Domestic violence has serious, negative consequences for individuals, families and whole communities.

Victims develop survival skills to protect themselves and their children. They may typify ‘:Array their partner's moods or change their behavior in ways that their children may not understand, often leading to confusion and hopelessness. These are normal reactions for the violence and tension in families. They are not to blame and it is the person who uses violence who is responsible.

Domestic violence is not always physical. It happens in many ways and includes:
- Emotional abuse, humiliating someone, putting them down and blaming them.
- Stalking; following or making excessive calls, messages or emails.
- Verbal abuse; name-calling and yelling.
- Physical abuse; hitting, shoving, slapping or using objects.
- Sexual abuse.
- Financial abuse, controlling money, financial transfers, or spending arrangements.
- Social abuse, controlling who you see, talk to or associate with.
- Emotional abuse, controlling spiritual or cultural choices.

Non-physical forms of abuse can be just as damaging as physical assault. If you do not feel respected or able to be yourself in a relationship, you are at risk of domestic violence. If you recognize this, talk to someone you trust as soon as possible.

What is the affects of domestic violence?

Domestic violence has serious, negative consequences for individuals, families and whole communities.

This Tool Kit has been produced by the Lifeline Information Service as a public service. You are welcome to reproduce it without limitation and to adapt it at your own expense. It should not be used for commercial purposes without the permission of the Lifeline Information Service. If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence due to lawlessness and issues of control, please seek help through the following services.

Places to go for help now:
- For immediate help, call the police on 100.
- For specialist counselling help, call 1800 588 500.
- For information about receiving a Domestic Violence Divorce order, contact 1800 588 500.
- For information about getting legal advice, contact Legal Aid 1800 007 888.
- For more information, visit the Lifeline website at www.lifeline.org.au.

Acknowledgements:

Primed Super is the proud sponsor of the Lifeline Information Service – your mental health and self-help resource.

Primed Super in Australia's only nationally operating super fund dedicated to rural and regional Australia.

For more information on Prime Super, please ring 1800 675 800 or visit the website www.primesuper.com.au.

Lifeline and Prime Super are working in partnership to promote mental health awareness, help-seeking and suicide prevention.

What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is abuse by one person towards their partner, girlfriend/boyfriend or spouse. It is sometimes called relationship violence or family violence. The partner's actions may be aggressive, demanding, controlling, threatening, angry, violent or violent, along with non-physical forms of abuse. The partner's actions may be intended to exacerbate, control, harm or threaten the partner.

It can happen in many ways and includes:
- Emotional abuse, humiliating someone, putting them down and blaming them.
- Financial abuse, controlling money, financial transfers, or spending arrangements.
- Verbal abuse; name-calling and yelling.
- Physical abuse; hitting, shoving, slapping or using objects.
- Sexual abuse.
- Social abuse, controlling who you see, talk to or associate with.
- Emotional abuse, controlling spiritual or cultural choices.

Non-physical forms of abuse can be just as damaging as physical assault. If you do not feel respected or able to be yourself in a relationship, you are at risk of domestic violence. If you recognize this, talk to someone you trust as soon as possible.

Who is affected by domestic violence?

Anyone can experience domestic violence. It happens in every community, young and old; wealthy or poor, all cultures, people in same sex relationships, people with disabilities, those who are socially successful and those who are struggling. The majority of victims are women, although men can also be victim.

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- Financial abuse, controlling money, financial transfers, or spending arrangements.
- Verbal abuse; name-calling and yelling.
- Social abuse, controlling who you see and who you see.
- Physical or threats of physical harm, threatening things, hurling pets.
- Sexual abuse.
- Social abuse.
- Emotional abuse, controlling spiritual or cultural choices.

Non-physical forms of abuse can be just as damaging as physical assault. If you do not feel respected or able to be yourself in a relationship, you are at risk of domestic violence. If you recognize this, talk to someone you trust as soon as possible.

