

Is someone you
know being abused
in a relationship?



A guide for families, friends & neighbours
Your support can make a difference



Domestic Violence
Resource Centre Victoria



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Alternatively, please phone the Victims of Crime Helpline 1800 819 817 8.00am – 11.00pm Monday to Friday, except public holidays, or contact the Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria (03) 9486 9866 or email dvrcv@dvrcv.org.au

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Introduction

It can be really worrying when someone you care about is being hurt or abused by their partner. This guide will provide you with practical information on how to help, and how to look after yourself.

This guide will help in supporting female and male victims of abuse. Throughout the guide we refer to the victim as 'she' for simplicity and because the majority of victims are women, however we encourage supporters of men who are being abused to use this guide.

You can contact the services listed at the back of this pamphlet to speak to someone confidentially about your concerns.



'My best friend really helped me. She never judged me or made me feel like it was my fault. She helped me think about what to do, looked after my kids to give me a break, and was there when I needed her. It can't have been easy on her. But her support made a big difference.' Ana

Your help can make a great difference to someone who is abused.

Your response to her situation is really important. If she feels supported and encouraged, she may feel stronger and more able to make decisions. If she feels judged or criticised, she could be afraid to tell anyone else about the abuse again.

While anyone can be a victim or perpetrator of family violence, it is mainly committed by men against women, children and other vulnerable people. Even when children are not directly involved, witnessing an incident or having to clean up after an incident can have a big impact on them.

Abuse, or family violence, can affect anyone regardless of income level, race, culture, religion, ability or sexuality.

Family violence can happen in a marriage, in a de-facto relationship, in a civil union, in a gay or lesbian relationship, to people with a disability who rely on their carer, and between parents, children and relatives. In some cases, the violence might be by a young person against a parent or relative. For an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, 'family' can mean a relative according to tradition or social practice.

The support services listed at the end of this pamphlet can provide support and more information.

What is abuse?

Every couple has arguments or disagreements. In a respectful and equal relationship, both partners feel free to state their opinions, to make their own decisions, to be themselves, and to say no to sex. But this is not the case when someone is abusive. In an abusive relationship, one partner tries to dominate the other through physical harm, criticism, demands, threats, or sexual pressure.

Family violence or abuse might be obvious or it might be subtle. It might be an isolated incident or it might be a pattern of abuse over a long time.

For the victim and her children, this behaviour can be very dangerous, frightening, confusing and damaging.

Family violence and abuse is a violation of human rights and is never acceptable in any form, in any community or culture.



'My family and friends didn't think it was "that bad" because he only physically hit me once. But the put-downs and manipulation were so much worse, the way he controlled my life. I really wish my family could have understood how horrible it was.' Kate

Psychological or emotional abuse can be just as harmful as physical abuse.

Abuse in a relationship is never acceptable, regardless of the circumstances, and is never the fault of the victim. Abuse is not caused by alcohol, or stress, or by the victim's behaviour. Abuse happens because the abuser wants to control and manipulate the other person.

In Victoria, the law recognises that family violence is not just physical – it includes control and manipulation [see *Family Violence Protection Act (2008)*]. Some examples of family violence might include stopping someone from seeing her family and friends, threatening to harm other family members or pets to intimidate her, humiliation, threats, insults, constant criticism or racist taunts. It might include taking her medication from her, taking away her access to money for food and clothes, threatening to report her to immigration or threatening to tell her family and friends about her sexual orientation when she doesn't want them to know. It can also include damage to property, harassment, and stalking.

Family violence, bullying, sexual assault and stalking are unacceptable and can be reported to the police.

How can I recognise abuse?

You might be unsure if what your friend or relative is experiencing is 'abuse'. Maybe you just have some sense that something is 'wrong' in her relationship. Sometimes there may be signs that indicate that there is abuse. But often there will be nothing obvious.

These are some of the signs that someone is being abused:

- She seems afraid of her partner or is always very anxious to please him or her.
- She has stopped seeing her friends or family, or cuts phone conversations short when her partner is in the room.
- Her partner often criticises her or humiliates her in front of other people.
- She says her partner pressures or forces her to do sexual things.
- Her partner often orders her about or makes all the decisions (for example, her partner controls all the money, tells her who she can see and what she can do).
- She often talks about her partner's 'jealousy', 'bad temper' or 'possessiveness'.
- She has become anxious or depressed, has lost her confidence, or is unusually quiet.
- She has physical injuries (bruises, broken bones, sprains, cuts, etc). She may give unlikely explanations for physical injuries.
- Her children seem afraid of her partner, have behaviour problems, or are very withdrawn or anxious. She is reluctant to leave her children with her partner.
- After she has left the relationship, her ex-partner is constantly calling her, harassing her, following her, coming to her house or waiting outside.

