



Domestic Violence
Prevention Centre

let's talk: safe relationships, sex and consent

a resource for
young people



acknowledgement

The Domestic Violence Prevention Centre (DVPC) acknowledges that we are located on Kombumerri Country and recognise the cultural significance of this land. We are committed to playing our part in ensuring that the history of this land, sea and people are shared.

DVPC acknowledges that the Kombumerri Saltwater people are the traditional caretakers and custodians of the land on which we work and understand the connection that they hold to the land, water, sky and animals.

DVPC pays respects the Kombumerri Traditional Custodians and their Elders, past and present.

DVPC acknowledges all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across our country who have made positive contributions to sustaining First Nation People's voice, knowledge and connections.

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Website



Facebook

about this resource

This resource *let's talk: safe relationships sex and consent* was developed by the Domestic Violence Prevention Centre (DVPC) Gold Coast. Many people have come to know our book *The Purple Book* as an invaluable resource for women and it was recognised that young people could also benefit from a resource to help you access information and support in a way that is meaningful for you.

Many young people will encounter new and different types of situations within their relationships, both platonic and intimate – these connections are a normal part of life. It is our hope that this resource will be useful and informative and assist you to talk about developing, maintaining and understanding different relationships. We also hope this resource will provide you with support options if you are in a relationship and experiencing abuse.

This resource was developed from the direct work and experience of counsellors working with young people in the DVPC Children and Young People's team. This resource was also made in consultation with young people on the Gold Coast including the Headspace Southport Youth Advisory Council.

In this resource you'll find general information that can be useful for you or in helping a friend, and we encourage you to seek further support from a trusted adult or support service.

Throughout this resource QR codes will link to further information and a list of handy numbers and websites are included at the back too!

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relationships

Relationships can mean something different for every person. They can feel different for everyone, however all young people will have relationship-type *connections at some point and in some way* – they are a normal and important part of life.



values

Knowing and understanding your personal values is key to building safe, respectful, and fulfilling relationships.

Developing a deeper understanding of your personal values allows you to recognise situations or behaviours that don't match up with your values.

So, what can you do if you are unsure of your values? How can you figure out what you value when it comes to relationships? You can start by asking yourself these questions:

- What is important to me in life?
- What type of person do I want to be?
- What am I most proud of myself for?
- What type of behaviour have others shown towards me that made me feel safe, respected, and happy?
- What type of behaviour have others shown towards me that made me feel unsafe, disrespected, and unhappy?
- When I think of the people I look up to, what is it about them that inspires me?
- What do I want to be remembered for?
- What change would I want to see in the world?
- When do I feel most like myself?
- Should I do something that doesn't feel right?
- Should I do this just because my family/friends/partner are telling me to?

Over time and with different life experiences, your values may change. This is a normal part of personal development. You might reflect on who you were in a different time of your life versus now and notice what has changed, as well as what has stayed the same. This can be another helpful way to recognise the values you have held across your life versus the values that have become important to you more recently.

The same goes for reflecting on your past and current relationships. Can you recall the type of people that you were close to and how they might have answered these questions? Do the people currently in your life help you to live in a way that aligns with your values?

Which of these values are most important to you?



Now see if you can choose your top 3–5 values – these are your core values. Every person holds a set of core values: the things important to them, what they stand for, what they are not willing to compromise on ('non-negotiables') and more. These values help you to live your life in a way that meets your personal needs and have relationships with people who align with your values.

defining relationships

Relationships can be with different people in your life – friends, family, partners (casual, dating and hooking up) or people in your community (school friends, teammates, work colleagues). When relationships are working well, they can provide connection, support and happiness.

Relationships have different meanings, too. Some are about finding love or emotional connections, some about friendship and hanging out with people you enjoy, some are about physical connections.

Most young people have a need for an emotional and social connection with others, which usually includes feeling accepted and supported by those around them. It's okay if you don't feel like you 'need' a particular kind of relationship with others – you should never feel pressured to be in any kind of relationship. You have rights and responsibilities in all relationships and it's important you have the knowledge and understanding of each to help you determine what feels right for you.

“In a healthy relationship, power is shared equally between both parties, neither partner has to be in control of the other.

“Both parties feel comfortable, safe and treated with respect; there is never abuse or violence in the relationship.”