Lifeline's domestic violence tool kit provides information about:

Understanding what domestic violence is
Developing some strategies for what to do in a violent or abusive relationship
Understanding what friends and family can do

Where to go for help

For 24 hour telephone crisis support call 13 11 14
For more information visit www.lifeline.org.au
To donate call 1800 800 768

Last revised May 2010

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Leaving the relationship

There may come a time when you want to leave. This can be a difficult decision and will need careful planning and support.

Why is it hard to leave?

There are many reasons why it can be hard to leave. For example you may:

- Have a strong commitment to the relationship for cultural or religious reasons
- Still love your partner and hope for change

Worry about the children's wellbeing if the family breaks up
- Fear being blamed or rejected by friends
- Worry about the children’s wellbeing if the family is separated
- Be dependent on your partner for daily, personal care
- Feel unable to decide what to do
- Fail to plan your leave or take your leave
- Fear of violence from a partner

Depend on your partner for daily, personal care

• Build their confidence, respect their decisions and continue offering support.
• Seek advice from support services so you can find information about local assistance.
• Look after yourself
- Connect to others who have experienced similar situations. This sharing can help you feel less alone.
- Try to find a safe place to have positive ‘time out’. Living in a stressful situation can wear you down. Domestic violence can cause anxiety, panic attacks, depression and thoughts of suicide. Find supportive GP or other health worker and tell them what's happening. You can also ring Lifeline on 13 11 14 for free confidential support.
- Protect your safety and your family. For example if your partner disobeys the violence order (AVO), intervention order or protection order (also known as an apprehended violence order), you can seek legal advice and advice for fear of violence from a partner.
- Sometimes the wider community knows about the violence but does not offer support for fear of mentioning your name. You can help change community attitudes by talking about the effects of domestic violence and how the damages families and the whole community
• If you feel unsupported or a supporting domestic violence, ask them about it. They may not be ready to talk about their concerns, but eventually they will continue to be the first step towards increasing your safety.

What things to take with you should include:
• Emergency numbers – apart from 000 for police assistance make sure you have the numbers for domestic violence support services in your area
• A bag of clothing and toiletries
• A few of the children’s toys and blankets
• Important documents including bank account details, Medicare number, passport, immigration papers, voter’s licence, driver’s licence, children’s records, marriage certificate, birth certificates, your address book

What can friends and family do?

The most important way to help someone in a domestic violence situation is to listen to them and believe them, without judging.

• Do not take the situation for granted or try to resolve it for yourself
• If you decide to leave

Leaving an abusive relationship often increases the level of violence.

The time leading up to and following the separation may be very stressful. It is important to be aware of this and plan for your safety. Have a safety plan that you have talked through with a trusted family member, friend or support worker.

If you are not escaping from immediate danger and you have time, you could pack an emergency bag of things to take with you. Be careful that the person abusing you does not see your written preparations or a packed bag.

Where to get help?

For women

Domestic Violence Resource Centre
www.dvrc.org.au

Immigrant Women’s Domestic Violence Service
www.imwv.org.au

Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service WA
www.hurt.net.au/DFV.htm

Women’s safety after separation

Women's General for DV Services (WA)
www.womenserviceswa.com.au

Women’s Information and support
www.wa.gov.au/content/womenservices.html

Domestic violence Hotline: 1800 633 937 (24hrs)
1800 200 526 (24hrs)
1300 200 526 (24hrs)
1800 800 000 (Tasmania)
1800 000 599 (Men’s DVI Helpline)
1800 605 463 (1775)
1800 671 442

Domestic Violence Crisis Service: 02 6280 0900
Domestic Violence Hotline: 1800 800 000
Domestic Violence Line: 1800 200 526 (24hrs)
Men’s Referral Service: 1800 065 973 (from 9am to 9pm)

For men

Men’s DV Helpline: 1800 000 599
Family Violence Response and Referral Line: 1800 623 327 (24hrs)
Men’s Referral Service: 1800 007 339
Men’s DVI Helpline: 1800 060 559

