)

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ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

This resource provides information on:

- domestic and family violence
- family wellbeing
- warning signs about domestic and family violence
- impacts on domestic and family violence
- responses to situations where family violence may be occurring

You can use this resource to:

- get some tips and hints for building family wellbeing
- learn information about domestic and family violence
- build skills to help families in crisis



Family wellbeing is about making sure that every individual feels part of the family group.

WHAT IS DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE

Families come in all shapes and sizes. It doesn't matter what kind of structure a family is, for example single, extended family, nuclear family. What matters is how caring, supportive and loving the members are to each other.

For each family member to have a sense of worth, self-esteem, well-being and a sense of connection, it is necessary that a loving, healthy and safe atmosphere exists.

This healthy family atmosphere gives children the best chance to grow into healthy, well-balanced and happy adults.

Family wellbeing is about making sure that the whole family and each individual who is part of the family group:

- feels safe and secure
- has help when they need it
- can grow and reach their potential
- is looked after when sick and unwell
- has adequate access to life's essentials (food, clothing and shelter)
- is connected with extended family and community
- can resolve conflict effectively

- possesses skills to deal confidently with stress, change and life's challenges
- has financial independence.

Domestic and family violence occurs when one person in any relationship uses violent and abusive tactics to maintain power and control over the other person in a relationship.

People who experience these acts of abuse or violence often feel fearful and unsafe.

Domestic and family violence occurs between people in a range of domestic relationships including spousal relationships, intimate personal relationships, family relationships and informal care relationships.

Domestic and family violence occurs between people in a range of domestic relationships including:

- intimate personal relationships
- spousal relationships including same sex relationships
- families & friends relationships
- informal care relationships

BUILD FAMILY WELLBEING

Here are some suggestions you could do to help build family wellbeing:

- Attend parenting programs to learn effective parenting
- Do a course in effective conflict resolution
- Show acts of love toward each family member
- Share in extended family and community events and gatherings
- Praise and encourage each other
- Do fun family things together (fishing, cooking, walking, going on picnics, camping)
- Teach values, traditions and ideas that allow individuals in the family to grow and reach their potential
- Plan family time to achieve work/life balance
- Congratulate family members on their achievements
- Participate in recreational and physical activities together and individually
- Encourage family members to gain the language, literacy and numeracy skills to access knowledge, gain education and participate as productive members of society

CHECK YOUR FAMILY WELLBEING

Being an effective parent is not just about looking after children.

It is about providing an environment where children can grow to healthy, responsible and happy adults who are able to contribute to the community in which they live.

Checking your family wellbeing is an important and ongoing part of being an effective parent.

Ask yourself these questions to check your family's wellbeing.

- Do we spend enough time together?
- Do we spend time with other family members (grandparents, brothers, sister, aunts and uncles)?
- How often do you encourage your children/grand children?
- Does your family have access to income, housing, education, children's services, health services?
- Are you able to resolve issues, conflict and differences with respect and open communication?
- Do you have strategies and supportive approaches to deal with stress, unexpected events, family illness and financial hardships?
- In what ways do you tell or show you family that you love and appreciate them?
- How often do you tell your children that you love them?
- Are there constant arguments in your home?
- Is this atmosphere tense?



TYPES OF ABUSE

Economic Abuse

Having access to money of your own is part of a healthy relationship.

When another person withholds money or uses threats to control your money it is called economic abuse.

Economic abuse can include:

- making you hand over all your pay or government payments

- not letting you have your own bank account
- not giving you money for food and/or other essential household items
- making you hand over money that is given to help support children's needs
- demanding to know your key card pin number
- your partner using all available money on themselves instead of their family
- threatening or abusing you if you don't hand over your money to a family member.

Social abuse

Social abuse involves controlling your movements and associations. For example:

- controlling where you go, not letting you see your friends or families
- depriving you of the necessities of life such as food, shelter,
- denying you medical care
- keeping you isolated from your friends and families.