The Purple Book

types of relationships

There are many different **types of relationships** – all are valid, and it is important to identify which of these you feel comfortable with when it comes to interacting with different people in your life. It can take some time to find another person who wants the same type of relationship as you.

Relationships can involve emotional, social, romantic, and sexual connections and feelings. They might be described as 'close', 'casual' or 'distant'. Relationships can change over time. This can be for a range of reasons – as you develop as a person and find out more about yourself and what you want in life, your relationships can change.

Different relationships can look like:

Casual/hook-ups: not yet defined or 'labelled' as a commitment. Can be vague and it can be difficult to get clarity on the expectations each party has. Clear communication can be helpful for both people to understand each others expectations and boundaries.

"I thought relationships were just boyfriends and girlfriends or married people, I didn't realise that even my friends were a type of relationship. I didn't realise that sometimes my friends were overstepping boundaries."

Dating/girlfriend and boyfriend: can be between two people who have gone on one date or several, they might be exploring getting to know each other with the intention of engaging in a longer-term relationship – or not. Remember that expectations for dating can be different for every person – this is why it is important to speak with your partner about what YOU need and want in a dating relationship and listen to what THEY need and want to feel. This can help to create a safe and respectful relationship together.

Friends with benefits: can be a type of relationship that is typically focused on romantic or sexual interactions; however, this can vary from person to person. It can also be used by a person in an attempt to ‘keep it casual’ or to not engage in a longer-term/more serious commitment. It is often depicted as ‘close friends who have the benefits of physical and sexual intimacy’. It can also be important for the people involved to be communicating clearly about their intentions, desires, needs and boundaries as these can change.

Partner/significant other: referring to a person who is in a committed emotional, romantic and/or sexual relationship.



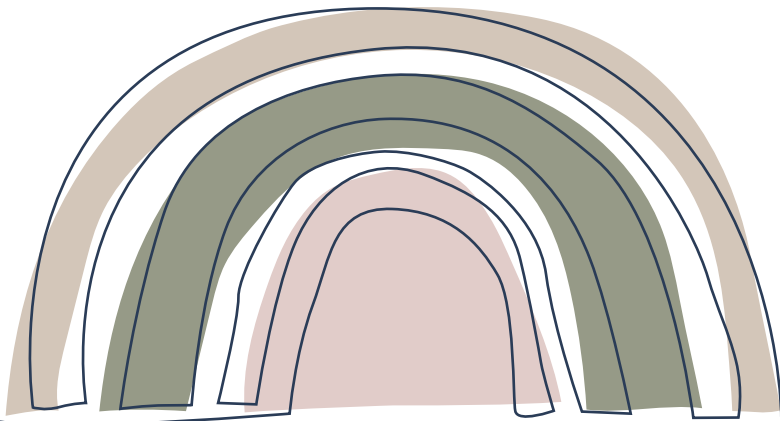
Platonic: a relationship that describes a friendly connection, however, does not include sexual/physical feelings or interactions.

LGBTIQA+ relationships

Your sexuality and gender are yours to own and there's no correct path to follow in exploring who you are. It's okay if you are still working things out and you don't need to feel pressured to define your sexuality or gender to anyone, or to explore this physically if you're not ready to.

LGBTIQA+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans/transgender, Intersex, Queer/questioning, and Asexual people representing common sexual and gender identities and bodies in the community. The + symbol acknowledges that there are many other diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

In this resource, the acronym LGBTIQA+ is used to refer collectively and inclusively to young people of diverse genders and sexualities and acknowledges the range of ways you may identify your gender, sexuality, lived body experience and relationships.



influences

There are so many ways that your ideas about relationships can be influenced – this can come from what our friends are saying or doing; what we see on social media and online; how our communities and families talk about relationships or what they say they want from us or tell us we should be doing.