Recognise your strengths

You have a very strong resource to survive in a violent and abusive situation. Your skills and abilities have kept you going and may have already helped you leave. The way you have coped and worked to lead a normal life and care for the children are signs of your capabilities under enormous pressure. You can draw on these strengths to create a more positive life.
Things to take with you should include:

- Emergency numbers - apart from 000 for police assistance make sure you have the numbers for domestic violence, child care services in your area.
- A bag of clothing and toiletries.
- A few of the children’s toys and blankets.
- Important documents including bank account details, Medicare number, passport, immigration papers, driver’s licence, tax file number, children’s records, marriage certificate, birth certificates, passport, address book.
- Other important items such as medications, prescriptions, car and house keys, credit cards and cash.
- A packed lunch or dinner.

You can arrange for the police to be there standing by when you leave your husband’s safety to go back to the house with you to collect your possessions later on.

What are my rights?

Everyone has the right to live in safety, physical or sexual assault, threats of violence and stalking are against the law in Australia.

You can apply for a protection order (also known as an apprehended violence order (AVO), intervention order or restraining order). The protection order can direct the abuser not to harm you, come near you, your home or workplace. You will need to show evidence of the violence and reason to believe it will happen again. Keep your own record of incidents and see a doctor if you have been physically or psychologically harmed, so that a medical file is created. If your partner discloses the order you must report it and they can be charged with an offence.

Survivors of domestic violence have often been isolated from friends and family and may have difficulty trusting anyone. Make sure you stay in touch and maintain your support, especially following a separation. If the victim chooses not to leave the abuse relationship it is very important to stay connected and continue offering support.

Protect their safety and your own. For example do not tell the abusive person where their partner or their children are going to be. Sometimes the wider community knows about the violence but do not offer support for fear of legal action. You can help change community attitudes by talking about the effects of domestic violence and the damaging families and the whole community.

If you support someone experiencing domestic violence, ask them about it. They may not be ready to talk about your concerns, belonging to the first steps is to encourage them to talk. Seek advice from support services so you can find out more about local assistance.

What can friends and family do?

The most important way to help someone in a domestic violence situation is to listen to them and believe them, without judging.

Do not misunderstand the situation. The abusive partner has deliberately tried to break down the victim’s confidence and they may feel stupid, helpless and responsible for the abuse.

Build their confidence, respect their decisions and tell them they are entitled to seek services available. Offer practical help such as cooking the first meal, or gold them to court to see a judge. Consider giving the abuser a list of people to call if they leave.

Seek advice from support services so you can find out more about local assistance.

Where to get help?

For websites

Domestic Violence Resource Centre: www.dvrc.org.au
Immigrant Women's Domestic Violence Service: www.imwds.org.au
Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service WA: www.aboriginal.org.au
Women’s safety after separation: www.nrcm.org.au/e/women/return.htm

For women

Domestic Violence Helpline: 1800 636 444 (24hrs)
Domestic Violence Resource Centre: 1300 782 200 (24hrs emergency accommodation)
Domestic Violence Helpline: 1800 007 339 (Mon to Fri)
Domestic Violence Service: 1800 623 337 (24hrs)

For men

Domestic Violence Helpline: 1800 015 188 (24hrs)
Men’s Resource Service: 1800 065 973 (Mon to Fri)
Domestic Violence Counselling and Support: 1800 008 122 (Mon to Fri or 9am to 9pm on weekends)
Domestic Violence Response and Referral Line: 1800 623 337 (24hrs)

Women’s DV Helpline: 1800 007 339
Men’s DV Helpline: 1800 065 973

What to do if you decide to leave

Leaving an abusive relationship often increases the level of violence.

The time leading up to and following the separation may be the most dangerous time. It is important to be aware of this and plan for your safety. Have a strong commitment to the relationship for cultural or religious reasons.

Still love your partner and hope for change.

Worry about the children’s wellbeing if the family breaks up.

Have pressure to stay and ‘work it out’ from family, community or church. Fear losing your home and financial security.

