

Domestic Violence

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What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence occurs when a family member, such as a partner or ex-partner, repeatedly tries to harm another family member. This harm may be caused in a number of ways, including:

1. Physically (physically hurting you)
2. Emotionally (threatening and purposely insulting you, or keeping you away from others)
3. Financially (preventing you from access to any finances)
4. Doing anything to make you feel unsafe, threatened or controlled.

These abusive behaviours are likely to be repeated and used in an attempt to control you.

How you might feel

You might feel helpless at times, like you have no control over things that happen. The abusive relationship could affect your self-esteem and make you feel like this is what you deserve. It is very hard to keep feeling positive about yourself if you are in an abusive relationship.

Experiencing domestic violence can be very confusing, because the abusive person may not be abusive all the time. Sometimes they might be very loving and sorry for their behaviour.

It is normal to still feel love for the person who is being abusive towards you but it is important to remember that a healthy relationship is built on respect. Abusive behaviour is unacceptable and wrong.

This isn't your fault

Your partner may try to blame you for their behaviour which in itself is a form of emotional abuse and control. They may say something like "this never would have happened if you didn't make me angry." It is important to remember that domestic violence is not your fault. The person doing the harm is the only one responsible for their behaviour.

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How domestic violence may affect your children

1. They don't associate home with safety and happiness
2. They are at an increased risk of being abused themselves
3. They may begin to feel depressed, guilty, lonely and/or upset
4. They may learn that violence is ok and copy the abusive behaviour
5. They may 'act out' and have behavioural problems, low self-esteem and their ability to focus on school might suffer

The home should generally be a safe place for kids to grow up happy and healthy. Families have their troubles, but domestic violence crosses the line of what's ok and acceptable. Children living with domestic violence are not sure what to do in order to keep safe and be loved.

It is very traumatic for a child to be in an abusive environment. Even if the children do not directly see the abusive acts, they are likely to have some idea of what is going on. This is enough to cause them harm.

What you can do

1. The first and most important step is to realise that every person deserves to be safe and you are no different.
2. Assess whether you or your children are in immediate danger of harm and get out of the house if you need to. It might be useful to prepare an emergency bag of useful things in case you need to leave the house in a hurry.
3. Talk to someone. Whether it's a family member, friend, counsellor or telephone helpline service it can really help to tell someone what you're going through.

4. If you are in immediate physical danger in your home you can call the police. Domestic violence is a crime and the police are required to respond promptly to your call.
5. Seek help in deciding what to do next. There are support services out there that can help you see your options more clearly and provide you with advice. Each state and territory has several support services which are listed below. All services are 24 hours.

NSW - 24 Hour Domestic Violence Line:
1800 65 64 63.

QLD – 1800 811 811 for women, children and youth.
1800 600 636 for men.

VIC - Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service:
(03) 9373 0123 or free call 1800 015 188

SA - 1800 800 098

WA - 1800 007 339 for women, 1800 000 599 for men

ACT – 02 6280 0900

NT - 1800 019 116 for women, 1300 789 978 for men

TAS - 1800 633 937 (men and women)

Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800

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