



Community Life Church Cherrybrook

Domestic and Family Violence

Information and Resources

2021



Support

Domestic Violence Line 24 hours

1800 65 64 63

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)

131 450

1800RESPECT

1800 737 732

Child Protection Helpline

132 111

NSW Elder Abuse Helpline

1800 628 221

Domestic and Family Violence Resource - Background

This document is intended for use of the Council and members of Community Life Church Cherrybrook to offer current information about domestic and family violence and to offer resources and referral to anyone who experiences domestic violence.

What is domestic and family violence?

Domestic and family violence is a crime.

It's when there is violent, abusive or bullying behaviour or actions towards a partner or former partner to scare and control them. It can happen at home or outside the home. It causes fear and harm to the body, mind and spirit.

Domestic and family violence can happen to anyone. It happens:

- in every community
- in all cultures
- to young and old
- to wealthy and poor
- in any profession and level of education.

It's usually a man who is violent towards the woman he's in a relationship with. But domestic and family violence can be between:

- married and de facto couples
- separated or divorced couples
- former partners and exes
- boyfriends and girlfriends
- LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, question/queer, couples)
- carers
- relatives
- long-term residents in a residential facility, such as a retirement village
- extended family or kin in Aboriginal communities.

Family violence

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people prefer to use the term "family violence" when referring to intimate partner abuse. Family violence can also include abuse that occurs in the community between siblings, parents, children, grandparents, aunts and uncles.

The NSW Government describes 'family' as having "a broader definition and includes people who are related to one another through blood, marriage or de facto partnerships, adoption and fostering relationships, sibling and extended family relationships. It includes the full range of kinship ties in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, extended family

relationships, and constructs of family within lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer (LGBTIQ) communities. People living in the same house, people living in the same residential care facility and people reliant on care may also be considered to be in a domestic relationship if their relationship exhibits dynamics which may foster coercive and abusive behaviours." (It Stops Here, 2014)

Children and teenagers

Children and young people are also victims when they have to live with domestic violence, and it can be a form of child abuse.

Elder abuse

Older people are vulnerable to family violence. The abuser is usually a family member, such as an adult child, a spouse or a partner.

Facts about domestic and family violence

- 1 in 3 women experience physical or sexual violence, or both, perpetrated by someone they know.
- Of those women who experience violence, more than 50% have children in their care.
- Domestic and family violence is a factor in about 40% of all murders.
- At least 1 woman a week is killed by a partner or former partner in Australia.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience far higher rates and more severe forms of family violence compared to other women.
- Domestic and family violence against women is the biggest reason women are homeless. It's also a common factor in child protection reports.
- Around Australia, police attend a call-out about domestic and family violence on average once every 2 minutes.

Unreported as a crime

Most domestic and family violence assaults aren't reported by victims because they:

- fear more violence
- feel ashamed
- think that the violence wasn't worth reporting to police
- think they won't be believed
- fear their children will never talk to them again or will be taken away
- fear being left homeless
- fear losing their residence visa or spousal visa

Types of Family and Domestic Violence

Domestic and family violence includes different types of abuse. A person doesn't need to experience all of these types of abuse for it to be a crime under the law. The abuse can include:

- verbal abuse
- psychological abuse
- emotional abuse
- financial abuse
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- harassment and stalking
- spiritual or religious abuse
- reproductive abuse
- image-based abuse

Verbal abuse

- swearing and continual humiliation, in private or in public
- attacks on intelligence, sexuality, body image and capacity as a parent and spouse
- ridiculing religious beliefs or ethnic background
- screaming, shouting, name-calling, put-downs

Physical abuse

- direct assault on the body (choking, strangulation, shaking, eye injuries, biting, slapping, pushing, spitting, burning, punching, kicking, pulling hair)
- use of weapons including objects
- hurting the children
- locking the victim in or out of the house or rooms
- forcing the victim to take drugs
- not allowing medication, food or medical care
- not allowing sleep

Psychological abuse

- creating fear, such as driving dangerously, possessing weapons, angry looks
- destroying property or valued possessions
- hurting or killing pets in front of family members
- making threats regarding custody of any children

- saying that the police and the courts will not help, support or believe the victim
- threatening to 'out' the person

Emotional abuse

- blaming the victim for all problems in the relationship
- constantly comparing the victim with others to undermine their self-esteem and self-worth
- sporadic sulking
- withdrawing all interest and engagement (for example, weeks of silent treatment)
- emotional blackmail and suicidal threats

Social abuse

- isolation from family and friends such as ongoing rudeness to family and friends to alienate them, or limiting contact with family and friends
- instigating and controlling the move to a location where the victim has no established social circle or work opportunities
- restricting use of the car or telephone
- forbidding or physically preventing the victim from going out and meeting people

Financial abuse

- forbidding access to bank accounts
- providing only a small 'allowance'
- not allowing the victim to work or have a job
- forcing the victim to sign documents or make false declarations
- using all the wages earned by the victim for household expenses
- controlling the victim's pension
- denying that the victim is entitled to joint property

Sexual abuse

- any form of pressured or unwanted sex or sexual degradation causing pain during sex
- assaulting genitals (hurting your private parts)
- forced sex without protection against pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease
- making the victim perform sexual acts unwillingly (including taking or distributing explicit photos without their consent)
- criticising or using sexually degrading insults

