



Family Violence Fact Sheet

It is important for anyone experiencing family violence to know that family violence is never ok, no matter the circumstances or situation.



What is family violence?

Family violence is a pattern of behaviour that is:

- physically
- sexually
- emotionally, psychologically abusive
- coercive
- controlling
- dominating
- OR**
- making a person feel scared or fearful for their safety and wellbeing and that of another; and
- includes causing a child to witness, hear or otherwise be exposed to the effects of such behaviour. Children witnessing family violence has the same negative effects on children as physical violence against them.

The **Victorian Family Violence Protection Act 2008** views family violence as happening between people in a family or family like relationship such as:

- a current or former spouse (husband or wife)
- a current or former partner (male or female)
- a current or former relative
 - a parent
 - a son or daughter
 - a niece or nephew
 - an uncle
 - an aunty
 - a grandparent (grandmother or grandfather)
 - a cousin
- for an Aboriginal or Torre Strait Islander person – relative includes a person who under Aboriginal or Torre Strait Islander tradition or contemporary social practice is the person's relative
- a person who has or has had an intimate personal relationship with you (sexual or not)

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- someone who you consider as like a family member
 - a child who normally or regularly lives with you
 - a child who used to live with you
 - A carer

Family Violence is sometimes called domestic violence, intimate partner violence or an abusive relationship.

Types of family violence

Family violence includes many different types of violence and abuse.

Emotional and psychological abuse

This kind of family violence is when a family member insults, upsets, intimidates, controls or humiliates another family member. It includes:

- yelling, swearing and name-calling
- putting someone down in front of other people or in private
- using words to intimidate or threaten someone
- doing or saying things to make someone feel confused or less confident
- stopping someone from spending time with friends or family

Physical abuse



This kind of family violence is any harmful or controlling physical behaviour that one family member uses towards another. It includes:

- shoving, pushing, punching, hitting, slapping, biting or choking
- using weapons or objects to harm someone
- damaging or destroying someone's personal belongings or property
- harming other family members or family pets.

Sexual abuse

This kind of family violence is any unwanted sexual behaviour by one family member towards another, even if you are married or in a relationship. It includes:

- threatening or intimidating someone into unwanted sexual activities
- exposing someone to sexual images or content they don't want to see
- sharing sexual images or content about someone without consent
- engaging in unwanted sexual contact with someone
- raping someone.



Harassment, stalking and threats of harm

This kind of family violence is unwanted behaviour like:

- following someone to see where they're going or who they're meeting
- tracking phone calls or phone locations
- constantly ringing or texting someone
- threatening to harm someone or the people close to them
- repeatedly waiting near your house or your workplace

Financial abuse

This kind of family violence is controlling finances like:

- not letting someone access money
- controlling the family money
- not giving someone enough money for essential items such as food, petrol, medical, children's clothing and items for school
- refusing to give someone money for recreational purposes eg: to go out with friends, to play sports
- taking money, bank or credit cards against someone's will

Cultural /Spiritual Abuse

This kind of family violence is when a family member uses power and control to deny another family member their cultural and spiritual rights. It includes:

- denying someone access to cultural or spiritual ceremonies or rights
- ridiculing someone's beliefs or culture
- not allowing someone to take part or belong to a cultural group
- stopping someone from practicing their culture or religion.
- denying someone their cultural heritage
- stopping someone's religious observances or practices

Signs of family violence in someone you know

People experiencing family violence often don't tell anyone. This might be because they've been threatened about telling anyone or they don't think anyone will believe them. Also, people experiencing family violence sometimes blame themselves for the abuse or feel ashamed about it, so they don't want to talk about it.

If you think someone you know is experiencing family violence, there are signs you can look out for. The person might:

- regularly have physical injuries like scratches or bruises – the person might say that the injuries don't matter or are because of a clumsy accident
- seem afraid of their partner
- speak about their partner as being jealous, moody or bad tempered

- describe their partner as controlling – for example, the person has to get their partner’s approval to do things or go places, they may not be able to be involved in cultural activities
- seem more anxious, jumpy, distant or depressed than usual
- often be criticised by their partner
- not socialise as much as they did in the past
- not want to leave children with their partner or family member.

These are only some of the signs of family violence, and sometimes these signs happen because of other things going on in a person’s life. But a combination of these signs over time might mean that someone is experiencing family violence.

What to do if you’re experiencing family violence, or someone you know is

If you or a person you know is experiencing family violence and are in immediate danger - **please call POLICE/AMBULANCE 000 now.**

These are a number of Family Violence support services that can support people affected by family violence

Telephone support services available:	Contact number
<i>For all emergencies: Police, ambulance or Fire</i>	<i>000</i>
<i>Safe Steps – Family Violence Response Centre (24 hour service)</i>	<i>1800015188</i>
<i>1800 RESPECT – National HelpLine (24 hour service)</i>	<i>18007377328 or online</i>
<i>Sexual Assault Crisis Line (24 hours service)</i>	<i>1800806292</i>
<i>VACCA - Family Violence Case Management and support programs</i>	<i>03 92878800</i>
<i>Djirra -Aboriginal Family Violence Response & Support Service</i>	<i>03 92443333</i>
<i>DardiMunwurro – Aboriginal Men’s Crisis Support Line (24 hour service)</i>	<i>1800435799</i>
<i>Men’s Referral Service</i>	<i>1300766491</i>
<i>Men’s Line</i>	<i>1300789978</i>
<i>QLife (supporting the LGBTIQ young people)</i>	<i>1800184527 or online</i>
<i>Kids Helpline (24 hour service)</i> <i>Telephone support to all children and young people 0-18</i>	<i>1800 55 1800 or online</i>