

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE?



Any behaviour that's controlling, threatening, violent or intended to make you or your family feel scared and unsafe can be considered domestic violence and abuse.

When people think of domestic abuse, they often focus on domestic violence. But domestic abuse includes any attempt by one person in a marriage or intimate relationship to dominate and control the other. Victims of domestic abuse may also include a child or other relatives, or any other household member.

Violence and abuse are used for one purpose: to gain and maintain total control over you. An abuser uses fear, guilt, shame, and intimidation to wear you down and keep you under their thumb.

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender.

Domestic abuse can occur within a range of relationships including couples who are married, living together or dating.

Domestic abuse affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels.

Domestic abuse can be mental, physical, economic or sexual in nature. Incidents are rarely isolated, and usually escalate in frequency and severity.

Domestic abuse may culminate in serious physical injury or death.

Domestic and family violence can take many forms which include:

- **Physical abuse** – hitting, strangling, smashing things, denying medical support, hurting pets
- **Sexual abuse** – unwanted sex/sexual acts, sex on their conditions, denying choice in contraception
- **Coercive control** - a type of domestic abuse that is a pattern of behaviour used by an abuser to control, harm, punish, or frighten someone they are in a relationship with
- **Emotional and psychological abuse** - put downs, blaming, threats of violence, self-harm or suicide, criticising appearance/body, spreading rumours
- **Financial abuse** - strict or unfair control of money
- **Verbal abuse** - name calling, yelling, public humiliation
- **Social abuse** - controlling where you go and who you see, controlling appearance
- **Harassment and Stalking abuse** - following, making excessive phone calls, texts or emails
- **Spiritual or cultural abuse** - controlling practices or choices
- **Technology facilitated abuse** – tracking via mobile phone apps, monitoring spending through online bank accounts.

If someone who has a close personal relationship with you makes you feel afraid, powerless or unsafe, or if you are afraid to disagree or negotiate for what you want, this may be a sign of abuse.

All individuals have the right to be free from violence. If you are experiencing abuse it is not your fault, it is the abuser who is responsible. Domestic and family violence is a crime.

IF YOU ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, PHONE 000 AND ASK FOR THE POLICE AND/OR AN AMBULANCE

1800RESPECT

is the 24-hour national domestic, family and sexual violence counselling, information and support service. Call 1800 737 732.

LIFELINE

is a non-profit organisation that provides free, 24-hour telephone crisis support service in Australia. Call 13 11 14.

Call **GOT YOUR BACK SISTA** on **02 4989 2777** during business hours to book an appointment with our Support Team or receive information and advice.