Domestic and family violence takes many forms. It involves violent, abusive or intimidating behaviour carried out by a partner, carer or family member to control, dominate or instil fear. It doesn't have to be physical abuse. It can be emotional, psychological, financial, sexual or other types of abuse.

It can affect anyone in the community, regardless of gender, sexual identity, race, age, culture, ethnicity, religion, disability, economic status or location.
Get help now...

It’s never too late to seek help if you, or someone you know, is a victim of domestic violence.
If you are in immediate danger call the Police on 000
Domestic Violence Line (24 hrs) 1800 656 463
www.community.nsw.gov.au
Translating and interpreting service 13 14 50

What is domestic and family violence?

Domestic violence takes many forms. It involves violent, abusive or intimidating behaviour carried out by a partner, carer, friend or family member, boyfriend or girlfriend, to control, dominate, humiliate or instil fear. A person does not need to be married for it to be considered ‘domestic and family violence’. A person does not need to experience all of these types of abuse for it to be considered domestic or family violence.

Domestic and family violence can include (but is not limited to) the following types of abuse:

Psychological
» driving dangerously
» destruction of property
» abuse of pets in front of family members
» making threats regarding custody of any children
» asserting that the police and justice system will not assist, support or believe the victim
» threatening to ‘out’ the person.

Emotional
» blaming the victim for all problems in the relationship
» constantly comparing the victim with others to undermine self-esteem and self-worth
» sporadic sulking

» withdrawing all interest and engagement (for example weeks of silence)
» emotional blackmail and suicidal threats.

Social
» systematic isolation from family and friends through techniques such as ongoing rudeness to family and friends to alienate them
» instigating and controlling the move to a location where the victim has no established social circle or employment opportunities
» restricting use of the car or telephone
» forbidding or physically preventing the victim from going out and meeting people.

Financial
» forbidding access to bank accounts
» providing only an inadequate ‘allowance’
» not allowing the victim to seek or hold employment
» coercing to sign documents or make false declarations
» using all wages earned by the victim for household expenses
» controlling the victim’s pension
» denying that the victim has an entitlement to joint property.

Physical
» direct assault on the body (strangulation or choking, shaking, eye injuries, biting, slapping, pushing, spitting, punching, or kicking)
» use of weapons including objects
» assault of children
» locking the victim in or out of the house
» forcing the victim to take drugs, withholding medication, food or medical care
» sleep deprivation

by taking steps together we can make the violence stop
www.facebook.com/whiteribbonrun
Verbal

» swearing and continual humiliation, either in private or in public
» attacks following clear themes that focus on intelligence, sexuality, body image and capacity as a parent and spouse.

Sexual

» any form of pressured/unwanted sex or sexual degradation by an intimate partner or ex-partner, such as sexual activity without consent
» causing pain during sex
» assaulting genitals
» coercive 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.

Signs you could be in an abusive relationship

Our relationships and families should provide us with the things we all need, including love, care and support within a safe environment. Sometimes, however, this is not always the case.

If you are unsure whether the circumstance(s) you find yourself in are within the realm of domestic and family violence, please read the list following:

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

» Make you feel uncomfortable or afraid?
» Often put you down, humiliate you, or make you feel worthless?
» Constantly check up on what you are doing or where you are going?
» Try to stop you from seeing your own friends or family?
» Make you feel afraid to disagree or say 'no' to them?
» Constantly accuse you of flirting with others when this isn’t true?
» Tell you how the household finances should be spent, or stop you having any money for yourself?
» Stop you from having medical assistance?
» Scare or hurt you by being violent (e.g. hitting, choking, smashing things, locking you in, driving dangerously to frighten you)?
» Pressure or force you to do sexual things that you don’t want to do?
» Threaten to hurt you, or to kill themselves if you say you want to end the relationship?
» Interfere with your online access or access to the phone?
» Hurt your children, or performed violent actions in front of your children?
» Make regular negative comments about the way you look or what you wear?