Some things that influence our ideas and behaviours around relationships:

- Social
 - Friends' beliefs around relationships
 - Friends' actions/behaviours in relationships
 - Social media
 - Bullying
- Pop Culture
 - Media
 - Celebrities
 - Movies
 - Porn
- Cultural
 - Beliefs and values
 - Discrimination
 - Racism
- Religious
 - Beliefs and value systems within a particular religion
- Societal expectations
 - Stereotypes about your role in a relationship
 - Your 'prescribed' or expected gender/sex roles
- Family
 - Dynamics within your family growing up
 - Experiencing domestic and family violence
 - Familial beliefs and values
- Community rules, laws and policies

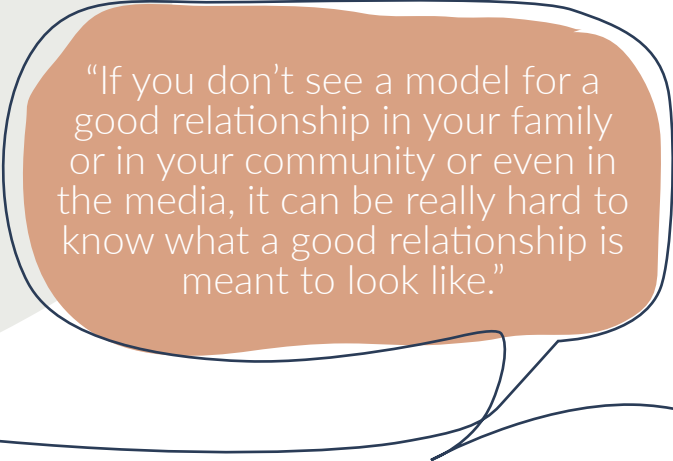
"I've seen a lot of stuff in TV shows. Like there's always that couple that's so toxic, but everyone wants to be in a relationship like theirs."

The **feelings** you have about who you're attracted to, who you feel close to, or who you feel comfortable with can also influence your own ideas and beliefs about what a relationship should look and feel like for you.

Some of these influences **may seem contradictory**, however it is up to you to determine what feels right for you.

Take some time to think about:

- What is important to you in a relationship?
- What you WANT and NEED in a relationship?
- What you don't WANT and NEED in a relationship?
- How do you want to feel in a relationship?
- How do you NOT want to feel in a relationship?



"If you don't see a model for a good relationship in your family or in your community or even in the media, it can be really hard to know what a good relationship is meant to look like."

sexuality

The following definitions have been included to support you in finding and understanding a language that best describes the way you feel about yourself and those you're in a relationship with. This is not an exhaustive list and language is always evolving.



sexual diversity

SEXUAL ORIENTATION: (an individual's identity regarding the gender/s to which they are sexually/emotionally/ romantically attracted, or not)

- Gay: men who are primarily attracted (romantically, emotionally and/or sexually) to other men, or women who are primarily attracted (romantically, emotionally and/or sexually) to other women, or used as an umbrella term for any individual who identifies as 'not straight'.
- Lesbian: typically, women who are primarily attracted (romantically, emotionally and/or sexually) to other women.
- Bisexual: an individual who experiences attraction (romantically, emotionally and/or sexually) to some people of their gender and another gender.
- Pansexual: an individual who experiences attraction (romantically, emotionally and/or sexually) for people of all sexual and gender identities/expressions.
- Asexual: an individual whose orientation is characterised by having no sexual attraction toward any gender identity/expression.
- Heterosexual: an individual who is generally attracted to the opposite sex. A man who is attracted to women, or a woman who is attracted to men.

gender

GENDER IDENTITY: (an individual's personal sense of one's own gender)

- Cisgender: an individual whose gender matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

- **Transgender:** an individual whose gender differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Genderqueer/Gender Diverse/Non-Binary:** an individual whose understanding of their gender is outside of the common understandings of being male or female (inclusive of agender/gender fluid identities), they may not identify as a man or a woman, or as one or the other only some of the time.
- **Queer:** an umbrella term that describes anyone whose gender and sexual identity differs from 'straight' and 'cisgender'. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people may all identify with this word.
- **Sistergirl:** may be used by some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to describe male-assigned individuals who live partly or fully as women.
- **Brotherboy:** may be used by some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to describe female-assigned people who live partly or fully as men.

Intersex: an individual who is born with a combination of typically 'male' and 'female' biological traits and sexual organs. It is not a gender identity or sexual orientation, as intersex individuals may still identify as being male, female or other, and may be attracted to males, females or others.

Everyone has the right to a safe relationship built on love, respect, support and understanding. For LGBTIQ+ young people though, it's likely that homophobic, biphobic and transphobic legislation, systems and attitudes may prevent you from seeking help when someone uses violence against you. Later in the resource we explore abuse within LGBTIQ+ relationships.