Lateral Violence

This type of domestic and family abuse involves:

- gossips, shaming and blaming others, backstabbing and attempting to socially isolate others
- harmful behaviour to each other collectively as part of an oppressed group, within their

Cultural Abuse

Cultural and spiritual abuse is another form of abuse. It involves:

- forcing you to attend religious activities against your wishes
- prohibiting (not allowing) you to participate in the religious practices of your choice

families, within their organisations and within their communities

- other terms include 'workplace bullying', 'horizontal violence', 'inter-racial conflict' and 'internalised colonialism'

Physical abuse

There are many different types of physical abuse. Physical abuse can happen by itself or with other forms of family or domestic abuse; for example, emotional abuse.

Take a look at the type of conduct that is considered physical abuse.

Examples of physical abuse are:

- hitting or striking

- pulling and dragging by the hair
- biting
- burning
- punching
- slapping
- damaging personal items
- pinching
- torturing
- being cruel to family pets
- choking

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is about making you feel bad and worthless by teasing, name calling and putting you down all the time.

There are many different forms of emotional abuse including:

- putting you down all the time (for example, 'You're useless.' and 'You're pathetic.')
- stopping you from seeing friends and family
- shaming you in front of your friends, family or children (for example 'You can't do anything right.' 'You're hopeless.')
- calling you names (for example, slut, scum bag,

- bitch, slob, fat, dickhead)
- threatening you (for example, 'If you leave me I'll kill you and the kids.')
- telling you that you are dumb, stupid or an idiot all the time
- making you feel guilty (for example, 'How long does it take to go to the shop and back?' 'I bet you blabbed to your family about the fight we had?' 'You're turning the kids against me.')
- ringing or checking up on you all the time (for example, 'Where are you? Who's there? How long are you going to be?')
- Children seeing or hearing physical and verbal abuse

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse means any action or conduct that involves sexual activity with you that you do not want to be involved in.

Types of activities include:

- forcing you to have sex
- touching you sexually when you have said you don't want that
- making you watch pornography (sexually explicit) films or videos
- taking photos or videos of you naked
- making you do sexual things that make you feel dirty and degraded

Stalking

Stalking is when a person follows you or spies on you all the time.

Stalking includes:

- a partner who follows you or comes to your work or friends to check up on you
- an ex-partner follows you and your children
- an ex-partner rings you all the time even though you have said you don't want this
- an ex-partner comes around to your place without you inviting them
- an ex-partner coming near your house and watching you
- an ex-partner showing up at your workplace.

WARNING SIGNS OF DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE

Often in families where domestic and family violence is taking place, the victim and/or the children start behaving differently. Below are some of the common warning signs that domestic or family violence could be happening.

GENERAL WARNING SIGNS

People who are being abused may:

- seem afraid or anxious to please their abuser
- go along with everything their abuser says and does
- check in often with their abuser to report where they are and what they're doing
- receive frequent, harassing phone calls from their abuser
- talk about their abuser's temper, jealousy, or possessiveness.

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

People who are being physically abused may:

- have numerous injuries, with the excuse of "accidents"
- frequently miss work, school, or social occasions, without explanation
- dress in clothing designed to hide bruises or scars (for example, wearing long sleeves in the summer or sunglasses indoors)

ISOLATION

People who are being isolated may:

- be restricted from seeing family and friends
- hardly go out in public without their partner
- have no rights or are controlled and monitored
- no access to money, credit cards, medical or vehicle.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SIGNS

People who are being emotionally psychologically abuse may:

- have very low self-esteem, even if they used to be confident
- show major personality changes (for example, an outgoing person becomes withdrawn)
- be depressed, anxious, or suicidal.

SIGNS OF CHILDREN EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE

Children may display behaviours or actions that indicate that they are experiencing or witnessing domestic and family violence. This includes:

- being very cautious in front of a parent or step-parent
- trying to please a parent or step-parent
- showing changes in speech, eating habits and behaviour
- timid and afraid
- withdrawn and isolated from friends of their own age
- stops speaking or playing when parent or step parent enters the room
- doesn't want to be left alone with parent, step-parent or sibling
- bed wetting.

