



Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is “violence, abuse, and intimidation between people who are currently or have previously been in an intimate relationship”. A domestically violent relationship is one where the perpetrator (the person being violent) uses controlling, coercive, or threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse to control and dominate the other person.

Domestic violence has severe and long-term impacts on the victims, perpetrators, and families involved.

Types of Abuse

Many people in abusive relationships do not realise they are in one – often they feel this because the abuse isn't physical. However, abuse can include:

- **Physical Abuse:** when a person uses or threatens physical force against another person. E.g., shaking, slapping, spitting, or biting, trying to strangle or choke, using weapons, threatening violence, abusing children or pets, depriving sleep or food, driving dangerously
- **Sexual Abuse:** forced or unwanted sexual activity. E.g., using sexually-degrading insults, sexual assault/rape, unwanted exposure to sexually explicit content
- **Verbal Abuse:** using words to humiliate or damage a person's self-esteem. E.g., Name-calling, swearing, humiliation in public, attacking another's intelligence, parenting, or body

- **Emotional Abuse:** using controlling tactics to damage a person's independence, confidence, self-esteem, or wellbeing. E.g., blaming them for relationship issues, constant negative comparisons, insulting, threatening suicide or taking children away, guilt-tripping
- **Financial Abuse:** controlling a partner's finances or financial freedom. E.g., restricting access to bank accounts, monitoring financial spending, forbidding a partner to work, refusing to work
- **Image-Based Abuse:** when someone shares or threatens to share intimate photos without that person's. E.g., sharing nude/sexually explicit photos without consent, digitally adding a person's face to a sexualised image
- **Social Abuse:** isolating the person from family, friends and social connections. E.g., monitoring phone calls, deciding who they can contact criticising friends and family, not allowing new friends, moving away from their loved ones
- **Spiritual Abuse:** preventing someone from practising their religion or controlling their religious or spiritual beliefs. E.g., forcing someone from practising their religion, misusing spiritual or religious beliefs to justify other types of abuse, or ridiculing a person's religious practices.

It is often difficult to identify abusive relationships, these relationships often move through cycles of violence, calm, and tension. The main signs to look for revolve around the themes of jealousy, possessiveness, threats, and violence.



The Impacts of Domestic Violence

- **Mental Health:** victims of domestic violence are more likely to struggle with low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, PTSD, and feel suicidal
- **Health:** domestic violence negatively impacts a victim's health, including increased blood pressure, digestive issues, lowered immunity, and risk of death from violence. It is the leading contributor to illness, disability, and premature death for women aged 18-44
- **Children and Young People:** those exposed to domestic violence at a young age are more likely to experience child abuse, harassment, and family violence. They are more likely to be in domestically violent relationships as an adult or become perpetrators themselves
- **Homelessness:** domestic violence is the leading cause of homelessness for women and their children.

Supporting those Experiencing Domestic Violence

Listen without judgement

It can be difficult to leave an abusive relationship; remember to be patient and try to understand what they're going through. If you jump in early and tell them what to do, they are likely to retreat and feel further criticised. Show support and patience by listening without judging them.

Name the abuse you have spotted

If they are describing signs of domestic violence, it can be helpful to say so. Do not presume anything and allow them to say no. Consider looking up signs with them, if they are open to this.

Help them get advice or support

If they are open to seeking support, encourage them to access services or advice, such as those listed below. Offer to go with them if they meet with a support service. It can be very nerve-wracking going to gain support.

Regularly keep in touch with them

It can be very slow for someone to leave a domestic violence relationship or take steps to change the dynamics. Check-in with them regardless of their decision, so they don't feel isolated

Offer support if they need to leave the relationship

If appropriate, offer a place to stay if they decide to leave the relationship, or signpost them to domestic services that can offer emergency housing.

Domestic Violence Support Services

Australia:

Acacia's DFV Connect Line: 1800 879 163

Lifeline: 13 11 14 or www.lifeline.org.au

1800 RESPECT: 1800 737 732 or 1800respect.org.au

MensLine: 1300 789 978 or mensline.org.au

New Zealand:

Lifeline: 0800 543 354 or Lifeline.org.nz

Shine Helpline: 0508-744-633 or www.2shine.org.nz

Women's Refuge: 0800 733 843 or

womensrefuge.org.nz

Family Violence Information Line: 0800 456 450 or

www.areyouok.org.nz