

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is violence occurring within an intimate relationship.

This can be violence committed by partners or family members.

We are particularly interested in intimate partner violence – where partners in a relationship are violent toward each other. Domestic violence can happen in any relationship and it can take many forms. It can be difficult to identify when it happens and it can be even more difficult to talk to someone about it.

Types of domestic violence

Domestic violence can take many different forms and may not be easily recognised as violence. It may be physical, sexual or verbal or it may take the form of continual and habitual psychological, social or financial abuse.

Some examples of domestic violence are:

- **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is any actual or threatened harm eg. bruises, cuts, broken bones, pushing, choking, being threatened or injured with objects/weapons.

It can also include denial of sleep, warmth or nutrition, denial of medical care, driving recklessly with you in the car.

- **Psychological abuse**

Psychological abuse is where a person undermines their partner psychologically. This can include:

- Lying to friends and family
- Manipulating and undermining
- Intimidating
- Threatening violence to themselves eg. to commit suicide

- **Verbal abuse**

Verbal abuse is any spoken threats of violence or words that have the affect of making another person feel bad. This can include:

- Name calling
- Harassing and threatening phone calls
- Intentionally saying things to scare others
- Constant put-downs



- **Social abuse**

Social abuse is where a partner tries to control what the other partner does. This can be:

- Controlling where they can go, who they can see and what they can wear
- Restricting them from contacting family and friends
- Constantly checking up on where they are and who they are with

- **Stalking**

This is when a person takes action intending to maintain contact with, or exercise power and control over another person. These actions cause distress, loss of control, fear or harassment to another person and occur more than once.

Stalking can be a range or combination of behaviours including:

- Repeated phone calls or text messages
- Messages on social networking sites (eg. MySpace or Facebook)
- Use of GPS to track you via your mobile phone
- Sending letters, faxes or e-mails or leaving notes
- Watching and/or following
- Sending flowers or chocolates

- **Sexual Assault**

Sexual assault is a form of violence in intimate partner relationships. This includes:

- Any forced or unwanted sexual activity
- Being pressured to have sex
- Being forced to do any sexual acts

Who does it affect?

ANYONE!!

You can be straight, gay, lesbian, transgender, young, old, male female, of any cultural or religious background AND be a victim of domestic violence.

Some people are more vulnerable to domestic violence but it can happen to anyone.



The Domestic Violence Checklist

Does your partner or any family member:

- 1. Physically hurt you**
- 2. Threaten you with violence**
- 3. Verbally abuse you**
- 4. Prevent you from attending events or venues**
- 5. Force you to do things you don't want to do (eg. sexual acts)**
- 6. Tell you not to see your family or friends**
- 7. Has angry outbursts at you – like a Jekyll & Hyde character**
- 8. Make you feel scared or anxious**
- 9. Humiliate you by calling you names or making fun of you**
- 10. Act in a jealous and possessive manner**

If you have answered YES to any of these questions then you may be experiencing domestic violence. We strongly recommend you think about your relationship.

Below are some good contact numbers for you to talk to people if you would like some advice.

Getting help

If you or someone you know is in a violent relationship there are many organisations that can provide free and confidential advice and support.

- **The Domestic Violence Line**
1800 656 463 (24 hour)
- **The Victims Support Line**
1800 633 063 (24 hour)
- **NSW Rape Crisis Centre -**
1800 424 017 (24 hour)
- **ACON Lesbian & Gay Anti-Violence Project**
1800 063 060 – (10am-6pm)
- **Kids Helpline**
1800 551 800 (24 hour)



General information is also available on the internet:

- *Bursting the Bubble*
www.burstingthebubble.com/
- *When Love Hurts*
www.dvirc.org.au/whenlove/
- *Another Closet* – Domestic Violence in Gay and Lesbian Relationships
<http://ssdv.acon.org.au/index.php>
- *Kids Helpline*
www.kidshelpline.com.au
- *South East Centre Against Sexual Assault*
www.secasa.com.au/index.php/survivors/52

**Please remember – in an emergency
call the Police on 000**

Helping a Friend – A note to remember

People who are affected by violence will often turn to friends and family. It is important that you listen and support them without passing judgment on the situation. Your guidance and support will help them to make decisions to keep them safe and make them feel stronger.