WHAT IMPACT DOES DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE HAVE?

On victims

Family members and victims experiencing domestic and family violence can be effected in a number of ways.

Some of the ways they can react to domestic and family violence include:

- becoming withdrawn and nervous
- feeling suicidal
- being addicted to drugs and alcohol
- behaving passive
- being unable to communicate
- feeling dull and depressed
- acting aggressive and blaming toward others (for example, blaming children for not behaving)
- becoming sick with unexplained problems such as headaches, asthmas, stuttering, vomiting, stomach aches

On children

Children who are exposed to family violence can respond in a in a number of ways.

Some of the warning signs that children maybe experiencing family violence include:

- developmental delays
- lacking self confidence
- copying abusive or violent behaviour
- being cruel to animals
- being withdrawn or depressed

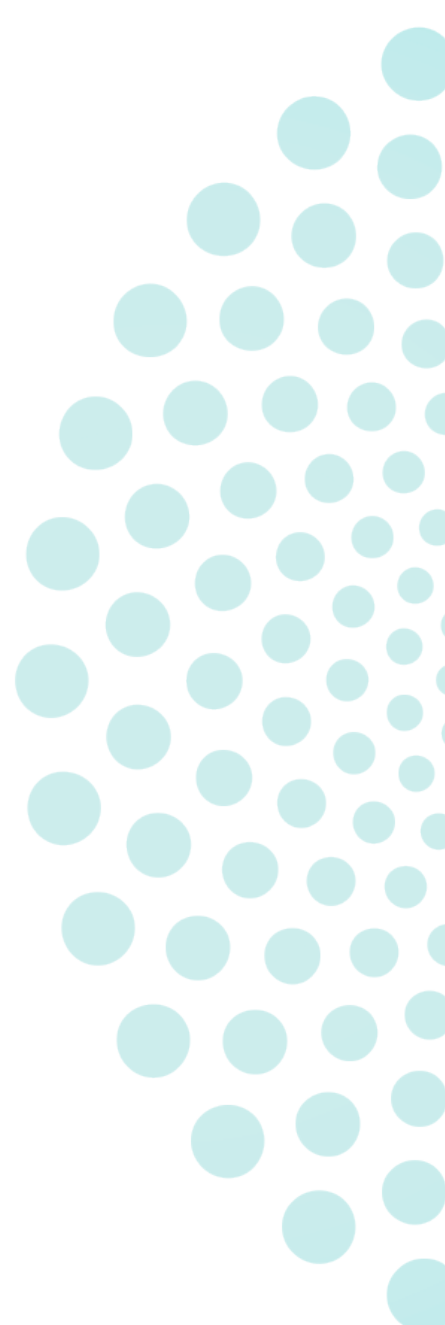
On young children

- bed wetting
- nightmares
- imagery friends
- speech problems
- confusion
- attempting self-harm

SILENT MESSAGES

When family violence occurs in a family and others do not act to stop it, it teaches children that:

- it's okay to abuse and hurt the people you say you love
- violence is okay when you are feeling stressed and pressured
- being aggressive while using alcohol and drugs is okay
- you can get want to want by being violent or standing over others
- violence is an acceptable way to manage problems
- nobody will help you when violence is happening in your home
- violence is a normal way of life
- family breakdown is normal
- loss of cultural obligations is okay



ASSUMPTIONS AND FACTS

Take a look at some of the things people think about domestic and family violence then read the facts.

