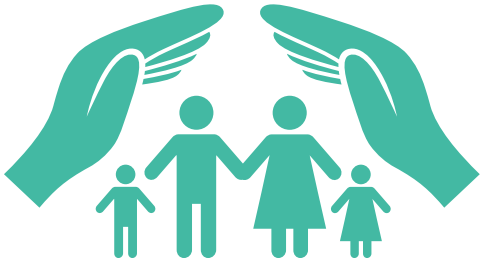
FAMILY VIOLENCE



City of Casey

Supporting families and individuals in our community to stay safe

What is family violence?

Family violence, also known as domestic violence, occurs when a person uses abusive, controlling, or coercive behaviour to dominate another family member or partner.

The key indicator of family violence is that the victim feels controlled, fearful, unsafe, or intimidated due to another person's behaviour.

Who is affected?

Family violence can affect anyone, regardless of age, gender, cultural background, or sexual orientation.

Children are particularly vulnerable and are considered victims of family violence even when the abuse is not directed at them. Witnessing violence, seeing injuries, living with property damage, or experiencing the effects of a distressed parent can have long-lasting impacts on children.

Family violence can cause significant psychological, emotional, and physical harm to both direct victims and those who witness it.

Types of family violence

Physical abuse

- Hitting, pushing, restraining, or intimidating someone.
- Throwing objects or using weapons.
- Denying access to food, medication, or essential care.

Verbal and emotional abuse

- Constant criticism, insults, name-calling, and humiliation.
- Threats, harassment, and undermining a person, including in front of children.

Sexual abuse

- Forcing a person to participate in sexual activity against their wishes.
- Pressuring someone into unwanted sexual acts or behaviours.

Coercive control

- A pattern of controlling and manipulative behaviour.
- Isolating someone from family and friends.
- Gaslighting, monitoring activities, threatening children or pets, controlling finances, and dictating clothing or behaviour.

Financial abuse

- Controlling access to money or bank accounts.
- Forcing someone to take out loans or incur debt.
- Closely monitoring spending or misusing joint finances.

Spiritual or religious abuse

- Preventing someone from practising their faith.
- Forcing a person to follow religious beliefs against their wishes.

Technology and social media abuse

- Monitoring or stalking someone through social media.
- Controlling online activity, contacts, or profile content.

Reproductive coercion

- Interfering with a person's reproductive choices.
- Pressuring or preventing pregnancy against the individual's wishes.

Key facts

- Approximately **1 in 4 women** experience violence, emotional abuse or economic abuse by an intimate partner or family member.
- Family violence is the **leading cause of homelessness** for women and children.
- More than **one women is killed every week** in Australia as a result of family violence.
- **60.7% of surveyed LGBTIQA+ people** reported experiencing violence from an intiate partner during their lifetime.
- Around **1 in 8 men** have experienced physica and/or sexual violence by a current or former partner since the age of 15.

How to support someone experiencing family violence

- Believing them and taking their concerns seriously.
- Listening without judgement or interruption.
- Avoiding blame and never making excuses for the perpetrator.
- Understanding that leaving a violent relationship may not be safe or possible immediately.
- Providing practical support such as transport, attending appointments, childcare assistance or helping them connnect with support .

Where to get help

A number of support services are available for those affected by family violence including:

- **1800RESPECT**: 1800 737 732
- **Safe Steps Victoria**: 1800 015 188
- **MensLine Australia**: 1300 789 978
- **Sexual Assault Crisis Line (Victoria)**: 1800 806 292
- **Rainbow Door:** 1800 729 367
- **The Orange Door**
- **Kids Helpline**: 1800 55 1800
- **InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence**
- **South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault and Family Violence (SECASA)**
- **After Hours Child Protection Crisis Line**: 131 278
- **Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women's Service**

Key takeaways

Family violence is about power, control, and abuse. It can affect anyone and can take many forms beyond physical violence. Recognising the signs, supporting those affected without judgment, and connecting people with appropriate services can make a significant difference. If someone is in immediate danger or feels unsafe, they should call 000 (Triple Zero) for emergency assistance.