

# Domestic and family violence is a crime. It is a serious violation of human rights.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOUR FAMILY, OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW OF, IS AFFECTED BY ABUSE?

- Don't ignore your concerns; we all have a responsibility to look out for all the children in our community, even if we don't know them personally.
- Living with violence harms kids. It is important to make a serious plan for the safety of any children who are at risk. It's NOT enough to just reassure children that they are not to blame and that you can protect them.
- Talk to experts for advice. The numbers on the back of this brochure will be a good start. They will support you to do what is best for everyone involved, including the children.
- Once the family is safe, make a plan about what to do if the violence happens again. Give the children telephone numbers, including the police, and practice what to say.

## PLAY YOUR PART IN PREVENTING ABUSE

- Remember that one person can make a difference in the life of a child.
- Be a good role model, listen to children, and be kind and respectful.
- Make it clear that abusive behaviour is never OK.
- Talk to children/young people about respectful relationships.
- Don't accept excuses for violence, victim blaming, or sexist attitudes.
- Learn more about DFV (see websites on the back of this brochure).



**IF YOU ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER  
RING 000**

NATIONAL HOTLINES:

**1800 RESPECT  
1800 737 732**

**National Domestic Violence Helpline  
1800 200 526**

**Mensline Australia  
1300 789 978**

**Aboriginal Family Domestic Violence Hotline  
1800 019 123**

**Lifeline  
13 11 14**

**Kids Helpline  
1800 551 800**

**Translating & Interpreting Service  
131 450**

APPS TO HELP WITH DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE:

**Penda  
Daisy**

LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TO PREVENT ABUSE:

[www.napcan.org.au](http://www.napcan.org.au)  
[www.ourwatch.org.au](http://www.ourwatch.org.au)  
[www.theline.org.au](http://www.theline.org.au)  
[www.whiteribbon.org.au](http://www.whiteribbon.org.au)

**NAPCAN** PREVENT CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT



# DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE HURTS CHILDREN TOO

# WHAT IS DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE (DFV)?

**Domestic and family violence is abuse within a relationship or family, and it is very common.**

**Some people think DFV only affects adults, but the sad fact is that it damages children, even when they don't actually see the abuse.**

DFV is about one person in a relationship using power to control the other person. This can be by:

- Verbal abuse e.g. insults, constant put-downs, name calling and yelling
- Emotional/psychological abuse e.g. threatening to kill/harm people or pets, constant criticism, minimising or blaming the victim for abuse, property damage, prolonged silence and exclusion from decision making
- Physical and sexual abuse e.g. pushing, hitting, kicking, restraining, using weapons/throwing objects, forced or unwanted sexual activity, including rape
- Financial abuse e.g. controlling money, preventing partner from seeking employment, exclusion from financial decisions
- Social abuse e.g. isolation from family and friends, controlling phones and internet access
- Stalking e.g. following, constant phone calls and sending disturbing/unsolicited messages or gifts
- Spiritual/cultural abuse e.g. criticising beliefs, using religion for power, not allowing someone to speak their own language or practice their culture
- Technological abuse e.g. using or threatening to use phone, email, social media sites, GPS, spyware/logging hardware etc to stalk or intimidate



## HOW DOES DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE AFFECT CHILDREN?

**Children may:**

- Blame themselves for the violence
- Feel helpless
- Find it hard to play and make friends
- Become quiet and fearful
- Become rude and aggressive, copying the abusive adult
- Have sleeping problems like nightmares or not wanting to sleep alone
- Find it difficult to concentrate and learn
- Develop problems with wetting or soiling
- Miss school to make sure their mum is safe
- Show signs of stress like headaches and tummy aches
- Hurt pets
- Do risky things like running away or trying alcohol and drugs
- Think violence and power is normal in a relationship
- Be delayed in meeting developmental and emotional milestones

## MYTHS ABOUT CHILDREN LIVING WITH FAMILY VIOLENCE

**MYTH: "Domestic violence doesn't affect kids unless they get physically hurt themselves."**

**FACT:** Children get really stressed seeing their parents fight or shout, or knowing/sensing that abuse is occurring. They often blame themselves. DFV can damage babies' and children's growing brains.

**MYTH: "If the kids aren't actually there at the time, they don't realise what's happening."**

**FACT:** Children usually sense that there is conflict in the home. They need you for their survival so they are especially sensitive to noticing when you are tense and unhappy. They may not show it to others but they suffer emotionally and may get physically ill.

**MYTH: "It's the alcohol's fault. He's only abusive when he's drinking."**

**FACT:** Alcohol is often used as an excuse. However, people who are violent when drinking, can make the choice to avoid alcohol. By law adults are still responsible for their actions.

**MYTH: "It's ok because he didn't actually hit me; he hit the wall."**

**FACT:** Hitting or breaking an object in anger is very scary to children. It also sends the message, "This is what I can do to you if you don't obey me."

**MYTH: "But he's a great dad in other ways!"**

**FACT:** A great dad is someone his kids can trust and rely on. He is a good role model and shows his children how to have loving and respectful relationships - not how to hurt people.

**MYTH: "He was just really stressed out and I shouldn't have provoked him."**

**FACT:** Violence is always a choice. Stress and anger are not an excuse. The victim should never be blamed for the abuse.