

A FAITH LEADER'S PRACTICE GUIDE AND TOOLKIT

# Preventing and Responding to Family Violence

*By Manal Shehab*



## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the First Nations peoples as the traditional custodians of the lands and waters throughout Australia. We acknowledge the Aunties, Grandmothers, Mothers, Daughters and Sisters who have maintained culture through genocide, dispossession and colonisation. We also want to acknowledge the incredible resilience and strength shown by First Nations peoples who live daily with the impact of colonisation, racism and transphobia. This land is Aboriginal land and its sovereignty has never been ceded.

We also would like to pay our respects to Elders - past, present and emerging.



For more information please visit: [aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia](https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia)

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# Origins of this resource

## About this resource

Faith settings are important environments where social networks and social norms are formed and are therefore an important context in which we can target activities to prevent family violence and violence against women.

This resource shares the best of Australian and international research evidence on the factors that cause and reinforce family violence in faith communities. We also look at what works to address these factors and the role of faith leaders and communities in responding to and preventing violence.

It draws from the evidence produced by Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS), affiliate researchers,

and strategies from specialist CALD and LGBTQIA+ family violence organisations. It also uses the 'Change the Story framework' of Our Watch, the national organisation leading the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia. In addition, it is informed by the wealth of good work already practiced in diverse faith communities in Australia and across the globe.

This resource is written by Manal Shehab (Sisters4Sisters Support Services) with support from WIRE and other family violence specialist organisations, including consultation with members from Victoria's diverse faith communities.

## About Sisters4Sisters



We are a dedicated team of therapists committed to supporting you to find your voice. S4S believes every woman has the right to feel safe, respected, heard and validated. We are here to support you on your journey of healing and growth. We ensure a safe space that honours and respects you and your journey no matter where you've been or where you're at. This is YOUR story. We help you get unstuck from the dominant narrative that held you back.

Together we embark on a journey of self discovery that allows you to tap into the hero within; embrace uncertainty; let go of the inner critic and unleash your full potential. We give you the information and resources you need to move forward with confidence, hope and resilience. Here for you when it matters.

## About WIRE



WIRE provides information, support and referral to Victorian women, non-binary and gender diverse people on any issue. We provide support through a telephone support line, by email and web chat, as well as face-to-face in our Walk-in Centre located in inner Melbourne. We also deliver a range of programs and services including job coaching, employment workshops, and financial and legal clinics.

We undertake projects and provide education and resources to individuals, organisations and the community to build capacity and capability to counter gender bias, discrimination and family violence. This includes training and programs focused on increasing women's financial capability, addressing family violence, dealing with difficult calls and working more effectively with women, non-binary and gender diverse.

WIRE's vision is a just society where all people can thrive.

## Acknowledging faith leaders and their important role in communities.

Sisters4Sisters and WIRE would like to acknowledge the important roles played by faith leaders. We understand that often, faith leaders work in a voluntary capacity, are over worked, expected to be available for their community at all times, and be experts on all subjects. This practice guide and toolkit is designed to offer some practical support around working with family violence in faith settings and in particular, within the Australian context.

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide all faith leaders and active community leaders with guidance to safely respond to families in their faith communities who are experiencing family violence as well as how to prevent it from starting in the first place. We invite and encourage you to participate in our nation's effort to end violence by incorporating the information found in this toolkit to develop your faith community's response.

This toolkit includes a number of topics regarding religious rituals and themes, to assist faith leaders in identifying the numerous ways in which they can educate themselves, their families and their communities on the issue of family violence. This is not an all-inclusive list and we encourage you to adapt these ideas and suggestions in a way that will honour your tenets and beliefs, while supporting victim-survivor/s and holding persons using abusive and violent behaviours accountable. This toolkit aims to address communities of all faiths and focuses on educating, raising awareness in communities and supporting them to safely respond to the needs of victim-survivor/s and their families and address the prevention of violence rather than engaging in theological debates or discourse.





# Part 1

## Understanding Family Violence

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### Family Violence Law in Victoria

In Victoria, the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 says that family violence is behaviour by a person towards a family member of that person that is:

- Physically or sexually abusive
- Emotionally or psychologically abusive
- Economically abusive
- Threatening
- Coercive or in any other way that controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to feel fear for the safety and wellbeing of that family member or another person, and
- Behaviour by a person that causes a child to hear or witness, or otherwise be exposed to, the effects of the behaviours referred to in the points above.

### Part 1 includes:

1.1 The Royal Commission into family violence

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1.2 What is family violence?

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1.3 Power and control tactics

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1.4 Evidence based risk factors

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1.5 Impact of family violence on women

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1.6 Why is it hard for women to leave a relationship?

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1.7 When children are involved

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1.8 Family violence in different communities

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1.9 Responding to myths about family violence

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# 1.1 The Royal Commission into family violence

Family violence is a serious problem which affects all communities in Australia. It is preventable, and we have the power to stop it before it starts.

## Your community needs family violence support that meets their needs

The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022 says that all women have the right to live free from violence or the fear of violence. The plan also says that prevention work **must include strategies to meet the needs of particular groups, including faith communities and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.**

In 2014 a ten-year-old boy named Luke Batty was killed by his father while his mother was experiencing family violence. His death was one of many deaths caused by family violence that year. The Victorian Government Royal Commission into Family Violence was established the next year, in 2015.

The Commission recommended that the Victorian Government develop training packages on how to respond to family violence for faith leaders and communities (Rec. 163). The Commission also recommended that the Government look at barriers to preventing violence, reporting violence, recovering from violence, and practices that support violence or make excuses for it.

### The role of the Commission was to find ways to:

- prevent family violence
- better support victim-survivor/s
- hold perpetrators/people who use abusive behaviours accountable

### It investigated:

- criminal law, corrections and courts
- the role of support services, health system and alcohol and drug treatment services, as well as refuges, housing and education
- tools available to police

### The Commission found that existing programs were not able to:

- reduce how often violence happens, or its impact on victim-survivor/s
- stop violence before it started through early intervention
- support victim-survivor/s
- hold perpetrators/people who use abusive behaviours to account for their behaviour
- coordinate community and government services

The Royal Commission provided its report, including 227 recommendations, to the Victorian Government on 29 March 2016. Government is working to implement every one of the Commission's recommendations, backed with an investment of more than \$2.7 billion to keep women, children and families safe. See The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022 at [www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au). 'Our responsibilities' - Women's Safety Publications & Articles ; Reducing Violence. See RCFV's Recommendations 163-165 at [www.faithvictoria.org.au/news-a-articles/330-royal-commission-into-family-violence-report](http://www.faithvictoria.org.au/news-a-articles/330-royal-commission-into-family-violence-report)

# 1.2 What is family violence?

Family violence is violence or abuse that happens in a family situation or in the home. It is about one person trying to control another person over time.

It often happens between couples or married partners, but it can also happen between other people living in a domestic situation together, like siblings, extended family members, or between parent and child. Elder abuse is also family violence.

## There are many names for family violence

You may have heard people use different words to talk about family violence.

Some of those words are:

- Domestic violence
- Intimate partner violence
- Abuse, or abusive behaviours
- Violence against women
- Non-partner sexual assault

## Family violence is not always physical

Family violence comes in many different forms, including:

- Physical violence
- Emotional/psychological abuse
- Financial abuse
- Spiritual abuse
- Sexual violence
- Controlling, threatening and manipulative behaviour

Sometimes a person who uses abusive behaviours will never physically hurt their partner. Family violence is about control over another person, often over a long period of time. For example, if a spouse regularly tries to control their partner's behaviour by threatening to take away their partner's car keys, he is still using family violence, even if he doesn't use physical violence to hurt the other person. You can read more about different tactics of family violence and how to spot them in 1.3 Power and control tactics on page 10.

## Who uses family violence and who is harmed by it?

Family violence can happen between:

- Married couples
- People who are separated or divorced
- People who live together
- People who are dating
- Same sex couples
- Parents and children
- Older people and caregivers
- People with disabilities and caregivers
- Extended family members and community members

In this resource we use **victim-survivor/s** when we are talking about a person who has experienced family violence. We use **person who uses abusive behaviours** when we are talking about the perpetrator (the person who is harming the victim-survivor/s).

## Why does this resource mostly talk about women as victim-survivor/s of violence? What about men?

All violence is wrong, but there are patterns of violence. For example, both women and men are more likely to experience violence used against them by men. About 95% of all victim-survivor/s of violence in Australia were hurt by a man.\*

While men are more likely to experience violence used against them by other men in public places, women are more likely to experience violence by men they know, often in the home.

\* Source (Diemer, 2015)



Most acts of family violence and sexual assault are done by men, against women. This violence is also likely to have a bigger impact on women than men.

## How does family violence harm women, children and community?

Family violence harms all of us. It causes deep, long term damage to the health and wellbeing of women, their children, families, communities and society.

Family violence is the biggest health risk factor for women aged 25-44 years old.

It is the biggest cause of homelessness for women and a common factor in child protection notifications.

In Victoria, children are considered victim-survivor/s in their own right.

Children and young people are also harmed by family violence, even when the violence does not directly affect them (go to page 18 for more information).

Seeing, hearing or knowing that their mother or other caregiver is experiencing family violence can have a lifelong impact on children. It can shape attitudes to relationships and violence, as well as behavioral, cognitive and emotional functioning, social development, and education and employment. (Go to page 18 for more information).

Family violence also costs our society a lot of money and resources. Police are called to family violence incidents across the country on average once every two minutes. The health, administration and social welfare costs of violence against women are estimated to be around \$21.7 billion a year.

If nothing more is done to stop family violence before it starts, the cost may reach \$323.4 billion over a thirty year period from 2014-15 to 2044-45, according to estimates.

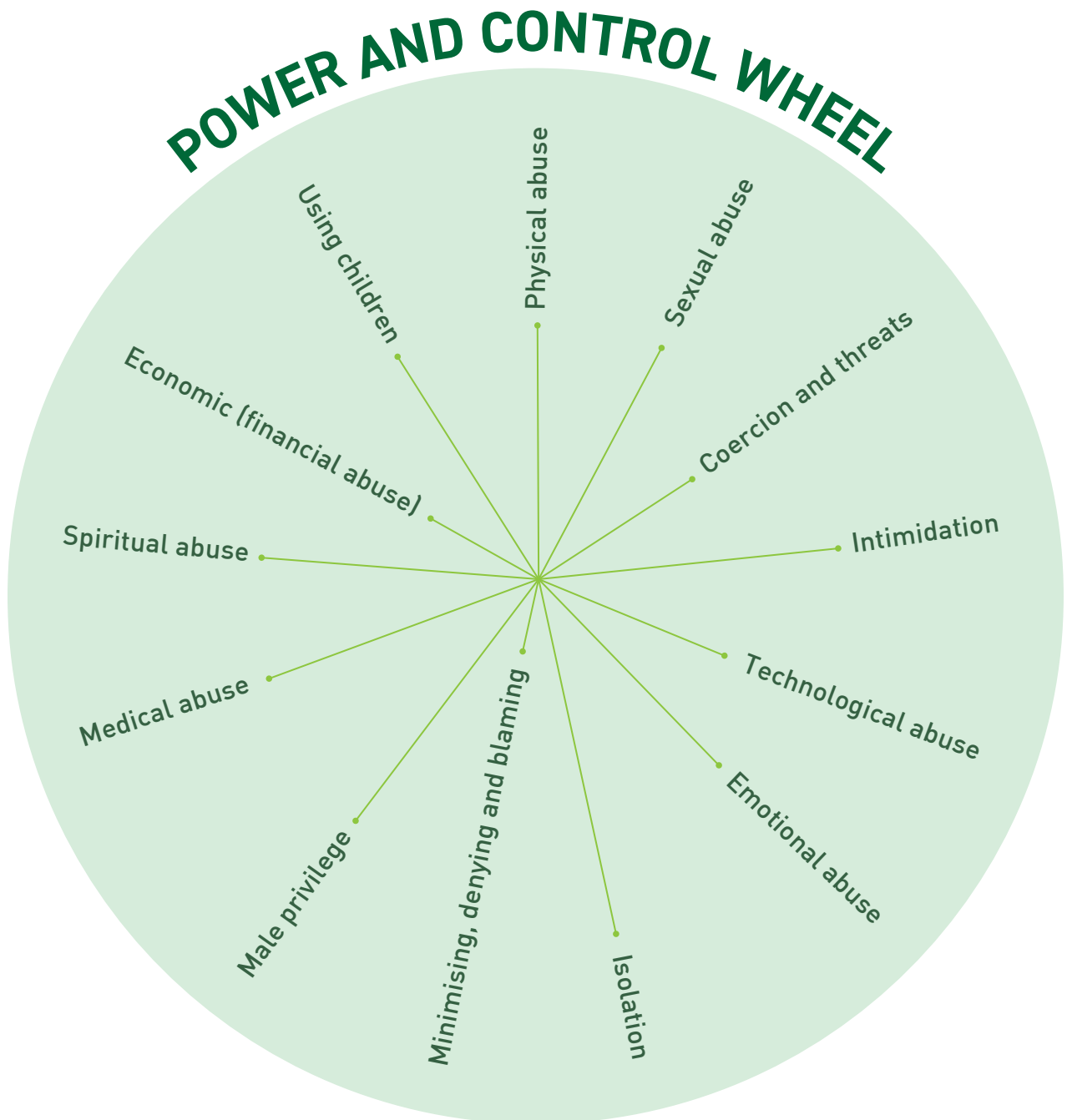
- On average, one woman a week is murdered by her current or former partner.
- 1 in 6 Australian women have experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or former partner.
- 1 in 4 Australian women have experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner.
- Australian women are nearly three times more likely than men to experience violence from an intimate partner.
- Australian women are almost four times more likely than men to be sent to hospital after being assaulted by their spouse or partner.
- More than two-thirds (68%) of mothers who had children in their care when they experienced violence from their previous partner said their children had seen or heard the violence.
- There is growing evidence that women with disabilities are more likely to experience violence.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women report experiencing violence in the previous 12 months at 3.1 times the rate of non-Indigenous women.
- In 2014-15, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women were 32 times as likely to be hospitalised due to family violence as non-Indigenous women.

Although most statistics refer to women and men, we know that many people who are non-binary or gender diverse also experience family violence. Australia is only just starting to collect statistics on how non-binary and gender diverse people experience family violence.

## 1.3 Power and control tactics

Family violence is about one person trying to get power and control over another person over time. Family violence workers use the Power and Control Wheel to help identify different tactics of family violence. The wheel focuses on the person using abusive behaviours rather than the victim-survivor/s. This helps us hold the person using abusive behaviours accountable for their behaviours.

There are many different tactics of power and control



adapted from Duluth model

<b>Physical abuse</b>	<p>All forms of physical violence against another person, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choking</li> <li>• Pushing/Pulling</li> <li>• Slapping</li> <li>• Biting</li> <li>• Kicking</li> <li>• Hitting</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual abuse</b>	<p>Any type of sexual activity that the other person does not want, or that is forced on them. Sexually abusive people may use physical force, make threats, or take advantage of someone who is not able to give consent. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rape – forcing a person to have sex without consent or because it is 'their duty' within the marriage</li> <li>• Sexually touching a person who does not want to be touched or forcing a person to do particular sexual acts they don't want</li> <li>• Causing a person pain during sex on purpose, without consent</li> <li>• Forcing a person to have sex without protection against pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections (STIs)</li> <li>• Using sexually degrading insults</li> <li>• Showing pornography to a person who does not want to see it</li> </ul>
<b>Coercion and threats</b>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Controlling a person by threatening to leave the relationship</li> <li>• Controlling a person by threatening to suicide</li> <li>• Controlling a person by threatening to report another person to welfare</li> <li>• Controlling a person by threatening to harm children or pets</li> <li>• Forcing a person to drop legal charges or forcing a person to do illegal things</li> <li>• Threatening to harm family here or overseas, or ruin their reputation</li> <li>• Threatening to send children or a person overseas and/or cancel their visa</li> </ul>
<b>Using intimidation</b>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smashing things</li> <li>• Destroying a person's property</li> <li>• Abusing a person's pets</li> <li>• Putting weapons where the person can see them as a threat</li> </ul>
<b>Using emotional abuse</b>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making a person feel bad about themselves</li> <li>• Putting a person down or calling them names</li> <li>• Making a person think they are crazy</li> <li>• Making a person feel guilty</li> <li>• Playing mind games</li> <li>• Humiliating a person</li> </ul>



**Using isolation**

Examples:

- Controlling what a person does, including who they see and talk to, what they read and where they go
- Limiting a person's life outside the home (e.g. social networks)
- Using jealousy as an excuse for unhealthy or harmful behaviours
- Not allowing a person to attend English classes or pursue a career
- Not allowing them to learn how to drive

**Minimising, denying and blaming**

Examples:

- Making light of abuse
- Telling a person that the abuse didn't happen or that they are exaggerating it
- Telling a person that they caused the abuse that they experienced

**Culture**

Examples:

- Dowry abuse
- Forced marriage
- Child marriage
- Female cutting

**Using children**

Examples:

- Making a person feel guilty about their children
- Using the children to send hurtful messages to another person
- Using visitation to harass another person
- Threatening to take a person's children away

**Using economic (financial) abuse**

Examples:

- Stopping a person from getting or keeping a job
- Making a person ask for money
- Giving a person an allowance and then taking it away
- Not letting a person see the family income/expenses information
- Not giving a person access to the family income
- Putting bills and loans in a person's name without their consent

**Using medical abuse**

Examples:

- Refusing to let a person get medical treatment, including routine care
- Refusing to let a person get treatment for injuries caused by abuse, or not leaving a person alone in the treatment room to make sure they don't tell a doctor or nurse what really happened
- Forcing a person to use alcohol or drugs, including prescription drugs

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**Spiritual abuse**

## Examples:

- Using scripture to make excuses for abuse
  - Denying a person's freedom to practice their religion of choice
  - Forcing a person to act against their religious beliefs
  - Shaming a person for their religious practices
  - Making demands based on an interpretation of scriptures or religious teachings (e.g. "the scriptures say that you need to obey me because you are my wife")
  - Using a particular interpretation of scriptures to make excuses for physical, sexual and other abuse
  - Using religion to make a person feel guilty for not doing something (e.g. "how can you call yourself religious if you don't forgive me?")
  - Using religious ideas about marriage to make excuses for forced sex (marital rape)
  - Manipulating other people in their religious community (e.g. faith leaders) to control, isolate and shame a person so that they will stay in an abusive relationship
  - Convincing faith leaders to use religious scriptures to make a person feel guilty and put pressure on them so that they stay in an abusive relationship
- 

**Using technology**

## Examples:

- Stalking
  - Tracking a person's technology use
  - Secretly changing files or device settings
  - Breaking technology items or assistive devices on purpose
  - Pretending to be another person on the internet
-

# 1.4 Evidence based risk factors

It is very important that you know how to spot risk factors. These signs show that the person using abusive behaviours is at greater risk of killing, nearly killing, or seriously injuring the victim-survivor/s.

If a person you support reports any of the behaviours listed, their life and their children's safety may be in danger. You should strongly encourage the victim-survivor/s to seek support from a specialist family violence service (go to page 73). You also need to make a safety plan (go to page 86).

## Family violence during pregnancy/new birth

Family violence often begins or gets worse during pregnancy. It is linked to higher rates of miscarriage, low birth weight, premature birth, foetal injury and foetal death. Family violence during pregnancy is a warning sign for future violence against a woman and her child. There are some factors which make a person more likely to use abusive behaviours or commit more severe family violence during pregnancy, including:

- Attitudes and beliefs that support traditional gender roles for men and women
- Attitudes and beliefs that support violence
- Jealousy and control of the time the pregnant person is taking to care for their unborn child
- Unplanned pregnancy and reproductive control

## Recent separation

Just before, during or after people in a relationship have separated are high risk times for victim-survivor/s. Separation is a time of danger because of the shift in power in the relationship. The evidence shows that women are at the greatest risk of harm within the first 2 months of separation.