Why doesn't she end the relationship?

It can be hard to understand why someone would stay in a relationship if she is being treated so badly. Leaving may appear to be a simple solution. You might think that the abuse is partly her fault because she puts up with it, or that she is weak or stupid if she stays.

It is hard to imagine what it is like to be abused when you are not in the situation yourself. From the outside, it may seem easier to leave than it actually is.

It can be very difficult to end a relationship with an abusive partner. This is an important thing for friends and family to understand.

There are many reasons why it may be hard to end the relationship.

- **She is afraid of what the abuser will do if she ends the relationship.** The person who is abusive may have threatened to harm her, her relatives, her children, pets or property. They may threaten to commit suicide if she talks about ending the relationship. Many victims find that the abuse continues or gets worse after they separate.
- **She still loves her partner,** because he or she is not abusive all of the time.
- **She has a commitment to the relationship** or a belief that marriage is forever, for 'better or worse'.
- **She hopes her partner will change.** Sometimes the abusive person might promise to change. She might think that if the abuser stops drinking, the abuse will stop.
- **She thinks the abuse is her fault.**

- **She feels she should stay with her partner for the sake of the children**, and that it is best that children live with both parents. Her partner may have threatened to take or harm the children.
- **A lack of confidence.** The person who is abusive will have deliberately tried to break down their partner's confidence, and make her feel like she is stupid, hopeless, and responsible for the abuse. She may feel powerless and unable to make decisions.
- **Isolation and loneliness.** The person who is abusive may have tried to cut her off from contact with family or friends. She might be afraid of coping on her own. If English is not her first language, she might feel particularly isolated.
- **Pressure to stay with her partner from family, her community or church.** She might fear rejection from her community or family if she separates from her partner.
- If she is from a different cultural or linguistic background, her partner may have made **threats to report her to authorities or immigration** if she tells someone about the violence.
- **She may feel that she can't get away from her partner** because they live in a rural area, or because they have the same friends, or are part of the same ethnic, Aboriginal or religious community.
- **She doesn't have the means to survive** if the relationship ends. She might worry about where she would live, access to money or transport, particularly if she lives in an isolated area. She may be dependent upon her partner's income.
- If she has a disability, **she may depend upon the abuser for everyday assistance.**

It is very important that you do not make her feel that there is something wrong with her because she hasn't separated from her partner. This will only reinforce her low confidence and feelings of guilt and self-blame.

Ending a relationship with an abusive partner can sometimes be quite dangerous. The abuse **may** continue or increase after she leaves. Help her to decide what she can do, and to consider her safety whether she decides to stay or leave. She might want to contact one of the services listed in the back of this guide to talk about how to protect herself.



'When I told her how he abused me, my friend said "but you let him do it" like it was my fault. That made me feel worse. She didn't know how much pressure he put on me to go back, how he said he loved me and would kill himself rather than live without me and the children. He made me feel so guilty. I thought how important it was for the children to have a father. It was all a way of manipulating me to come back. My friend stopped talking to me after I went back to him, she said I was stupid. I was really upset because she was my only close friend in Australia and I really needed someone to talk to, and to help me to see that the way he treated me was wrong.' Nicola

Should I get involved?

Many people worry that they will be ‘interfering’ if they get involved, or that it is a ‘private matter’. But it is more worrying if someone is being abused and you say nothing. **Your support can make a difference.** You might risk some embarrassment if you approach her and she rejects your support or tells you your suspicions are wrong. But if you approach her sensitively, without being critical, most people will appreciate an expression of concern for their wellbeing, even if they are not ready to talk about their situation. It is unlikely you will make things ‘worse’ by expressing concern.

How should I approach her?

Approach your friend or relative in a sensitive way, letting her know your own concerns. Tell her you’re worried about her, then explain why. For example ‘I’m worried about you because I’ve noticed you seem really unhappy lately’.

Don’t be surprised if she seems defensive or rejects your support. She might be scared of worrying you if she tells you about the abuse. She may not be ready to admit to being abused, or may feel ashamed and afraid of talking about it. She might have difficulty trusting anyone after being abused. If the victim is a man, he may feel particularly embarrassed about speaking about the abuse as he may be worried about being seen as ‘weak’ or ‘unmanly’.

