

Support & information

Your local domestic violence outreach service will give you information and practical support. They can be contacted during business hours (9am-5pm) Monday to Friday.

Eastern Metropolitan region
Ringwood 9259 4200

North & Western Metropolitan region
Eaglemont 9450 4700
Footscray 9689 9588

Middle/Inner South region
St Kilda 9536 7777 or 1800 627 727 (landline only)

Mornington Peninsula
5971 9454

Southern Metropolitan region
Frankston 9781 4658
Cranbourne 5990 6789
Dandenong 9791 6111
Narre Warren 9703 0044
Pakenham 5945 3200

Barwon South West region
Geelong 5224 2903
Hamilton 5571 1778
Warrnambool 5561 1934
Portland 5521 7937

Hume region
Broadford 5784 5555 (8.30am-5pm)
Shepparton 5823 3200 or 5821 9458
Wangaratta 5722 1100 (8.30am-5pm)
Wodonga 02 6022 8888

Gippsland region
Bairnsdale 5152 0052
Lakes Entrance 5152 0052
Leongatha 5662 4502 or 1800 221 200
Morwell 5120 2000
Warragul 5622 7000

Loddon Mallee region
Bendigo 5430 3000 or 1800 884 038
Mildura 5021 2130 (24 hours)
Swan Hill 5033 1899 (8.30am-5.30pm)

Grampians region
Ararat 5352 6200
Ballarat 5333 3666
Horsham 5362 1200
Stawell 5358 7400

the warning signs

Does your partner, your ex, or a family member:

- stop you seeing family or friends
- threaten to hurt you, your kids, family members ... or a pet
- make you feel scared to say no to them
- smash things or lock you in the house
- force or trick you to have sex or do sexual things you don't want to
- constantly check where you are and what you're doing
- call you names or deliberately make you feel bad
- try to damage your relationship with your kids
- control all the spending in the household

care + respect = yes

violence + abuse = no

“ when the yelling starts, she turns the TV up loud and hides with her little sister under the bed ”

“ I'd have to make sure the kids were quiet so he didn't get angry. It was a struggle to respond properly to my kids when I was always tense and worried about his reaction ”

“ I told myself as long as he's only hurting me and not my children ... until one day not only did he hurt me he hit my 2 month old ”

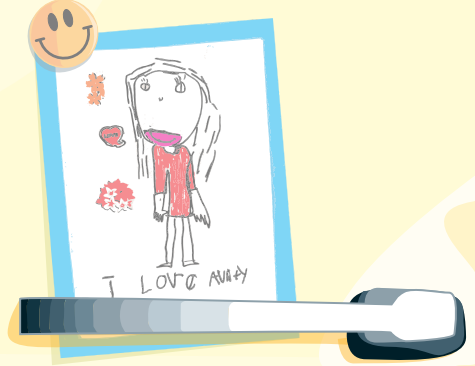
“ [now] I can come home from work without fear of what is awaiting me behind closed doors. I make my own decisions, I control my own life. It's not an easy road but it far outweighs the years before. ”

“ My kids are happy now, but if I had continued with the relationship it would be the opposite. ”

More stories at www.dvrcv.org.au/mothers

family violence hurts kids too

information for mothers



Do you feel safe at home? ... do your children?

Everyone has a right to feel safe and free of fear in their own home. If your partner hurts you – or abuses you, or tries to control you – this is family violence. It's not your fault. There is no excuse for violence. Family violence does affect your kids. Even if they don't see or hear the abuse, they know it's happening. Babies and young children pick up on this, even if they're in another room. Older children know what's going on. You are probably trying hard to protect them. You do your best to stop them from hearing arguments or seeing abuse. But kids are very sensitive. Growing up in a 'climate of fear' is damaging to children.

Name calling or put-downs are abuse too. It can hurt as much or even more than physical violence.

All forms of family violence are not ok. And some – like physical violence, threats or stalking* – are a crime. There are laws to protect women and children from family violence.

But ...

“... he's stressed”

“... it's only if I do something 'wrong'”

“... it's only when he drinks”

No excuses. Violence is a choice.