## Violence which happens more over time, or gets worse

Violence that happens more often, or gets worse, is linked to a higher risk of being killed.

## Use of weapons in most recent violent event

Use of a weapon is linked to a high level of risk because past behaviour is a good predictor of future behaviour. A weapon is any tool which can injure, kill or destroy property, including guns.

## Access to weapons

People who use abusive behaviours and have access to weapons (especially guns), are much more likely to seriously injure or kill a victim-survivor/s or a pet than others who do not have access to weapons.

## Strangulation/choking

Women who survive strangulation are almost 8 times more likely to be killed at a future date. The effects of strangulation may show up weeks after the event in the form of clotting, swelling or hemorrhaging in the brain.

## Obsession/jealousy and controlling behaviours

The person using abusive behaviours may have complete control over what the victim-survivor/s does outside the home. For example, a man may tell his wife who she can be friends with, control how much money she can access and decide when she can see friends and family and when she can use the car. This is dangerous because it means the victim-survivor/s has fewer options and opportunities to access support, keep themselves safe, or leave the relationship.



## Threats to harm or kill

<b>Victim-survivor/s</b>	When a person who uses abusive behaviours threatens to kill a victim, often they mean it. Threats to kill are a very important warning sign
<b>Children</b>	Child abuse and family violence often happen in the same family. Children who see, hear or experience abuse may suffer lifelong impacts (go to page 18 for more information)
<b>Animals</b>	There is a direct link between family violence and pets being abused or killed. Abuse or threats of abuse against pets are used to control family members
<b>Self</b>	Threats or attempts to commit suicide are a risk factor for murder-suicide
<b>Sexual assault</b>	About 1/3 of women who are sexually assaulted fear for their lives. Women are at higher risk of being killed by partners who physically and sexually assault them
<b>Stalking</b>	Stalkers are more likely to be violent if they have had an intimate relationship with the victim. Stalking, when coupled with physical assault, is strongly connected to killing or attempting to kill a person

## Unemployment

If the person using abusive behaviours is unemployed, they are at a higher risk of killing the victim-survivor/s. Suddenly losing a job can put the victim-survivor/s in greater danger. This is because the person using abusive behaviours is spending more time in the family home, and because of the impact on their masculine identity as the 'breadwinner' or 'provider'.

## Drug or alcohol use & mental health

Drugs, alcohol or prescription drugs and inhalants do not cause family violence, however, they can increase the risk of family violence.

Drugs and alcohol are dangerous because they can make the behaviour of the abusive person more unpredictable, making it more difficult for the victim-survivor/s to know when violence is coming. Therefore, alcohol and drugs can make the violence more frequent and more severe. Please note that when a person who uses abusive behaviour ends their alcohol or drug use, it does not mean the violence will stop. A person who uses violence under the influence has a propensity to use violence when sober.

Research shows us that people who have trauma in their past, including physical or sexual violence, are at greater risk of having or developing mental health issues. Some victim-survivor/s may turn to alcohol and drugs to mask the pain of their experience. It is very important to recommend treatment for mental health and substance abuse issues that will also support healing for the trauma they have experienced.

# 1.5 Impact of family violence on women

Abuse and violence have a destructive effect on women over time.

It can affect her:

- Self-esteem, confidence and ability to make decisions.
- Employment, financial independence and long term security.
- Relationships with children and capacity to be a loving, effective parent.
- Social connections with family, friends and community networks.
- Physical health and wellbeing.

It can cause:

- Physical injuries, chronic pain and other medical symptoms and illnesses.
- Anxiety, depression, eating, sleep and panic disorders, suicidal behaviour, traumatic and post-traumatic stress disorder.
- The adoption of risk behaviours that further affect health such as alcohol and drug abuse and physical inactivity.
- Unwanted pregnancy, difficulties during pregnancy, foetal abnormalities, stillbirth and low birth weight.

# 1.6 Why it is hard for women to leave a relationship?

Leaving a violent relationship is difficult and many women will attempt to leave a number of times before finally separating. There are many reasons for this:

## Increased risk of harm

- Violence often escalates when the woman is planning to leave or actually leaves, with an increased risk of assault, stalking and murder.
- Many family violence homicides occur during the separation period.

## Barriers to accessing the system

- Women experiencing family violence may not know there are support services that can help them.
- Women may not know about the kinds of support available to them; they may feel that services won't be able to help with their situation.
- Women may not have access to money and may not know where financial support is available.
- A lack of safe and affordable housing options means women may feel there's nowhere to go.

## Financial pressures

- Lack of access to money or other resources.
- Having to leave her job if she needs to be relocated for safety.

## Conflicting concerns and priorities

- Not wanting to disrupt her children's lives, education, and links to family and community.
- Believing it's in her children's best interests to be close to their father.
- Continuing to care for her partner and hoping he will change. (Many women don't want to leave the relationship, they just want the violence to stop.)
- For some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, the fear of putting their connections to extended kinship and family networks and to land at risk.
- For some women with disabilities, the fear of losing the person on whom they feel dependent.
- For some immigrant and refugee women, the fear of losing their residency entitlements.
- Wanting to avoid the stigma associated with being a single parent.

## Social isolation and its effects

- Feelings of shame and guilt about the violence or believing it is her fault.
- Fear of being isolated or ostracised by her community.
- Difficulty making decisions because she has been cut off from friends and family, is exhausted, and/or lacks confidence in her own judgment.



# 1.7 When children are involved

Sometimes our focus is on keeping the family unit together at any cost, but children are impacted when they are brought up in a household where family violence is present. Often they are the silent victim-survivor/s.

The chart below will help you understand the impacts of family violence on children of different ages as well as adult victim-survivor/s. You can use this chart to help you support victim-survivor/s who want to raise their children in two happy homes instead of one where they are exposed to abuse.

Remember: if you think that a child is being subject to abuse, you are mandated to report this to Child First (see referral list on page 73).

## The impact of family violence on children

Age	Developmental factors	Ways they display distress	What to do
<b>0-2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limited ability to understand what is happening</li><li>• Highly dependent on parents for basic needs</li><li>• Development of secure attachment</li><li>• Different experiences of time (e.g. if a caregiver is absent it can feel to the toddler like they have been left for a long time)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difficulty eating or sleeping</li><li>• Regression to behaviour they had previously outgrown (e.g. bed wetting, thumb sucking)</li><li>• Separation anxiety</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide consistency and familiarity</li><li>• Maintain frequent contact with both parents</li><li>• Avoid lengthy periods of separation from parents. Note: its been found that one week away from parents is too long</li></ul>
<b>3-4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Very dependent on parents</li><li>• Developing ability to think and reason</li><li>• Their world is magical</li><li>• Believe they are the cause of everything that happens in the world</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difficulties with sleeping and eating</li><li>• Regression</li><li>• Increased separation anxiety</li><li>• Disruptive behaviour</li><li>• Whining</li><li>• Physical symptoms</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explain things in simple terms</li><li>• Give reassurances often</li><li>• Create predictable parenting arrangements</li><li>• Note: it has been found that 2 weeks away from parents is too long</li></ul>

Age	Developmental factors	Ways they display distress	What to do
<b>5-8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can have difficulties talking about their fears</li> <li>• Will miss the absent parent</li> <li>• Likely to believe a parent has rejected them or stopped loving them</li> <li>• Can try to care for and comfort parents despite their own emotional needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hyperactivity</li> <li>• Regression</li> <li>• Withdrawal</li> <li>• Difficulties with schoolwork or peer relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give reassurance that parents still love them and care for them</li> </ul>
<b>9-12</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think in black and white</li> <li>• Greater ability to understand</li> <li>• Can often feel angry</li> <li>• Other feelings include shame, sadness, loneliness, fear, low self-esteem, powerlessness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenging behaviour</li> <li>• Difficult to discipline</li> <li>• Complaints of physical pain</li> <li>• Risk taking behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show understanding and support for their feelings and concerns</li> </ul>
<b>Adolescents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of their own sense of identity</li> <li>• Social orientation is the peer group</li> <li>• Often see two sides to a story</li> <li>• Issues of behaviour management</li> <li>• Good at detecting honesty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased acting out behaviour</li> <li>• Difficulty concentrating on their schoolwork</li> <li>• Withdrawal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give honest replies to questions to build trust with parents</li> <li>• Talk about their concerns in a supportive environment</li> <li>• Encourage positive behaviour</li> <li>• Practice fair and consistent management of their challenging behaviour</li> </ul>

# 1.8 Family violence in different communities

Family violence happens in communities across Australia, but there are some things you should know about supporting victim-survivor/s from specific communities, including:

- The LGBTQIA+ community
- Migrant and refugee communities
- Older Victorians
- People with disabilities
- Children and young people

## LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, intersex, and queer) communities

Family violence can happen in both heterosexual and same sex relationships. Rates of family violence in the LGBTQIA+ community are the same as or higher than rates between people who aren't LGBTQIA+.

LGBTQIA+ people experience physical, verbal and sexual violence and discrimination across their lifetime at higher rates than people who aren't LGBTQIA+. This means that LGBTQIA+ people may be made more vulnerable to abuse because:

- A person's experiences of violence and abuse across a lifetime have an impact on their psychological and physical health and may make a person more socially isolated. These experiences may also make it harder for LGBTQIA+ people to recognise and name family violence in partners, parents and other family members.
- Many LGBTQIA+ people have experienced discrimination when accessing services (including health and community services). A person with these experiences may not feel safe talking to community services, police, or the legal system.
- Some LGBTQIA+ may be less likely to ask for support because there is a lack of crisis accommodation that meets their needs and there are not as many referral options for the person using abusive behaviours.

There are some things you should keep in mind when talking to a LGBTQIA+ victim-survivor/s of family violence:

- Do not force a person to share their sexual orientation or gender identity. If they do, you should keep that information confidential.
- It is a good idea to use gender neutral language (e.g. partner), or mirror the language the victim-survivor/s uses when talking about the person using abusive behaviours.
- No matter the size and the gender of the victim-survivor/s or the person using abusive behaviours, family violence is always about one person trying to get power and control.

(Content adapted from Kate O'Halloran's RCFV Submission.)

## Migrant and refugee communities

There are some things you should keep in mind when talking to a victim-survivor/s who is a migrant or refugee:

- Learning more about the person's culture and identity may help you respond to the abuse.
- Don't assume that you share the same values and expected behaviours with the victim-survivor/s, just because you have the same heritage or cultural background. Your values may be very different.
- Victim-survivor/s in the immigrant and refugee community may speak English as an additional language, or may not speak English at all. If possible, use a certified and confidential interpreter when you are talking to the victim-survivor/s. **You must** avoid using family, friends, and members of their community to interpret as it may increase the person's risk of harm.



- Immigrants may not understand what family violence is or how it is defined in Australian law. Some immigrants may be afraid they will be deported or arrested. Practices like forced and early marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting, and dowry abuse are illegal in Australia. It is important that you understand what the law says about practicing these traditions or allowing them to go ahead. You can find information about these laws and information about relevant support services in Appendix B:

- Forced and early marriage
- Female genital mutilation/cutting
- Sexual assault
- Dowry abuse
- Family violence and partner visas
- Family violence within LGBTQIA+ communities
- Human trafficking and slavery

## Older people

Family violence against older people is sometimes referred to as elder abuse. Elder abuse is a form of family violence. In the Victorian family violence context, this is defined as any behaviour of a perpetrator as defined in the FVPA (Family Violence Protection Act) where it has occurred within any family or family-like (including unpaid carer) relationship where there is an implication of trust, and which results in harm to an older person. This includes any family violence risk factor that applies to an adult victim-survivor/s from a perpetrator's behaviour. It is important to recognise that older people are a diverse cohort. All older people can experience family violence. Most older people live independently and do not require care or support; however, they can still experience violence from adult children and other family members.

Older people are recognised as an at-risk age group as they may be in a period of transition, which can increase dependence on family/carers.

If an older person discloses to you that they are experiencing family violence from a family member or carer, you should follow the same protocol for responding to disclosures from other people in your community. If a person discloses using family violence against an older person, refer to section 4.4 (page 52) to respond.

If you are concerned about elder abuse and want information or the opportunity to talk to someone, call **1800 ElderHelp (1800 353 374)** or **Senior Rights Victoria** on **1300 368 821**.

## People living with disability requiring support

Some people with disabilities depend on caregivers to support them with daily living. This can make them more vulnerable to abuse and neglect. As a faith leader, you may be one of the few professionals who regularly visits homes and care facilities. That puts you in a position to notice signs of abuse or neglect and take appropriate action.

There are some things you should know about family violence by caregivers. The abuse may include physical abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse, emotional abuse, harassment or exploitation. It also includes neglect which deprives the person of a service or support that they need. The abuse may happen in a number of places including the person's home, a nursing home, group living home, or in a relative's home. A criminal act of neglect, abuse, assault and violence can be reported to police.

## Children and young people

Because of their age, a child or young person is more vulnerable to abuse. There are some things you need to know if a child has been abused:

- The child's safety is the first priority.
- It is not your job to investigate the abuse.  
Report the abuse to the child protection agency  
– they will investigate.

**If a child tells you they have been abused, you can support them by:**

- Believing the child's story. It is rare for a child to lie about abuse.
- Telling the child that you support them.
- Keeping their story private and confidential, but also explaining that people of religious ministries have a legal obligation to report physical and sexual abuse.
- You also need to indicate to young people that you have a duty of care and will need to take action if you believe they are unsafe (under the Act).
- If the child is older, supporting them to make decisions for themselves where possible.
- Sharing age appropriate information about resources for healing in the community.

# 1.9 Responding to myths about family violence

There are a lot of myths about family violence in all communities, including faith communities. There are many myths about victim-survivor/s, and about people who use abusive behaviours. When working with a victim-survivor/s, you must be aware that they may believe some of these myths too. We don't recommend repeating these myths (because saying them can make them stronger), but it's important to be aware of them and address them with the facts.

**Myth: Family violence happens when stress or anger cause a person to lose control**

**Fact: People who use abusive behaviours choose when to use abuse and violence**

Family violence is a gendered crime and a choice. Many men who use violence in their families do it because of their beliefs, which often involve male entitlement, gender role expectations and a violence- supportive attitude.

**Myth: Family violence is usually a one-off incident, or doesn't happen very often**

**Fact: Family violence is a pattern of behaviour where a person uses tactics to get power and control over a victim-survivor/s.**

Physical violence is only one tactic of power and control, and sometimes people who use abusive behaviours never use physical violence.

**Myth: Family violence only happens to poor or uneducated women in specific communities**

**Fact: Family violence can happen to anyone, no matter how wealthy or educated they are, or what their background or community is.**

**Myth: Victim-survivor/s deserve the abuse they experience because they 'provoke' the person using abusive behaviours, or push them too far**

**Fact: Family violence is never okay, no matter what.**

Everyone deserves to feel safe in their family and people who use abusive behaviours are responsible for the violence they use against others. It is their choice to use violence, and they can also choose to get support to change their behaviours.

**Myths: If the victim-survivor/s didn't like it, she would leave**

**Fact: There are lots of reasons why a victim-survivor/s may not leave the relationship.**

The victim-survivor/s may be afraid that leaving will cause more violence, and may be trying to protect themselves, their children, or even pets. The evidence shows that the most dangerous time for a victim-survivor/s is when they try to leave a relationship. The victim-survivor/s may also lack confidence in their own abilities, lack financial resources, or have limited support outside the relationship, especially if the person using abusive behaviours has isolated them from family and friends.

**Myths: People who use abusive behaviours have been abused as children**

**Fact: While many people who use abusive behaviours have experienced violence as children, it is also true that many people who were childhood victim-survivor/s choose not to use violence.**

Many people who use abuse did not experience family violence as children. Focusing on the person's experience of violence as a child ignores the risk of their current behaviour and the impact on their family.

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**Myth: Family violence is caused by alcohol and drug use**

**Fact: Alcohol and drugs do not cause family violence, but they may make violence worse.**

People who use abusive behaviours might say things like: "I didn't know what I was doing, I was drunk" or "it's not my fault, I couldn't control myself". But this myth doesn't explain why an abusive person uses other tactics of control such as financial, social and psychological abuse when they aren't affected by alcohol or other drugs. It also doesn't explain why the person using abusive behaviours can go and drink with friends at a pub and not use violence against them. There are many men who drink and don't abuse their families. There are many men who drink and abuse their families and no one else. Alcohol can increase risk because it may make the person using abusive behaviours more unpredictable, but alcohol does not cause family violence.

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**Myth: Family violence isn't very common**

**Fact: In Victoria, family violence is the biggest cause of injury or death for women aged 18-45 years old.**

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# PREVALENCE

We can create a world where everyone is equal, free and safe and yet violence continues to impact our communities in gendered ways

**EVERY 9 DAYS**  
**A WOMAN IS KILLED**  
BY HER CURRENT OR FORMER PARTNER

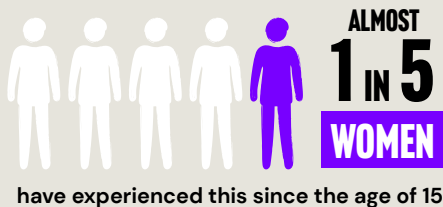
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2019) Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story 2019

**95% OF ALL VICTIMS**  
**EXPERIENCE VIOLENCE FROM**  
**A MALE PERPETRATOR**  
(REGARDLESS OF THE VICTIM'S GENDER)

Diemer, K. (2015) ABS Personal Safety Survey: Additional analysis on relationship and sex of perpetrator



**INTIMATE  
PARTNER  
VIOLENCE**



**SEXUAL  
ASSAULT**



Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2017) Personal safety, Australia, 2016

**97% OF SEXUAL ASSAULT OFFENDERS**  
**PROCEEDED AGAINST BY POLICE ARE MALE**

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022) Sexual Assault - Perpetrators: Sexual assault statistics for offenders proceeded against by police, criminal court outcomes for defendants, and prisoners in adult custody.



**SEXUAL  
HARRASSMENT**



ABS (2017) Personal safety, Australia, 2016

Australian Human Rights Commission (2018) Everyone's business: Fourth national survey on sexual harassment in Australian workplaces

**SAFE + EQUAL FAST FACTS**

**STOPPING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE STARTS WITH GENDER EQUALITY**



# Part 2

## Prevention Works

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Preventing family violence means stopping it before it starts. Preventing violence is separate to responding after the violence has happened. Both forms of action are important to reduce the risk to women and children in faith communities and build more healthy relationships over time. As a faith leader, you have a role to play in both preventing and responding to violence.

To break down a culture of violence, you must challenge these myths and attitudes that support violence and gender inequity and send the message that family violence has no place in your faith community. You must do this both in private (when having conversations with community members) and in public, through sermons, publications and at gatherings.

Part 2 includes:

- 2.1 Stopping family violence before it starts
- 2.2 Strengthening respectful relationships
- 2.3 Intersectionality: How it can inform your work



## 2.1 Stopping family violence before it starts



### The causes/drivers of family violence

People who work in the family violence sector often call the factors that cause family violence the 'drivers'. The evidence shows that there are four main drivers of family violence against women.

## Higher probability of violence against women

### Gendered Drivers of violence against women

Particular expressions of gender inequality consistently predict higher rates of violence against women:

- 1 **Condoning** of violence against women
- 2 **Men's control** of decision-making and limits to women's independence
- 3 **Stereotyped** constructions of masculinity and femininity
- 4 **Disrespect** towards women and male peer relations that emphasise aggression

Gendered inequality sets the **necessary social context**

### Reinforcing factors

Particular expressions of gender inequality consistently predict higher rates of violence against women:

- 5 Condoning of violence in general
- 6 Experience of, and exposure to violence
- 7 Weakening of pro-social behaviour, especially harmful use of alcohol
- 8 Socio-economic inequality and discrimination
- 9 Backlash factors (increases in violence when male dominance, power or status is challenged)

These drivers are caused by a culture of gender inequity, which means that women are not given fair and just access to benefits, power, resources and responsibilities.

