



Australia Awards

# Australia Awards

## Domestic and family violence in Australia

**Domestic and Family Violence** is the term used in Australia to refer to when someone uses violent or controlling behaviour towards a partner/spouse, ex-partner, or family member.

It is a **pattern of behaviour** where someone **repeatedly** uses behaviour towards the other person, and these behaviours combined over time, makes the person feel **scared, controlled**, and takes away their **independence and dignity**.

Domestic and family violence can happen in any relationship. Research shows that in the majority of cases it is men being abusive towards women and children.

A person being abusive might use a range of different behaviours to control or scare you:

**Isolate:** Stop you from seeing/talking to friends/family/community; Monitor your communication with family/friends; Punish you, or make you feel bad if you spend time with other people.

**Deprive:** Deny you access to resources, money, or necessities; Stop or interfere with your ability to work/study; Stop you from leaving the house or doing activities important to you.

**Degrade:** Put-down/humiliate you or what is important to you; Disrespect or not listen to your opinions; Show emotional unkindness; Name-calling; Share private information/ images without consent. Disrespect or control your cultural/spiritual beliefs/practices.

**Intimidate:** Threaten you or other people you care about (including children); Be physically aggressive (e.g. stand over you, slam doors, display weapons, throw objects, destroy your property).

**Manipulate:** Tell lies or gaslight (distort reality); Play mind games; Pressure you to do things you don't want to do; Manipulate others so they don't believe/support you.

**Monitor and harass:** Stalk you; Monitor you through technology; Constantly check-up on you.

**Control:** Make the decisions in the relationship; Control access to resources/money; Control family life and decisions about your body;

**Harm:** Physically assault; Sexually assault; Deny you access to what you need to be physically or mentally healthy (e.g. food/exercise/health care/medication); Put you in situations that are dangerous (e.g. drive dangerously; leave you somewhere unsafe, force you to take drugs).

**Rules and punishments:** Rules and unfair expectations about how you should do things (e.g. parenting, housework, physical appearance). Punishment if you don't comply.

**Exploit:** Treat you like a slave in the house. Force you to do things you don't want to do. Take advantage of any unequal power differences, vulnerabilities or dependence.

**Deny, minimise and blame:** Blame you for the abusive behaviour; Tell you the abuse is your fault or that it's not that bad; Deny that they are being abusive to you or others.

**Over-protection:** Use 'caring' or 'love' to justify abuse (e.g. "If you really loved me you would...", "I am checking up on you all the time because I care about you"); accusing you of cheating.

**Using other people or systems to abuse:** Getting family members to be abusive; Threatening to or using systems (e.g. Immigration; police, courts) to intimidate or control; Using religious institutions or spiritual scripture to abuse or justify abuse; Using children as a way to abuse/control.

If you want to talk to someone about your relationship, you can call:

**1800RESPECT: 1800 737 732 – 24/7** – confidential support from trained counsellors. You can remain anonymous.

**Domestic Violence Crisis Line: 1800 800 098 – 24/7** – confidential support, advice and options around your safety.





## Australia Awards

You can also contact Women's Safety Services SA - Migrant Women's Support Program on **8152 9260** during business hours. This service can provide you with advice and support about your situation. It has multi-cultural and multi-lingual workers to help you.

If you call a telephone help-line, you can expect that the counsellor will:

- Listen and believe you
- Not judge you or pressure you share information if you don't feel ready or safe to do so
- Understand that your life is complicated and that you are doing the best you can to protect yourself and your family
- Understand that relationships come in all forms and that abuse can happen in any community
- Explain options and resources available
- Respect your right to make your own decisions about what is best for you and your family
- Connect you with a safe telephone interpreter if you need one

The University also has a counselling service if you would like to speak to someone in person.

### If you feel scared or concerned by the behaviour of your partner/family member you can call the police on 000.

For further information about domestic and family violence and where to get support, please visit:

#### Women's Safety Services

<https://www.womenssafetyervices.com.au/>

#### 1800RESPECT

<https://www.1800respect.org.au/>

#### Police

<https://www.police.sa.gov.au/your-safety/domestic-violence>

#### Say it out Loud (support for LGBTQ+ communities)

<https://sayitoutloud.org.au/?state=SA>

#### Men's Referral Service (support for men about relationships) **1300 766 491**

