

Domestic Violence Information Booklet

For

Women

*“Never think your
partner’s abuse
is your fault”*

WHAT IS DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE?

Most people in a healthy relationship disagree about things from time to time. In a healthy relationship both parties are able to put forward their opinions, points of view or concerns, and feel comfortable discussing them together. It is normal for voices to become raised in a heated discussion, so long as a level of respect and equality is present between both parties.

Domestic violence is abusive and violent behaviour used by one person to control and dominate another person within a domestic relationship. (*Definition from: The Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989 Legislation*).

In an unhealthy relationship the situation can be very different. Domestic and family violence may occur if one person in the relationship uses violence or abuse to gain power and control over the other. This may be achieved through fear and intimidation as the person being threatened feels too frightened to argue back or too scared to disagree and express their opinion.

FORMS OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE...

Domestic violence can occur in many forms and is not restricted to any particular community, social class, age, cultural background or geographical area. It can include:

Physical abuse such as pushing, shoving, slapping, hitting, punching, biting or pinching; threatening to hurt you, your relatives, and friends or work colleagues in some way. Or damaging property, harming pets in order to frighten and intimidate you.

Sexual abuse occurs when someone forces you to have sex or take part in sexual acts when you don't want to.

Social abuse such as controlling where you go, not letting you see or have contact with your friends or family.

Financial abuse such as taking control of the money, not giving you enough money to survive on, forcing you to hand over your money, or not letting you have a say in how it is spent.

Emotional abuse such as making you feel worthless, criticising your personality, your looks, the way you dress, constantly putting you down, yelling, shouting, name-calling, and swearing at you.

Spiritual abuse such as forcing you to attend religious activities against your wishes, prohibiting you from participating in the religious or cultural practices of your choice.

Stalking such as constantly following you by foot or car, constantly calling you by phone, text messages and emails, or staying outside your house or workplace (Stalking is a criminal offence in Queensland).

Internet Abuse

HOW SAFE IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP?

The most telling sign of an abusive relationship is fear of the other person. If you feel like you have to walk on eggshells around the other person or constantly watch what you say and do in order to avoid a blow up, the chances are your relationship is unhealthy and abusive.

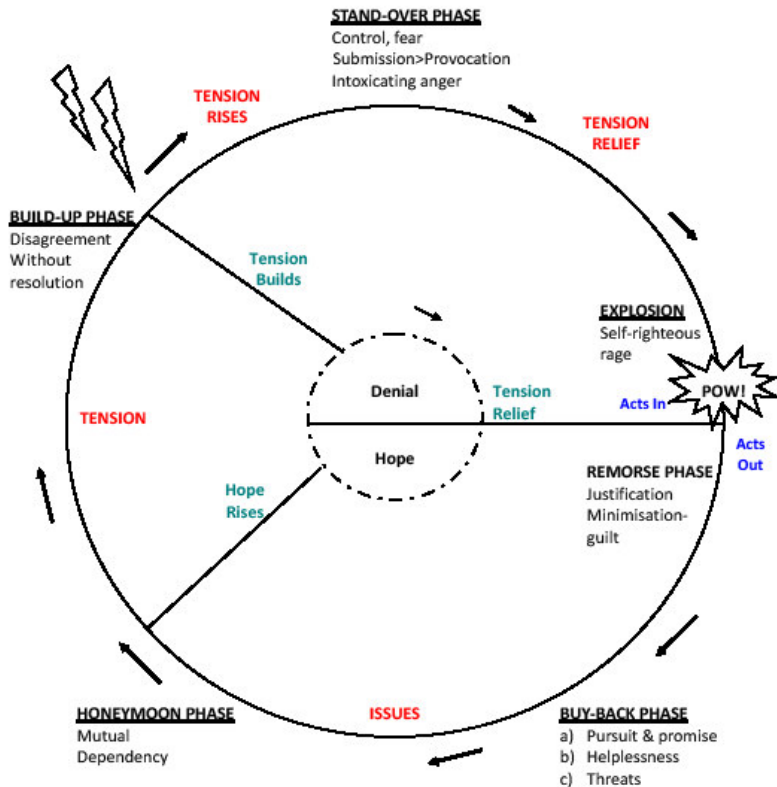
Warning signs:

- Does your partner ridicule or insult people you like? Is your partner jealous of your friends, family or pets?
- Does your partner become angry or upset just before or during a social event you've been looking forward to?
- Does your partner intercept your mail or telephone calls?
- Do you discourage people from telephoning you at home because your partner resents sharing your time?
- Do you have less contact time with friends and family than before your relationship began? Do you feel uneasy about being with your partner and your friends at the same time?
- Do you feel nervous or frightened about what your partner will say or do, if you are a few minutes late home from work, shopping, the hairdressers, or visiting others?
- Do you feel your clothing, opinions or decisions must have your partner's approval?
- Do you speak carefully or avoid speaking, so you won't risk upsetting your partner?
- Do you time your activities to avoid their being noticed by your partner?
- Do you often feel you're walking on egg-shells around your partner?
- Does your partner claim to know the "right" way to do things, and that you don't know what's "right"?
- Does your partner insist that activities take place in precise ways or at precise times?
- Does your partner interrupt your work or other things that are important to you, to get his or her needs met?
- Does your partner keep you up late, asking about real or imagined sexual or romantic incidents?
- Does your partner force you to apologies for things you didn't do?
- Does your partner call you names with sexual connotations such as "slut" or "whore"?
- Does your partner flaunt relationships or flirt with others while in your presence?
- Does your partner threaten to publicly disclose things you've said or done in private?
- Does your partner threaten suicide or mental instability if you leave or withdraw your love or affection?
- Does your partner try to frighten you by using bodily or facial expressions or noises to show extreme anger and loss of control?