To stop family violence before it starts, we must target the drivers (causes) of family violence by working towards gender equity and addressing issues such as ageism, sexism, ableism, racism and homophobia.



## What are violence-supportive attitudes?

Researchers have found five key categories of attitudes that support violence. You need to challenge these attitudes in people who abuse others. Some victim-survivor/s may also have these attitudes. You need to challenge these attitudes in victim-survivor/s too. These attitudes:

1

**Justify violence**, based on the belief that it is okay for a man to use violence in certain circumstances (e.g. the idea that violence against your partner is okay if they have had sex with another man)

2

**Excuse violence**, based on the belief that it is caused by factors like stress, or on the belief that men can't be held responsible for their behaviour (e.g. the idea that rape is a result of men not being able to control their need for sex)

3

**Trivialise the impact of violence**, based on the belief that the impact of violence is not serious enough to need action (e.g. the idea that women who are sexually harassed should sort it out themselves rather than report it)

4

**Minimise violence**, by denying its serious impact, denying that it happens, or denying that certain behaviours are violent (e.g. the idea that it's only rape if the woman physically resisted)

5

**Shift blame for the violence** from the person who is choosing to use abusive behaviours to the victim-survivor/s (e.g. the idea that women ask for rape)



## **EQUALITY = SAMENESS**

**Giving everyone the same thing**

It only works if everyone starts from the same place



## **EQUITY = FAIRNESS**

**Access to the same opportunities**

We must first ensure equity before we can enjoy equality

**Gender equity** means that women have fair and just access to benefits, power, resources and responsibilities. It is about understanding men and women's different needs, power and access to resources, and putting the balance right again.

While Australia is making progress, many women and girls still experience discrimination and are given fewer opportunities than men and boys (see page 32). This imbalance starts when we are children, but it adds up over a lifetime.

**Gender equality** means that women are not discriminated against because of their sex. Gender equality is what happens when we put gender equity into practice.

## What role can faith communities play in preventing family violence?

To work against the four drivers of violence against women, your faith community must:

1. Challenge condoning violence against women
2. Promote women's independence and decision making power
3. Challenge gender norms, stereotypes and roles
4. Strengthen respectful relationships between women and men, girls and boys

### Challenging condoning violence against women

Challenging the condoning of violence against women means addressing the attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, systems and practices that justify or downplay violence against women. People who condone violence against women may not realise they are doing it, but their beliefs and behaviours influence others. Left unchallenged, they create a culture where it's okay to look away, deny the problem or make excuses for the bad behaviour.

## Promoting women's independence and decision-making power

Promoting women's independence and decision-making power in public life and relationships are ways to reduce the drivers (causes) of family violence. In practice, this means challenging the idea that men make better leaders than women, or that men should be the head of the household and decide how money is spent.

### Challenging gender norms, stereotypes and roles

The following diagram shows examples of some of the rigid gender roles and stereotypes which drive (cause) violence against women. You can help prevent violence in your community by challenging these roles and stereotypes.

#### Feminine

Caring / Nurturing  
Sociable  
Cooperative  
Sexy  
Delicate  
Passive  
Emotional / ok to cry  
Put others needs first  
Submissive  
Pretty / attractive  
Vulnerable  
Don't stand out

#### Masculine

Tough  
Independent  
Competitive  
A 'Stud'  
Strong  
Active  
Physical  
Aggressive  
Sporty  
Not ok to cry  
Protective  
Controlling  
Financial provider/Breadwinner

# Gender Equality in Australia across the life course

## Gender Equality in Australia Across the Life Course

### Early childhood

What happens to girls in early childhood?



They experience gendered play spaces



They begin gendering appearance



They begin displaying gendered behaviour



They interact with gendered toys

### Education

What happens to girls at school?



They stop studying maths & science



Only 16% of STEM graduates are women



They stop playing sport

<50% of teenage girls participate in sport



They spend three hours a day on social media



Their physical health concerns are ignored



They experience violence

47% of girls feel unsafe walking alone after dark



They experience serious mental health issues

### Employment

What happens to women at work?



They experience a gender pay gap

There remains a gender pay gap of 14%



They experience a motherhood penalty



First Nations women experience unique, complex challenges



They suffer from the rigid structural organisation of work



They work in underpaid feminised industries



Women experience discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace



They receive lower award wages than men



If women live with a disability, they are further disadvantaged

### Unpaid work: parenting and domestic labour

How does unpaid work affect Australian women?



Women shoulder a disproportionate load of unpaid domestic labour

Australian women spend 80.8% more time on unpaid household work each day than men



Women spend much more time actively parenting than their male partners



Women suffer from policy settings that encourage unequal division of unpaid work



Single mothers are doubly penalised

### Retirement and old age

What happens to Australian women in old age?



They are more likely to live in poverty



They retire with significantly less superannuation savings than men

Women in Australia currently retire with 47% less superannuation than men



They are more likely to rely on the age pension



They are more likely to live in housing stress



## 2.2 Strengthening respectful relationships

The Non Violence Wheel can help you understand what equality and respect looks like in a relationship. It is also helpful for people who use abusive behaviours because it shows a person how to move towards behaviours and choices that are not violent. You can help prevent violence in your community by promoting these respectful behaviours in relationships.



## 2.3 Intersectionality: How it can inform your work

"Intersectionality is a way of thinking about identity and its relationship to power. It is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects. It's not simply that there's a race problem here, a gender problem here, and a class or LBGTQIA+ problem there." (Kimberlé Crenshaw 2017).

Intersectionality is a term, social theory and framework introduced by Black, Indigenous women and women-of-colour in the US to challenge the multiple forms of systemic racism and sexism that discriminate against them (Fernando, N 2018).

Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analysing the complex causes and effects of social inequalities in people's lives. The way power is organised in a society creates layers and forms of social division that work together and influence each other. This has led to systemic injustice and social inequalities that discriminate and oppress groups of people who are not the dominant group in that society.

Intersectionality is now used globally to explain power and privilege. Intersectionality reflects how people can have a complex mix of privileges and disadvantages (Collins and Bilge, 2016).

It explains how multiple forms of gender identity intersect to compound existing oppression and discrimination for people who experience bias, oppression, discrimination and disadvantage through multiple factors, such as race, ethnicity, faith, class, age, sexual orientation, ability, Indigeneity, migrancy at the same time. It helps us remember that it is the barriers that are the problem, not the individual, their culture, or their identity. It helps us to understand that at the root of these barriers are relations of power.

### Taking an intersectional approach to prevention work

Intersectionality reminds us that gender is not experienced in the same way by everyone. For example, factors such as a person's race, sexuality or religious beliefs can change their ideas about gender. These factors (and many more) can also change the ways a person's gender is seen or treated in society, by law, policy, institutions and other people.

An intersectional approach helps us focus on the intersecting and interlinking forms of discrimination and oppression which contribute to the gendered drivers (causes) of violence.

Here are the five things to remember when putting an intersection approach into practice in faith communities.

## 1. Make connections between gendered inequality and other forms of inequality

To prevent family violence, you must share messages that address the diverse experiences of people in your faith community. Make connections between gendered inequality between men and women but also the other inequalities that immigrants and refugee communities are facing, such as racial discrimination and exclusion from workforce.

Remember also that when you talk about forms of inequality like racism, people have gendered experiences of racism. For example, a black woman will have a different experience of racism than a black man. Understanding the intersections between and across forms of discrimination including gendered inequality is very important in preventing family violence in faith communities.

## 2. Move away from a very simple understanding of culture

To prevent family violence, you must remember that a person's 'cultural background' doesn't always provide a lot of useful information on its own. 'Culture' is often used as another way of saying race or ethnicity. This focus on race or ethnicity is an overly simple understanding of what culture means. For example, you might have heard yourself say that someone is from a different culture or cultural background, but what do you really mean? If a person is Italian, does that mean they only speak and think like Italian people do? Like all Italian people? Which Italian people? Take another example – maybe you have described yourself or another person as African. Africa is a big place – it's a continent with 54 official countries, 9 territories and more than 1000 languages. What does describing someone as African mean to you? What does it mean to an African person?

It's not wrong to describe ourselves or another person as coming from a particular

background, but it doesn't always provide much useful information. This becomes a problem when people decide that someone's background can give them a lot of information about who that person is, without knowing anything more about the person. It is also a problem when people think about culture as something that 'other people' have. We are all part of culture.

## 3. Unpack and challenge myths about culture and violence

To prevent family violence, you must understand that culture is always changing and is experienced differently by each person. You must also challenge myths that culture is the same for everyone, or that it never changes. Sometimes when immigrants and refugees talk about 'culture', they focus on the differences between the way things are done overseas and the ways things are done in Australia. They may describe these differences by talking about the 'traditional' practices and beliefs that they or their parents were raised with, and the 'new' Australian culture they find themselves in now. No matter where we come from, most of us have traditions we cherish and continue from generation to generation. When we describe a whole culture as 'traditional' it can stop us from seeing that culture is always changing and experienced differently by each person. Talking about culture as 'traditional' can imply that a culture, and people who are born into that culture, can't or won't change. Sometimes 'traditional' becomes another way of saying old fashioned, or less advanced.

Australian culture is based on traditions and history that is constantly changing. Dominant Australian cultural narratives (the stories and messages that people in Australia often repeat and share) also change over time. Some Australian cultural narratives celebrate multiculturalism and difference. Others focus on our colonial history and connections. Right now, not many dominant Australian narratives acknowledge the theft of Aboriginal

people's land or the continuing violence committed against First Nations peoples. Most stories and messages do not recognise that Aboriginal people have lived on and cared for this country for tens of thousands of years. Very few narratives acknowledge that violence against women and racism is part of Australian history and culture.

When people talk about immigrant and refugee communities, they sometimes describe a 'clash of cultures'. We must remember that often clashes happen within cultures. Cultures change, share and borrow from each other. Preventing family violence is about changing the culture of violence by challenging messages that support violence and finding and sharing messages within your faith that support gender equality for everyone.

#### 4. Challenge racialised representations of violence

To prevent family violence, you must remember that family violence is not linked to any specific community. You need to question and challenge ideas that link violence to particular groups of people.

Family violence can happen in any community, but when immigrant men use violence against women, other people point to cultural attitudes as the cause of violence. Some forms of violence such as 'honour killing', acid attacks, child brides and sex trafficking are often reported in the media in a way that supports the belief that men from immigrant backgrounds are more dominant and that migrant women are passive and in need of 'saving'.

In the media, immigrant men's masculinity and their potential to commit violence is racialised (linked to their race) while race or migrancy is not linked to models of masculinity or tendency for aggression, violence, conservative thinking, or criminality for white Anglo Australian men.

We must understand and challenge the racial and cultural stereotypes that make it appear as if Anglo-Australian men are less aggressive and violent than immigrant men.

Politics, world events and public debates about immigration, multiculturalism and what it means to be Australian have an impact on the ways that immigrant and refugee communities are shown in the media. A clear example of this is the way that Muslim communities have been shown in the media because of people's confusion and false ideas about terrorism.

We should be working to prevent all forms of violence against women, but thinking about immigrant communities as more violent than other communities takes the focus away from the fact that violence against women doesn't happen in any one specific community.

#### 5. Preventing racism is also part of preventing violence against women

To prevent family violence, you must challenge racism as well. Preventing violence against women means preventing all forms of gender-based violence.

Many immigrant and refugee women's experiences of violence and gendered inequality are linked to their experiences of racism and discrimination. For example, when a Muslim woman experiences abuse while wearing a hijab in public, gendered inequality is intersecting with racism. Other examples include underpaying migrant women domestic workers, and sexual harassment that is also racially abusive.

These examples are very clear, but often it is not as easy to see the link between gender equality and racism. Discrimination and fear of racism can have an impact on women's access to prevention programs, information, social networks, services, use of spaces and support.

Discrimination also affects women's sense of belonging, feeling safe and feeling respected within the wider community. Challenging racial stereotypes and harmful ideas about immigrant and refugee communities is essential to preventing violence against immigrant and refugee women.

As you know, to prevent violence against women we must challenge rigid gender stereotypes about men and women. These stereotypes also intersect with racism and other factors. Gender is never the only way that a person is seen by society. In Australia, gendered stereotypes about Anglo-Australian women and men may be different to gendered stereotypes about non-Anglo communities.

Common stereotypes about immigrant and refugee people are different for men or women. For example, Arab women are often stereotyped as being submissive while Arab men are often stereotyped as being domineering or controlling (and often this stereotype goes hand in hand with the assumption that because someone is Arab they are also Muslim).

You should approach conversations about gender with the understanding that we all experience gender differently. Age, life stage, ethnicity, family, religion, sexuality, ability, illness and many other life experiences may change the ways we see gender. You should create opportunities for communities to discuss gender issues specific to them and be open to learning more about their experiences.

These tips are adapted from 'Intersectionality Matters: A guide to engaging immigrant and refugee communities to prevent violence against women by Multicultural Center for Women's Health' (Chen, J. 2017).



# Part 3

## Understanding Family Violence in Faith Settings

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This resource shares the best of Australian and international research evidence on the factors that cause and reinforce family violence in faith communities, what works to address these factors, and the role of faith leaders and communities in responding to and preventing violence.

Faith leaders provide a source of social, moral and ethical guidance and support for their community members, and may provide invaluable support to women experiencing violence and their families. Faith settings are important environments where social networks and social norms are formed and are therefore an important context in which we can target activities to prevent family violence and violence against women.

Part 3 includes:

- 3.1 The Evidence
- 3.2 Contributing factors of family violence in faith communities
- 3.3 Practical prevention ideas for faith leaders



# 3.1 The Evidence

Section 3.1 has been reproduced in part (with some adjustments) from a document published by The University of Melbourne and Multicultural Centre for Women's Health, authored by Vaughan, C., Sullivan, C., Chen, J., Vaid Sandhu, M. (2020). What works to address violence against women and family violence within faith settings: An evidence guide, Parkville: University of Melbourne.

## Key findings from the report

Faith leaders provide a source of social, moral and ethical guidance and support for their community members, and may provide invaluable support to women experiencing violence and their families. Faith settings are important environments where social networks and social norms are formed and are therefore an important context in which we can target activities to prevent family violence and violence against women.

More than half of Victoria's population report an affiliation with a faith. Though the majority adhere to Christianity, Victoria has the highest proportion of adherents to religions other than Christianity in Australia. Victoria also has the highest proportion of residents born overseas of any Australian state (ABS, 2017).

The research shows that faith communities are important places where people impacted by family violence may turn to for support. They are also places where faith leaders can provide guidance to community members to foster healthy, respectful and equitable behaviours, social norms and relationships that prevent family violence.

## Interpretation of faith teachings, scripture and language

Sacred texts and teachings are important in almost all faith communities. The evidence suggests that particular interpretations of sacred texts and teachings can be used by faith leaders to condone violence against women. (Band-Winterstein & Freund, 2018; Levitt & Ware, 2006b). Religious men have also

been found to justify their violent behaviour by reference to religious teachings (Douki 2003; El Matrah 2011; Islam 2018; le Roux, 2016; Wendt, 2008; Winkelmann, 2004).

In a study with Jewish, Christian and Islamic leaders in Memphis, Levitt and Ware (2006b) found that some faith leaders cited scripture underpinning their belief in the doctrine of wifely submission. It must be noted that for many people of faith, it is important to separate religious teachings from patriarchal culture. Interpretive approaches to scripture and teachings may allow faith-based communities to reject beliefs and norms which underpin gender inequality while preserving important religious teachings.

While interpretations of religious texts can contribute to the drivers of violence, it is vital to recognise that women draw upon religious texts for support during and after experiences of violence, and the very text used by some religious men to condone violence are used by religious women to condemn it. Women across diverse faith communities have reported drawing resilience from their faith and faith teachings. (Bradley, 2010; El-Khoury et al., 2004; Ghafournia, 2017; Horne & Levitt, 2003; Ting & Panchanadeswaran, 2016; Vaughan 2016; Wendt, 2008)

## The intersection of religion, culture and the experience of migration

It is important to emphasise here that consideration of the intersection of religion and culture in responses to family violence and violence against women, should not be interpreted to mean that 'culture' is a relevant

consideration for migrants only. Stopping violence against women and family violence requires widespread cultural change across Victorian society as a whole. The difficulty of separating cultural and religious norms reinforces the importance of tackling the drivers of violence in all contexts and settings.

### **Providing support to women experiencing violence**

Existing evidence suggests that the support that women receive from their faith leaders after disclosing violence varies significantly. Some women report feeling listened to, believed, and that their faith leader was able to provide appropriate support, even encouraging them to call the police. However, many of the studies described unhelpful responses that could put women and families at risk of further violence. Survivors also reported feeling blamed and/or ostracised by both their communities and faith leaders following disclosures of violence.

(Band-Winterstein & Freund, 2018; Horsburgh, 2005; Knickmeyer, 2003; McMullin, 2018; Miles, 2002; Nason-Clark, 2009; Ringel & Bina, 2007; Ting & Panchanadeswaran, 2016; Wendt, 2008).

None of the studies reviewed found that faith leaders were aware that the most dangerous time for a woman and their family is following attempted separation unless the leader had received specific violence training. Nevertheless, there is a long history of faith communities providing vital material assistance to families experiencing violence, such as temporary housing, social and spiritual support, health services, economic and material support, counselling and case management. (Levi, 2009; Hassouneh-Phillips, 2003; Knickmeyer 2003; Vaughan 2016).

### **Holding men who use violence to account and supporting behaviour change.**

Increased accountability for perpetrators and a focus on supporting behaviour change are key priorities to end violence against women and family violence. What we know about best practice for interventions and responses to perpetrators of family violence and violence against women remains limited but continues to develop. In recent years, faith-based organisations have implemented or supported programs which aim to stop men from using violence against women and promote healthy relationships. However, none of the Men's Behaviour Change Programs currently running in Victoria specifically focus on holding religious men who use violence to account.

### **Some recommendations from the report:**

- Prioritise safety - faith leaders and faith communities may prioritise a range of factor such as the sacredness of marriage, reputation of family or community, or particular interpretations of sacred texts – ahead of the safety of those experiencing family violence. Efforts to prevent or respond to family violence and/or violence against women will be ineffective, and potentially harmful, if the safety of women and children is not the priority at all times;
- Build faith leaders' understanding of the breadth of forms of violence; Training faith leaders to respond to disclosures of violence with a focus on women's safety and that of their children;
- Increase leaders' knowledge of locally available family violence and violence against women services, and how to make 'warm' referrals to these services;

- Support faith leaders to hold perpetrators to account for their behaviour (Bent-Goodley 2012; Choi 2017; Fowler 2006; Horne and Levitt, 2003; Jones 2005; McMullin et al. 2015).
- Build relationships between secular institutions and faith leaders and communities. This has been identified as key for reducing violence in faith settings (Nason-Clark, 2010 cited in McMullin 2015).
- Religious expertise and violence expertise are both required to respond to violence in faith-based communities. (Nason-Clark & Holtmann, 2013).
- Recognise and build on women's leadership. This may involve establishing women's groups, creating opportunities for women to hold formal leadership roles, ensuring the opportunity for women to contribute to the design and delivery of interventions, and proactively seeking women's feedback on proposals and programs. Recognise the diversity within your faith community (i.e. ethnicities, language groups, socioeconomic backgrounds, and migration pathways).
- Take an intersectional approach in recognising how gender inequality intersects with other inequalities – such as those that may arise because of racism, poverty, past exposure to trauma, and discrimination based on religion – to shape people's experiences.
- Faith leaders also need skills for working cross-culturally and in a trauma informed way with diverse communities.
- Newly arrived faith leaders may have limited understanding of Australian law concerning family violence and violence against women, or of local expectations about gender equality and the position of women.
- Engage senior leadership early and sustain engagement. All evidence suggests that engaging senior leadership early in the

planning of an intervention to address violence against women and family violence will enhance recruitment of participants, investment of organisational resources, community-wide awareness of the intervention, and reduce potential resistance.