ASSUMPTIONS	FACTS
Domestic and family violence only harms the person being abused	Domestic and family violence harms all members of the family
It's their business not mine. If I help I am meddling	Supporting a victim of family violence and their children is not meddling
Sometimes the victim brings it on themselves	The victim are not to blame for the abuse they are experiencing
It's the alcohol and/or drugs	Blaming alcohol and drugs shifts the responsibility away from the person who is committing the abuse. Alcohol and drugs may be a contributing factor but it is not the cause.
A man has right to control his wife/partner and children	Men have no right to assault or abuse women and children or other men
They could just leave	A victim may have been threatened with their life if they leave. In some situations they may be pressured by family to stay in an abusive situation rather than shame the family by leaving their partner. They may have nowhere to go and be financially unstable.
If I get involved they might blame me for breaking up their family and their children being taken away	Taking action rather than being a bystander is a positive thing to do. It provides an opportunity for the victim and children to get support. It also provides an opportunity for the abuser to get help to change their behaviour and break the cycle of abuse.
If I make a report the authorities they will take away their children	Family support is not about taking children away from their parents. It is about helping families become safe and positive places to be. Sometimes children will need to be moved to a safe place. The goal of this is to protect the children and work with the family to change so children can come home to a safe place
Family violence only happens to bad fashion people	Domestic and family violence can happen to all people
It's my own fault. If only I could make them happy this wouldn't happen	It is not your fault. Individuals are responsible for their own happiness. The person who is hurting you is responsible for their behaviour.

RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE

Sometimes people are not even aware that they are experiencing family or domestic violence.

They may not know it is illegal. How you respond can really make a real difference to a family in crisis. Your support could help a family to get help and change what is happening.

Supporting someone who is in a situation of domestic and family violence can give them the strength to:

- take action for themselves and their children
- look at options
- make decisions

- empower families
- prevent or demolish domestic and family violence in our communities
- become more assertive.
- When domestic and family violence is occurring, sometimes the perpetrator may try to make the victim believe that they are to blame for what is happening. It is important to remember that the victim is not to blame for the domestic and family violence. The person responsible for the domestic and family violence is responsible their behaviour and for their own happiness. The person responsible is using tactics to have power over you.

Actions victims can take

If you or your children are experiencing domestic and family violence including physical, sexual or emotional abuse it is important to think about what is really going on and what your options are.

Think about these questions:

- Have you or your children/family been threatened if you leave?
- Do you hope your partner will change?
- Do you think arguments and fights are your fault?
- Do you believe it is better for children to have both parents even if the relationship is abusive?
- Do you believe that domestic violence doesn't impact that much on children?
- Do friends, community and family members pressure you to stay?
- If you are being cared by someone who mistreats you, are you worried that no one will look after you?
- Do you have language or social barriers that prevent you from accessing support services?
- Do you worry about how you would cope financially?

Some of the things you could consider include:

- applying for a protection order from the Courts
- planning and preparing to leave for a safe shelter
- planning what you will do if your partner's behaviour is escalating (for example, leave the house or find a safe place in the house and telephone the police
- asking the neighbours to telephone the police if they hear fighting or abuse
- teaching the children how to telephone for help
- finding out your legal rights
- speaking about your abuse to doctors, friends, counsellors, teachers so you and your children can get the help you need
- having a safety plan in place and monitoring the abuser's comings and goings.

Supporting someone who is in a situation of domestic and family violence can give them strength.

THINGS YOU COULD SAY TO LET OTHERS KNOW

You may want to reach out to friends and family but are not really sure how to bring the issue up.

Here are some ways in you can begin to let others know you are experiencing domestic and family violence. Remember talking about it will help you.

- 'I need to talk to you about something'
- 'Can I ask you do a favour for me? I need someone to look after my children while I see a counsellor this afternoon.'
- 'I am living in domestic and family violence.'
- 'My partner has become very abusive to me since getting the sack.'
- 'Do you know where I can get help for me and my children? I need to get out of an abusive relationship.'
- 'I am really frightened of my partner when there has been drinking.'
- 'I need your help. I don't know how to deal with the situation I am in.'
- 'Thank you for supporting me. I really need someone I can rely on right now.'
- 'I believe I'm being abused? Who can I talk to or where can I go to get help?'



THINGS TO DO TO SUPPORT A VICTIM

Sometimes we might find it difficult to know what to do to support someone in family crisis.

We may wrongly think it is not our business, but domestic and family violence is an issue that concerns all of us.

Being a passive bystander and doing nothing sends a message to the perpetrator that domestic and family violence is okay.