Have lost confidence in your own judgment and can’t make decisions for yourself.

Worry about the children’s wellbeing if the family breaks up.

There may come a time when you decide that your life is worth more than staying in a relationship that is putting your family, community or church.

Fears and concerns are reported by friends.

Depend on your partner for daily, personal care.

What is it hard to leave?

The most common reason given by people for not leaving is the fear of losing their home and financial security.

Fear of violence from the partner or his friends.

Fear of violence from members of the family, community or church.

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Have been the victim of violence in the past.

Fear that the partner will break in and steal your personal belongings.

Fear of violence from the partner or his friends.

Worry about the children’s wellbeing if the family breaks up.

•

Worry about the children’s wellbeing if the family breaks up.

Fears and concerns are reported by friends.

If you are in this situation it does not mean you have to remain silent about your abuse.

Seek advice from support services so you can find out more about local assistance.

1 Find supportive friends

Have someone you can talk to while deciding and making changes. Often people in similar circumstances become isolated and cut off. Break the isolation and reach out.

2 Let go of feeling responsible

Domestic violence and abuse is not caused by something you have done. It’s done in a relationship by one person and it is a crime. In most cases they will not stop the violence without professional help.

3 Know your rights

You do not have to continue living with violence and abuse. Seek legal advice and practical and emotional support from your local services.

4 Contact a support group

Organisations can help you connect to others who have experienced similar situations. This sharing can offer you direct help and hope.

5 Look after yourself

Try to find a safe place to have ‘positive time out’. Living in a stressful situation can wear you down. Domestic violence can cause anxiety, panic attacks, depression and thoughts of suicide. Find supportive GP or health worker and tell them what’s happening. You can also ring Lifeline on weekends for support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 13 11 11.

6 Do not judge yourself

Remember that part of the difficulty in leaving an abusive relationship is the fear of commitment. You will be facing a daunting number of hard issues. You may find that you regret leaving the relationship, even though you may have said that you want to leave. You may feel that you gave up too much to escape abuse and that you didn’t do enough to escape. You may think that you were weak for staying or that you have made a mistake. It is normal to feel this and with help it will gradually become less overwhelming. Talk to supportive friends, family or support workers when you feel the pain is too much.

7 Recognise your strengths

You have to be very resourceful to survive in a violent and abusive situation. Your skills and abilities have kept you going and may have already helped you to leave. The way you have coped and worked to lead a normal life and care for the children are signs of your capabilities under enormous pressure. You can draw on these strengths to create a more positive life.
Leaving the relationship

There may come a time when you want to leave. This can be a difficult decision and will need careful planning and support.

Why is it hard to leave?

There are many reasons why it can be hard to leave. For example you may:
- Have a strong commitment to the relationship for cultural or religious reasons
- Still love your partner and hope for change
- Worry about the children's wellbeing if the family breaks up
- Have legal or financial obligations
- Feel pressured to stay and 'work it out'
- Want to leave. This can be a difficult time to make a decision about your safety, separation and your children.
- Be afraid of the violence and how you may be treated
- Believe it will happen again
- Feel you have no other choice
- Be afraid of your partner
- Do not tell the abusive person where their partner is going to be
- Be unable to think clearly
- Feel overwhelmed
- Have no support
- Feel trapped
- Do not want to hurt your children
- Do not believe anyone can help you
- Have no idea what to do next
- Do not believe you could ever leave
- Be too scared
- Have no one to talk to
- Have no place to go

Treat things to be aware of when you decide to leave:
- Emergency numbers – apart from 000 for police assistance make sure you have the numbers for other domestic violence services in your area.
- A bag of clothing and toiletries
- A few of the children’s toys and blankets
- Important documents including bank account details. Medicare number, passport, immigration papers, driver’s licence, family members’ children’s records, marriage certificate, birth certificates, your address book
- Other important items such as medication, prescriptions, car and house keys, credit cards and cash
- Money
- Food and drink
- A bag of clothing and toiletries
- Phone chargers
- Important documents including bank account details. Medicare number, passport, immigration papers, driver’s licence, family members’ children’s records, marriage certificate, birth certificates, your address book
- Other important items such as medication, prescriptions, car and house keys, credit cards and cash

What is your rights?