- Support organisations leading perpetrator programs to work in partnership with faith communities and faith leaders to conduct targeted research to identify the most appropriate strategies for engaging, and changing the behaviour of religious men who use violence. (Band-Winterstein & Freund 2018; Ringel & Bina 2007).

**\*\*For full report, please visit:**

<https://www.mcwh.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Evidence-Guide.pdf>

## 3.2 Contributing factors of family violence in faith communities

Contributing factors of family violence in faith settings	Actions you can take as a faith leader
<p><b>Secular institutions and policy makers have failed to work with, support and fund faith leaders and communities to prevent family violence</b></p> <p>Faith communities need to be supported to challenge the drivers of violence in faith settings. In the past, faith communities have lacked the capacity, resources and funding to document and measure the success of their work to respond to and prevent violence.</p> <p>This lack of collaboration means secular services don't always understand spiritual abuse and sometimes fail to respond to spiritual abuse in faith communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Seek funding and partnerships to build evidence of programs that work</li> <li>– Build relationships with family violence bodies at the local, state and national level</li> <li>– Know what external resources and referral agencies exist for family violence and violence against women</li> </ul>
<p><b>Particular interpretations of faith teachings, scripture and language make excuses for violence against women and support rigid gender roles for men and women</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Understand and separate religious teachings from patriarchal culture</li> <li>– Find ways to interpret scriptures and teachings that reject gender inequality and violence, while preserving important religious teachings</li> <li>– Understand and challenge the gendered drivers that normalise, justify and tolerate violence against women</li> </ul>
<p><b>Male-only leadership and patriarchal norms in faith communities promote gender inequality</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Support women's existing leadership roles and build new leadership roles for women</li> <li>– Work with victim-survivor/s and advocates to design and deliver effective responses to family violence</li> <li>– Role model men and women working respectfully and as equals (e.g. delivering sermons together)</li> <li>– Understand and challenge patriarchal norms, values and gender stereotypes within the leadership structures of faith traditions</li> </ul>



Contributing factors of family violence in faith settings	Actions you can take as a faith leader
<p><b>There are barriers to divorce in some faith communities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Interpret faith teachings and scripture in a way that rejects shame around divorce in situations of violence</li> <li>– Recognise that refusal to agree to a divorce is a form of spiritual abuse</li> </ul>
<p><b>A culture of denial, silence and silencing makes it difficult for victim-survivor/s and people using abusive behaviours to seek support</b></p> <p>Some faith communities deny and silence conversations about violence. Experiences of anti-Islamic and anti-Semitic attitudes, as well as racism, have led some faith communities to avoid seeking support from secular services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Work to shift the culture of silence and denial through policy, teachings and education of faith community members</li> <li>– When someone tells you that are experiencing family violence, respond with a focus on safety for the victim-survivor/s and their children (if any)</li> <li>– Hold people who use abusive behaviours accountable</li> <li>– Understand experiences of racial/religious discrimination</li> <li>– Find strategies to provide your community with support to report racism, and also access to culturally-specific services</li> </ul>
<p><b>Understand the intersection of religion, culture and the experience of migration (go to page 34-37)</b></p> <p>Faith leaders must take an intersectional approach to understand how gender inequality intersects with other inequalities to shape people's experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Recognise how gender intersects with other inequalities and creates multiple barriers to seeking support and accessing services</li> <li>– Be aware of specific barriers people might face due to racism, poverty, past trauma, immigration status, and discrimination based on religion</li> <li>– Understand how cultural values and traditions and migration experiences intersect with religion in the family violence context</li> </ul>

## 3.3 Practical prevention ideas for faith leaders

Prevention means stopping violence before it starts. As a faith leader, there are many different ways you can prevent violence. Here are some ideas:

### Community education and engagement

- Change attitudes and beliefs about women and family violence through education (e.g. offer classes on family violence, teach equality and respect in relationships and between men and women, or run marriage retreats that teach that violence is never okay).
- Offer classes on parenting in respectful, non-violent ways.
- Offer assertiveness and safety training and classes on conflict transformation. Put policies and procedures in place to prevent sexual harassment and abuse.
- Mark Domestic Violence Prevention Month, Child Abuse Prevention Month, and 16 days of Activism on Violence against Women.
- During pre-marital counselling, talk about respect, honesty, healthy communication, financial matters, conflict resolution, violence, power, control and decision-making.
- For children's story times, include stories that highlight women as being strong and independent and use inclusive language to help children understand that all people are valued by their faith.
- Plan sessions on issues related to coming of age, identity, relationships and sexuality for young people. Holding separate sessions for women and men (and taking into account the needs of any gender diverse and non-binary people too) may create a safer space for honest discussion and teaching.
- Create safe meeting and counselling places by having windows on all doors and two adults present when meeting with children and young people.

- Ensure all volunteers and staff who spend time with children have an up-to-date working with children check and police check and that your organisation is listed so you are notified if there is a reportable incident.
- Provide regular training on harassment and abuse for parents, religious teachers and youth workers.

### Teachings, sermons, prayers

- Plan special worship services and prayers for people affected by abuse and family violence, at home, nationally and internationally. Include stories of healing from abuse. When praying for peace in the world, pray for peace and safety in our homes as well.
- Be aware of how teachings about forgiveness, obedience and bearing the religious symbols may impact those suffering abuse.
- Be aware of how certain theological interpretations can be used by the person using abusive behaviours to make excuses for their attitude and behaviour.
- Talk about your faith's concern for life, healing and wholeness.
- Talk about your faith's dislike for oppression and violence.
- Mention verses that emphasise positive and respectful relationships and respect for women.
- Mention the verses stressing your faith cares deeply for the weak and vulnerable.
- Interpret texts and traditions carefully to condemn violence against women and children.
- Understand the theology in its cultural and historical contexts and make careful application to our present-day situation.

## Sacred texts

- Consider using an inclusive language version of the texts.
- Include texts with women in major roles. Some set texts do not have women in major roles, but you can try to find texts that do.

## Relationships with your community

- Study, preach and advocate equality between men and women, as well as equality between people with power and people without power.
- Model empathy and respect in all relationships.
- Use respectful language and tone in all relationships.
- Avoid jokes that put down or disrespect women.
- Avoid jokes about family violence or destructive metaphors such as "rule of thumb." (This originated as a guide for the thickness of the stick with which a husband could beat his wife)

## Leadership and decision-making

- In decision-making, commit to listening to all voices and making decisions for the common good.
- Compliment teams with gender diverse leadership at all levels.
- Expect all faith leaders to use healthy and respectful ways of dealing with conflict.
- Be careful not to imply that positions of authority are divinely ordained and cannot be questioned. Assume that all human authority is subject to sin, and must be held accountable.

## Tips for faith leaders when working with an intersectional approach

- See people's lives as multi-dimensional. Recognise how gender inequality intersects with other inequalities such as racism, poverty, past exposure to trauma, precarious immigration status, and discrimination based on religion.
- Actively reflect on and address your location of power as a faith leader, in relation to the person you are supporting.
- Develop skills for working cross-culturally with ethnically diverse members of your faith community.
- Move away from simplistic ideas about culture, and understand what is meant by culture. Ask the person what aspects of their culture are important to them in relation to faith and family violence.
- Avoid repeating stereotypes about gender and culture.
- Challenge myths about 'traditional' culture and violence.
- Focus on challenging rigid gendered stereotypes and roles.
- Understand and challenge racial stereotypes that promote the message that men from immigrant and refugee backgrounds are more patriarchal and that women are passive, and in need of 'saving.'
- Preventing racism is also part of preventing violence against women. Be aware of how violence and gendered inequality against women intersect with racism and challenge racial stereotypes. This is an essential part of preventing violence against immigrant and refugee women.
- Be conscious to not exclude or erase the experiences of genderqueer/non-binary or transgender people and be prepared to challenge conventional male/female gender distinctions.
- Bring interfaith leaders together to start a conversation around gender equality through a religious lens.



# Part 4

## The Family Violence Response Toolkit

This toolkit is a guide to support faith leaders to respond to someone who tells them they are experiencing family violence as well as safely engage with those causing harm. It aligns with the MARAM Framework and focuses on the safety of the victim-survivor/s, including children who are victim-survivor/s in their own right.

By having all faiths share the unequivocal message that their religion never intends for any human being to be abused or oppressed by another, faith leaders can support and strengthen the victim-survivor's faith and at the same time condemn attitudes and behaviours of the person using abusive and violent behaviours by stating unequivocally that these attitudes and behaviours were never founded in, nor do they have a place within, faith settings.

Part 4 includes:

- 4.1 Scope of the role of faith leaders
- 4.2 Information sharing and confidentiality
- 4.3 Creating a safe environment
- 4.4 Working with victim-survivor/s of family violence
- 4.5 Working with a person using violence
- 4.6 Self care



## 4.1 Scope of the role of faith leaders

**We have created Part 4 of this resource based on the following principles and recommendations from *The Evidence Guide*:**

- Faith leaders to make safety the first priority.
- Ensure faith leaders have access to current information and resources about local services.
- Understand the role of gender inequality.
- Use strengths-based and trauma-informed ways to work with their diverse communities.
- Use an intersectional approach.
- Build the capacity of faith leaders to safely and appropriately respond to women experiencing violence.
- Build the capacity of faith leaders to safely engage with people who use abusive and violent behaviours.
- Use plain language and include topics such as Australian laws and expectations for gender equality to support all faith leaders as well as newly arrived faith leaders.
- Provide a structured conversational approach that can be used face-to-face, peer mentoring and responses that aim to change attitudes and behaviours.
- Build trust and rapport so you can safely connect them with relevant family violence specialist services.

### Opportunities

Faith leaders have a unique role in the community. You are a trusted community leader who has visibility of the whole family, often including the extended family network. You are an integral part of the community fabric and you have influence to support a person to engage with a specialist family violence service. As part of your general communications to all your congregates, ensure your message promotes respecting women and condemns violence in all forms. The most important part of your role is to always promote the safety of the victim-survivor/s, including children and young people.

Your place of worship or office may be the first place a victim-survivor or person using abusive and violent behaviour seeks support. A person of faith will most likely reach out first to his/her own faith community in times of trouble. Therefore, well-informed and committed faith leaders are often in the best position to provide immediate support and referrals to family violence services and other community resources. An appropriate response is crucial. To avoid feeling shamed or re-victimized, victim-survivor/s of family violence need validation and support, with a communal response to their safety needs. The community must jointly deny the justifications of people using abusive and violent behaviours and hold them accountable for their actions. This is the only hope for eradicating violence altogether.

**Your role also includes but is not limited to:**

- Listening and believing the victim-survivor/s and the impact of the abuse they have experienced;
- Raising awareness of what protective factors they may have/need and the options/services available. You may have to support them to self-advocate by offering possible referral pathways using the referral guide at the end of this toolkit;
- Strengthening protective factors of victim-survivor/s which can promote safety, stability and recovery for all family members. Protective factors can include family violence services, family, friends, community, housing, physical and mental health supports, financial resources and school support;
- Strengthening protective factors for people using abusive and violent behaviours. This is done by encouraging and supporting them to engage with specialist family violence services to work on changing their violent behaviour. Ensure you maintain visibility of risk and safety through safe, non-collusive engagement with the person causing harm.



## Limitations

Talking to people that cause harm to their family members is difficult. It is easy to unintentionally move from just listening to colluding. For this reason, we strongly recommend against having direct conversations with the person using harm about their abuse and instead strongly encourage them to engage with specialist family violence service providers that work with people to end their use of abuse and violence. At times, you may feel that you are unable to extend the right support for the victim-survivor/s and/or person using family violence. Know that you are not alone. You can learn about the local services in your area and connect with these services to help you fulfil your role of supporting your community. Have an understanding of the services that are available so you know who you are referring your community to. You will need to work together with these services and be led by them to provide consistent and safe support for members of your community. You can find a list of specialist family violence services here: <https://www.thelookout.org.au/service-directory>

Seek secondary advice and consultation from these specialist services when family violence is initially disclosed, or you suspect family violence is occurring. Seeking advice from these services will support you to respond safely to the victim-survivor/s or person using violence, and will minimise the possibility of inadvertently increasing risk to the victim-survivor/s. Establishing this relationship with a specialist service will also help you to respond if the family violence risk escalates.



## Remember:

- Do not actively confront and/or question a person using family violence about their use of violence.
- Do not coerce a person using family violence into admitting accountability for their behaviour.
- Do not collude with the person using family violence (refer to page 65 for information on collusion).
- Do not try to engage directly about a person's use of violent and controlling behaviours and do not try and change their attitudes that support these behaviours. This is a long term and complex process that requires specialist skill and knowledge.
- Do not shame, judge or make decisions on behalf of either the victim-survivor/s or person using violence.

## 4.2 Information sharing and confidentiality

Some professionals and services are authorised to share information to inform risk assessment and management under a range of laws including the Child Information Sharing Scheme, the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme and Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, Australian privacy laws and other relevant information sharing permissions.

Faith leaders are not required by law to share information about family violence but may have obligations to report risks to children. However, you should consider whether you can voluntarily share information related to family violence risk to assist with assessing and managing that risk.

Regarding the reporting of child abuse, recent changes to Victorian law require people involved in religious ministry to report known or suspected child physical or sexual abuse to child protection authorities. This legal obligation is in addition to existing obligations to report to the Commission for Children and Young People under the Reportable Conduct Scheme. Failure to report abuse is a criminal offence. This includes information obtained during religious confessional. For more information: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/news/new-laws-requiring-people-in-religious-ministry-to-report-child-abuse/>

### Information sharing and confidentiality when working with a victim-survivor

To provide effective support to victim-survivor/s, it is crucial for you to build and maintain relationships of trust. An important way of achieving this is through open and transparent communication. This means making it clear that although you and your organisation will maintain confidentiality where possible, you may need to report where there is a risk to self or another person/s. It can be helpful to let the victim-survivor/s know the circumstances for which you may need to report and talk through the process so the victim-survivor/s understands the processes happening in relation to their disclosure and thus can make informed decisions.

Never share information about the victim-survivor/s with the person using violence. This can be extremely dangerous and increase the family violence risk.

### Information sharing and confidentiality when working with a person using violence

Where there is a risk to another person, you should share this information with other services where you are able to do so. You should not share information that would put a person at risk (e.g. sharing information about the victim-survivor/s to the person using violence).

Information sharing information supports services to develop a detailed understanding of the person suspected or known to be using family violence, including their patterns of behaviour, beliefs and attitudes, dynamics of risk factors and any known protective factors or supports needed to stabilise their circumstances. Sharing risk-relevant information with other services also supports the service system to better work together to respond to safety and risk for all members of the family.

Ongoing engagement with the person using violence will support you to observe any changes in their behaviour, and better understand the pattern of their violent and controlling behaviours.

## Protecting information

If you do write down information relating to a disclosure, make sure all the information about every member of the family is securely stored, transmitted and handled in the strictest confidence.

Verbal information also must be protected to ensure that your conversations regarding the disclosure cannot be overheard by others.

If your organisation works with both the person using violence and the victim-survivor/s, you must take care to ensure any recorded information is separately documented.

At all times, you must also take care to ensure that disclosure of documentation pertaining to the person using violence or victim-survivor/s is stored securely so it does not increase the risk of harm to a victim-survivor.

For more on information sharing, refer to *Contribute to information sharing with other services - Responsibility 6* in the:

- Victim-survivor/s Guide: <https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources/responsibility-6>
- Adult user of family violence Guide: <https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-professionals-working-adults-using-family-violence/responsibility-6>

## Information privacy

Privacy and confidentiality laws mean you are legally obliged to safeguard how you collect, store, access, transmit, use and dispose of personal information. Legally, you must:

1. Tell the person you support that they have the right to privacy and confidentiality.
2. Only share information with anyone else, including another agency, overseas, or interstate, with the consent of the person.
3. You may also need to get consent when you are making referrals to another agency, or speaking to other professionals. You need to get this consent before you provide the service.
4. Make sure all the information is securely stored, transmitted and handled in the strictest confidence. If you are seeing people from the same family, keep notes and files for individual family members separate.
5. Tell the person you support that there are some extreme situations when you may need to disclose information about them without their consent. For example:
  - If there is a clear and imminent threat of serious bodily injury or death to a person
  - If there is a serious threat to public health, safety or welfare
  - Law enforcement and security
  - Investigation of unlawful activity
  - Information required or authorised by another law

The Information Privacy Act and Health Records Act allows an organisation to disclose personal information about a person if it has reasonable grounds to believe the disclosure is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious and imminent threat to an individual's life, health, safety or welfare.

## 4.3 Creating a safe environment

With every member of the community you are supporting, creating a safe space is the essential first step to enable conversations about a person experiencing or using family violence.

Creating a safe space can make the person feel safe and respected to talk about their experiences of family violence.

It can also make it easier to identify narratives and behaviours of people who use family violence.

Creating a safe space to talk with people who use violence can reduce resistance to engage with services and seek help.

You can create a safe environment by:

- Making people feel welcome, that their safety is important and that their identity is respected (welcoming decor and appropriate art).
- Asking what they need to feel comfortable (temperature change, seating, tissues, cup of tea, glass of water, snack).
- Asking if they want to have someone else accompany them for support.
- Removing any objects that could be used as weapons.
- Separating waiting areas from your main consultation areas/rooms.
- Making sure there are different access points and times for people who are known to use violence and victim-survivor/s.
- Knowing your surrounding space including exits and corridors where victim-survivor/s and people using violence can accidentally meet.

Other considerations

- Address the immediate health and safety needs of each person.
- Always talk to each person separately.
- Arrange care for children or young people if they are present so they are not in the room when discussions are taking place.
- Make sure the person can access any communication adjustments and aids if they have a disability affecting their communication.
- Arrange for a translator if required. Never use other family members to translate or interpret for either the victim-survivor/s or person using family violence. If you need access to translators or interpreters, contact [www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au) or call 131450.
- Request mobile devices not be in the room because some mobile devices have been used via certain apps to track, spy and listen to the conversations of the victim-survivor/s. Please note that even if a phone is switched off, this can still take place. For more information, please visit <https://wesnet.org.au/>.

## 4.4 Working with victim-survivor/s of family violence

### Signs that family violence may be occurring

A person may disclose family violence to you in confidence or you may suspect a person is experiencing family violence. Below is a list of common observable signs of trauma that may indicate family violence is occurring, even if there has not been a disclosure:

Signs	Signs of trauma that may indicate family violence is occurring for adult victims	
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— bruising</li><li>— fractures</li><li>— chronic pain (neck, back)</li><li>— fresh scars or minor cuts</li><li>— terminations of pregnancy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— complications during pregnancy</li><li>— gastrointestinal disorders</li><li>— sexually transmitted diseases</li><li>— strangulation</li></ul>
Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— depression</li><li>— anxiety</li><li>— self-harming behaviour</li><li>— eating disorders</li><li>— phobias</li><li>— somatic disorders</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— sleep problems</li><li>— impaired concentration</li><li>— harmful alcohol use</li><li>— licit and illicit drug use</li><li>— physical exhaustion</li><li>— suicide attempts</li></ul>
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— fear</li><li>— shame</li><li>— anger</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness</li><li>— withdrawn and emotionally numb</li></ul>
Social/ financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— homelessness</li><li>— unemployment</li><li>— financial debt</li><li>— no support networks</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— no friends or family support</li><li>— isolation</li><li>— parenting difficulties</li></ul>
Demeanour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— unconvincing explanations of any injuries</li><li>— describe a partner as controlling or prone to anger</li><li>— be accompanied by their partner, who does most of the talking</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— anxiety in the presence of a partner</li><li>— recent separation or divorce</li><li>— needing to be back home by a certain time and becoming stressed about this</li><li>— reluctance to follow advice</li></ul>

These signs of trauma do not by themselves determine that family violence is occurring, they are 'indicators' only at this stage. These signs may also indicate that another form of trauma has occurred. If you suspect someone is experiencing family violence, it may be appropriate for you to ask screening questions about family violence, and offer support in connecting them to specialist family violence services if they choose.