Harassment and stalking

- following and watching
- telephone and online harassment
- tracking with Global Positioning Systems (GPS)
- being intimidating
- coming into your own place without permission

Spiritual or religious abuse

- using spiritual or religious beliefs to scare, hurt or control you
- stopping you or shaming you for practising your spiritual or religious beliefs
- forcing you or your children to take part in spiritual or religious practices when you don't want to
- forcing you to raise your children according to spiritual or religious beliefs you don't agree with
- using religious or spiritual leaders or teachings to force you to stay in the relationship, as an excuse for their violent and abusive behaviour, stop you or your children from getting medical or health care, force you into a marriage you don't want

Reproductive abuse

- forcing or pressuring you to have unprotected sex, become pregnant or have an abortion
- passing on a sexually transmitted infection they know they have
- doing things to stop your birth control, such as throwing them away, hiding them, stopping you from buying them
- preventing or limiting your access to sexual health services and information
- forcing you to have operations to remove parts of your genitals

Imaged-based abuse

- also known as "revenge porn", it's when a nude or sexual image of you is taken and shared without your permission
- sharing or threatening to share intimate, nude or sexual photos or videos of you to friends, family, strangers in person, on the internet, on social media sites, or through a text message or app
- accessing personal computer files to steal images
- Photoshopping a person's image onto a sexually explicit photo or video
- taking images of a woman's cleavage or under her skirt
- secretly filming sexual activity or sexual assault

Violent actions: power and control

Using coercion and threats

- making or carrying out threats, or both, to hurt your partner
- threatening to leave your partner, to commit suicide or report her to Centrelink or for child abuse
- making your partner drop criminal charges against you
- making your partner do illegal things

Using intimidation

- making your partner afraid through actions, gestures or looks
- smashing things
- destroying your partner's property
- abusing pets
- displaying weapons

Using emotional abuse

- putting down your partner
- making your partner feel bad about themselves
- calling your partner names
- making your partner think she's crazy
- playing mind games
- humiliating your partner
- making your partner feel guilty

Using isolation

- controlling what your partner does, who they see and talk to, what they read, where they go
- limiting your partner's involvement in any activities outside the home
- using jealousy to justify actions

Minimising, denying and blaming

- making light of the abuse and not taking your partner's concerns about it seriously
- saying the abuse didn't happen
- shifting responsibility for abusive behaviour
- saying your partner caused it

Using children

- making a partner or ex-partner feel guilty about her children
- using the children to relay messages
- using visitation to harass your partner
- threatening to take the children away

Using male privilege

- treating her like a servant
- making all the big decisions
- acting like the king of the castle
- being the one to define men's and women's roles

Using economic abuse

- preventing her from getting or keeping a job
- making her ask for money
- giving her an allowance
- taking her money
- not letting her know about, or have access to, family income

How to recognise domestic and family violence

It can be hard for a person to realise they're in a domestic and family violence situation, especially when the person they love is causing the hurt and violence.

If someone is experiencing domestic and family violence, they may feel afraid, insecure, degraded, angry and unsure about what to do.

Domestic and family violence causes fear and reduces their self-esteem.

They may even blame themselves and think it's their fault.

Sometimes women don't get help because they feel too ashamed to talk about what is happening.

Or they hope the violence will stop.

Self-Check

Does your former or current partner, boyfriend or girlfriend, flatmate, carer, or family member:

- Make you feel uncomfortable or afraid?
- Often puts you down, humiliates you, or makes you feel worthless?
- Constantly checks up on what you are doing or where you are going?
- Tries to stop you from seeing your own friends or family?
- Makes you feel afraid to disagree or say 'no' to them?
- Constantly accuses you of flirting with others when this isn't true?
- Tells you how the household finances should be spent, or stops you having any money for yourself?
- Stop you from receiving medical help?
- Scares or hurts you by being violent (for example, hitting, choking, smashing things, locking you in, driving dangerously to frighten you)?
- Pressures or forces you to do sexual things that you don't want to do?
- Threatens to hurt you, or to kill themselves, if you say you want to end the relationship?
- Interferes with your online access or access to the phone?
- Hurts your children or performs violent actions in front of your children?

Does your former or current partner, boyfriend or girlfriend, flatmate, carer, or family member make you feel:

- fearful or scared?
- anxious?
- sick?
- numb?
- like you have no confidence?
- so stressed that you have trouble sleeping because of these feelings?
- physical symptoms, such as tense muscles or a racing heart beat because of these feelings?
- unable to concentrate because of these feelings?

If you have answered 'yes' to any of these, then you could be experiencing abuse. If you don't feel safe, respected and cared for, then something isn't right.

At risk.

What we can do

People who are experiencing domestic violence may feel shame and may need to feel safe before they disclose anything to you.

- Look for signs of violence (but don't assume)
- Be available to talk
- Make sure they are safe
- Don't confront the person who is using violence
- Let them know it's not their fault
- Support them to talk to the Police if they want to
- Report any abuse to the Helpline where children are present
- Be patient
- Don't ask too many questions
- Offer referral phone numbers
- Seek professional support

Remember, people's lives might be at risk

Resources and referral

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