

What is Domestic & Family Violence?

Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) occurs when one person in a relationship uses violence or abuse to maintain power and control over another. While anyone can experience DFV, the majority of victims are women. In Australia, **1 in 4 women** have experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or former partner since the age of 15 (ABS, 2021–22). Abuse can continue even after the relationship has ended.

In Queensland, the **Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act (2012)** provides legal protections against DFV. Regardless of your age, culture, sexuality, or gender identity, **you have the right to live free from fear**. The law applies to various relationship types, including intimate partners, family members, and informal carers.

DFV can take many forms and is not always physical. Other types of abuse include:

- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Social isolation
- Coercive control
- Financial abuse
- Spiritual abuse
- Threats and intimidation
- Technological abuse

These behaviours may occur as isolated incidents or as part of a broader pattern over time. However, they all contribute to a cycle of fear and control. Abuse is **driven by the abuser's desire for power**, and is **not caused by anything the victim does or doesn't do**.

Domestic violence must be understood in the broader context of **social inequality**, not simply as conflict within individual relationships. Most women do not enter relationships expecting abuse. In some cases, they may make long-term commitments believing that marriage or a deeper bond will end the abuser's extreme jealousy or controlling behaviour. Sometimes, these commitments are made under pressure or fear.

For many women, **physical or sexual violence does not begin until months or even years into a relationship**, and may start during pregnancy. Controlling behaviour early in the relationship is often misinterpreted as love or deep affection—when in fact, it is a warning sign of potential abuse.

Disagreements are a normal part of any relationship. Healthy relationships allow both partners to express their views and concerns openly and respectfully. **You deserve to feel safe, respected, and valued in your relationship.**

You are not to blame for another person's actions that make you feel unsafe, disrespected, or fearful.

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SUPPORT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE WHEN YOU'RE READY

You don't have to go through this alone.
Help is available when you're ready to reach out.

DVNQ: 4721 2888

1800 RESPECT: 1800 737 732 (24-hour telephone counselling line).

13 YARN (13 92 76): Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander 24/7 crisis support line

DV Connect (Womensline – 24/7): 1800 811 811

DV Connect (Mensline – 9am-midnight 7 days): 1800 600 636

Sexual Assault Helpline (7.30am to 11.30pm, 7 days): 1800 010 120

Kids Helpline (24/7): 1800 551 800

Lifeline (24/7): 13 11 14

WWILD (9am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday): (07) 3262 9877

Brother to Brother crisis line (24/7): 1800 433 799

SOURCES:

DVNQ

[What is domestic violence? | Queensland Courts](#)

[Information about domestic and family violence - Domestic Violence Action Centre](#)

[13YARN - Call 13 92 76 | 24 /7 Crisis support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders](#)

[What is domestic and family violence? | Need to know | Queensland Government](#)