## Safe engagement with a victim-survivor

Explain your role including the limitations of support you can provide, and that you can support a referral to a specialist family violence service if the person chooses to do so.

Include confidentiality statements, seek consent to share information to support a referral and explain the need to share information if there is serious risk to the victim-survivor/s, their children, other family members and/or the community. This may include sharing information about children under mandatory reporting laws.

### Ask open ended questions

Ask open ended questions about their wellbeing and their children's wellbeing, before asking about the family violence. Asking open ended questions builds rapport and encourages the victim-survivor/s to talk and respond with more detail. You do not need to ask all of these questions in your first conversation. Use your judgement about when and how to use these example questions as appropriate. Here are some examples of open-ended questions:

- "I'm pleased to see you today – how are things going?"
- "What has brought you here today?"
- "Can you tell me what has been happening for you lately?"
- "Tell me a bit about your family/home life/relationship with X?"

### Strengths based approach

A victim-survivor may be told every day that they are useless by their abuser. Whilst we know family violence is not the victim-survivor's fault, many blame themselves. Low sense of self-worth is a common impact of experiencing abuse, thus it is important to highlight the strength of a person to disclose family violence.

You can start by acknowledging the courage it has taken to talk about their experience and affirm their strengths and abilities by pointing out the behaviours or actions they have taken to maintain their safety:

- "It takes a lot of courage to talk about this"
- "You have shown an enormous capacity to be strong when great pressure has been placed on you"
- "You have done a lot to keep yourself and your children safe. That must have taken a lot of skill and forethought"
- "I want to tell you that family violence is never okay and that you and your children have the right to be safe and respected in your home. You and your children do not deserve to be hurt and controlled. Nothing you nor your children did or do will ever justify violence"

### Asking prompting questions

You can frame the prompting questions below as part of a routine process that you do to identify and screen for family violence risk.

- "When we are concerned about someone, we always ask a set of questions to find out if they are experiencing violence or being mistreated in any of their relationships"

As part of the conversation, you can link some of the observable indicators into the conversation:

- "I noticed that you appear to be experiencing [insert observation]. Is there something worrying you/you would like to talk about?"

Simple statements can also help to validate the victim-survivor's experience.

- "Many people experience issues in their relationships"
- "I have seen people with issues like yours in their home"

If the person responds to your prompting questions, you can ask the direct screening questions in the screening tool below.

## Screening for family violence risk

If a victim-survivor responds to your prompting questions, you can ask the direct screening questions in the Screening and Identification Tool. This can help you to get a better understanding of the victim-survivor's risk and their self-assessment of their risk. Because risk is dynamic, it is recommended that you use the screening tool routinely to help you to assess the changing nature of risk experienced by the victim-survivor/s.

### Screening and Identification questions

1. Has anyone in your family made you or your children feel unsafe or afraid?
2. Is there more than one person in your family that is making you or your children feel unsafe or afraid?

If the person answers yes to any of these questions, ask the following questions:

3. Have they controlled what you do and how you do it?
4. Have they threatened to hurt you in any way?
5. Have they physically hurt you in any way?

If the person answers yes to any of these questions, continue to ask the following questions:

6. Do you have any immediate concerns about the safety of your children or someone else in your family?

Before the victim-survivor leaves, check if they feel safe to do this on their own.

7. Do you feel safe when you leave here today?
8. Do you have a trusted person to call or go to if you feel unsafe or in danger?
9. Would you go to the police?

### Check and clarify with the victim-survivor/s

It is important not to assume meaning. You may need to check that you understand what the victim-survivor is saying. Many words can have different implied meaning to different people (e.g. love, guilty). It is important you know what that means to the victim-survivor/s. Here are some examples of checking and clarifying:

- Can I check this with you?
- You seem to be saying... is this how it is?
- I don't quite understand, can you tell me...
- Have I heard you right that...?
- Perhaps you could explain that to me?
- What does love look like to you?
- What does get angry look like?
- Can you tell me a bit about what feeling guilty means for you?

It is important to actively listen. This means your intent is to learn and understand more of what the experience has been for the person you are talking with.

### Ways you *should not* ask about family violence

- Are they hitting you?
- They aren't being violent with you, are they?
- Have they been roughing you up?
- They haven't hurt you, have they?
- Have you done anything to make them angry?
- What exactly did they do to you? Can you describe that?
- What did you do that caused that?
- What did you say to cause that?
- Don't you understand his mood by now?
- Couldn't you see it coming and stopped it?

This type of questioning can be considered victim-blaming; bring on feelings of shame and guilt to the victim-survivor/s; make the victim-survivor feel they need to defend themselves and will inevitably make it an unsafe space for them to speak out and seek support.

## Reflect

You may need to reflect on your own bias, whether it's conscious or unconscious.

All decisions and judgements we make are influenced by our existing knowledge, perceptions and biases. These develop through socialisation, education and learned associations between various personal attributes, identities and social categories. Biases are learned ideas, opinions or stereotypes formed throughout an individual's personal and professional life through our understanding of culture, family, attitudes, values and beliefs (including religious beliefs).

Bias can occur when this experience and understanding leads to assumptions about individual people or communities based on their circumstances, personal attributes, behaviour and background. This includes characteristics such as a person's age, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability or disability, faith, language and cultural background.

All people have these biases. As a professional and community leader, it is important for you to acknowledge the influence of both your own culture, values and your biases. You may be conscious or unconscious of the biases you hold. Recognising these can enable you to challenge and address them and help you work safely with members of your community.



## Remember:

- Responsibility for the use of violence rests solely with the person using violence.
- Victim-survivor/s are not to be blamed, held responsible or placed at fault (directly or as part of structural responses) for another person's choice to use violence.
- This includes shifting responsibility and accountability for violence and its impacts on children towards the person using violence, and away from adult victims' perceived 'failures'.

## Practice Considerations

When engaging with a victim-survivor, there are some considerations to keep in mind when having your conversation. This includes:

- Considering the person's identity and how this may have impacted their experiences of accessing services, feeling heard – e.g., age, gender, sexuality, disability, cultural identity, migration history.
- Using a person-centred approach – allowing the person to describe the violence they have experienced so you can understand their experience of family violence, including how they describe their relationship with the person using violence; impact of the violence on their daily functioning and relationships; the person's relationship with other family members (who might also be victim-survivor/s or users of violence), as well as other significant family relationships (validate the experience).
- Considering how your own beliefs and experiences can influence your professional bias (conscious and unconscious). Reflect on how your own upbringing, cultural norms and practices might affect your own decisions and engagement with the victim-survivor/s.
- Considering a trauma informed approach when engaging with a victim-survivor – everyone experiences some level of trauma from family violence and that trauma affects each person differently. Your role is not to treat trauma, but to be aware of it by creating a safe space for engagement and understanding that it can affect a person's relationships, social connections, employment etc. A person can be triggered by every day events.
- When working with older people who may have experienced elder abuse, be careful not to assume someone is incompetent or has cognitive disability (including dementia) based on how they present or communicate, particularly as they may be experiencing trauma or grief or depression. Capacity and competence should always be presumed unless the engagement, information gathering and secondary consultation suggests this is affected. It is also important to be aware of your own potential for unconscious bias or ageism, including undermining the older person's agency, such as by not engaging with them directly but instead engaging and potentially colluding with adult children who might be using violence.

## Preparing a safety plan

Safety planning means thinking about ways a person can keep themselves safe when they are experiencing family violence. Often victim-survivor/s have already been doing many things to keep themselves and their children (if any) safe. Victim-survivor/s are the experts in their own lives, and often they know what will work for them.

Whether or not the victim-survivor decides to stay or leave the relationship, it is a good idea to encourage them to speak to a family violence specialist service to create a detailed safety plan for their own individual needs. For help with making a safety plan, they can call Safe Steps (1800 015 188) or 1800 RESPECT.

For a basic Safety Planning Risk Assessment Screening Tool, see Appendix A on pg 87.

## Things to consider

- What are the things that the person does to keep themselves (and the children, if any) safe?
- How does the person know when things are escalating?
- Has the person talked to their children (if any) about their safety plan?
- Does the person understand technology safety?
- Are there any barriers to putting a safety plan into action? (e.g. pets, mobility issues, discrimination, marginalisation, isolation, phone internet access and safety)

## Items they may need to take with you

### Important documents

- Driver's license
- Children's birth certificates
- Their birth certificate
- Centrelink cards

### Legal documents

- Court papers like IVO's or Family orders
- Passports
- Marriage certificate/Divorce papers
- Lease/rental contracts
- Mortgage and property deeds
- Medical records
- School records
- Registration papers/Insurance papers

## Important Emergency numbers

### Emergency support person:

#### Plan to contact them:

Are the children aware? Yes/No

#### Safe word:

Are the children aware? Yes/No

#### Safe place:

Are the children aware? Yes/No

### Financial

- Bank account details
- Money/shares
- Credit Cards

### Other

- House and car keys
- Medication
- Jewellery
- Photographs
- Children's toys
- Clothing for themselves and their children
- Personal items which may be destroyed



## Ongoing support, referral and secondary consultation

### Secondary consultation

When you have identified a person is experiencing family violence and you need more information and/or professional guidance to guide your discussions with the victim-survivor/s, seek secondary consultation with a specialist family violence service.

Secondary consultation will help you to build your knowledge and understanding of family violence risk and possible referral options. You may want to seek information from your local specialist family violence service and build working relationships so you feel comfortable talking to and seeking advice from them. This will also support you to make referrals to these services through the workers you become familiar with.

Remember that you are not expected to do this all on your own. Building referral networks to relevant specialist family violence services will benefit the health, safety and wellbeing of the person/people you are supporting and help to inform the support that you are providing.

### Referral

Referral is the process of connecting victim-survivor/s (adult or child/ren) to information or services that are outside your area of practice expertise. This includes early intervention when family violence first occurs, to avoid or respond to escalation or crisis and additional harm, and to support stabilisation and recovery from family violence. Referral is an important part of the risk management process.

When you have identified a victim-survivor to be at serious risk of family violence (requiring an emergency response), you should encourage them to call police or refer them to specialist family violence services for comprehensive risk assessment and management. Making referrals

can also lead to increased understanding of risk through sharing of relevant information – including perpetrator (person causing harm) behaviour – that can be used for ongoing risk assessment, management and safety planning. It is worth noting that some people have experienced stigma and had negative interactions with the police and may not feel comfortable contacting the police.

Specialist family violence services triage responses to referrals, with actions taken for higher risk cases as a priority. You may have a role to provide ongoing engagement and support with a victim-survivor after you have referred them to a specialist family violence service. You should continue to engage with the victim-survivor/s about their experience of risk, i.e., to monitor their level of risk, and provide support as needed.

Referrals can also support the wellbeing or unmet needs of an individual, or strengthen protective factors, such as housing, financial security, connection to professional advocacy or therapeutic services, responding to health, child developmental or social issues. Referrals are made to meet a range of service needs. For example, an older person experiencing family violence might need access to advice and support including legal advocacy or financial counselling to respond to the impact of family violence. (List of referral agencies and their numbers found in section 4 of this toolkit on page 73).

### Ongoing support

You have an ongoing role to provide support to the victim-survivor/s as a trusted leader in the community. You can support them by:

- Keeping their safety at the heart of your work and helping them to strengthen their protective factors such as connections with community, school and other social networks
- Continuing to engage, listen and validate their experience

- Continuing to monitor the dynamics of risk and revisiting their safety plan if needed
- Encouraging referral to a specialist family violence service.

## Intervention Orders and how they can provide safety for the family

A family violence intervention order can protect a person from a family member who is using family violence. It is using the power of the law to stop a person from:

- Committing family violence against the protected person
- Intentionally damaging the protected person's property or threatening to do so
- Attempting to locate or follow the protected person or keeping them under surveillance
- Publishing on the internet or by email or other electronic communication any material about the protected person
- Contacting or communicating with the protected person by any means
- Approaching or remaining within a certain distance of the protected person
- Going to or remaining within a certain distance of where the protected person lives, works or attends school or childcare
- Getting another person to do anything the respondent must not do under the order.

The applicant can choose as many conditions as they like from the list. The applicant can also talk to the court registrar if they want to:

- Include any other conditions that will make them feel safe
- If the affected family member has children, they can ask the magistrate to change (vary) or suspend a parenting order.
- Apply the conditions to an associate of the respondent.

The magistrate makes the final decision about what conditions are included in an interim or final order.

A person can obtain a family violence intervention order at your local Magistrates' Court or the police can take one out on the victim-survivor's behalf if they deem a person unsafe after assessing the situation. If a victim-survivor and their children need protection straight away, they can apply for an interim intervention order. If there are fears for the children's safety you can include them in the application.

The person the intervention order will protect is called the affected family member or the protected person. The person the intervention order is made against is called the respondent.

Intervention orders include conditions to stop the respondent from using family violence against the protected person. If the respondent breaks the conditions of an intervention order the police can charge them with a criminal offence.

## Breaches

If a respondent breaks the conditions of an intervention order, family violence safety notice or a counselling order, the police can charge them with a criminal offence. This is called a breach.

**The court takes breaches of intervention orders very seriously. If the court finds the respondent guilty, they can be given:**

- A prison sentence
- A fine
- A good behaviour bond or other penalty
- The respondent may also have a criminal record

The police should be informed if the respondent to an intervention order breaks the conditions.

If a person is charged with breaking the conditions of an intervention order, they should get legal advice. [For more information, visit https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/get-legal-services-and-advice/free-legal-advice/get-help-over-phone](https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/get-legal-services-and-advice/free-legal-advice/get-help-over-phone)

## 2.6 Checklist for supporting a victim-survivor/s



### Do's:

- ✓ Believe the victim-survivor/s.
- ✓ Tell them that it is never their fault, they don't deserve to be treated this way, and it is not aligned with their faith teaching and practices.
- ✓ If the family violence is happening within a marriage, help the victim-survivor/s see that their partner's violence has broken the marriage covenant and they have the option of leaving should they wish to. They should not have to stay in a situation that is unhealthy and where their life and the lives of their children may be in danger.
- ✓ Support and respect their choices. Even if they choose to stay in the relationship, it is their choice. The victim-survivor has the most information about the relationship and what is right for them.
- ✓ Give them referral information (Key services - section 5, page 73).
- ✓ Encourage the victim-survivor to make a safety plan (go to Section 4.4 page 57 and also Appendix A). Safety planning is a process and it is ongoing.
- ✓ Protect their confidentiality.
- ✓ Tell the victim-survivor/s how you will support them through this time.
- ✓ Support the victim-survivor/s to mourn the loss of the relationship, if they decide to leave. You can refer them to counselling support or a GP to get a mental health plan.
- ✓ Pray with the victim-survivor/s if that is what they want.
- ✓ Connect with specialist family violence service providers to assist you in your response, but protect the victim-survivor's confidentiality.
- ✓ Let them know that you will continue to be there for them whatever they choose to do.



## Do Not's:

- ✗ Do not give information about the victim-survivor (including their whereabouts) to the person using violence, or any other person (including other faith leaders or congregation members) who might pass that information on.
- ✗ Do not downplay the danger to the victim-survivor. You can be a reality check (e.g., "From what you have told me, I am very concerned for your safety...")
- ✗ Do not tell the victim-survivor what to do. Provide information, referrals and support whilst remembering that the victim-survivor is the expert in their life.
- ✗ Do not react with disgust or anger at what the victim-survivor tells you, but don't react passively either. Let the victim-survivor know that you are concerned about the person's violent or controlling behaviours, and that it is wrong.
- ✗ Do not blame the victim-survivor for the violence. If the victim-survivor is blaming themselves, remind them that there is no excuse for violence (e.g., "I hear that you provided supper late or forgot to water the lawn but there is no excuse for your partner to be violent with you.")
- ✗ Do not contact the person using violent or controlling behaviours, without getting permission first from the victim-survivor. Speaking to the person using violence to find out their 'side' of the story could put the victim-survivor in danger.
- ✗ Do not recommend 'marriage enrichment,' 'mediation,' or a 'communications workshop.' These will not stop the violence.
- ✗ Do not send the victim-survivor home with just a prayer or tell them to submit to their partner. Victim-survivor who are told to pray more or become more religious may question their faith. They may feel they have to choose between their faith and their life. What they need to hear is that their faith doesn't support the violence against them.
- ✗ Do not try to reconcile the couple.
- ✗ Do not tell the victim-survivor to be a better partner.
- ✗ Do not tell the victim-survivor that they will be punished for seeking a way out of the relationship or breaking the marriage covenant, if that's what they choose to do (e.g., they will not enter paradise).
- ✗ Do not encourage the victim-survivor to forgive the person and take them back.
- ✗ Do not encourage the victim-survivor to become dependent on you and do not become emotionally or sexually involved with the victim-survivor.



## 4.5 Working with a person using violence

### Your role

Whilst this section guides you on how to have a conversation with people who use violent and controlling behaviour, we strongly encourage you to connect them with specialist family violence services that work with people to end their use of violence. This is a highly specialised role where even the highly qualified find it challenging at times. Your role is to build a professional, trusting relationship so that you can support the person using violence to connect with professional services via referral options you suggest.

People who use violent controlling behaviours often try to cover up what they have done or pretend that the abuse wasn't as bad as it was. People using violence will often minimise their use of violence or abuse and seek ways to justify or avoid responsibility for their actions and their impacts.

In early conversations, people who use violence will describe the family violence as a 'one-off incident', related to being tired, stressed or pressured. This may shift over time to narratives that disclose patterns of violent and controlling behaviour.

Many people who use violent and controlling behaviours try to convince people in authority (e.g., faith leaders, police, health professionals) to believe their 'side' of the story, make excuses for their behaviour and avoid taking responsibility for change.

The term 'collusion' refers to ways that an individual, agency or system might reinforce, excuse, minimise or deny a person's use of violence towards family members and/or the extent or impact of that violence.

Invitations to collude occur when the person using violence seeks out the professional to agree with, reinforce or affirm their narrative about their use of violence, the victim-survivor/s or their situation.

When taken up by professionals, this practice colludes with the person using violence as they attempt to avoid responsibility for their use of violence.

Professionals have a responsibility to recognise invitations to collude. Collusion is covered below on page 65.

You should consider the impact on the behaviour on the victim-survivor/s and hold their safety centrally in your mind, even if you have not spoken to the victim-survivor/s about their experience of violence.

### Considerations when working with people who use violence

Before you start engaging with a person who uses violence or a person you suspect of using violence, consider the following:

- The safety of the victim-survivor/s including children and young people is paramount. Sometimes you may be in contact with both the victim-survivor/s and the person using violence. If you are going to be supporting both the victim-survivor/s and the person using violence into the future you will need to be aware to never share information that the victim-survivor/s have told you with the person using violence because this could put the victim-survivor/s in danger. Keep your documentation separate and ensure that you arrange meetings so there is no chance for them to meet at the same time.

- The priority is to establish whether the person presents a serious or immediate risk to adult or child victim-survivor/s, themselves or others in the community.
- Unless there is a direct disclosure, you should not ask questions directly about their use of family violence. Instead, focus on recording observable signs and narratives that the person might be using violent and controlling behaviour and share that information with relevant services to support risk assessment and management.
- The person may present as defensive, wary and self-justifying. Indicate that you will listen and be present with them and uphold their dignity throughout your engagement.

Your goal in building rapport and trust is to create an environment where family violence narratives and behaviours are able to be identified without colluding or supporting their behaviour or excuses.

## Safe and respectful engagement

Patterns of family violence behaviour emerge more easily when you give the person using violence space to share their story. This does not mean that you should believe what the person is saying is the absolute truth. You should reflect on and hold the experience of the victim-survivor/s as central to assist you to contextualise the information shared with you by the person using violence. Using professional curiosity and careful questioning can guide the direction and parameters of the engagement, which will identify risk and opportunities to reduce and manage it.

