

What is domestic or family violence?

Family violence is destructive behaviour in an intimate relationship where one person tries to dominate and control the other. It is also sometimes referred to as domestic violence.

Domestic or family violence can include a range of behaviours:

Physical abuse

- Hitting, punching, pulling by the hair, choking, pinching, pushing, stabbing or restraining you in any way (physical injuries are often directed at parts of the body that other people will not see).
- Using weapons to frighten you or causing damage to property.
- Not letting you sleep, eat, or take your medication.

Verbal abuse

- Harassing or threatening you.
- Saying things to frighten you, for example telling you that the children will live with them if you leave.
- Calling you insulting names.
- Undermining you as a parent in front of the children.

Sexual abuse

- Forcing you to have sex when you don't want to or making you engage in sexual practices you are not comfortable with.
- Making you wear clothes you are not comfortable with.

Emotional abuse

- Withdrawing from you and not giving you support.
- Controlling you through anger or not speaking to you.
- Expressing extreme jealousy.
- Not letting you use the phone or transport.
- Not giving you an opportunity to choose for yourself.
- Threatening to harm your pets.

Social abuse

- Putting you down in front of others.
- Lying to others about you.
- Isolating you from those people who do support you.
- Not letting you visit a doctor on your own.
- Controlling your life; not letting you have a life outside the home.

Financial abuse

- Controlling the money so you are dependent on them.
- Forcing you to sign for loans you might not agree with.
- Questioning you about every purchase you make.

Spiritual abuse

- Not letting you practise your own religion.
- Forcing you to follow a religion you don't want to.

Stalking

- Making constant phone calls and sending text messages, emails, faxes, letters or unwanted gifts to you.
- Loitering near your home or workplace.
- Spying on you or following you, including through the use of electronic means.

Domestic violence is a deliberate act and is rarely an isolated event. Over time, the violence tends to increase in frequency and severity.

About us

Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV) is a valued provider of specialist relationship and family services. As community-based, not-for-profit organisation with no religious affiliations, our services are for all members of the community, regardless of their religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, lifestyle choice, cultural background or economic circumstances. RAV provides services from 12 centres in metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria. Our services include relationship and family counselling, dispute resolution, relationship skills courses, professional development and training, and family violence prevention, support and recovery services.

Safe from violence booklet

This information sheet has been developed from Relationships Australia's *Safe from violence* booklet, available to download or order from www.rav.org.au/booklets/#safefromviolence

Support services

- **Safe Steps** Ph: 1800 015 188
- **Sexual Assault Crisis Line** Ph: 1800 806 292
- **Immigrant Women's Domestic Violence Service** Ph: (03) 9898 3145
- **Men's Line** Ph: 1300 789 491
- **Men's Referral Service** Ph: 1300 766 491

For more information on RAV's services, visit www.rav.org.au or call 1300 364 277. To order additional copies of this flyer, please email communications@rav.org.au

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