If you have answered ‘yes’ to any of these, then there are signs that you are not being treated right, or that you are being abused. If you don’t feel safe, respected and cared for, then something isn’t right. If you want to talk to someone about these things, counsellors are available on the Domestic Violence Line on 1800 656 463.

Checklist produced by the Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria (republished with permission)
I have nowhere to go

Fear of having nowhere to go can make it hard to leave a violent relationship. There are emergency short-term and long-term accommodation options available for women who experience domestic and family violence in NSW. For access to your local women’s refuge or emergency accommodation, call the Domestic Violence Line on 1800 656 653. Some refuges prefer not to advertise their phone numbers, but the Domestic Violence Line will take your number and the local refuge will phone you back.

For emergency accommodation because of homelessness, call the Homeless Persons Information Centre on Toll free 1800 234 566. Note, however, that this number does not provide domestic and family violence support services.

Deciding whether to leave or stay

As you decide whether to leave your partner or stay with them, you might be thinking:

» my partner has promised to stop the abuse. Often abusive partners plead for another chance, beg for forgiveness, and promise to change. They may even mean what they say in that moment, but their true intention is to keep you from leaving. Most of the time, they quickly return to their abusive and controlling behaviour once they have been forgiven and they are no longer worried that you will leave.

» I am hoping my partner will change. While change is not impossible, it is not quick or easy. Change can only happen once your partner takes full responsibility for their behaviour and stops blaming you, or their unhappy childhood, stress, work, financial problems, drinking, drug misuse, depression or temper.

» I can help my partner. It is not unusual to want to help your partner. You may think you are the only one who understands them or that it is your responsibility to fix their problems. But, the reality is that by staying and accepting repeated abuse, you are reinforcing and enabling their abusive behaviour.

» my partner is attending counselling. Even if your partner is in counselling, there is no guarantee that they will change. Many partners who go through counselling continue to be violent, abusive, and controlling. If your partner has stopped trivialising the problem or making excuses, that is a good sign. But you still need to make your decision based on who they are now, not the person you hope they will become.

I am worried about how I will survive financially

The Australian Government, through Centrelink, can provide crisis payments in cases of domestic violence. For enquiries about financial assistance call Centrelink on 13 10 21.

For enquiries about services and payments call the Family Assistance Office on 13 61 50 or visit the Department of Human Services Centrelink website www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/dhs/centrelink

I am worried about what will happen if I leave.

You may be afraid of what your partner will do, where you will go, or how you will support yourself or your children. But do not let fear of the unknown keep you in a dangerous and unhealthy situation.

Signs that your partner is NOT changing:

» they tell you that you owe them another chance
» they say that they can’t change unless you stay with them and support them
» they minimise the abuse or deny how serious it really was
» they continue to blame others for their behaviour
» they claim that you are the one who is abusive
» they say you will destroy the family by leaving.

I am worried about someone else

You may have a sister, colleague, Mum, cousin, neighbour or friend who is experiencing violence. Your friend or family member may:

» seem afraid of their partner or is always anxious to please their partner
» stop seeing friends and family
» have become anxious, depressed, withdrawn or have lost their confidence
» say their partner is jealous, possessive or has a bad temper
» have bruises, sprains or cuts on their body
I am a young woman

Young women can experience a variety of forms of violence and controlling behaviour. Sometimes this can be difficult to recognise as domestic violence and you might be confused about how you’re feeling – your partner (your boyfriend or girlfriend) might be loving one day and violent the next. Here are some signs that something is not quite right in your relationship:

- you have lost your confidence because of things your partner says to you
- your partner hits you or throws things at you when he gets angry
- your partner gets jealous all the time and accuses you of cheating
- your partner tries to stop you from hanging out with your friends and family
- your partner makes you feel scared.

There are services available for young people who experience domestic violence, even if you just want to call and talk it through with someone. Remember that you are not alone and that every relationship should be respectful.