* For more info on family violence & stalking www.dvrcv.org.au

family violence

hurts

kids

too



Children can't feel safe or happy if their mum is being hurt. They may feel frightened or helpless. Some kids try to protect their mum, or they might feel angry and blame her. Some children even think it's their fault.

They may:

- ★ feel unwell with stomach cramps or headaches
- ★ have trouble concentrating at school
- ★ have difficulty with friendships
- ★ 'act out' ... or withdraw
- ★ learn that violence can give them control over others

"He used to yell at our son. His favourite comment was ..."

... you're as stupid as your mum."

Some partners try to damage the relationship between a mum and her kids.

They may:

- ★ tell your kids you are a 'bad' mother
- ★ encourage them to ignore what you say
- ★ stop you from attending to your child
- ★ be jealous of your pregnancy or when you are breastfeeding your baby

Common questions



'He's good to the kids. Don't they need us to stay together no matter what?'

A man is not being a good dad or role model if he abuses you, the child's mother.

Even if he is caring or affectionate towards the kids, it doesn't make up for the damage he is doing hurting you.

Family violence can have a worse effect on children's development than divorce or separation.

Is it my fault?

No matter what you do, a partner should not hurt you or make you feel bad about yourself. If someone is treating you badly, they're doing the wrong thing, not you. You are not to blame. Don't be ashamed to ask for help.



What you can do ... for you

★ Make a safety plan

- ✓ plan where you can go and who you can call in an emergency
- ✓ keep important items together in a safe place in case you need to leave suddenly — such as birth certificates, bank cards, Centrelink details, money, medication, clothes, keys
- ✓ teach your kids what to do and who to call if they don't feel safe

★ Talk to someone

- ★ Take 'time out'
- ★ call a family violence service
 - ✓ They will support you — whether you decide to stay or separate from your partner. Their focus is to help you and your children be safe
 - ✓ Find out how the law can protect you



To. The Family 123 Street St, SUBURB VIC 3000



Should I leave him?

The most important thing is your own safety, and the safety of your children. You'll probably ask yourself questions like:

- ✓ how can I take them away from the father they love?
- ✓ what if he threatens to get custody of the kids or to contact Child Protection?
- ✓ can I offer the kids a better life on my own?
- ✓ how will we manage since he earns the money?
- ✓ will we be in more danger if we leave?

There are services that can help you to work through these issues so you can decide what is best for you and your children. You don't have to deal with this on your own.



What you can do for your kids



- ★ give lots of cuddles
- ★ tell them you love them, often!
- ★ ask them how they feel
- ★ reassure them it's not their fault
- ★ let them know this happens to other kids & feeling upset is normal
- ★ let them know it's not their role to protect you
- ★ show them respect & help them show respect for others
- ★ show them you are interested — play games, read stories, involve them in sport & community activities
- ★ get help and support for your kids & for yourself

Where to get help



Police - Dial 000 for urgent help

Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service

1800 015 188 or 9322 3555 (24hours)
Support, information & referrals to safe accommodation

Centre Against Sexual Assault

1800 806 292 (24hours)
Confidential counselling for survivors of sexual assault & non-offending family members

inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence

1800 755 988 or 9413 6500 (Mon - Fri 9.30am-5.30pm)
Support & information to migrant & refugee women in their primary language

Women's Legal Service

1800 133 302 or 9642 0877 (Mon 10am-1pm, Tues & Thurs 6.30pm - 8.30pm, Wed 2pm-5pm)
Drop-in Thurs 9.30am-12pm, Lvl 3, 43 Hardware Ln, Melb
Free legal advice for women in Victoria

Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria

03 9486 9866 (Mon - Fri 9am-5pm)
Details for support services, counsellors & support groups closest to you. DVRCV has booklets to send you & books for loan.

www.burstingthebubble.com for young people experiencing family violence

www.dvrcv.org.au/mothers stories from mothers who have experienced family violence

Kids Helpline

1800 551 800 (24hours)
Telephone, online & email counselling & information service for young people aged between 5 & 18
www.kidshelp.com.au

Parentline

13 22 89 (Mon - Fri 8am-12am)
Counselling, information & referral for parents & carers with children from birth to 18
www.parentline.vic.gov.au