



Domestic Violence

the FACTS

Keep Safe

Stay Cool

Promoting Healthy Relationships

Preventing Domestic Violence

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Government of South Australia

Southern Adelaide Health Service

Domestic Violence

the **FACTS**

Keep Safe *Stay Cool*

This handbook is part of an education program for students run by Southern Primary Health and Second Story

For further information contact:
Southern Primary Health – Noarlunga
on 8384 9266

This booklet is based on one created by 'Peace at Home', a human rights agency that addresses Domestic Violence in Boston, USA

Statistics quoted in this booklet are sourced from The World Health Organisation, The Australian Institute of Criminology and Department of Human Services, Victoria 2004

Information is
POWER

Read this booklet, get the facts, share what you know with others – and take action.

Domestic violence can be stopped.

This handbook is based on materials developed by experts across the United States, the UK and Australia. The information in the following pages will enable you to:

- > Offer support and information
- > Reach out for help if you are in domestic violence
- > Feel confident in approaching someone in an abusive relationship
- > Talk knowledgeably about behaviours that constitute domestic violence.

All people have the right to live with respect and dignity... free from fear!

So what is Domestic Violence

Finding your way

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Have you or someone you know ever experienced the following by their partner?

- > name-calling or put-downs
- > isolation from family or friends
- > withholding of money for basic needs
- > actual or threatened physical harm
- > sexual assault or pressure to do unwanted sexual acts

These are examples of domestic violence, which includes dating abuse and partner violence.

Domestic Violence is defined as violent or controlling behaviour by a person towards their partner, usually their girlfriend, boyfriend, wife or husband.

This violence takes many forms, and can happen once in a while or all the time. Although each situation is different, there are common warning signs - or 'red flag' behaviours to look out for, including those behaviours listed above. Knowing these signs is an important step in preventing and stopping domestic violence.

Approximately 95 percent of the victims of domestic violence are women. However, violence also happens in both gay and lesbian relationships and in a small number of cases, by women against men.

Human Rights for all people

Domestic Violence is an important Human Rights issue and is a number 1 public health issue facing women and children.

Today, in our own communities, hundreds of thousands of women and children as victims of violence, are experiencing violations of their basic rights, including the right to live with respect and dignity - free from fear. No one at home or abroad deserves to be hit, beaten, threatened, humiliated, or otherwise subjected to physical or emotional harm.

Everyone has the right to safety, freedom, equality, own opinions and to make their own choices.



Common myths about Domestic Violence

Myth: Domestic violence is not a widespread problem

Fact: Almost one third of all women experience Domestic Violence in their lifetime. This includes emotional, physical and sexual abuse

Myth: Domestic violence is not serious. Everyone has arguments

Fact: Domestic violence is behaviour which degrades, violates and/or injures an individual

Myth: Domestic violence is a working class problem

Fact: Domestic violence can affect anybody. Studies show that perpetrators come from every economic and social background

Myth: A women is more likely to be attacked by a stranger than by her partner

Fact: Domestic violence is more common than violence against women in the street, pub or workplace

Myth: It was a one-off. It won't happen again

Fact: Violence against a partner is rarely an isolated incident. It usually forms part of a pattern of increasing abuse

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STATS

1 in 8 high school students will be in a domestic violence relationship before they leave school

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Common myths about Domestic Violence

Myth: Only certain types of people assault or abuse their partners

Fact: There is no typical abuser. Age, physical build, race, religion or temperament are not determining factors

Myth: Perpetrators of Domestic Violence must be mentally ill

Fact: There is no direct link connecting domestic violence with mental illness. Violence against women is motivated by a desire to control and maintain power over their partner

Myth: Perpetrators who assault or abuse their partners are violent by nature

Fact: Most people who use violence against their partners are not violent outside the home

Myth: People who abuse their partners suffered abuse as children

Fact: Many men and women who were victims of violence as children do not go on to perpetrate abuse themselves. As adults we make choices whether to continue past patterns or to seek help to put the past in its place

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STATS

95% of domestic violence involves a male perpetrator and a female victim. The other 5% includes same sex relationships or a female perpetrator to a male victim

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STATS

1 out of 3 women will experience domestic violence at some time in their life

Common myths about Domestic Violence

Myth: Domestic Violence is caused by alcohol

Fact: Many perpetrators are violent towards their partners when they are sober. Alcohol is just another excuse used by perpetrators to avoid taking responsibility for their violence

Myth: The victim must have done something to deserve it

Fact: No-one deserves to be beaten or abused. Many perpetrators make irrational or excessive demands on their partners.