It's important to know that there are LGBTIQ+ specific services and communities that provide a safe space for help and support. A list of services is provided in the back of this resource.

gender stereotypes

What are gender stereotypes?


Gender stereotypes are widely held beliefs or generalisations about the behaviours and characteristics attributed to women and men. Men can often be characterised as being 'strong', 'tough', and/or 'dominant'. Women can often be characterised as being 'emotional', 'in need of protection' or 'submissive'. It is clear that many young people are living in gendered environments and are affected by male and female stereotypes on a daily basis. Gender roles in society can create certain expectations, and the pressure of upholding gender stereotypes can often have negative effects on how young people perceive themselves and others.

Where do gender stereotypes come from?

Gender stereotypes are complex and originate from local culture and traditions. From a young age, children learn what are acceptable female and male behaviours from their family, friends, media, and institutions such as school or religious leaders. Gender stereotypes can negatively impact people of all genders, as young people find themselves regularly exposed to messages about how they should look, what they should/should not be interested in, and how they need to present themselves to be accepted as a 'real man' or a 'real woman'.

How do gender stereotypes impact me?

Gender stereotypes can affect everyone and can be particularly harmful for girls and women. Gender stereotypes can support gender inequality by creating different statuses for boys and girls. Gender stereotypes can negatively impact on a young person's personal identity and may cause young men to feel insecure in their masculinity and young women to have poor self-esteem or self-worth.



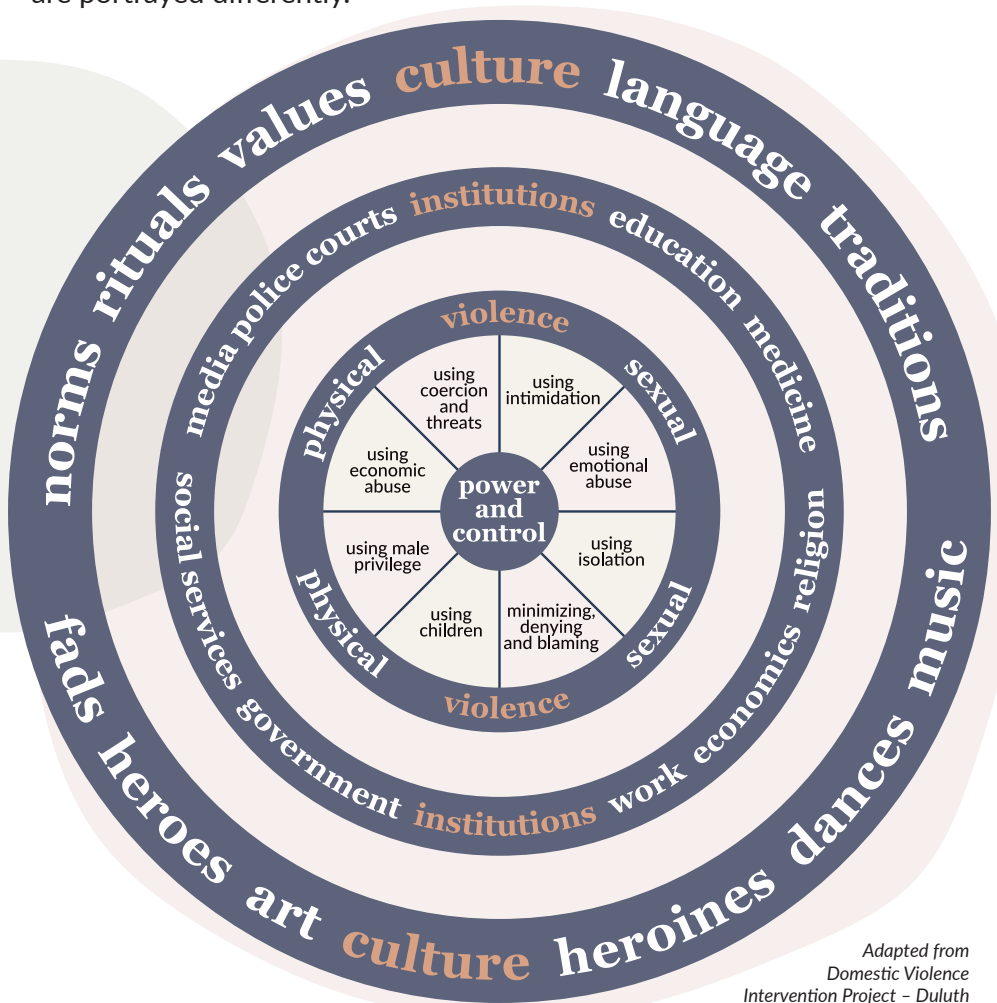
Research shows that 'levels of violence against women are significantly and consistently higher in societies, communities and relationships where there are more rigid distinctions between the roles of men and women'.