The Line: Helping teenagers and young adults through a difficult time in their lives. Call 1800 MYLINE (1800 695 463) or visit http://theline.org.au

Love: The Good, the Bad, the Ugly: Information and advice from the personal experiences of other young people who have been there. Visit http://lovegoodbadugly.com
I am an older woman

Women of all ages can experience domestic and family violence. Recent data indicates that one in four women reporting physical domestic violence are aged 45 years and over.

Some older women may have experienced domestic and family violence for years, while for others the abuse may have started later in life. Some have experienced violence from their partner, whereas others have experienced violence from their children or carers.

It is important to remember that domestic and family violence is not only physical but can include emotional, social, verbal and psychological abuse as well as harassment and stalking. It could include financial abuse, such as controlling your pension.

While older women’s experiences of violence reflect those of other women, there are also particular issues that arise for many older women in violent relationships.

Older women often have smaller social networks for support. They may be financially disadvantaged after raising children and have limited employment opportunities to create new wealth. These can create barriers to leaving violent relationships and accessing services and support.

You can obtain the help you need through the Domestic Violence Line on 1800 656 463.

You might also find it useful to contact:

Older Women’s Network
P: 02 9247 7046 www.ownnsw.org.au

Older Person’s Legal Service

I am a migrant woman

In my culture, husbands are the head of the family and some think it’s ok to use violence against their wife.

NSW is proud to be a multicultural Australian state in which individuals from different cultures are encouraged to identify with their heritage. All women and men in NSW share the same human rights as well as equality before the law.

In NSW there are services available as well as support and protection for women who are victims of domestic violence. Translators are available for you if you are not confident speaking English. The NSW Government is committed to building an equitable, inclusive and safe society.

It’s important to know that if you have come to Australia on a temporary or spousal visa, you can apply for residency if you have suffered domestic and family violence. Under the immigration law, refuge workers are permitted to help you fill in immigration forms.

If you are worried that you will be forced to return to your home country contact the Domestic Violence Line on 1800 656 463.

You might also find it useful to contact:

Immigrant Women’s Speakout Association
P: 02 9635 8022 www.speakout.org.au

Immigration Advice and Rights Centre
P: 02 9262 3833 www.iarc.asn.au

Immigrant Women’s Health Service
P: 02 9726 4044 (Fairfield)
P: 02 9726 1016 (Cabramatta)
www.immigrantwomenshealth.org.au

Translating and Interpreting Service
P: 13 14 50

Services and support

The National Sexual Assault Family & Domestic Violence Counselling Line 1800 737 732 or 1800respect.org.au

www.nswrapecrisis.com.au


Lifeline 13 11 14 or lifeline.org.au

Relationships Australia 1300 364 277 or relationships.org.au

Housing NSW – temporary accommodation line
Toll free: 1800 152 152

NSW Men’s Referral Service (24 hrs) 1300 766 491

To report suspected child abuse or neglect, call the Child Protection Helpline 13 21 11 (24/7).

Legal services

Women’s Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service
1300 888 529 www.lawaccess.nsw.gov.au

Domestic Violence Legal Advice Line
Toll free: 1800 810 784 www.womenslegalnsw.asn.au

Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women’s Legal Centre P: 02 9569 3847 (Sydney metropolitan), Toll free: 1800 686 587 (NSW only).

Aboriginal Medical Services (AMS) are Aboriginal community-controlled health care services and aims to improve the health standards in Aboriginal communities across Australia.
Aurora – new domestic and family violence app

If you are experiencing domestic and family violence or you’re worried that a friend or family member is, this app contains useful and potentially life-saving information. You’ll find:

» emergency contacts
» information on the sorts of behaviour considered to be domestic and family violence
» vital information and links to support services available in NSW.

The app also allows the user to message their trusted friends and family members or call emergency services immediately.

Download free from the iPhone App Store and the Android Google Play Store.