### Professional curiosity

Professional curiosity helps you to:

- Set up a professional and respectful relationship to set expectations for behaviour and engagement
- Demonstrate you are willing to listen and work with the person, regardless of their behaviour towards their family.
- Place boundaries around the behaviour as part of, not intrinsic to, the person.
- Create a sense of trust and transparency in your working together.
- Be open minded and non-confrontational with the person to foster a sense of trust and minimise the risk of escalation of harm to victim-survivor/s.

Some examples of professional curiosity in prompting questions are included below in the 'respectful approaches' section.

### Person in their context

Situating the 'person in their context' is an important starting point for your engagement. They will have a range of identities and varied lived experiences that have shaped their historical and current behaviours. This does not excuse their behaviour. Awareness of the person's context helps to inform the way you engage, provide ongoing support, refer and seek secondary consultation. Be aware of the:

- Person's past experience of family violence (as a child, in other family or previous relationships).
- Person's use of violence in previous relationships.
- Impact of their use of violence on victim-survivor/s and their own daily functioning and relationships, including their parenting role.
- Presence of any risk/threat/risk to the victim-survivor/s or another person.
- Person's description of their relationship with the victim-survivor/s.
- Person's relationship with social, cultural and community networks.
- Presence of any relationships with professionals, services and systems.
- Environmental factors that impact on their life.

When engaging with a person using violence, have in mind:

- Any barriers that may affect a person's access to services.
- Patterns of family violence behaviour.
- Your own biases.
- Trauma they may have experienced (including pre-migration trauma) and any support they may require to address this. Please note that although a person using harm may have had a hard life, or had traumatic experiences and use/d this as an excuse to justify their behaviour, that is not an excuse for violent behaviours. Most people from diverse range of cultural backgrounds who have experienced past traumas will never commit acts of family violence or abuse.

## Respectful approach

Research shows that people who use family violence often feel shame or embarrassment at the idea of seeking help for violent and abusive behaviours. (Ref: Adapted from OurWatch 2019, Men in focus, p. 36.)

This can lead to avoiding help-seeking, which is often linked to attitudes about traditional gender roles and behaviours – in particular, expressions of masculinity that do not include showing emotion or concern for other men. (ref: Hashimoto N, Radcliffe P, Gilchrist G 2018, 'Help-seeking behaviours for intimate partner violence perpetration by men receiving substance use treatment: a mixed-methods secondary analysis', Journal of Interpersonal Violence. doi: 088626051877064.)

People using violence are more likely to engage if they believe that you are a trustworthy professional and can offer support in a non-judgemental way.

People who use family violence are unlikely to disclose or discuss their behaviour if they feel judged, disrespected or dismissed.

This means they will be more likely to minimise or deny their use of violence, disengage from the service system, and not seek help now or in the future.

To keep the person in view of services and engaged with supports, your conversations should:

- Be respectful and listen carefully for opportunities to promote respect of women and condemning violence using your faith's text and traditions.
- Be careful not to laugh or make jokes with them (colluding).
- Keep the victim-survivor/s in view by using their name and the names of children where possible.
- Use professional curiosity.
- Keep safety of victim-survivor/s and children central to conversation.
- Don't recoil, look disgusted or show signs of disapproval when you hear behaviours or narratives that are concerning.
- Use a strengths-based approach.

Make a connection and build a professional relationship with the person using violence.

"Before we talk about what brought you here, tell me a bit about yourself".

- Your work?
- Where you live and with who?
- What sports, activities/community activities are you involved with?
- What activities do you do regularly/occasionally?
- Are there things you don't do but would like to do?
- How would you describe yourself?
- What is it you want me to know about you?
- What have you been doing since we last meet?

## Ask open ended questions

Ask guided open-ended questions to encourage the person to share more details about their situation. Your role is to listen and support referral to specialist family violence services who have the expertise to work directly with the person using violence about their use of violence.

- What has brought you here today?
- What would you like to discuss today?

## Do not ask 'why?' questions (why tends to be accusatory or indicative that the person is a problem, not that they have a problem)

Be curious and interested in the person, listen to allow for disclosure of behaviours or reveal underlying beliefs and attitudes. Invite collaboration:

- I was wondering if you could help me to understand.....'

## Non-collusive practice

Your role is not to actively change the attitudes and behaviours of the person using violence. To ensure the safety of the victim-survivor/s, your role is to:

- Identify overt and subtle violence supporting narratives that indicate the person's beliefs and attitudes, record these and share information with relevant services.
- Offer texts and traditions/interpretations that promote respect of women, healthy relationships and condemns violence.
- Find verses/scripture that support respect of women, healthy relationships and condemn violence against women.

- Understand the impacts of family violence risk, related information disclosed or identified family violence behaviours. Remembering that perpetrators will selectively disclose (i.e., not reveal the extent of their violent and controlling behaviours), if at all.

## Recognising collusion

Collusion happens when an individual, agency or system reinforces, excuses, minimises or denies a person's use of violence towards a family member.

People using violence can intentionally invite professionals to collude in their narratives. This will give the narrative legitimacy while allowing them to avoid thinking critically about their behaviour and its impact on others.

Collusion can take many forms:

- Compliant collusion (agreeing)
- Oppositional confrontation (reprimand or arguing)
- Gesturing (nodding, smiling, laughing at demeaning comments or jokes). This can be unintentional.
- Blaming the victim-survivor/s
- Accepting excuses

## Avoiding collusion

You can avoid collusion by doing the following:

- Consider your role and level of responsibility to directly engage about their use of family violence and be mindful of the potential increase of risk
- Do not interview or ask questions of the victim-survivor/s in the presence of the person using violence
- Reflect on your own practice and adopt a balanced approach



- Consider sharing information or seeking secondary consultation with other services
- Be careful how to use the word 'Yes' when listening and clarifying. Many use a word like yes to demonstrate they are listening but it may be construed as being in agreement. Consider other words or sounds to demonstrate you are listening that does not show approval i.e., ahhaa, hmm

### Common narratives

Narratives and behaviours that appear to be innocuous may in fact be part of a pattern of behaviour making victim-survivor/s feel unsafe and elevate their level of risk.

A person's narratives, behaviours, presenting needs and circumstances can support the identification of indicators or risk factors demonstrating their use of family violence behaviours.

Understand when it is safe to ask questions and when to observe only – unless there is a direct disclosure, you should not ask questions directly about a person's use of family violence. Instead, you should focus on recording observations and information sharing. Direct questioning can increase risk unless you are a skilled professional.

Be alert to the following narratives:

- Minimising use of violence and abuse and seeking ways to justify and avoid responsibility for actions and impacts
- Describing the family violence as a one-off incident related to being tired, stressed or pressured that may shift over time to patterns of behaviour
- Rarely will people using violence disclose physical or sexual violence. They are more likely to present a story about life, relationships or family that negatively reflect on their current or former partner.

- That they are a victim of the person that they are abusing, who has failed to live up to their obligations, religious or otherwise

### Tactics used to harm the mother-child relationship:

Be aware of observing narratives or behaviours that indicate the following tactics to harm the mother-child relationship:

- Threatening to use family law and child protection systems to attack and undermine the mother-child bond
- Creating an environment of instability and harsh discipline in the home
- Conditioning children to misinterpret their coercive and controlling tactics that leads the children to blame their mother, minimise the abuse and distance themselves
- Actively belittling women and/or mother in front of their children
- Isolating victim-survivor/s from their friends and family and preventing them from accessing services to support their parenting.

### Closing the conversation

Closing a conversation safely is also important and shows you are being respectful, and have been listening. You can end your conversations by thanking the person using violence for sharing their story, acknowledging and offering referral to other services. You may want to seek permission to check in on them at a later date and see how they are doing. This gives opportunity to assess risk of victim-survivor/s and children and also encourages them to reach out to family violence specialist services that support ending violence and if they have, you can encourage them to keep going.

### 3.4 Practice considerations

Use the following approaches when working with people who use family violence:

- **Prioritise victim-survivor/s safety.**  
All professionals must be aware of victim-survivors' safety and wellbeing in their communication with people using violence. This includes professionals who do not have a role in asking questions about family violence.
- **Keep information provided by the victim-survivor/s confidential from the person using violence.**  
Never disclose that you are aware of information provided to you or another agency by a victim-survivor. This applies whether a person is suspected or known to be using violence. If a person using violence thinks the victim-survivor has accessed a service, or provided any information, they may escalate their violence in retaliation or use the information to further intimidate and coerce the victim-survivor/s.
- **Explore values and goals aspired for the family with the person using violence.**  
People using violence have values and goals for their family, relationships and themselves. A collaborative, respectful approach is more likely to support ongoing engagement and keep the person using violence in view of the service system, compared with a judgemental or confrontational approach. In communicating with people using violence, you should give the dual messages of acceptance of them as people with potential to change, while rejecting coercive or violent attitudes and behaviours and invitations to collude with them.

- **Recognise that people who use family violence may seek you to collude with them.**

Reflective practice can support you to identify whether a person using violence is engaging with your service to reinforce their position of control over the victim-survivor/s. This includes by presenting as charismatic and caring. If a victim-survivor/s feels your service may not believe them if they disclose violence, this may further isolate or demotivate them from seeking help. For more guidance on responding to invitations to collude go to MARAM practice guides: Guidance for professionals working with adults using family violence – Responsibility 2 – Identification of family violence risk

- **Reflect an open attitude and demeanour.**

Maintain a curious and open approach when you are learning about a person using violence's family life and other aspects of their lives. Each person comes to a service with their own history, experience, needs and circumstances. The more you learn about the person's life, the more information you will have to support effective risk identification, assessment and management opportunities.

### Secondary consultation, referral and ongoing support

Secondary consultation and information sharing is a key aspect of building a shared understanding of family violence and developing a system wide consistent and collaborative practice. Faith leaders are an integral part of the community - you listen, identify and respond to family violence risk, provide ongoing support and support referrals to relevant specialist services for both victim-survivor/s and people who use violence.

Seeking secondary consultation from specialist family violence services is critical to help you to gain further understanding of family violence risk and possible referral options.

## Secondary consultation

Similar to your work with victim-survivor/s, seeking secondary consultation when working with a person using violence will also expand your knowledge of family violence risk and the services that can support the person using violence. You should be seeking secondary consultation when working with people who use violence:

- If you are uncertain about the level of risk.
- When you are uncertain about the identity of a victim-survivor/s or person using violence.
- When you want to discuss next steps with a person with expertise in family violence
- To help with safety plans.
- To seek expert knowledge and advice for children and young people and older people.
- For advice and support from targeted services including ethno-specific, LGBTQIA+ and disability services that focus on primary prevention or early intervention.
- For legal support.
- For any other service or professional where their involvement in collaborative responses would benefit the victim-survivor/s and/or person using violence e.g.: alcohol and other drugs (AOD), gambling help, counselling, mental health, parenting support, financial counselling and housing.



### Always remember:

- Keep the victim-survivor/s safety the priority – consulting with other services can contribute to the safety of the victim-survivor/s.
- If you believe a child or children needs protection or if you have significant concerns for their wellbeing, you are obliged to report to Child Protection or make a referral to Child FIRST.
- Keep the risk presented by the person using violence visible to the service system who can continue to monitor change and escalation of risk behaviours.
- Utilising secondary consultation builds your confidence with continuing to support people using violence, and increases knowledge and further understanding of family violence risk and possible referral options.

## Referral

Where there is immediate risk to the victim-survivor/s including children, the community (including yourself), and/or the person using violence through self-harm, refer a matter to:

- Victoria Police where a crime may have been committed, or is likely to be committed.
- Child protection or Child FIRST or other statutory services.
- Mandatory reporting to child protection where there is a reasonable belief of child physical or sexual abuse.
- Other professionals with expert skills or skills in supporting a person using violence.

Other services may also be appropriate, including:

- Crisis Assessment and Treatment Teams (CATT) – calling the local CATT may be more appropriate where service users are showing acute signs of mental illness but are not necessarily a threat to others.
- Child Protection – in order to share information where children are involved or to obtain information about the level of risk a person using family violence may present to a child or young person.
- A specialist family violence service – in order to share information and to collaborate with the service on safety planning if a victim-survivor is currently engaged in their service.

If you are uncertain how to proceed, call a specialist perpetrator intervention service, or other services such as The Orange Door or Rainbow Door for a secondary consultation on responding to immediate risk.

If a person using violence doesn't want to accept the referral, you may need to consider sharing information with relevant services while keeping the safety of the victim-survivor/s in mind.

## Ongoing support

You have an important role in keeping engaged with the person using violence and continuing to observe their behaviour, keeping them in view with the safety of the victim-survivor/s in mind.

You can support them to remain connected to their social networks, to employment or education and to the community.

Look out for the changing dynamics of risk and harm to the victim-survivor/s, community, other family members and themselves.

There may also be barriers to engaging with services due to previous negative experiences, structural inequality and discrimination and experiences of trauma had by the person using violence. You can help by:

- Being curious about the experiences of the person using violence.
- Listening to what they tell you and assessing.
- Providing information to the person using violence so they understand how a referral can support them.

Remember that when you refer a person using violence there may be a wait time before they receive support. It is important to keep connected until this engagement commences. You can do this through regular phone calls and meetings if you feel confident to do so.



## 4.6 Self care

As a faith leader, you may sometimes be a first respondent when problems happen in your community. No matter your level of skills and expertise, your role in the community may lead to burnout, compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma. Self care practices can help you avoid these conditions.

Burnout is caused by long-term involvement in emotionally demanding situations. It is a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion. Symptoms may include depression, cynicism, boredom and loss of compassion.

Compassion fatigue is a combination of physical, emotional, and spiritual depletion associated with caring for others who are in significant emotional pain and physical distress.

Vicarious trauma is an occupational challenge for people working and volunteering in the fields of victim services, law enforcement, emergency medical services, fire services, and other allied professions, due to their continuous exposure to victim-survivor/s of trauma and violence. Exposure to the trauma of others has been shown to change the world-view of these responders and can put people and organisations at risk for a range of negative consequences.

### Ways to practice self-care:

1. Don't overload yourself - make sure you have a realistic work load
2. Make sure you are connecting people into the professional service sector that has the structures and resources to provide more in depth support
3. Know your boundaries and set limits on the support you can provide to your community
4. Work with others – you don't need to do everything yourself
5. Take a day off when you need it
6. Laugh, joke and spend regular time unwinding
7. Take care of all parts of yourself - mind, body, feelings, spirituality
8. Do not take on other people's stress
9. Be upfront with your feelings and concerns - don't let worries fester
10. Process and talk things. Out talk to a healthcare professional if you need to
11. Read materials and go to workshops and training seminars on compassion fatigue

# STEPS TO SELF-CARE

Self-care refers to selected actions that restore balance in our personal and professional lives.

Not just an add-on activity, self-care is also a state of mind through development of self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-efficacy.

## EXERCISE

Light **3 DAYS A WEEK** exercise improves happiness by **10-20%** increases work productivity by **15%**

## MEDITATE

**50%** reduction in overall psychiatric symptoms  
**70%** decrease in anxiety  
**44%** reduction in common medical symptoms

## READ

A new trend in treatment of mental illness; boosts creativity and activates sensory areas of the brain.

## GREENSPACE

Having **over 30%** of green space in your surroundings is recommended for **healthy cortisol levels**.

## LAUGH

Laughter strengthens the immune system, boosts energy and diminishes pain.

Children laugh over **300 times per day**

The typical adult chuckles

**15 times per day**

## TIME OFF

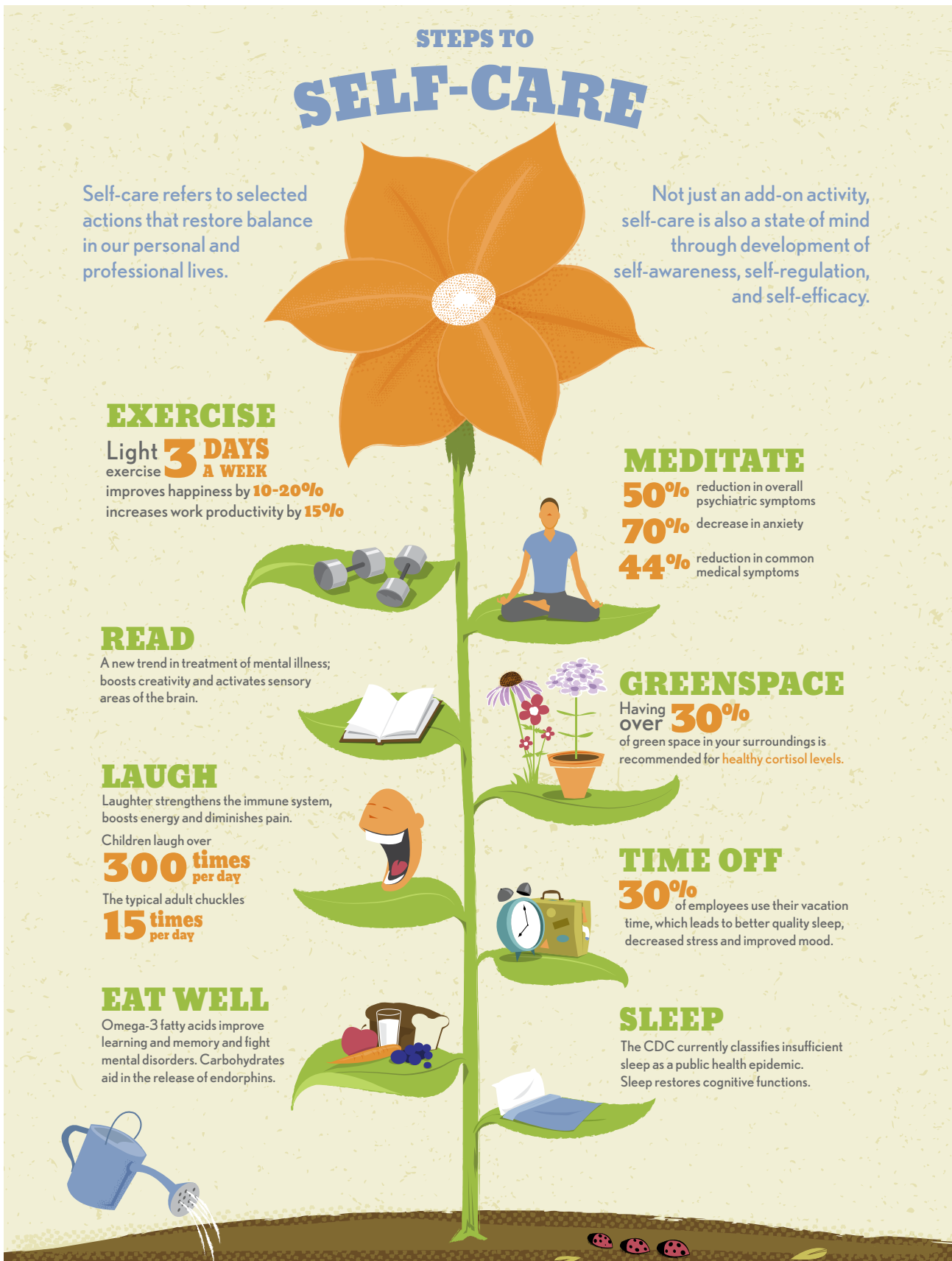
**30%** of employees use their vacation time, which leads to better quality sleep, decreased stress and improved mood.

## EAT WELL

Omega-3 fatty acids improve learning and memory and fight mental disorders. Carbohydrates aid in the release of endorphins.

## SLEEP

The CDC currently classifies insufficient sleep as a public health epidemic. Sleep restores cognitive functions.





# Part 5

## Key Services, appendices and references

Part 5 includes:

Key services

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Community referrals

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Appendix A

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Appendix B

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Appendix C

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Appendix D

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# Key services

## Emergency Services

Police will respond to family violence incidents. In an emergency, contact 000 and ask for the Police.

## Family violence support services

### 1800RESPECT (Nationwide Service)

Confidential information, counselling and support service. Supports with safety planning, finding services and healthy relationships. Available 24/7 Tel: 1800 737 732

### Safe Steps family violence response centre (statewide Service)

Safe Steps is the central contact point for crisis accommodation in Victoria and provides telephone crisis counselling, refuge referral, emergency accommodation, information and support for all women. Available 24/7.