Here are some ideas for effective ways to support someone in family crisis.

- Do not push someone to tell you they are being abused. They may be ashamed or afraid to say anything.
- Respect their right to make their own decisions even if you disagree with their decision.
- Listen to what they have to say but avoid blaming them.
- Don't make critical or negative comments about the abuser.
- Think about how to help keep them and their children safe.
- Make sure they are safe and alone when you speak to them.
- Don't tell them what to do.
- Get support for yourself if you need to.
- If you feel they are in immediate danger

call the police.

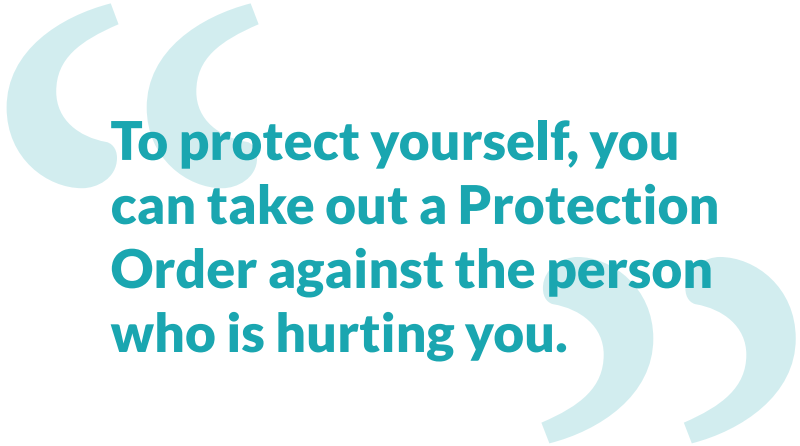
- Provide information on services.
- Be available for them.

There are lots of ways to begin a conversation with someone you suspect may be the victim of domestic and family violence.

Just a few words to someone can let them know you are not a passive bystander and that you are concerned for their wellbeing.

Here are a couple of suggestions on what you could say:

- 'I am really worried about you. You seem to be really unhappy.'
- 'Is everything okay? You look really stressed.'
- 'I am here for you when you are ready.'
- 'I think everyone has a right to feel safe especially with those who say they love us.'
- 'I believe everyone should be treated with respect.'
- 'I don't think it okay for anyone to hurt you.'
- 'It's not your fault.'
- 'How are you coping?'
- 'How can I help you?'



To protect yourself, you can take out a Protection Order against the person who is hurting you.

HOW TO TAKE OUT A PROTECTION ORDER

Taking action to stop the further family violence from continuing is a positive thing to do.

To protect yourself or your family from further domestic violence you can take out a Protection Order against a family member who is hurting you.

This includes physical, sexual, emotional or economic abuse.

You can go to the court or police to fill in an

application for a Protection Order.

Sometimes if the police have been called to an incident they will take out a Protection Order. Once you sign it naming the abuser (the 'respondant') he or she will be served a notice to appear in court.

Protection Orders hearings are not about getting the person convicted for a criminal offence they are about protecting the victim/s from further abuse. They are closed hearings and kept confidential.

Temporary Protection Orders

If there are concerns about the safety of the victim the court can grant a Temporary Protection Order at the time of the application.

Protection Order Conditions

When the court grants a Protection Order what it is saying is that the individual must behave and not commit domestic violence against you or your family.

They must not have a weapon during the order and any weapon licences will be cancelled.

The court can make other conditions such as ordering the abuser to:

- not come within a certain distance from the victim
- not enter the victim's workplace

- not enter the victim's residence
- not commit a specific act of domestic violence
- to leave the residence formerly shared with the victim
- not locate where a victim is now residing.

Taking out a Protection Order doesn't mean that you have to end the relationship. The purpose of a Protection Order is to make you and other family members safe.

There are a number of organisation's who can help you work through all your choices so that the decisions you make are the most positive for you and your family and that the family have a safe space to work on the issues that have led to domestic and family violence.

Being an effective parent is not just about looking after children. It is about providing an environment where children can grow healthily.



Community groups empowering community

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