Staying Home Leaving Violence

**Staying Home Leaving Violence** is a free NSW service that provides the support you need, for as long as you need, to exclude violence from your home and prevent it in the future. It is a long-term support program designed to assist you through each step of the process. As part of this program, the violent person is removed from the home allowing you and your children, if you have them, to remain safely in your home.

**Staying Home Leaving Violence caseworkers** help you:

» work with Police and the courts to remove your violent husband, partner or boyfriend
» support you through the separation
» help with housing and money matters
» improve your family’s safety.

You will be provided with a range of support services such as safety planning, improving your home’s security such as changing the locks and putting up stronger window screens, assistance in managing finances, support for children and help throughout the legal process.

If you decide to stay in your home, there are services that can help support you at this time. Support workers from women’s refuges can help you work out what extra services you need, and link you up with them.

**Staying Home Leaving Violence** operates in 18 communities across NSW. Call the **Staying Home Leaving Violence** program in your area:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bega</td>
<td>02 6492 6239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campbelltown</td>
<td>02 4633 3777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dubbo</td>
<td>02 6883 1560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Sydney</td>
<td>0439 414 673</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>02 9602 7795</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kempsey</td>
<td>02 6563 1588</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lake Macquarie</td>
<td>02 4943 9255</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>02 9602 7795</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maitland</td>
<td>02 4933 9540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moree</td>
<td>02 6752 8027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Druitt</td>
<td>02 9677 1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>02 4926 3577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penrith</td>
<td>02 4721 2499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redfern</td>
<td>02 9699 9036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoalhaven</td>
<td>0459 046 066 or 0459 046 077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walgett</td>
<td>02 6928 1611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollongong</td>
<td>02 4255 5333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyong</td>
<td>02 4350 1748</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Taking steps to heal**

The effects of domestic and family violence can continue for a long time even after the end of the relationship. Attending counselling, therapy, or a support group can help you understand what you have been through and assist you to build new and healthy relationships.

After the trauma you have been through, you may be struggling with upsetting emotions, frightening memories, or a sense of constant danger. Or you may feel numb, disconnected, and unable to trust other people. When bad things happen, it can take a while to get over the pain and feel safe again. Remember that you are not alone. Support from family, friends and counsellors can help your recovery.

If you ever feel that you need to talk to someone, please contact the Domestic Violence on 1800 666 463 or one of the services listed.
I am a man experiencing domestic and family violence

Although domestic and family violence is more commonly experienced by women it can happen to men, too. Violence against any person is unacceptable. Perpetrators of violence against men include their children, wives or partners, parents, siblings and carers.

Men who experience domestic and family violence are more likely to experience psychosomatic symptoms, stress, depression and alcoholism, than non-abused men.

Many men who experience domestic and family violence feel a sense of shame about the abuse they are experiencing. This may be related to feeling like they should be able to protect themselves from violence. It is important to remember that it is never your fault and that men, like everyone else, are entitled to the full protection of the law when it comes to domestic violence.

If you are male and experiencing domestic violence, support and services are available.

**MensLine Australia**

P: 1300 789 978 (24/7)

www.menslineaus.org.au

**National Domestic Violence Line**

P: 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)

I am a young male and I am concerned about my behaviour in my relationship

Recognising that you have problems controlling your anger or dealing with difficult phases in your relationship is a great first step. If you require more information, or need to talk to someone confidentially try contacting one of the following services.

**Mensline** is a national helpline that offers support, information and referrals to help men to deal with relationship problems in a practical and effective way. P: 02 9708 2088 or 1300 789 978 or email: talkitover@menslineaus.org.au.

**Kids Helpline 24/7:** If you’re under 25 can call 1800 551 800 (24/7) or use their web or email counselling services, if you want to talk about relationships. No problem or concern is too big or too small to talk to the counsellors about.

www.kidshelp.com.au

**Reach Out** is a website for young people to help them understand issues relating to mental health and wellbeing. It includes information about issues relating to violence.

http://au.reachout.com

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