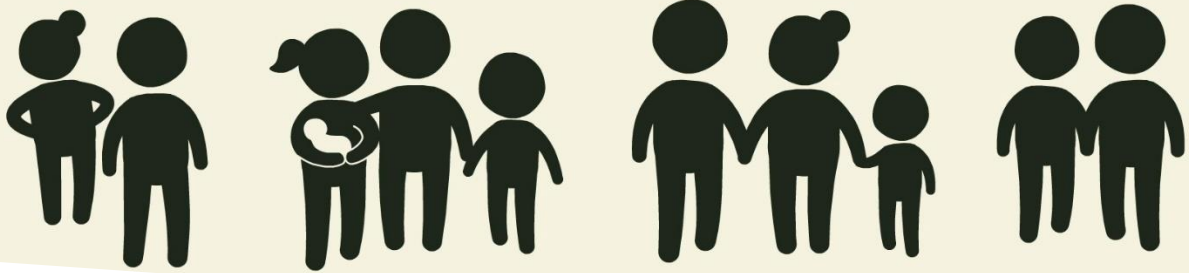


# FAMILY VIOLENCE



## WHAT IS FAMILY VIOLENCE?

Healthy relationships have respect and trust so that people feel safe and can make their own decisions.

### What is family violence?

Family violence is where you say or do things to hurt, scare or control a family member. This is against the law.

### Who might experience family violence?

Family violence can happen in any sort of family relationship. This includes between partners and ex-partners, and parents and children or stepchildren. It can happen with brothers, sisters, cousins, uncles, aunts, nieces or nephews.

The most vulnerable people in our community are children, old people, pregnant women and people with disabilities.

### What sorts of things can be family violence?

Family violence can be physical violence. Things like hitting, kicking, biting or throwing something at another person. But it isn't always physical.

There are also other types of family violence that can be harder to identify. Often there is more than one type of family violence happening. Family violence includes things like:

**Threats:** This is when you say or do things to make another person feel scared or worried. It might be when you say you will do bad things to a person, like you will hurt them. It might be when you stand very close to someone and look very angry and shake your fist at them.

**Emotional abuse:** This is when you say and do things that make someone feel shame, no good, scared or worried. This includes when you blame someone unfairly, call them bad names, tell them they are stupid/no good, or play mind games with them.

**Controlling behaviour:** This is when you try to be the boss of another person and decide things for them which makes them feel bad. It includes telling them how to do things, what to wear, when they can go out and who they can see.

**Hurting pets:** This is when you hurt someone's pets or animals to make that person feel scared or upset.

**Stalking:** This is when you make another person feel worried because you follow them, watch them or harass them. This includes when you watch who they are talking to on social media, follow them around in a car, or hang out around the person's home or workplace. It also includes when you phone them again and again, or send them messages, letters or packages.

**Damaging property:** This is when you break or destroy other people's things. This includes when you make holes in walls and doors, smash windows in cars and buildings, burn someone's clothes, mattresses or toys, or damage their things.

**Financial abuse:** This is when you take someone's money or stop someone from using their money. It is when you spend all the money so there's nothing left to look after your family and pay for things like food or the power bill. It is pressure to share money, like royalties, inheritance or payouts.

**Dowry abuse:** This is when your husband or his family threaten, demand or pressure you or your family to give them money or gifts in return for marriage. It can include refusing to marry you, threatening to divorce or leave you, hurt you or your family, deny you money or have you deported from Australia.

**Social abuse:** This is when you disrespect another person in front of their family or friends and make them feel embarrassed. It is also when you keep someone away from family and friends, or you stop someone going places without you.

**Sexual abuse:** This is when you make someone do sexual things that make them feel ashamed, upset or scared. It can happen between partners and in other family relationships.

## What about when children see or hear family violence?

When children see or hear violence between other people, it can scare them and make them feel worried for a long time afterwards. This is a type of family violence.

Children watching family violence can also learn violent ways. We need to protect children from this type of family violence.



## How do I get help to keep my family safe?

You could be a victim of family violence or you might be a person who uses family violence against others. If these behaviours are happening, it's time to ask for help to keep you and your family safe. Taking this step can be hard, but there are lots of things you can do to get support.

**Talk to a counsellor:** This can help you get things sorted out. This is important if you are feeling unsafe or if you think you could be using violence to get your own way. You can also talk to a counsellor with your partner.

**Make a safety plan:** It is a good idea to work out what you can do to make your family safe. Think about where you can go, who can help, who to call and what things you might need to take with you if you need to leave.

**Call a support person or the police:** If you are the victim of family violence, you may need someone to help you and your children get to a safe place.

**Talk to a lawyer:** A lawyer at Legal Aid WA or another legal service can help too. They can go with you to court to ask for a Family Violence Restraining Order (FVRO), which can stop the person who is hurting or scaring you from coming near you.

Legal Aid WA has offices all over the state. So if you need help to be safe from family violence, come and see us, give us a call or check out our website.

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