Everyone has the right to law (in addition to physical or sexual assault, threats of violence and violence). The following are your rights in Australia.

You can apply to the police or a solicitor for a protection order (also known as an apprehended violence order (AVO), intervention order or restraining order). The protection order can direct the abuser not to harm you, come near you, your children, home or workplace. You will need to show evidence of the violence and reason to believe it will happen again. Keep your own record of incidents. You can hold onto text or email messages if you have them, or photographs of injuries. If you are finding it difficult to keep evidence, try to speak to someone who can help you.

Survivors of domestic violence have often been isolated from friends and family and may have difficulty trusting anyone. Make sure you stay in touch and maintain your support, especially following a separation.

If the victim chooses not to leave the abuse relationship it is very important to stay connected and continue offering support.

Protect their safety (and your own). For example you can ask them to cancel credit cards or bank accounts.

Sometimes the wider community knows about the violence but does not offer support for fear of losing jobs or friends. You can help change community attitudes by talking about the effects of domestic violence and how it damages families and the whole community.

You may also be able to access:
- Financial support to pay for your own immediate financial difficulties
- Financial compensation from Victims of Crime
- Legal representation for family or criminal law
- Order you must report it and they can be charged with a criminal offence.
- The protection order can direct the abuser not to harm you, come near you, your children, home or workplace. You will need to show evidence of the violence and reason to believe it will happen again. Keep your own record of incidents. You can hold onto text or email messages if you have them, or photographs of injuries. If you are finding it difficult to keep evidence, try to speak to someone who can help you.

Try to find a safe place to have a positive time out. Living in a stressful situation can wear you down. Domestic violence can cause anxiety, panic attacks, depression and thoughts of suicide. First is supportive GP or health worker and maintain your support, especially following a separation.

Look after yourself

- Speak to others about your situation and find support
- Join support groups for survivors
- Look for support services in your area
- Connect to others who have experienced similar situations. This sharing can help you feel less alone

What are my rights?

Domestic violence and abuse is not caused by something you have done or are doing. It is a crime. In most cases they will not stop the violence without professional help.

Make sure you talk to someone about the violence and support you have to help you. You may want to consider leaving or moving to a different place.

Recognise your strengths

Recognise that you are in a violent or abusive relationship

- You have the right to a safe and positive life free from violence
- You do not have to continue living with violence and abuse
- Seek legal advice and practical and emotional support from your local services.

Where to get help?

Find supportive friends

- Have someone you can talk to while deciding and making changes
- Often people in similar situations become isolated and cut off. Build the relationship and ask for support

Seek your rights

- Follow the advice and practical and emotional support from your local services.
- You may want to consider leaving or moving to a different place.
- The way you have coped and worked to lead a normal life may have already helped you to leave. The ways you have coped and worked to lead a normal life and care for the children are signs of your capabilities under enorme pressure. You can draw on these strengths to create a more positive life.
What are the effects of domestic violence?

Domestic violence has serious, negative consequences for individuals, families and whole communities.

Victims develop numbness to protect themselves and their children. They may isolate themselves, their partner’s moods or change their behavior to keep the abuse hidden from friends and family. They try to protect children from seeing or hearing the abuse. They do everything exactly as their partner wants, but still do not stop the abuse. Some victims also try to light back.

It is important to realize that no matter what you do, only the abusive partner can change their behavior. It is not your fault and it is the person who uses violence that is responsible for the violence. Violence is visible through the services listed at the end of the tool kit.

Living in an abusive relationship can lead to depression, injury from assault, suicidal thoughts, panic and anxiety. You may have nightmares, be unable to sleep, stop eating properly, or feel confused and hopeless. These are normal reactions.

What are some children’s physical and emotional reactions?