Don’t push the person into talking if they are uncomfortable, but let them know that you’re there if they need to talk. Be patient, and keep an ear out for anything that indicates they are ready to talk about the abuse.



'My family knew I was being abused and that I felt trapped, but they didn't say anything about it until I finally left. It would have helped if they had said that his behaviour wasn't ok, because I thought it was normal. If they had said that I was a good person and that they were there if I needed them, it would have made getting out a lot easier.' Ellie

What can I do to help her?

The most important thing you can do is to listen without judging, respect her decisions, and help her to find ways to become stronger and safer.

- **Listen to what she has to say.**
- **Believe what she tells you.** It will have taken a lot for her to talk to you. People are much more likely to cover up or downplay the abuse, rather than to make it up or exaggerate. You might find it hard to imagine someone you know could behave abusively. But the person who is abusive will probably show you a very different side to the side the victim sees.

'You don't have to fully understand to be of assistance. All you have to do is give your time and love without being judgmental.' Jane

- **Take the abuse seriously.** Abuse can be damaging both physically and emotionally. Don't underestimate the danger she may be in.
- **Help her to recognise the abuse** and understand how it may be affecting her or her children.
- **Tell her you think she has been brave** in being able to talk about the abuse, and in being able to keep going despite the abuse.
- **Help to build her confidence in herself.**
- **Help her to understand that the abuse is not her fault** and that no-one deserves to be abused, no matter what they do. Let her know you think that the way her partner is treating her is wrong. For example, 'No-one, not even your husband, has the right to mistreat you'.
- **Help her to protect herself.** You could say 'I'm afraid of what he could do to you or the children' or 'I'm worried that it will get worse'. Talk to her about how she thinks she could protect herself. See the section 'Helping to increase her safety' (page 16).
- **Help her to think about what she can do** and see how you can help her to achieve it.
- **Offer practical assistance** like minding the children for a while, cooking a meal for her, offering a safe place to stay, transport or to accompany her to court, etc.
- **Respect her right to make her own decisions**, even if you don't agree with them. Respect her cultural or religious values and beliefs.
- **Maintain some level of regular contact with her.** Having an opportunity to talk regularly to a supportive friend or relative can be very important.

- **Tell her about the services available, which are listed at the back of this guide.** Remind her that if she calls a service, she can just get support and information, they won't pressure her to leave if she doesn't want to. Services are required to provide a consistent approach, so it shouldn't matter which service she makes first contact with, all of them should be able to give her the same information.
- **Talk to her about laws that can protect her,** such as a Family Violence Intervention Order. For information about Family Violence Intervention Orders, and other information on what the police, courts and support services can do, see the section on 'The laws that can protect her' (page 18).
- **Keep supporting her after she has left the relationship.** The period of separation could be a dangerous time for her, as the abuse may increase. She may need practical support and encouragement to help her establish a new life and recover from the abuse. She could also seek counselling or join a support group.



'What would really have helped is to have a relative or friend to mind the kids for a while. I just needed the time to think and work out my feelings without the kids being around all the time.' Soraya

Questions you could ask and things you could say:

These are just some ideas. It is important that you only say what you believe, and use your own words.

- 'The way he treats you is wrong.'
- 'What can I do to help you?'
- 'How do you think his behaviour has affected you?'
- 'How do you think his behaviour is affecting your children?'
- 'I'm worried about what he could do to you or the children.'
- 'What do you think you should do?'
- 'What are you afraid of if you end the relationship?'
- 'What are you afraid of if you stay?'



What not to do

When talking to someone who is being abused, some things may not help, or may stop her from wanting to confide in you fully.

Here are some of the things victims of abuse say did *not* help

- **Don't blame her for the abuse** or ask questions like 'what did you do for him to treat you like that?' or 'why do you put up with it?', or 'how can you still be in love with him?' These questions suggest that it is somehow her fault.
- **Don't keep trying to work out the 'reasons' for the abuse.** Concentrate on supporting the person who is being abused.
- **Don't be critical** if she says she still loves her partner, or if she leaves but then returns to the relationship. Leaving an abusive partner takes time, and your support is really important.
- **Don't criticise her partner.** Criticise the abusive behaviour and let her know that no-one has the right to abuse her (for example, say 'your partner shouldn't treat you like that'). Criticism of her partner is only likely to make her want to defend him or her.
- **Don't give advice,** or tell her what you would do. This will only reduce her confidence to make her own decisions. Listen to her and give her information, not advice.
- **Don't pressure her to leave** or try to make decisions on her behalf. Focus on listening and supporting her to make her own decisions. She knows her own situation best.