THE CYCLE OF ABUSE

In many abusive relationships there is a cycle of violence. This cycle varies, but generally rotates between relative calm and an explosion of abuse. The abuse often escalates over time from threats and verbal abuse to physical violence.

CYCLE OF VIOLENCE & CYCLE OF AVOIDANCE



**VIOLENCE IS PART OF A CYCLE
IT IS NOT A ONE OFF EVENT**

SAFETY PLAN

DON'T UNDER-ESTIMATE THE LEVEL OF DANGER YOU MIGHT BE IN!

Ensuring safety is very important, as abuse can often escalate if a partner tries to leave a relationship. We often underestimate the level of danger we are in, because we don't realise the danger or we minimise the risk involved. The following tips may assist you and your children to leave safely.

- Have your mobile phone with you at all times if possible
- Keep emergency numbers such as **000** and DVConnect **1800 811 811** in your phone (on speed dial if you can)
- Make a list of family and friends who can help in an emergency. Ask what they would be willing to do (transportation, shelter, money etc.) if you needed to make a quick getaway
- If you can't stay with family or friends, choose a hotel or motel where you can go (save money to pay for at least one night) and know the quickest way there
- The domestic violence hotline (DVConnect 1800 811 811) can assist you to a women's shelter
- Plan how you will leave in an emergency situation. Will you travel by car, bus, taxi, train, a ride from a friend or on foot?
- If it is by car, have a spare set of keys and keep fuel in the car
- If by bus, taxi, train etc ensure you have some money set aside for fare
- Make provisional agreements for children, pets and other commitments
- Pack a bag and keep it in a safe place where no-one will find it. The following items should be in the bag:
 - * Money
 - * Emergency phone numbers and an extra set of keys to the house and car
 - * Clothing for you and your children
 - * Medication for you and your children (if regularly taken)
 - * Important papers such as drivers licence, passport birth/marriage certificates, health care card, credit cards etc. jewellery and valuables

THE IMPACTS OF ABUSE

All forms of abuse have damaging consequences. Your confidence can become worn down by abuse. If you have been in an abusive relationship you may experience some of these:

- Afraid to tell anyone
- Worried that it's your fault
- Depressed and anxious
- Confused
- Scared of coping on your own
- Scared it will get worse if you leave
- Afraid that no-one will believe you
- Frustrated and sad because you've tried everything
- Exhausted

AFFECTS OF ABUSE ON CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Children are affected by domestic and family violence whether they are physically abused or not. Children who witness domestic violence have been found to have higher levels of behavioural and emotional problems than other children. The impact of domestic and family violence will vary from child to child, depending on their age, sex, and role in the family.

These signs may include:

- Copying the abusive or violent behaviour
- Sleeping difficulties e.g. nightmares
- Trying to intervene and to stop the abuse (this is how some children become injured during domestic and family violence)
- Being stunned into a terrified silence by what they see
- Blaming themselves
- Being frustrated, angry or depressed
- Bullying others or being bullied by others
- Being cruel to animals
- Regressive behaviours like bed-wetting and thumb-sucking
- Being nervous and withdrawn
- Changes in behaviour and low academic performance at school
- Displaying illnesses including: unexplained headaches, asthma or stuttering
- Running away from home
- Attempting suicide or self harm
- Abusing alcohol or other substances

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILDREN

Parents and carers of a child growing up in an abusive household can help by:

- Being aware that domestic and family violence harms children too
- Educating children that there is never any excuse for abuse and violence
- Providing reassurance that the abuse and violence is not the child's fault
- Telling the child that he or she is loved
- Organising support at school by talking to a teacher, principal or guidance officer
- Encouraging the child to talk about how he or she is feeling and of any worries he or she may have
- Seeking support from a counsellor
- Ensuring the child knows how to call for help including phoning '000' and stating the address of the home
- Seeking support about the violence and contacting a Domestic Violence service, where appropriate, taking the child to a safe place

STAYING SAFE WHEN THINGS GET HEATED

- Stay calm and move to a safe area
- Avoid rooms with weapons e.g. kitchen, bathroom, garage
- Avoid rooms where there is no exit to an outdoor area
- Follow your safety plan
- In an emergency ring the Police or **000** as they can enter a place (with force if necessary) to investigate a domestic violence incident.

