

# What can you do if violence is affecting your family life?

- If you are living with violence, it is harming your kids. Make a serious plan for their safety and your own.
- Talk to someone used to working with families affected by violence. Leaving an abusive and controlling relationship can be very difficult. They will support you to do what is best for you and the children.
- Telling the children they are not to blame and that you can protect them will NOT work until your kids really feel safe. Safety is the first priority.
- Once you are safe, make a plan about what to do if the violence happens again. Give the children telephone numbers, including the police, and practice what to say.
- Make it clear that abuse is never OK and that you don't approve of the abuser's behaviour.

**If you are in urgent and/or immediate danger, the police are able to help – ring 000**

**Contact one of these organisations and they will suggest a local service to help you.**

Lifeline: 13 11 14

National Domestic Violence Helpline: 1800 200 526

NSW

Domestic Violence Line 1800 656 463

ACT

Domestic Violence Crisis Service (02) 6280 0900

QLD

dvconnect Women's Line 1800 811 811

NT

Dawn House (08) 8945 1388

24hr General Crisis Counselling 1800 019 116

WA

Crisis Care Helpline 1800 199 008

VIC

Women's Domestic Violence

Crisis Service 1800 015 188

SA

Domestic Violence Crisis Helpline 1300 782 200

TAS

Domestic Violence Crisis Service 1800 608 122

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NAPCCAN is an independent charity and the leading advocacy body for prevention of child abuse and neglect.

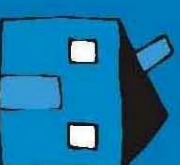
[www.napccan.org.au](http://www.napccan.org.au)

**NAPCCAN**  
PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE

NAP012 Revised 09/09

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
HURTS CHILDREN TOO**

**Domestic  
Violence  
Hurts  
Children  
Too !!**



# What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is violence within a relationship and it is very common. It is also called FAMILY VIOLENCE as it damages families. DV is caused by adults from teenagers through to old people. Some people think DV only happens between adults, but the sad fact is that it damages children, even when they don't actually see the violence. This is because children's growing brains are permanently altered by knowing that their parent has been harmed or frightened. Children growing up with DV are also more likely to be physically abused than other children – both by the abuser and the victim.

DV is about one person in a relationship using power to control the other person. This can be by:

- verbal abuse
- emotional abuse
- sexual abuse
- controlling money
- isolation from family and friends

**Domestic violence is a crime. It is a serious violation of human rights.**

# How does domestic violence affect children?

Children may:

- Blame themselves for the violence
- Feel helpless
- Find it hard to play and make friends
- Become quiet and fearful
- Become rude and aggressive, copying the abusive adult
- Have sleeping problems like nightmares or not wanting to sleep alone
- Find it difficult to concentrate and learn
- Develop problems with wetting or soiling
- Jig school to make sure their Mum is safe
- Show signs of stress like headaches and tummy aches
- Hurt pets
- Do risky things like running away or trying alcohol and drugs
- Think violence and power is normal in a relationship

# Myths about children living with family violence

**MYTH:** "Domestic violence doesn't affect kids unless they get physically hurt themselves."

**FACT:** Children get really stressed seeing their parents fight or shout. They often think they are to blame for being naughty. DV can even damage babies' growing brains.

**MYTH:** "If the kids aren't actually there at the time, they don't realise what's happening."

**FACT:** Children always know. They need you for their survival so they are especially sensitive to noticing when you are tense and unhappy. They may not show it to others but they suffer emotionally and may get physically ill.

**MYTH:** "It's the alcohol's fault. He's only abusive when he's drinking"

**FACT:** Alcohol is often used as an excuse. By law adults are still responsible for their actions.

**MYTH:** "He didn't actually hit me: he hit the wall."

**FACT:** Hitting or breaking an object in anger is very scary to children. It sends the message, "This is what I can do to you if you don't obey me."

**MYTH:** "But he's a great Dad in other ways!"

**FACT:** A great Dad is someone his kids can trust and rely on. He shows his children how to have loving and respectful relationships – not how to hurt people.