Call (03) 9322 3555 or 1800 015 188 (Toll Free)

[www.safesteps.org.au](http://www.safesteps.org.au)

### InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence

InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence works with women and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who are victim-survivor/s of family violence. The service has a team of bi-lingual and bi-cultural workers who provide assistance and information for women and children escaping family violence. Available 9am to 5pm weekdays.

Call (03) 9413 6500 or 1800 755 988 (Toll Free)

[www.intouch.org.au](http://www.intouch.org.au)

### WIRE

WIRE provides free information, support and referral for Victorian women, non-binary and gender diverse people on a range of issues. WIRE also delivers a range of programs, services and training. WIRE's Walk-In Centre is located at 372 Spencer St, West Melbourne.

Available 9am to 5pm weekdays.

Call 1300 134 130

Email [support@wire.org.au](mailto:support@wire.org.au) Web chat at [www.wire.org.au](http://www.wire.org.au)

### Orange Door Services

The Orange Door is the entry point for Victorians to access child and family services, and family violence services, including services working with those using violence. It provides help for people experiencing family violence, or who need support with the care and wellbeing of children and young people.



Locations		
Barwon	83 Moorabool St, Geelong 3220	1800 312 820
Bayside Peninsula	60-64 Wells Street, Frankston 3199	1800 319 353
Central Highlands	21 Armstrong Street Nth, Ballarat 3350	1800 219 819
Central Highlands	52 Grant Steet, Bacchus March 3340	1800 219 819
Goulburn	210 Corio Street, Shepparton 3630	1800 634 245
Inner Gippsland	163 Princes Drive, Morwell, 3840	1800 319 354
Loddon	57 View Street, Bendigo 3552	1800 512 239
Mallee	113 Madden Avenue, Mildura, 3550	1800 290 943
Mallee	14-18 McCallum St, Swan Hill 3585	1800 290 943
Nth East Melbourne	56 Burgundy Street, Heidelberg 3084	1800 319 355

### Department of Housing Crisis Accommodation line

For those that are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Free 24 hour phone line. Someone will take your call to get you help nearby. If after hours, they will refer you to the Salvation Army Crisis Service.

Tel: 1800 825 955 or (03) 9536 7777

[www.housing.vic.gov.au/crisis-emergency](http://www.housing.vic.gov.au/crisis-emergency)

### Salvation Army Crisis Accommodation

For those that are homeless or experiencing homelessness. Provide service for adults, and families with accompanying children. Services include accommodation, case management, assertive outreach support, and financial assistance. Go to website to find location near you.

Tel: 1800 627 727 or (03) 9536 7777

[www.salvationarmy.org.au](http://www.salvationarmy.org.au)

### Rainbow Door

A free specialist LGBTIQA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Gender Diverse, Intersex, Queer, Asexual, Brotherboys and Sistergirls) helpline providing information, support and referral to all LGBTIQA+ Victorian's, their friends and family. Available 10am to 5pm 7 days a week. Tel: 1800 729 367

Text: 0480 017 246

Email: [support@rainbowdoor.org.au](mailto:support@rainbowdoor.org.au)

## Indigenous Support Services

### Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women's Service

Call 03 9482 5744

Email [intake@emhaws.org.au](mailto:intake@emhaws.org.au) 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday [www.emhaws.org.au](http://www.emhaws.org.au)

Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women's Service seeks to promote social justice and equity for Aboriginal women and children experiencing family violence in the community. Elizabeth Morgan House provides a range of support, from crisis through to recovery, for Aboriginal women and children experiencing family violence.

## **Djirra (formerly called Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service)**

Call (03) 9244 3333 or free call 1800 105 303

[djirra.org.au](http://djirra.org.au)

The Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service (FVPLS) provides legal advice, counselling, information, referral and support to Aboriginal victim-survivor/s or people at immediate risk of family violence and sexual assault.

## **Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service**

Call 9212 0200

Email [boorndawanwillam@each.com.au](mailto:boorndawanwillam@each.com.au)

Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service provides a culturally safe service that assists Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR) in their healing journey to address the impacts of family violence by providing opportunities to become strong individuals and families, live in safe communities, and have healthy lives where pathways to recovery for Aboriginal people can be achieved.

## **Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency**

Call (03) 8388 1855

[www.vacca.org](http://www.vacca.org)

The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) is the lead Aboriginal child and family welfare organisation in Victoria. VACCA provides support, outreach, information and confidential advice to parents and carers of Aboriginal children.

## **Dardi Munwurro**

Aboriginal services - children, men's services and response. Delivers a range of tailored family violence, healing and behaviour change programs and services to Aboriginal men and youth.

Tel: 1800 435 799

[www.dardimunwurro.com.au](http://www.dardimunwurro.com.au)

## **Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS)**

Call (03) 9418 5999 or 1800 064 865 (toll free, 24 hours) [www.vals.org.au](http://www.vals.org.au)

## **Support and advocacy for older Victorians'**

### **Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV)**

Call 1300 368 821

10am–5pm, Monday to Friday [www.seniorsrights.org.au](http://www.seniorsrights.org.au)

Seniors Rights Victoria offers a range of services to support older Victorians experiencing abuse. These include advocacy, legal services and community education. They are the primary, government-endorsed destination for friends, family members and older Victorians seeking information relating to elder abuse. SRV responds to Victorians over the age of 60, or for Indigenous Victorians, over the age of 45. They will provide an interpreter if required.

## **Elder Rights Advocacy (ERA)**

Call (03) 9602 3066 or 1800 700 600

[www.era.asn.au](http://www.era.asn.au)

Elder Rights Advocacy (ERA) offers a free, confidential and independent service to older people (or their representatives), who are receiving an Australian Government subsidised aged care package in Victoria. ERA provides advocacy and assistance to support older people to uphold their rights and to prevent the abuse of these rights.

## **Sexual assault services**

### **Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASAs)**

[www.casa.org.au](http://www.casa.org.au)

CASA offer telephone or face-to-face counselling to survivors of recent and past sexual assault/abuse (including incest) and provide legal information. CASAs can assist victim-survivor/s to communicate with hospitals, doctors, the police and other legal system representatives, where appropriate.

#### **Melbourne metropolitan CASAs**

CASA House	Melbourne	9635 3610
Western CASA	Footscray	9687 5811
Northern CASA	Heidelberg	9496 2240
Eastern CASA	East Ringwood	9870 7330
South East CASA	East Bentleigh	9594 2289
Gatehouse Centre	RCH Parkville	9345 6391

### **Sexual Assault Crisis Line (outside of business hours)**

Call 1800 806 292

5pm weeknights to 9am the next day and throughout weekends and public holidays. The Sexual Assault Crisis Line Victoria (SACL) is a state-wide, after-hours, confidential, telephone crisis counselling service for people who have experienced both past and recent sexual assault.

### **Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Teams (SOCIT)**

Call (03) 9247 6666 (Victoria Police Switchboard) and ask for nearest SOCIT.

SOCITs are staffed by experienced and qualified Victoria Police detectives specially trained to respond to and investigate sexual offences and child abuse by perpetrators known to the victims.

## **Legal Services**

### **Victoria Legal Aid (VLA)**

Call (03) 9269 0120 or 1300 792 387 (country callers) 8.45am-5.15pm, Monday to Friday

[www.legalaid.vic.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au)

VLA offers free legal information. VLA has in-house lawyers who give legal advice and act for survivors of violence.

## **Women's Legal Service Victoria**

Call Legal Advice Line on (03) 8622 0600 or Toll Free on 1800 133 302 5.30pm–7.30pm  
Level 10, 277 William Street, Melbourne  
[www.womenslegal.org.au](http://www.womenslegal.org.au)

The Women's Legal Service provides free and confidential legal advice, as well as assistance and referral for women. Their services include a legal advice telephone line, face to face advice and assistance, casework, court support, interpreter assisted appointments, an outreach service and community legal education.

## **Community Legal Centres**

To find your local legal centre please call The Federation of Community Legal Centre's Victoria on (03) 9652 1500 [www.communitylaw.org.au](http://www.communitylaw.org.au)

## **Disability Discrimination Legal Service**

Call (03) 9654 8644 or 1300 882 872 (toll free)  
Web link is <http://www.ddls.org.au/>  
Human Rights Law Centre  
Call (03) 8636 4450  
[www.hrlrc.org.au](http://www.hrlrc.org.au)

## **LGBTIQA+ Legal Advice Clinic - Fitzroy**

Tel (03) 9419 3744

## **LGBTIQA+ – Legal Service - St. Kilda**

<https://lgbtiqlegal.org.au/contact-us/>  
Tel: (03) 9534 0777

## **Refugee Legal**

Call (03) 9413 0101  
[www.refugeelegal.org.au](http://www.refugeelegal.org.au)

## **Youth Law**

Call (03) 9611 2412  
[www.youthlaw.asn.au](http://www.youthlaw.asn.au)

## **Victorian Civil & Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)**

Call 9628 9856  
Email [vcap-rt@vcap.vic.gov.au](mailto:vcap-rt@vcap.vic.gov.au)  
[www.vcap.vic.gov.au](http://www.vcap.vic.gov.au)

VCAT have a Family Violence Support Worker if there are tenancy / lease matters.

## **Victims of Crime Helpline**

Call 1800 819 817  
8am-11pm, 7 days a week

Victims of crime can call a dedicated Helpline staffed by trained Victim Support Officers. Helpline staff offer information, advice and referrals to assist victims to manage and recover from the effects of crime.

## **Victims Of Crime Assistance Tribunal (VOCAT)**

Call 1800 882 752  
[www.vocat.vic.gov.au](http://www.vocat.vic.gov.au)

The Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal (VOCAT) considers applications for financial assistance by victims of violent crimes that were committed in Victoria.

## **Court Network**

Call 1800 681 614 or 8306 6966

Information and Referral telephone service operates 1pm–5pm, Monday to Friday

Court Network is volunteer based organisation providing support and information about going to court. Court Network can provide a court support person for people in court and during court appearance, and can provide a safe place in court.



## Services for children and young people

### Child First – Child & Family Information. Referral & Support Teams

Child FIRST offices have been established in 24 regional catchment areas across Victoria. Child FIRST provides a central, community-based referral point to a range of community based family services and other supports. The primary purpose of Child FIRST is to ensure that vulnerable children, young people and their families are linked effectively into relevant services. Each catchment area has its own Child First support team.

To access the phone number for each catchment area go to the DHS website: <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children-families-and-young-people/family-and-parenting-support/family-services/child-first-child-and-family-information-referral-and-support-teams>

### DHHS Child Protection Crisis Line (Statewide)

24 hours a day, 7 day a week support

During business hours ring the phone number covering the local government area where the child lives.

North division intake	1300 664 977	
South division intake	1300 655 795	
East division intake	1300 360 391	
West division intake	1800 075 599	(rural and regional only)
West division Intake	1300 664 977	(metropolitan only)
After hours phone number	131 278	(for all regions)

### Translation and Interpretation Services

Phone to gain access to an interpreter in your own language 131 450

[www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au)

[www.tisprebook.homeaffairs.gov.au](http://www.tisprebook.homeaffairs.gov.au)

### The Victorian Maternal & Child Health Line (MCH Line)

Call 13 22 29

24 hours, 7 days a week

This Victorian Maternal and Child Health Line is available to families with children from birth to school age. It is staffed by qualified Maternal and Child Health Nurses. They provide information, support and advice. The MCH Line is able to connect culturally and linguistically diverse families to female interpreters. The service is available to hearing or speech impaired callers who have access to the National Relay Service (NRS).

## **Child And Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)**

CAMHS is a specialist mental health service for children and young people aged up to 18 years of age. CAMHS programs and services include crisis assessment and treatment, intensive mobile youth outreach support, services continuing care case management services, and outpatient and inpatient services, including adolescent inpatient care (covering regional catchment areas).

For area and regional contact numbers, go to: [www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/services/child/](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/services/child/)

## **Gatehouse Centre For The Assessment And Treatment Of Child Abuse (CASA)**

Call (03) 9345 6391

9am-5pm, Monday to Friday

For afterhours assistance call Royal Children's Hospital on (03) 9345 5522

The Gatehouse provides assessment, treatment and advocacy services for children and young people aged up to 17 years where sexual abuse is known or suspected to have occurred or where problem sexual or sexually abusive behaviours are a concern. The Gatehouse also provides training and consultation services for professionals and other agencies.

## **Services for men**

### **Men's Referral Service**

Call 1300 766 491

8.00am-10.00pm, Monday to Friday and 10.00am-4.00pm, Saturday to Sunday

The Men's Referral Service is an anonymous and confidential telephone service provided for men by men. They offer a central point of contact for men who want to stop violent or abusive behaviour towards their family members.

## **Counselling services**

### **1800RESPECT**

Call 1800 737 732

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

1800RESPECT is the national family violence and sexual assault telephone counselling service for those seeking help for themselves, a friend or relative, a colleague or a client. Professionals are also encouraged to use 1800RESPECT for support with secondary referrals or vicarious trauma.

### **Community Health Centres**

Community Health Centres offer counselling as well as groups and activities for women, men, children and young people. To find your nearest Centre go to: <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/pch/commhealth/directory.htm>

### **Family Relationship Advice Line**

Call 1800 050 321

The Family Relationship Advice Line is a national telephone service established to assist families affected by relationship or separation issues. The Advice Line complements the information and services offered by Family Relationship Centres.

## Financial Services

### Financial Counselling Services

Call 1800 639 523

Financial Counselling Service provides a free service assisting people with hardship variations, moratoriums, full and final settle-for-less agreements, debt waivers, bankruptcy information and support, access to financial support and disputation of debt.

### National Debt Line

A not-for-profit service that helps people tackle their debt problems. Professional financial counsellors offer free, independent and confidential service. Available 9.30am to 4.30pm weekdays.

Tel: 1800 007 007

[www.ndh.org.au](http://www.ndh.org.au)

## Migrant Communities Organisations

### African Family Services

(03) 9602 5160

0457 329 773

0412 635 423

[servicesmanager@africanfamilyservices.org](mailto:servicesmanager@africanfamilyservices.org) [info@africanfamilyservices.org](mailto:info@africanfamilyservices.org)

<https://africanfamilyservices.org.au>

Provides case management services for Family Violence victim-survivor/s. Runs educational workshops and projects to raise awareness around the issue of Family Violence and its impacts on victims and families, in a culturally sensitive and safe space.

### Arab Welfare Association

9380 9536

[info@arabwelfare.org.au](mailto:info@arabwelfare.org.au)

Settlement support services; family violence case management; outreach for family and relationship issues; youth support programs; gambling prevention; group community programs to learn about citizenship, driver education, financial management, interviewing, job seeking, housing, legal services.

### Australian Bosnian Women's Association (Zena Zeni)

0412 543 474

[sanchi2000@hotmail.com](mailto:sanchi2000@hotmail.com)

Linking women to Government and other organisations such as Women's Health West, Centrelink, breast-screening clinics etc.

## **Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights**

(03) 9481 3000

reception@muslimwomenscentre.org.au <https://ausmuslimwomenscentre.org.au>

Family Violence case work and has a Family Safety team Programs for parenting, leadership and young women's empowerment.

## **Gabriela Australia (Filipina community)**

0481 577 670

gabaaustralia@gmail.com amadewingeril@yahoo.com

<https://www.facebook.com/Gabriela-Australia-1491865197762777>

Conducts forums, delivers education sessions and women's leadership and empowerment training. Lobbies on issues for women in the Filipina community.

## **Shakti Australia**

(03) 9753 4324 / 1800 SHAKTI (1800 72 584)

1800shakti@gmail.com <https://shaktiinternational.org/shakti-australia> <https://www.facebook.com/ShaktiAustralia>

Case management and counselling for women experiencing violence. Community programs in Dandenong, Hume, Knox, and Wyndham including emotional wellbeing, employment, Australian legal system, and service navigation Advocating on issues around forced marriage, under-age marriage, dowry abuse and honour-based violence.

## **The Silent Witness Network**

0418 389 135

melba.marginson@gmail.com <https://www.facebook.com/TSWN.Inc>

Collaborate on community leadership training and working with men in prevention Cross promote prevention work.

## **Sisters4sisters Support Services**

1800SISTERS (1800 747 8377)

info@s4s.org.au <https://www.s4s.org.au>

Provides counselling support services – family violence, relationships, alcohol & drug issues (support users and their families), gambling and mental health; outreach, information and referral; psychoeducation programs in faith, culturally and linguistically diverse communities on family violence- response and prevention; Women's empowerment programs; peer support.

## **Wellsprings for Women**

(03) 9701 3740

administration@wellspringsforwomen.com <https://www.wellspringsforwomen.com>

Partnering with others or facilitating parenting and leadership programs. Training with CALD communities to raise awareness on family violence. Run forums and workshop for community leaders on gender equality.

## **Women's Association South East Melbourne Australia Inc.**

0476 163 036

womensassociation.wasema@gmail.com <https://www.facebook.com/wasemainc>

Runs 7 Women's friendship cafes across Dandenong, Casey and Cardinia with over 500 participants. Supports women experiencing family violence through referrals to relevant resources and services in each region.



## Other useful resources and websites

### Alcohol and other drugs

<b>FAMILY DRUG HELPLINE</b> Call 1300 660 068 <a href="http://www.familydrughelp.org.au">www.familydrughelp.org.au</a>	A 24/7 state-wide support service staffed by people who have also been affected by a loved one's substance use. A range of services are available, such as professional counselling for family members (face to face or online), educational programs, support groups, and information and referral services.
<b>DIRECTLINE</b> Call 1800 888 236 <a href="http://www.directline.org.au">www.directline.org.au</a>	A 24/7 telephone service providing the community with access to drug and alcohol counselling, information and referrals.
<b>DRUGINFO/AUSTRALIAN DRUG FOUNDATION</b> 1300 858 584 <a href="http://www.adf.org.au">www.adf.org.au</a>	A 24/7 telephone service for students, parents, friends, relatives and other community members interested in obtaining relevant, up-to-date information about alcohol and other drugs. The website full of fact sheets on alcohol and other drugs.
<b>YODAA LINE</b> Call 1800 458 685 <a href="http://www.yodaa.org.au/youth">www.yodaa.org.au/youth</a>	A 24/7 state-wide service that provides counselling, information and referral to youth-specific alcohol and drug services. The line is open to young people, their families, police and community service providers as well as wider community.
<b>THE OTHER TALK</b> <a href="http://www.theothertalk.org.au">www.theothertalk.org.au</a>	The Other Talk is a website about Australian families talking openly about alcohol and other drugs. It was developed by the Australian Drug Foundation.