NOTE: The Police have the authority to remove an abusive person to a watch-house for a maximum of four hours. They can make an application for an urgent Domestic Violence Order (DVO) on your behalf.

Police Stations

Maroochydore	5475 2444
Coolum	5446 1877
Buderim	5445 1661
Kawana Waters	5493 7100
Caloundra	5439 4444
Mooloolaba	5444 1276

RESPONSIBILITY & AUTHORITY OF THE POLICE

Police have a number of responsibilities and authority under the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act and Police Powers and Responsibilities Act. These include:

- Enter a place (with force if necessary) to investigate a domestic violence incident
- Detain a respondent and take them to a watch-house for a maximum of four hours
- Make application for a Domestic Violence Order on behalf of an aggrieved
- Demand the name and address of any person involved in a domestic violence incident, including witnesses

STAYING SAFE AFTER SEPARATION

- Take out a DVO. Contact the court, police station, Legal Aid or Centacare CFCS for information or assistance
- If Orders are granted, keep a copy of them with you at all times
- Increase security on your home e.g. installing sensor lighting or changing locks
- Tell neighbours that you have a Domestic Violence Order (protection order) in place and that you are afraid of your ex-partner
- Ask neighbours to call police if they hear any shouting or abusive behaviour
- Ask for your calls to work and home to be screened
- Stay in touch with the domestic violence service and keep your safety plan updated
- Plan what you might say or do if your partner asks you to return to the relationship
- Change your routine if it seems necessary. Change work hours, grocery stores and regular appointments
- Review your banking and postal arrangements
- Report all breaches to police and document all incidents that can be used as evidence
- Important papers – make a certified copy of your important papers

SHOULD I TAKE OUT A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ORDER (DVO)?

It's natural to hope that things will change, or that the abuse will go away. It is possible for an abuser to stop abusing, but it is rare. Abusive behaviour will not change until the person perpetrating the abuse gets professional help and takes accountability for their abusive behaviour. Until such time a DVO is a legal order, which serves to protect you. .

What is a Domestic Violence Order (DVO)?

A domestic violence order is an order made by the Court that includes conditions that restrain, restrict and prohibit the behaviour of the respondent to prevent further domestic violence.

Who are the aggrieved and respondent?

The **aggrieved** is the person (victim) for whose benefit the domestic violence order is made and the **respondent** is the person (perpetrator) who the domestic violence order is made against.

WHO CAN BE PROTECTED BY A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ORDER?

People in the following relationships can seek protection under the law:

Spousal Relationships

- People who are married, separated or divorced;
- Biological parents of a child
- Two people of the same sex who are living together or have previously lived together as a couple

Intimate personal relationships;

- People who are or were engaged to be married to each other
- A betrothal under cultural or religious tradition
- People who are or were previously dating and whose lives have become enmeshed

Family relationships

- People who are related by blood or marriage, such as a grandparent, aunty, uncle, step-parent, sibling, cousin or child (18 years or over)
- Relatives of those who are in or have been in, a de-facto relationship
- A person who is regarded as a relative

NOTE: The definition of a relative may be broader for different cultures such as:

- Aboriginal people
- Torres Strait Islanders
- Members of non-English speaking communities
- Members of or people with specific religious beliefs

WHO CAN BE PROTECTED BY A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ORDER cont.....

Informal care relationship

- An informal care relationship exists if one person is, or was dependent on another person for day-to-day help e.g. Carer for someone living with an illness or disability, or person with an illness or disability

NOTE: Informal care relationships cannot exist between a parent and a child, nor does it occur where a paid care service is providing personal care e.g. nurse

WHERE CAN I GET HELP?

Centacare Catholic Family & Community Services

Bernard House

21 Cornmeal Parade

Maroochydore QLD 4558

Phone: (07) 5430 9300

Monday—Friday 9am to 5pm

Crisis Support Information & Counselling

DV Connect 24hr Crisis Line	1800 811 811
Kids Help Line (24hr)	1800 551 800
Lifeline 24hr	13 11 11
Parentline	1300 301 300
Sexual Assault Helpline (24hr)	1800 010 120
Immigrant Womens Support Services	07 3846 3490
Crisis Care	1800 177 135

Magistrate Courts—Domestic Violence Orders (Protection Orders)

Caloundra Court	07 5420 9000
Maroochydore Court	07 5470 8011
Nambour Court	07 5470 8755
Noosa Court	07 5473 8400
Gympie Court	07 5482 2011

Legal Information & Advice

Legal Aid	1300 651 188
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal & Advice Services	07 3392 3177
Women's Legal Services	07 3392 0670 or 1800 677 278
Sunshine Coast Legal Services	07 5443 7827

Child Contact Arrangements

Harmony House	07 5479 6971
Family Relationship Centre	07 5452 9700
Lifeline Family Dispute Resolution	07 5479 1600

Housing

Housing QLD	07 5475 9700
Sunshine Coast Regional Housing Council	07 5454 2900
Womens Refuges can be accessed via DV Connect	1800 811 811

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