It also reveals that 'men who hold traditional, hierarchical views about gender roles and relationships are more likely to perpetrate violence against women.'

(Our Watch, 2015: 25)

culture wheel

The Culture Wheel is a visual representation of how cultural norms, values and institutions reinforce violent attitudes and behaviours toward women. Reflect on how each segment in the wheel can support the behaviours and attitudes of young men differently to young women. Consider music videos, movies and how young men and young woman are portrayed differently.



Adapted from
Domestic Violence
Intervention Project – Duluth



safe and respectful relationships

equality

A relationship based on equality is one where each person's needs, interests and desires are heard, respected and openly discussed. This is different to a relationship where one partner's wants and self-interests are dominating the other person resulting in a relationship where there is a power imbalance.

Each aspect of the image is reinforced by the over-arching concept of **EQUALITY**:

equality

non-threatening behaviour

- talking and acting in a way that is non- intimidating
- feeling safe and comfortable to express yourself

negotiation and fairness

- working together to create solutions to conflict that are supportive and inclusive of both partners opinions and ideas.
- being open and willing to compromise
- accepting of change

respect

- listening without judgement
- being emotionally affirming and understanding
- individual opinions and beliefs are validated and supported
- you feel safe to share and explore vulnerabilities
- personal boundaries are accepted and respected

shared power

- each person in the relationship has shared power, influence, and responsibilities
- decisions are discussed openly and made together

trust and support

- feeling your goals in life are respected and supported
- feeling safe, heard, and valued in your relationship
- your rights to your own opinions, beliefs, and feelings are respected
- your right to have your own friends, hobbies and interests

honesty and accountability

- accepting responsibility for your own actions
- feeling comfortable and safe to admit mistakes and apologise
- communicating respectfully, openly, and truthfully

self-confidence and personal growth

- respecting your own personal identity
- individual growth and freedom is encouraged
- feeling loved and accepted for who you are

communication

- open and honest communication is supported
- speaking in a way that is respectful and emotionally affirming
- being open to compromise

*Adapted from
Domestic Violence
Intervention Project – Duluth*

the relationship continuum

safe and respectful or healthy relationships

- open communication
- trust
- mutual respect
- honesty
- equality
- enjoying time together AND apart
- feeling safe

unhealthy or toxic relationships

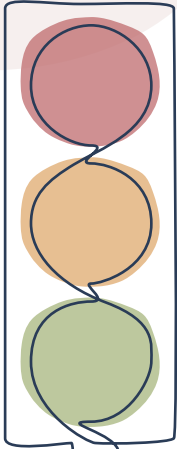
- not communicating
- not having trust
- disrespect
- dishonesty
- trying to take control
- only spending time together
- feeling uneasy or unsure

relationships where there is abuse

- communicating in a harmful or threatening way
- mistreating
- controlling
- isolating their partner from others
- feeling scared or unsafe

Whilst this doesn't cover all aspects of a relationship, it might be a way to help you think about where your relationship/s are at. It might even be helpful to think of this like a traffic light:

- We might look at safe and respectful or healthy relationships as the **GREEN** zone. These relationships are characterised by positive and respectful interactions where you feel safe and agree with what is going on. Of course, when considering if you want to have a relationship with someone, even someone who is showing all the signs of being in the green zone, you still have the choice whether you do or don't want to continue in this relationship.
- Unhealthy or toxic relationships are in the **ORANGE** zone. Here, you want to proceed with caution. If you feel like any of your relationships are in this zone, you might want to ask yourself some of the questions earlier on in the resource to help you decide what to do next. You may feel like you want to end the relationship, and that is okay! You may also want to try and work on the parts of it that seem to be sitting



in this zone – this may require you to think about your safety and whether you can have a conversation about how your relationship is feeling right now. How this conversation goes and how your partner responds or reacts, might give you more idea about where you'd like this relationship to be heading.