Myth: It is more understandable to assault/abuse your partner than it is to use violence against a stranger

Fact: A perpetrator has no more right to use violence against his partner than anyone else. Domestic Violence is a crime and should not be tolerated or condoned

Myth: If the violence or abuse was really serious, the victim would report it

Fact: Many women who suffer violence do not report the crime for fear of revenge, and many do not think they will be believed or taken seriously

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STATS

25% of young people in Australia have witnessed physical domestic violence against their mother

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Common myths about Domestic Violence

Myth: If the violence or abuse was really serious, the victim would leave

Fact: Fear, economic dependency, lack of self esteem resulting from constant abuse and concerns about disrupting their children's lives are some of the factors which prevent women and children from leaving an abusive relationship

Myth: The victim has a duty to stay for the sake of the children

Fact: Children can suffer emotionally and physically from living in a violent relationship. Many women leave a violent relationship to protect their children rather than themselves. Research has shown that the emotional and physical health of children improves when they are removed from violence

Myth: Men are physically abused by their partners just as much

Fact: Analysis of world wide and Australian research plus police and court records have found that the vast majority of assaults between couples involve men assaulting their female partners

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STATS

In Australia, 3 women are killed in domestic violence situations every fortnight

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STATS

Domestic violence is the main cause of death, disability and illness in Victorian women aged 15-44 years. It harms more than smoking, alcohol and obesity combined.

Common excuses, excuses, excuses

Have you heard it... blame the woman, blame the alcohol or even blame the anger?

Some common ways in which perpetrators deny their responsibility for domestic violence are:

- > 'I'll do what I like to her'
- > 'I was drunk and I can't really remember what I was doing'
- > 'It's her fault, she's always been paranoid'
- > 'She was asking for trouble, I have the right to have sex with her if I want to'
- > 'Of course I was strict with her, she needs keeping under control'
- > 'She answers back too much'
- > 'She can't keep quiet'
- > 'You know men, I didn't mean it, I was just depressed'
- > 'I've just got a jealous nature, I can't help it'
- > 'She's a tease, I just wanted to teach her a lesson'
- > 'If she didn't like it, she wouldn't stay with me'
- > 'I was angry, she should've stayed out of my way'

**Whatever they say,
there is never
an excuse!**

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A warning list of behaviours...

This list identifies a group of behaviours typically demonstrated by abusive people. All these forms of violence, social, emotional, sexual, economic/financial and physical, come from the perpetrators desire for power and control. The list can help you to recognise if you or someone you know is in a violent relationship.

Check off those behaviours that apply to the relationship. The more checks on the page the more dangerous the situation may be.

- Destructive Criticism or Verbal Attacks**
Name-calling; mocking; accusing; blaming; yelling; swearing; making humiliating remarks or gestures
- Pressure Tactics**
Sulking, threatening to withhold money; manipulating, telling you what to wear, how to behave etc. Rushing you to make decisions through 'guilt-tripping' and other forms of intimidation
- Abusing Authority**
Always claiming to be right (insisting statements are 'the truth') telling you what to do, making all the decisions
- Disrespect**
Interrupting, changing topics, not listening or responding, twisting your words, putting you down in front of other people, saying bad things about your friends and family
- Abusing Trust**
Lying, withholding information, cheating on you, being overly jealous