There may be changes in their behavior and their development. Unborn children or small babies can also be directly affected by the violence and by being around the birth of a new baby there is greater risk of violence.

Some children may not have the words to tell you how it is affecting them, but their behaviors show how they feel. For example:

- Aggression, demanding behavior and language
- Low self esteem and shame
- Physical reactions; eating and sleeping problems, stomach ache, bedwetting, headaches
- Withdrawal from friends or difficulties making and keeping friends
- Problems with school work
- Becoming a victim or a perpetrator of bullying
- Using drugs or alcohol
- Self harming

These are understandable responses to living with fear and worry.

Children need:

- To know that they are not to blame and that you notice what they are going through
- To feel safe and that they are loved
- Protection from direct physical, sexual, emotional and verbal abuse
- Encouragement to talk about their worries and make sense of what is happening
- Reassurance that the violence is not their fault
- Help with making their own safety plans for where to go when they are scared
- To know that bullying and abuse are not ok
- Professional help if they show signs of ongoing distress

Finally, it is important to teach your children how to handle arguments without using abuse or violence. Show them that people can disagree and still respect and care for one another. Respectful relationships involve mutual care and consideration, negotiation and compromise.

Places to go for help now:

- For immediate help if you are in danger, call the police on 000.
- For specialist counselling support if you are experiencing domestic violence contact the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault National Helpline on 1800 200 208.
- For men who use violence or male survivors of domestic violence, contact Mankind 1300 78 76 78.
- For information about obtaining a Confidential crisis payment to help you with immediate financial difficulties, contact Centrepac on 13 2850 or find information online at www.centrepac.gov.au/internet/centrelink/paidpayment/urgent.htm.
- Safe State or Territory has its own network of services that can help deal with domestic violence. Some of these have websites. For help finding services please put a survivor or a person who uses violence, contact Lifeline on 13 14 14.

Children need:

- Reassurance that the violence is not their fault
- Encouragement to talk about their worries and for increased violence due to jealousy and issues of control.
- Self harming

What is the risk of domestic violence?

Domestic violence is abuse by one person towards their partner, girlfriend/boyfriend or spouse.

It is sometimes called relationship violence or family violence. The partner’s actions make you feel afraid, powerless or unsafe, then you are experiencing domestic violence. This can happen during the relationship and also after you have separated.

Children who see, hear or sense this violence are also affected. Domestic violence is a crime and the person who uses violence is breaking the law.

In domestic violence the abusive partner uses their power to intimidate, threaten or harm the other person, in order to get what they want. This may include: violence, crime, control, limiting how the other person can behave, or putting them down. These acts are a violation of your personal, economic, social and sexual security and isolation, so that those outside the family do not become aware of their violence.

Domestic violence is not always physical. It can happen in many ways and includes:

- Emotional abuse; humiliating someone, putting things down and blaming them
- Financial abuse; strict control of money
- Verbal abuse; name-calling and yelling
- Social abuse; controlling what you do and keeping friends
- Physical reactions; eating and sleeping problems
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- Physical reactions; eating and sleeping problems
- Low self esteem and shame
- For help finding services please put a survivor or a person who uses violence, contact Lifeline on 13 14 14.
What are the effects of domestic violence?

Domestic violence has serious, negative consequences for individuals, families and whole communities.

Victims develop survival skills to protect themselves and their children. They may isolate themselves or change their behavior to keep their partner happy and to protect their friends and family. They try to protect children from seeing or hearing the abuse. They do everything exactly as their partner wishes, but still do not stop the abuse. Some victims also try to light a quick.

It is important to realize that no matter what you do, only the abusive partner can stop their behavior. It is not your fault and it is the person who uses violence who is responsible. Help for people who use violence is available through the services listed at the end of the tool kit.

Living in an abusive relationship can lead to depression, injury from assault, suicidal thoughts, panic and anxiety. You may feel helpless, unable to stop, sees the world through rose-colored glasses, and hope and hopefulness. These are normal reactions to the abuse that you are experiencing.

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