- Finally, relationships where you are experiencing abuse. The **RED** zone. These are NEVER okay. You have the right to feel respected, cared for, equal and safe in a relationship. If you're unsure about whether your relationship might be in the red zone, keep reading. And remember, there is support available to you if you notice that you are experiencing abuse in your relationship.

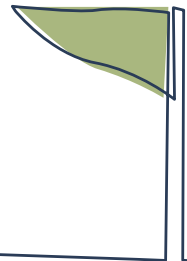
the green flags

When looking to start a relationship, or considering the relationship you are already in, most people are on the lookout for red flags – the things they don't want in a person they're with. Something equally as important to look for, though, are the green flags – what you DO want!

Consider some things that are usually signs of safe and respectful behaviour from a partner:

- They value time with you
- They respect personal time and time apart
- They encourage your independence
- They apologise sincerely when they hurt you
- They take responsibility for their actions
- They talk openly and honestly, especially about the tough stuff
- They really listen to you
- They're trustworthy and reliable, you can count on them
- They respect boundaries
- They respect privacy
- They can disagree with you, without making you feel insecure or unsafe
- They encourage and support you
- They like you for you and don't try to change you

Most importantly, you feel listened to, valued, respected, cared for, and safe!



communication

In all relationships, especially romantic relationships, communication is an essential part to making sure both people feel safe, respected, and happy. Sometimes at the beginning of a relationship you might feel like this, however as you go along, your feelings may change.

At times, you might decide that you want to end the relationship and will choose to let you partner know. Other times, you might feel that communicating your wants and needs with your partner could lead to a positive change in the relationship. It is important that you feel safe and heard when you talk with your partner, even when you need to talk about the tough stuff.

If you don't feel safe or respected, you might find the information in the rest of this resource helpful.

Some people might feel like their relationship is either too new, or they are too far into dating or their relationship to be able to communicate their wants and needs. That is not true! Communication should be a core part of the relationship from day one, and every day after that. Whether you are one week, one month, one year (or more) into the relationship, you can always talk about your relationship and what makes you feel safe, respected, loved, cared for, and valued OR what makes you feel otherwise.

Remember, communicating is not all about talking. A key part to communicating is also listening. Good communication goes both ways.



So how can you do it and what can you say? Here are some tips and ideas:

- Set aside time to talk and turn off distractions
- Don't push down or neglect your feelings and let them build up over time
- Don't think 'it doesn't matter' or 'it's not a big deal' – your feelings are valid
- Don't let conflicts build up without talking about them
- Don't try to be a mind-reader or make assumptions – ask your partner open-ended questions to start the conversation
- Communicate what you hope to get out of the conversation and what you need from your partner, 'I just need you to listen...', 'I need some advice...', 'It would be helpful if you...'

Some ways to start the conversation might be:

- What do we want more of in our relationship?
- What's important for both of us?
- Is there anything in our relationship that doesn't make you or I feel good?
- Is there anything you need from me?
- What I need from you is...
- I really appreciate when you...
- I feel hurt/upset/etc.... when you...
- What can we do to help each other feel happier in our relationship?
- If you ... it would help me to feel...

boundaries

Boundaries are an important part of all relationships with friends, family, and romantic partners. They look different for everyone and can change depending on the type of relationship they are being set in. Your boundaries can also vary based on where you're at right now, such as when you're going through a busy or difficult time in your life.

What are boundaries?

Boundaries are the limits we put in place with ourselves and others. They let people know where our 'line' is – what we are and are not okay with. When you set boundaries, you may also communicate what will happen if someone crosses that 'line'.

Why are boundaries important?

Having boundaries is a form of self-care. They help protect your emotional and mental wellbeing and are key to having safe, respectful, and enjoyable relationships. You deserve to have your needs met, and are entitled to set boundaries around what you do and don't want in a relationship.

How do I figure out what my boundaries are?