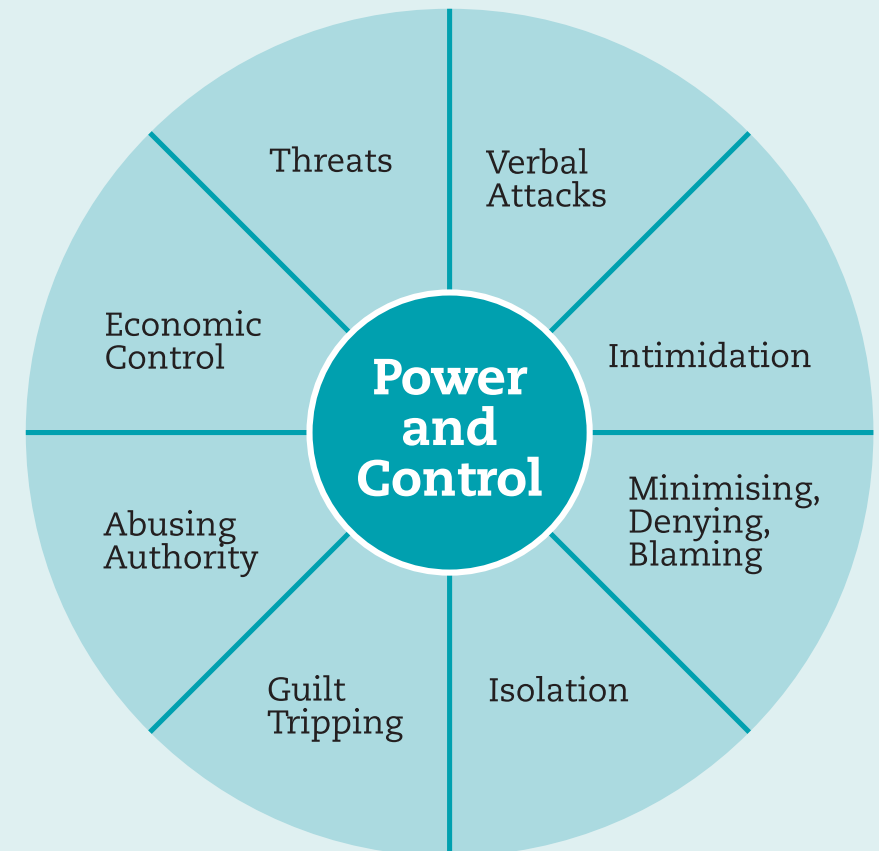
- Emotional Withholding**
Not expressing feelings, not giving any support, attention or compliments, not respecting your feelings, rights or opinions
- Minimising, Denying and Blaming**
Making light of bad behaviour and not taking your concerns about it seriously, saying the abuse didn't happen, shifting responsibility for abusive behaviour, saying you caused it
- Economic Control**
Interfering with, or not allowing you to work or study, refusing to share or taking your money, taking your car keys or otherwise preventing your from using the car
- Self-Destructive Behaviour**
Abusing drugs or alcohol, threatening suicide or other forms of self-harm, if you don't do what they want
- Isolation**
Preventing or making it difficult for your to see friends or relatives, listening into phone calls, telling you where you can and cannot go
- Harassment**
Making uninvited visits or calls, following you, checking up on you, embarrassing you in public, refusing to leave when asked

A warning list of behaviours...

- **Breaking Point**
Not following through on agreements, not taking a fair share of responsibility, refusing to help with joint responsibilities
- **Intimidation**
Making angry or threatening gestures, use of physical size to intimidate, blocking the exit during arguments, or driving recklessly
- **Destruction**
Destroying your possessions (eg furniture), punching walls, throwing and/or breaking things
- **Threats**
Making and/or carrying out threats to harm you or your family, friends, pets, etc
- **Physical Violence**
Being violent to you, others or household pets. Slapping, punching, grabbing, kicking, choking, pushing, biting, burning, stabbing, shooting, etc
- **Weapons**
Use of weapons or keeping weapons around which frighten you, threaten you or attempt to kill you or those you love
- **Sexual Abuse**
Forcing or pressuring you to do unwanted sexual acts

Violence Wheel linking abuse behaviours

This wheel helps to link the different behaviours that together form a pattern of violence. It shows the relationship as a whole – and how each seemingly unrelated behaviour is an important part in an overall effort to control someone.



The cycle of Domestic Violence

The Cycle of Domestic Violence shows how domestic violence often becomes a pattern made up of three stages:

1 Honeymoon

Apologies, excuses, promises to change, gifts or blaming you

1 Tension Building

Criticism, yelling, swearing, using angry gestures, coercion, threats

2 Violence/Explosion

Physical and sexual attacks, threats or explosions of temper

It also explains how three dynamics – **love**, **hope** and **fear** – keep the cycle in motion and make it hard to end a violent relationship

1 Love – for your partner, the relationship has its good times, it's not all bad. You love the person he or she is during the honeymoon phase

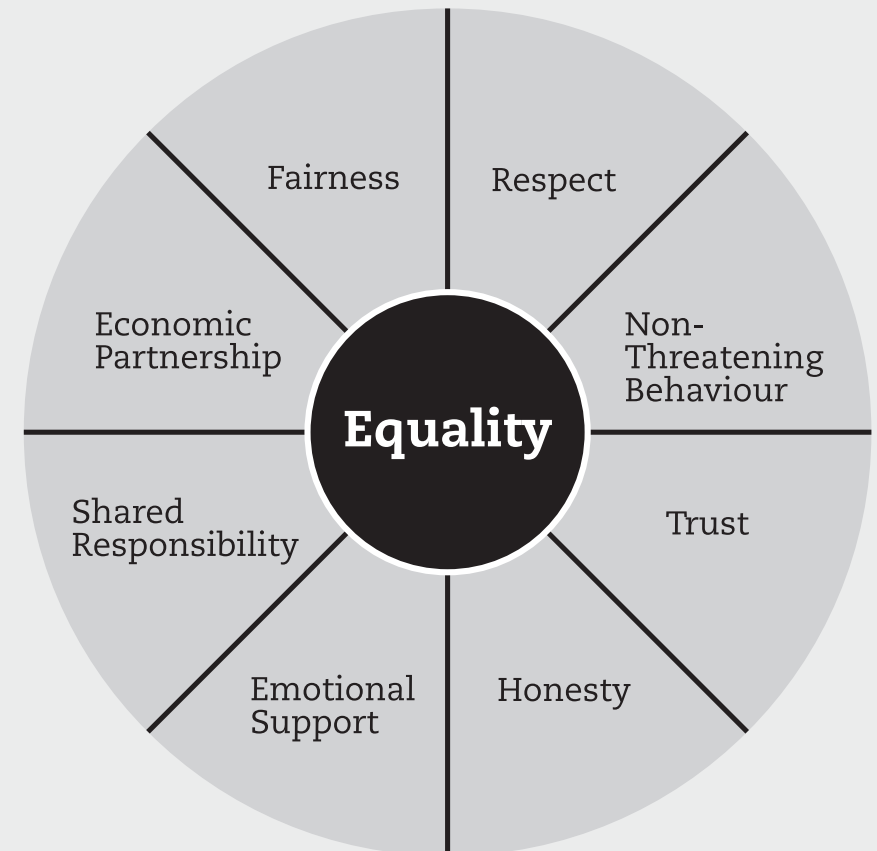
2 Hope – that it gets better and that the violence/threats will stop