### Racism and Discrimination

<b>Human Rights Commission</b> <a href="http://www.multiculturalcommission.vic.gov.au/experienced-racism-heres-what-you-can-do">www.multiculturalcommission.vic.gov.au/experienced-racism-heres-what-you-can-do</a> <b>Community Reporting Tool</b> <a href="https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/get-help/community-reporting-tool/">https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/get-help/community-reporting-tool/</a>	If you, or someone you know, has experienced discrimination or vilification on the basis of race or religion and would like to report it or seek information about your rights, you can make a formal complaint to the <a href="#">Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission</a> (VEOHRC) or report the incident anonymously using the <a href="#">Community Reporting Tool</a> .
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## Mental health

<p>TRIAGE &amp; CRISIS &amp; ASSESSMENT TREATMENT TEAMS (CAT), MENTAL HEALTH</p> <p>Call 1300 369 012</p>	<p>A group of people who work together and include mental health professionals such as psychiatric nurses, social workers, psychiatrists and psychologists. They are based in major hospitals and respond to urgent requests to help in mental health crisis. Available 24/7, 7 days a week.</p>
<p>BEYOND BLUE</p> <p>Call 1300 224 636</p> <p><a href="http://www.beyondblue.org.au">www.beyondblue.org.au</a></p>	<p>A helpline providing support and information to people so that they can achieve their best possible mental wellbeing.</p>
<p>LIFELINE</p> <p>Call 13 11 14</p> <p><a href="http://www.lifeline.org.au/">www.lifeline.org.au/</a></p>	<p>Lifeline is Australia's leading suicide prevention service, providing all Australians experiencing a personal crisis with access to 24/7 crisis support.</p>
<p>PARENTLINE</p> <p>Call 1300 301 300</p> <p><a href="http://www.parentline.com.au">www.parentline.com.au</a></p>	<p>Promotes respectful and positive relationships between parents, children, teenagers and all family types.</p>
<p>GRIEFLINE</p> <p>Call 1300 845 745</p> <p><a href="http://www.griefline.org.au">www.griefline.org.au</a></p>	<p>GriefLine Community and Family Services Inc. (GriefLine) listens, cares and supports people experiencing loss and grief, at any stage in life.</p>
<p>SUICIDE LINE</p> <p>Call 1300 651 251</p> <p><a href="http://www.suicideline.org.au">www.suicideline.org.au</a></p>	<p>Provides 24/7 professional, anonymous telephone support to people who are affected by suicide either themselves or someone they know.</p>
<p>SUICIDE CALL BACK</p> <p>Call 1300 659 467</p> <p><a href="http://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au">www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au</a></p>	<p>A 24/7 nationwide service that provides professional telephone and online counselling to people who are affected by suicide. Offers a free call-back service with original support worker.</p>
<p>MENSLINE</p> <p>Call 1300 789 978</p> <p><a href="http://www.mensline.org.au">www.mensline.org.au</a></p>	<p>A nation-wide phone and online support service for men that includes video counselling.</p>
<p>KIDS HELPLINE</p> <p>Call 1800 55 1800</p> <p><a href="http://www.kidshelpline.com.au">www.kidshelpline.com.au</a></p>	<p>Provides confidential support to children, teens, young adults, and also parents and carers. Email counselling and Webchat are also available.</p>
<p>HEADSPACE</p> <p>Call 1800 650 890</p> <p><a href="http://www.headspace.org.au">www.headspace.org.au</a></p>	<p>Online and telephone support service for young people and their families. The service is designed to promote mental wellness.</p>

## Community referrals

[illegible]

[illegible]



# Appendix A

## Safety plan

**Safety Planning guide for adults (or older children and young people, if appropriate)**

The following are some questions around safety that you can ask to assist the person experiencing family violence make a plan.

**Every safety plan will be unique and based on the needs of the adult or young person – you should be guided by the victim-survivor/s on what is important and safe for them in their safety plan.**

This guide aims to assist you to discuss what planning and actions can be undertaken safely.

**Plan detail and questions to support planning****Checklist and detail****Safe place to go**

Where are you right now – are you safe?

Address or name of place:

If you need to leave your home in a hurry, where could you go?

Address of safe place (if different to above):

**Emergency contacts**

*Would you feel comfortable calling the police (000) in an emergency? (if not – How can we support you to do so?)*

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Call **000** in an emergency or Safe Steps on **1800 015 188** or local family violence service on [insert]

*Who are your personal emergency contacts?*

Name, relationship, contact details

**System intervention**

*Where is the perpetrator right now?*

(provide details)

*Is an intervention order in place (and children named) or are there any other court orders or proceedings?*

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

(provide details)

**Support of someone close by**

*Is there someone close by you can tell about the violence who can call the police?*

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

**Planning for children, older people or people in your care [if applicable]**

*What would you need to arrange for people in your care?*

(provide details)

**If you have children in your care**

How many children do you have in your care?

(provide details)

*Where are they right now?*

(provide details)

**Safe Communication**

*Do you have access to a phone or internet?*

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

(provide details)

**Transport**

*Do you have access to a vehicle or other public transport options?*

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

(provide details)

**Items to take with you – escape bag**

What documents, keys, money, clothes, or other things should you take with you when you leave? What is essential? (provide details)

**Financial Access**

Do you have access to money if you need to leave? Where is it kept? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A  
(provide details)

**Consent to information sharing**

Consent for information sharing and referral:

I (name) consent to the collection, use and sharing of my personal information under Part 5A of the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008*. I understand that my information may be shared without consent if there is a serious threat to myself or another individual's life, health, safety or welfare.

I also understand that my information may be shared without consent if it is relevant for assessing or managing risks to a child victim survivor of family violence, or to promote the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person. (Note where your information may be shared without your consent, we will endeavour to consult with you on your views and inform you if this occurs).

<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Name (print)</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Worker Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Worker (print)</b>	<b>Date</b>
Verbal Consent obtained 'Yes' <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Date</b>

Please indicate your preferred contact method:

Mail: Email:

Phone / Text: Would you prefer to be called from a private number?  
☐ Yes ☐ No

What is the best day and time for us to call?

A message left with an authorised/safe person for you to return the call:

Authorised person contact details: (full name, relationship, telephone:)

## Referrals made

Type of organisation	Organisation Name	Contact person	Date of referral	Information sought/shared with
Aboriginal specific service				
Child FIRST				
Child Protection				
Police				
Court (Magistrates' and Children's Court)				
Sexual assault service				
Specialist family violence service for adult victim-survivor/s**				
Specialist family violence service for perpetrators**				
Specialist family violence service for child victim-survivor/s**				
The Orange Door				
Other				
Other				

\*\* Specialist family violence services includes services that provide tailored services for Aboriginal people and people from diverse communities and at-risk age groups.



# **Appendix B**

## **Australian Government Laws on the following and where to seek support:**

Forced & Early Marriages

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting

Dowry Abuse

Family Violence and Partner Visas

Human Trafficking and Slavery



# Forced and Early Marriage

## Forcing anybody to get married is a serious crime in Australia.

In Australia, people are free to choose whether to get married and who they want to marry. Usually, a person must be over **18 years** of age to be legally married. In some circumstances, a person over the age of **16 years** can marry a person over 18 years, but this requires a court order.

It is against Australian law to force, threaten or trick anyone into getting married. It is also against the law to encourage or help organise a forced marriage, and to be party to a forced marriage if you are not the victim. This applies to legal, cultural and religious marriages.

An arranged marriage, where both people freely consent to get married, is different to a forced marriage. Arranged marriages are legal in Australia.

If you or someone you know is in danger call the police on **000**.

Police in Australia are safe and can be trusted.

If you need a free interpreter call **131 450**.

## It is illegal to take or send someone to another country for a forced marriage or get someone else to organise this.

Sometimes people are taken overseas against their will or are deceived into going overseas to be forced into a marriage. This is against the law and can result in imprisonment.

## Are you, or is someone you know, at risk?

If you or someone you know is in, or at risk of, a forced or early marriage, you can contact the **Australian Federal Police (AFP)** on **131 237** (131AFP) for help.

The AFP can keep you safe, provide initial advice and refer you to other services for support, such as accommodation, financial support, counselling and legal and immigration advice. Further information is on the **AFP website** at **www.afp.gov.au**.

## There are other services in Australia that can help.

**My Blue Sky** is Australia's national website and helpline dedicated to forced marriage prevention, information, referrals and free legal advice.

Call **(02) 9514 8115**, text **0481 070 844**, email **help@mybluesky.org.au**, or go to the **My Blue Sky website** at **www.mybluesky.org.au**

**1800RESPECT** is Australia's national sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling service. It provides free, confidential telephone and online counselling and information. Counsellors will listen to you, answer questions and can refer you to other support services in your local area.

Call **1800 737 732** or go to the **1800RESPECT website** at **www.1800RESPECT.org.au**.

## Do you need an interpreter?

Call the **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)** on **131 450**. An interpreter from TIS can help you to communicate with other services, however TIS does not provide counselling. All calls are free and confidential.

## For more information on forced marriage:

Visit the Department of **Home Affairs website** at **www.homeaffairs.gov.au** and search for "forced marriage".



# Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting

## What is Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting?

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting is the deliberate cutting or altering of the female genital area for no medical reason. It has many names, including cutting, female circumcision and ritual female surgery. It is harmful to women's health and is not necessary.

If you or someone you know is in danger call the police on **000**.

Police in Australia are safe and can be trusted.

For free, confidential counselling and information call 1800RESPECT on **1800 737 732**.

If you need a free interpreter call **131 450**.

## Medical help and support is available in Australia.

If you have been affected by one of these procedures you can access free health care and support in Australia. Doctors, nurses, other medical professionals and teachers can help you.

If you are planning on having a baby, you may want to speak to a doctor, nurse or other medical professional to gain extra support for when you are pregnant and when you have your baby.

## Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting is a serious crime in Australia.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting is illegal in Australia. This includes sending a person overseas to have a procedure done, or facilitating, supporting or encouraging someone to have this done.

A person who commits these crimes can go to jail, whether they are a man or a woman.

If you have been affected by one of these procedures, you are encouraged to seek help and will not be punished under Australian law.

## There are other services and resources that can help.

You can find information on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting on the **National Education Toolkit for Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting Awareness website** at [www.netfa.com.au](http://www.netfa.com.au).

**1800RESPECT** is Australia's national sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling service. It provides free, confidential telephone and online counselling and information. Counsellors will listen to you, answer questions and can refer you to other support services in your local area.

Call **1800 737 732** or go to the **1800RESPECT website** at [www.1800RESPECT.org.au](http://www.1800RESPECT.org.au).

If you, or someone you know, has been taken overseas for this procedure or you think they are at risk of being taken out of the country for the procedure, call the 24/7 Consular Emergency Centre at **1300 555 135** (from Australia) or **+61 2 6261 3304** (from overseas) or contact the nearest Australian overseas mission at [dfat.gov.au](http://dfat.gov.au).

## Do you need an interpreter?

Call the **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)** on **131 450**. An interpreter from TIS can help you to communicate with other services, however TIS does not provide counselling. All calls are free and confidential.



# Dowry Abuse

## Dowry-related violence or harassment is a form of domestic and family violence.

Dowry traditions can differ across countries and cultures.

'Dowry' is a practice referring to money, property or gifts that are typically transferred by a woman's family to her husband upon marriage. The use of dowry in itself is not a form of abuse.

Any act of coercion, violence or harassment associated with the giving or receiving of dowry at any time before, during or after marriage is a form of abuse. Dowry-related abuse commonly involves claims that dowry was not paid and coercive demands for further money or gifts from a woman and her extended family.

Domestic and family violence are crimes against the law in Australia. A person who commits these crimes can go to jail, whether they are a man or a woman.

If you or someone you know is in danger call the police on **000**.

Police in Australia are safe and can be trusted.

For free, confidential counselling and information call 1800RESPECT on **1800 737 732**.

If you need a free interpreter call **131 450**.

## The Australian Government does not tolerate dowry-related violence or harassment under any circumstances.

The Australian Government takes the issue of family violence, including dowry-related violence and harassment, very seriously. All Australians have the right to live without violence, fear or coercion, regardless of their religious and cultural practices and beliefs.

Dowry-related violence and harassment includes behaviour or threats that aim to control a partner or their family by causing fear or threatening their safety.

## If you are on a visa you can still get help.

A partner, family members or other people in the community cannot threaten your visa status.

If you hold a temporary Partner visa (subclass 309 or 820) or a Prospective Marriage visa (subclass 300) and experience dowry related family violence, there are family violence provisions in Australia's migration laws to allow you to continue with your permanent Partner visa (subclass 100 or 801) application.

## Dowry cannot be used to force someone into marriage.

If a dowry was used as a means to force a person into marriage without their full and free consent, this may be a forced marriage.

In Australia, everyone has the freedom to choose if, who, and when they marry. It is against Australian law to force, threaten or trick anyone into getting married. It is also against the law to encourage or help organise a forced marriage, and to be party to a forced marriage if you are not the victim. This applies to legal, cultural and religious marriages.

## There are culturally sensitive services in Australia that can help.

**1800RESPECT** is Australia's national sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling service. It provides free, confidential telephone and online counselling and information. Counsellors will listen to you, answer questions and can refer you to other support services in your local area.

Call **1800 737 732** or go to the **1800RESPECT website** at **www.1800RESPECT.org.au**.

**My Blue Sky** is Australia's national website and helpline dedicated to forced marriage prevention, information, referrals and free legal advice.

Call **(02) 9514 8115**, text **0481 070 844**, email **help@mybluesky.org.au**, or go to the **My Blue Sky website** at **www.mybluesky.org.au**

Further information on family violence and visas, forced marriage and human trafficking is on the **Department of Home Affairs website** at **www.homeaffairs.gov.au** and search for "forced marriage".

## Do you need an interpreter?

Call the **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)** on **131 450**. An interpreter from TIS can help you to communicate with other services, however TIS does not provide counselling. All calls are free and confidential.





# Family Violence and Partner Visas

People who are on a Partner visa do not have to stay in an abusive relationship to stay in Australia.

In Australia, domestic and family violence is not accepted.

A partner, family members or other people in the community cannot threaten your visa status.

If you hold a temporary Partner visa (subclass 309 or 820) or a Prospective Marriage visa (subclass 300) and experience family violence, and your relationship has ended, there are provisions in Australia's migration laws to allow you to continue with your permanent Partner visa (subclass 100 or 801) application.

If you or someone you know is in danger call the police on **000**.

Police in Australia are safe and can be trusted.

For free, confidential counselling and information call 1800RESPECT on **1800 737 732**.

If you need a free interpreter call **131 450**.

**The Australian Government does not tolerate domestic and family violence under any circumstances.**

Domestic and family violence are crimes against the law. A person who commits domestic or family violence can go to jail, whether they are a man or a woman.

Domestic and family violence is behaviour or threats that aim to control a partner by causing fear for safety or wellbeing.

**Anyone experiencing domestic and family violence in Australia can get help from support services.**

You can get help no matter your visa or immigration status.

It doesn't matter if the relationship has ended or not – you can still get help.

**1800RESPECT** is Australia's national sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling service. It provides free, confidential telephone and online counselling and information. Counsellors will listen to you, answer questions and can refer you to other support services in your local area.

Call **1800 737 732** or go to the **1800RESPECT website** at **www.1800RESPECT.org.au**.

**Do you need an interpreter?**

Call the **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)** on **131 450**. An interpreter from TIS can help you to communicate with other services, however TIS does not provide counselling. All calls are free and confidential.

**For more information on the family violence if you have a visa:**

Further information on family violence and visas is on the Department of **Home Affairs website** at **www.homeaffairs.gov.au**.



# Human Trafficking and Slavery

Human trafficking and slavery are serious crimes in Australia.

Human trafficking and slavery are against the law.

A person who commits these crimes can go to jail, whether they are a man or a woman.

If you or someone you know is in danger call the police on **000**.

Police in Australia are safe and can be trusted.

If you need a free interpreter call **131 450**.

**The Australian Government does not tolerate human trafficking or modern slavery under any circumstances.**

Human trafficking and slavery occur when people are forced into exploitative situations for another person's profit. It can happen to men, women and children. Human trafficking and slavery can include:

- slavery, servitude or forced labour in industries such as hospitality, construction, forestry, mining or agriculture, as well as in intimate relationships;
- debt bondage;
- sexual exploitation;
- forced marriage; or
- trafficking for the purpose of organ removal.

**Human trafficking and slavery are hidden crimes.**

Human trafficking and slavery are crimes that can be difficult to detect. People may not seek help because they are afraid of retaliation from their exploiters or losing their migration status.

Signs that could indicate a person is being trafficked can include where a person:

- is being coerced, threatened or forced to work;
- is subject to poor working conditions;
- is not being paid or appears to be repaying a large debt to their employer or third party; or
- has their passport or other personal documents held by a third party, and cannot access these documents when they want to.

**Are you, or is someone you know, at risk?**

If you or someone you know is in, or at risk of human trafficking or slavery you can contact the **Australian Federal Police (AFP)** on **131 237** (131AFP) or go to the **AFP website** at [www.afp.gov.au](http://www.afp.gov.au) for help. The AFP can keep you safe, provide advice and refer you to other services for support, such as accommodation, financial support, counselling and legal and immigration advice.

The **Support for Trafficked People Program** is funded by the Government and delivered by the Australian Red Cross to provide assistance to people who are victims of human trafficking or slavery.

**There are other services in Australia that can help.**

**1800RESPECT** is Australia's national sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling service. It provides free, confidential telephone and online counselling and information. Counsellors will listen to you, answer questions and can refer you to other support services in your local area.

Call **1800 737 732** or go to the **1800RESPECT website** at [www.1800RESPECT.org.au](http://www.1800RESPECT.org.au).

**Do you need an interpreter?**

Call the **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)** on **131 450**. An interpreter from TIS can help you to communicate with other services, however TIS does not provide counselling. All calls are free and confidential.

**Further information on human trafficking and slavery in Australia:**

For more information on the Support for Trafficked People Program go to the Department of Social Services website at [www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au) or the Australian Red Cross website at [www.redcross.org.au](http://www.redcross.org.au). You can also email the Australian Red Cross at [national\\_stpp@redcross.org.au](mailto:national_stpp@redcross.org.au).

For more information on human trafficking and slavery, go to the Department of Home Affairs website at [www.homeaffairs.gov.au](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au) or the Australian Federal Police website at [www.afp.gov.au](http://www.afp.gov.au) and search for "human trafficking".



# Sexual Assault

**In Australia, it is against the law to sexually assault anyone.**

A person who commits sexual assault can go to jail, whether they are a man or a woman.

If you or someone you know is in danger call the police on **000**.

Police in Australia are safe and can be trusted.

For free, confidential counselling and information call 1800RESPECT on **1800 737 732**.

If you need a free interpreter call **131 450**.

**The Australian Government does not tolerate sexual assault under any circumstances.**

Sexual assault is directed towards another person without their consent. Sexual assault of a partner, spouse or family member is against the law.

Sexual assault can include:

- forcing anyone to have sex or perform sexual acts;
- forcing anyone to watch pornography; or
- having sex or performing sexual acts with a child.

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**Women have the same rights as men.**

The law in Australia treats women and men equally.

Everyone has the right to experience positive and safe relationships with their families, friends and loved ones. Violence is never okay. No-one should accept being harmed.

**There are culturally sensitive services in Australia that can help.**

**1800RESPECT** is Australia's national sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling service. It provides free, confidential telephone and online counselling and information. Counsellors will listen to you, answer questions and can refer you to other support services in your local area.

Call **1800 737 732** or go to the **1800RESPECT website** at [www.1800RESPECT.org.au](http://www.1800RESPECT.org.au).

**Do you need an interpreter?**

Call the **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)** on **131 450**. An interpreter from TIS can help you to communicate with other services, however TIS does not provide counselling. All calls are free and confidential.

# Appendix C

## Sympathy Vs Empathy



[Click here to watch](#)  
[HOW TO SHOW EMPATHY DURING A CONVERSATION - by Brené Brown](#)

## Sympathy vs Empathy

When describing what you feel about the other person's emotions, you might use one of the two words, **Empathy** and **Sympathy**. These words sound very similar, they both come from Greek and therefore, are confused very often.

### SYMPATHY

#### Definition

Sympathy is acknowledging that the other person is going through an emotional or physical struggle, supporting them and giving them comfort.

#### Examples

She expressed her sympathy to the bereaved family.

She never expressed any sympathy when I was injured.

I must confess I have some sympathy with his views.

There was no personal sympathy between them.

The President has offered his sympathy to the Georgian people.

He wants to express his deep sympathy to the Humpreys family.

### EMPATHY

#### Definition

Empathy is something more than just this. It's actually understanding what the other person is feeling because you've had a similar experience yourself or you're able to put yourself in their shoes.

#### Examples

It is important to develop the empathy between dogs and their handlers.

They could combine their compassion and empathy with being helpful.

As you increase the limit setting, you need to increase your empathy.

A qualified career counselor can extend greater empathy to their clients.

She had a deep empathy with animals.

A qualified career counselor can extend greater empathy to their clients.

# Appendix D

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- Women's Health in the North (WHIN): <https://www.whin.org.au>







### **Sisters4Sisters Support Services**

Contact us (weekdays, 9am to 5pm)

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### **WIRE**

Contact us (weekdays, 9am to 5pm)

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