Helping to increase her safety

Whether she is staying in the relationship or has separated, it is important to think about how she can be protected from further abuse.

You could:

- Help her to plan where she and her children could go in an emergency, or if she decides to leave. If she needs to stay at a secret location, tell her about safe accommodation services (refuges). Ring the *Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service* to find out more. If she speaks a language other than English, or is from a particular cultural background, she can be referred to the *Immigrant Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service* (see page 26).
- Agree on a code word or signal that she can use to let you know she needs help.
- Help her to prepare an excuse so she can leave quickly if she feels threatened.
- Help her to prepare an 'escape bag' of her belongings, and hide it in a safe place. If she leaves she will need money, keys, clothes, bank cards, driver's license, social security documents, property deeds, medication, birth certificates, passport and any other important documents for herself and her children.

- Talk to her about how the police can protect her. The police have clear guidelines for what they can do to increase the safety of women and children. For more information about what the police can do, including information on Intervention Orders see the section on ‘The laws that can protect her’ (page 18).
- If she decides to stay, she may need other ways to protect herself and the children from further violence. Ring one of the services at the back of this guide for ideas. An Intervention Order can have a condition on it that orders her abusive partner to stay out of the family home. In this case, she will be able to change the locks on the house, and can apply to have the lease changed into her name, even if she was not previously on the lease.
- If she wants to apply for an Intervention Order or to take other legal action, you could offer to give evidence as a witness. If you feel able to offer this, take notes if you observe abuse, noting times, dates, and what you observed.

For more information see the *Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria* website www.dvrcv.org.au or call (03) 9486-9866. Please see the ‘Services that can help’ section for legal advice.

The laws that can protect her

The police have a commitment to respond to all reports of family violence, and have a duty to protect people if they are at risk of harm from family violence, including children. The police can take action even if she doesn't want them to.

Family Violence Intervention Orders

A Family Violence Intervention Order (Intervention Order) is a court order made by a Magistrate. Its purpose is to protect the victim and her children from a member of her family, or a person she has had a close relationship with. She can get an Intervention Order even if there has been no physical violence.

An Intervention Order has conditions on it that tell the other person (the 'respondent') what they can and can't do. For example, a court can order a respondent to:

- stop harassing, threatening, or intimidating her
- stop coming within a certain distance of her house
- stop contacting her by any means, including email, SMS and phone
- stop damaging her property.

It may include a condition to make her abusive partner leave the family home. It may be possible for her to apply to have the lease to her house changed into her name even if she was not previously on the lease.

The *Victims of Crime Helpline* 1800 819 817 can offer more information about this option.

Her abusive partner must follow the rules on the Intervention Order exactly. It is a criminal offence for someone to disobey an Intervention Order. If they are found guilty they could pay a fine or even go to gaol.

Please refer to the contacts at the back of this book for advice on how to apply for an Intervention Order and any other advice or support.

Family Violence Safety Notices

A police officer can apply for a Family Violence Safety Notice (Safety Notice) if the court is not open and the matter is urgent. This is before 9 am or after 5 pm on weekdays, or on a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday.

A police officer can issue a Safety Notice if they believe that the victim needs immediate protection, to protect a child who has been subjected to family violence, or to protect property.

A police officer can apply for a Safety Notice even if the victim does not want them to. The officer will make it clear to the abusive family member that applying for a Safety Notice is a police decision.

The Safety Notice provides temporary protection, and is also an application for an Intervention Order that has to go to court within 72 hours. Then the Magistrate can hear the matter and decide what happens next.

To protect family members, the police can include a condition on the Safety Notice that her abusive partner (the respondent) must leave the family home. This means that he must not live, re-enter or visit the home until the matter goes to court. A Magistrate will then decide what happens next. If the respondent has nowhere to stay, the police will do their best to help find emergency accommodation.

If her partner refuses to leave or returns to the family home, the police can use reasonable force to remove him. The police can also charge him with a criminal offence.

If she has children, they can also be included on the Intervention Order, or in a Safety Notice, to make sure they are all safe.

Please refer to the contacts at the back of this book for more information about Safety Notices and any other advice or support.