3 Fear – that threats to you or your family will become reality



Healthy Relationship Wheel a better model to use

The Healthy Relationship wheel offers a view of a relationship that is based on equality and human rights. Use this chart to compare the characteristics of a healthy relationship to those of an abusive one (see violence wheel). The Healthy Relationship wheel is also helpful in setting goals and boundaries in personal relationships.



Suggestions ...for helping

This page refers to women because the majority of domestic violence is perpetrated against women. It is important to emphasise, however, that violence occurs to others as well, and is equally unacceptable.

Suggestions for helping

Do you know someone in a violent relationship? Do you suspect that a friend, relative or someone you know is abused? If so, don't be afraid to offer help, you might save someone's life. Here are some basic steps you can take to assist someone who may be a target of domestic violence:

Approach her in an understanding non-blaming way. Reassure her that she is not alone, that there are many women like her in the same kind of situation and that it takes strength to survive and trust someone enough to talk about the abuse.

Acknowledge that it is scary and difficult to talk about domestic violence. Tell her she doesn't deserve to be put down, threatened, hit or beaten. Nothing she can do or say makes the abuser's violence acceptable.

Share information, show her the Warning List, Violence and Non-Violence Wheels. Discuss the dynamic of violence and how abuse is based on power and control.

Support her as a friend. Be a good listener. encourage her to express her hurt and anger. Allow her to make her own decisions, even if it means she isn't ready to leave the abusive relationship.

Provide information on help available to abused women and their children, including social services, emergency shelters, counselling services and legal advice.

How can we stop Domestic Violence?

Even when you are not in touch with someone who is experiencing Domestic Violence you can be helping to stop it from happening:

- > Be clear about what is acceptable behaviour and what is not
- > Role-model non violence, respectful and cooperative behaviours
- > Find out more about violence against women and children. Be informed so that you can argue against the myths and excuses that allow violence to be perpetuated
- > There are no excuses for violence, expose excuses for what they are
- > Discuss what you know about domestic violence with friends, neighbours, family. Pass on your knowledge
- > Question the idea that guys must stick together and stick up for each other – sometimes men need to be challenged by other men
- > Question offensive jokes about rape, domestic violence and sexual assault
- > Pass on the message that talking out or asking for help when you are a part of domestic violence is a brave thing to do

But remember, never put yourself at risk.

**Your safety
is important.**

Emergency numbers

Police, Fire, Ambulance	000
Police Attandance	131 444
Domestic Violence Crisis Service (Open 9.00am – 5.00pm)	1300 782 200
Crisis Care (Open 4.00pm – 9.00am, 24hrs weekends & public holidays)	131 611
Domestic Violence Helpline > 24hrs	1800 800 098
Lifeline (Telephone counselling) > 24hrs	131 114
Youth Healthline	1300 131 719
Kids Helpline > 24hrs	1800 551 800
Migrant Women’s Support & Accommodation (Open 9.00am – 5.00pm)	8346 9417
Yarrow Place Rape & Sexual Assault Service (Open 9.00am – 5.00pm)	8226 8777
– After Hours Emergency (Open 24hrs)	8226 8787
– Toll Free (Country Callers)	1800 817 421

Useful websites

“Reach Out!” has lots of info on relationships and how to help friends
www.reachout.com.au <<http://www.reachout.com.au/>>

“When Love Hurts” (by Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre)
<http://dvirc.org.au/whenlove/>

Information on relationships, services available and health topics
www.cyh.com <<http://www.cyh.com/>>