

Family Violence

What is Family Violence?

Family violence, also known as domestic violence or domestic abuse, is behaviour that is used to control, dominate or create fear towards an intimate partner or family member.

Family violence behaviours

- Physical violence
- Sexual violence
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Coercive control
- Financial abuse
- Technology-facilitated abuse

What can family violence look like?

- Feeling afraid of how someone might react or “walking on eggshells”
- Being constantly criticised, humiliated or put down
- Being isolated from friends, family or support
- Having your movements tracked, having to explain where you are or why you are late
- Having to justify your spending or having your finances controlled
- Threatening language or behaviour towards pets or children
- Threats to harm self or others
- Being physically or sexually assaulted

Family violence myths and facts

MYTHS

- ✗ Family violence is always physical
- ✗ Family violence is a single incident and it won't happen again
- ✗ If I change my behaviour, I can stop the violence
- ✗ People stay in violent relationships because they are weak or stupid
- ✗ Family violence only occurs between partners

FACTS

- Family violence comes in many forms
- Family violence is a pattern of behaviours over time
- The person using violence is always responsible for their choices
- People remain in violent relationships to keep themselves and their children safe. The biggest risk to a person's life is immediately after separation from a violent partner
- Family violence occurs between

Uncertainty is normal

Many people who are experiencing violence might feel unsure or minimise what is happening to them. Part of that can be person using violence “gas lighting” you or making you question what you think is happening. You might wonder if what is happening to you is “serious enough” to be considered family violence.

If you feel controlled, unsafe or afraid, it is okay to ask for help.

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What now?

What to do next

- You can talk to someone you trust, or talk to a support service (see below for a list of services).
- You do not have to leave the relationship or even know what you want to do
- Support is available to you from family violence services, regardless of what you choose

Help is available:

- If you are in immediate danger – **call 000**
- For 24/7 family violence counselling support, call 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)
- For family violence support including safety planning and support to exit a relationship, call The Orange Door – visit <https://www.orangedoor.vic.gov.au/support-near-you> and enter your postcode
- You can call **8769 2200 – opt 1** to speak to a SECASA intake counsellor advocate during business hours

SECASA has a list of family violence supports [here](#)