It is important not to pressure your friend/relative into talking to police, especially if she is uncomfortable with this. However, you can show concern for her situation by talking to her about the options available.

What can I do if I witness or overhear physical violence or threats?

If you believe there is immediate physical danger and that she and her children have been, or are about to be, harmed, call the police on 000 immediately.

If you do have the opportunity to talk to her at another time, ask about whether or not she would like you to call the police. She may fear that calling the police may make things worse for her. Many people are afraid of involving the police, especially those from non-English speaking backgrounds or Indigenous communities who may have had bad past experiences. You could call a domestic violence service to find out about how you could help in this situation.



'Our neighbour was stalked by her ex-boyfriend. He'd watch her from outside the house. We sometimes heard him yelling at her in the backyard. We weren't sure if calling the police would make things worse. We asked her about it. We agreed to ring her if we saw him watching her house, so she could get her brother to come over. If we thought we heard her ex in her house, we'd ring her and she'd use a certain word as a signal for us to call the police.' Mark

Looking after yourself

Supporting a friend or relative who is being abused can be frustrating, frightening and stressful. You need to look after yourself and get support too.

Feeling frustrated or angry that she hasn't left the relationship

Remember that letting her know you're frustrated or disappointed will not help her, and may only make things worse. Don't give up on her, regardless of her decisions. Explain your fears, but let her know you will still support her. Remind yourself that your support is important, and will have a positive impact on her, even if she can't express this now. Don't underestimate the value of your support.

Feeling afraid or 'out of your depth'

Get some support for yourself. Talk to other friends or contact a service for information on what you can do.

Feeling pressured to help more than you are able

Be honest about the amount and type of support you can offer. Don't push yourself beyond your own limits – you can only fully support her if you look after yourself too. Remember that you are not responsible for the abuse, and you cannot 'rescue her'. She can also get support from the services listed at the back of this guide.

How can I respond to her abusive partner?

Be careful. Don't place yourself in a position where the person who is being abusive could harm or manipulate you. Don't try to intervene directly if you witness a person being assaulted – call the police instead.

If the person who is being abusive is your friend or relative, you may feel caught in the middle. It is important to understand that if you approach the person who is abusive, he or she may:

- tell you to 'mind your own business'
- deny the abuse, or say 'how can you think I could do something like that?'
- make it seem like it's 'not that bad', or that it only happened once
- make it seem like it's the other person's fault, or that it's her behaviour that's the problem, not theirs
- say that they couldn't help themselves, they were drunk, just 'snapped', or 'lost control'.

None of these responses mean that he or she is not abusive. It is common for a person who is being abusive to deny or minimise the abuse. Probably the only way you will be able to 'verify' that a person is abusive is if their partner tells you that they are, or if you witness the abuse. People who seem 'respectable' and 'normal' can still be abusive in the privacy of their own home.

It is possible that the person who is abusive may admit the abuse was their fault, but say they don't know how to stop their behaviour. They might also deny and minimise the abuse, but agree that something isn't right about how they act in certain situations. If the person who is abusive is male, he can be encouraged to call the *Men's Referral Service* for anonymous and confidential advice on how he may go about ending his use of violence (see contact details at the end of this guide). If the abusive person is female, she can contact her local Community Health Service.

If you do observe abuse, and you feel safe or able to, talk about specific behaviour you have observed. For example *'You are both my friends. The way you criticise and intimidate her makes me worry about her safety. Last Saturday at the party, I heard you say... and as you said it your face had such an intimidating look'*. Avoid making sweeping judgements about the person such as, 'I'm disappointed you have turned out to be violent' as this might make them more defensive. The more focused and specific you are about the behaviour you saw, the harder it is for the person to deny or minimise what happened.

If you only know about the abuse because the victim has talked to you about it, check with her first before saying anything to her partner. Her partner could become more abusive to her if he or she thinks she has told someone.

A man speaking to another man, or a woman speaking to another woman about their abusive behaviour can be a helpful way of approaching this issue. Don't focus on trying to understand why the person is abusive, or on trying to work out how to change him or her.

Don't get involved in excusing the abuse. People who are abusive can sound very persuasive when they try to deny, minimise or justify their behaviour, as they often make these excuses to themselves to feel better about what they are doing. Focus on what the person who is abusive is going to do about it, and encourage them to call the *Men's Referral Service* (see page 28).

If you'd like advice about or support before you speak with the person, you can call the *Men's Referral Service* or *Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service* too.



Services that can help

Police

If you witness violence or threats of violence and abuse, do not intervene yourself. Call '000' and ask for the Police.

For general information, visit www.police.vic.gov.au or visit your local police station. Some police stations have specialist Family Violence Liaison Officers who can answer your questions and provide you with more information.

Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service

Statewide 24 hour crisis support and safe accommodation (refuges) for women and their children.

Phone: (03) 9322 3555
or Country Toll Free: 1800 015 188

Immigrant Women's Domestic Violence Service

Support and crisis intervention to immigrant women in over 25 languages.

Phone: 03 8413 6800
Web: www.iwdvs.org.au

Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria

Provides initial telephone support, information and referral to services to assist people who have experienced family violence.

Phone: (03) 9486-9866

Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm

Email: dvrcv@dvrcv.org.au

Web: www.dvrcv.org.au

Victims of Crime Helpline

Offers counselling, advice and referrals to assist all victims of violence, including information on court procedures, the Victims Register and details of financial assistance.

Phone: 1800 819 817, 8.00am-11pm

Monday to Friday.

Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASA)

A free confidential 24 hour emergency or crisis care service for victim/survivors who have recently been sexually assaulted. This includes crisis counselling support and may include access to medical care and legal processes.

Phone: 1800 806 292 (24 hours)

Web: www.casa.org.au

Women's Information & Referral Exchange (WIRE)

Telephone counselling and information to women, referral to local counsellors and services.

Toll free: 1300 134 130

TTY: (03) 13 36 77, Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

Web: www.wire.org.au

Women's Health Victoria

Women's Health Victoria provides free information on personal issues including family violence.

Women's health nurses and midwives are available for one-on-one support.

Phone: (03) 8345 3045

Web: www.whv.org.au

Men's Referral Service

Free, anonymous and confidential information about services to help men change their abusive behaviour.

Call: (03) 9428-2899 or Toll Free: 1800 065 973

9am-9pm, Mon-Fri

Web: www.mrs.org.au

Kids Help Line

Telephone counselling for children and young people. This service also provides support for Australians under 18 years old through email and online counselling.

Toll Free: 1800 55 1800

Web: www.kidshelp.com.au

Victims Assistance and Counselling Program

Operates throughout metropolitan and regional Victoria. Service may include practical support, outreach, referral and crisis support.

To find out about your eligibility phone the Victims of Crime Helpline on 1800 819 817, 8am to 11pm Monday to Friday.

The Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal

Helps victims of crime by providing financial assistance (for example medical and counselling expenses).

Telephone: (03) 9628 7855 or Toll Free: 1800 882 752

Web: www.vocat.vic.gov.au

Victoria Legal Aid

Phone for free legal advice and publications on what to expect in court, and factsheets about Intervention Orders and family violence laws.

Phone: (03) 9269 0120 or Toll Free: 1800 677 402

Mon-Fri, 8.45 am to 5.15 pm

Web: www.legalaid.vic.gov.au

Women's Legal Service Victoria

Provide legal services that include representation in court proceedings, and telephone advice and referral.

Phone: (03) 9642 0877 or Toll Free: 1800 133 032

Federation of Community Legal Centres

Phone: (03) 9652 1500 to be referred to your nearest community legal centre for free legal advice.

Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service

Free 24 hour legal advice and representation to members of the Koori community.

Phone: (03) 9419 3888 or Toll Free: 1800 064 865

Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service

Provides assistance to victims of family violence and sexual assault and works with families and communities affected by violence.

Phone: (03) 9244 3333 or Toll Free: 1800 105 303

Web: www.fvpls.org

Court Network

Information and support before, during and after court.

Toll Free: 1800 681 614

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)

Interpreters in a range of languages.

Phone: 131 450, 24 hour service.

Counselling and support programs are available throughout Victoria to assist people who have experienced family violence or abuse at home. More information about these services can be obtained from the Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria on (03) 9486-9866 or from WIRE on 1300 134 130.



For additional copies of this guide, please contact the Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria on (03) 9486 9866, or the Victims of Crime Helpline on 1800 819 817.

Translations of this guide are also available in the following community languages: Arabic, Burmese, Chinese, Croatian, Dari, Dinka, Farsi, Macedonian, Serbian, Somali, Spanish, Turkish, Vietnamese.



Domestic Violence
Resource Centre Victoria



Department of Justice
and Department
of Human Services