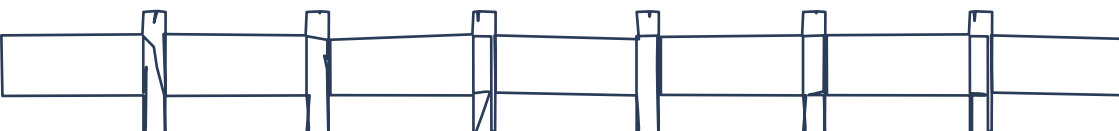
Boundaries are unique to each person. What you need or want from a relationship might be really different to what other people in your life need or want. Figuring out your personal boundaries requires you to tune in to yourself and reflect on how different situations have made you feel. Being able to pinpoint the feeling you had and trusting your gut when it gives you a signal that something isn't quite right for you is the first step to having your needs met.



How do I set them with people?

Communicating your boundaries to others can be difficult and might even feel awkward and uncomfortable. Some tips to keep in mind are:

- Speak clearly and calmly
- Use a firm and assured tone (you don't need to apologise for having and setting boundaries)
- Be consistent
- Use 'I' statements to assert why there is the need for a boundary to be set – 'I feel...' (describe your emotion/s) 'when...' (describe the behaviour or actions that make you feel uncomfortable or disrespect your boundaries)
- Explain what you need in order for your boundaries to be respected – 'I would like it if...' / 'it would be helpful if you...' (tell them how to respect your boundary)
- At times you may need to communicate the consequences of your boundaries being disrespected – 'I will have to...' / 'I'm going to...' (describe clearly the actions you will take as a result of them not meeting your needs)
- Sometimes, when you communicate a boundary, it may not be received well by the other person. It's important to have boundaries and at the same time monitor your safety when you are communicating these in a relationship. It is ideal to have open honest and respectful communication, however both people will need to be open to listening to each other



What if my boundaries aren't being respected?

If you feel unsafe to set boundaries, or a person continually disrespects the boundaries you have set, this could be a sign that the relationship is not safe or respectful, and therefore you might be experiencing abuse from your partner. You can access support through your school guidance officer, a local domestic and family violence service or see alternate supports in the back of this resource.



There are different types of boundaries that people have, and they might sound something like this:

At times, boundaries might be as simple as 'no'. Some other examples might be:

physical

- who you want to have physical contact with, who you want to allow in your personal space

E.g. "I'm okay with some touching but I don't want to have sex yet."

emotional

- creating distance between yourself and other people's emotions when you don't have personal capacity; managing your own emotions or triggers

E.g. "I have a lot going on for me at the moment, you may need more support than what I can give you at this time."

communication

- how others speak to you and you speak with others

E.g. "I don't think this conversation is going anywhere while you're speaking to me like that. Let's take a break and we can talk again when you're willing to speak to me calmly."

mental

- allowing yourself to have your own thoughts and opinions and being okay with others disagreeing

E.g. "I don't share my passwords with anyone, including my partners."

time

- how you choose to share your time with others and how you want people to respect your time

E.g. "I need some time by myself this weekend, let's catch up next week."

safe and respectful non-negotiables

IN ALL TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS, there are basic and essential non-negotiables to ensure **YOU** are in a safe and respectful relationship.

In any relationship where you feel safe and respected, it is highly likely that the power is shared equally – this means that neither partner has control of the other.

You feel **comfortable and connected** – there is no abuse or violence in the relationship.

Trust and love are built **by equality**.

Safe and respectful non-negotiables – sex and sexuality

The questions and statements on the next page are taken from the sexuality cards from the resource No Room for Family Violence. Learning to recognise abusive and respectful behaviour in intimate partner relationships can help you express what you want **MORE** of, what **CONCERNS** you and what you want **NONE** of in your relationships.



What I want more of?

- I feel safe to say no to sex
- My partner respects my gender identity, sexuality and unique body
- My partner wants to share closeness and affection not just sex

What concerns me?

- Does my partner put their needs above mine?
- Does my partner criticise my body or appearance?
- Does my partner make it a problem if I say no to sex?

What I want none of?

- My partner reveals private information or photos
- I have no choice about what happens in our sex life
- Force, blackmail, sexual assault, shaming, rape, coercion or other forms of power, control and sexual violence





sexual relationships

sex and consent –
why we need to talk about it

For some people, talking about sex can be difficult and awkward; however, it is a key step in preventing sexual violence and helping victim-survivors to access support. The first thing to remember is that sex and consent have to **ALWAYS** work together. There is no sex or other sexual acts without consent – *that* is sexual assault or rape. That's why, in talking about sex, we're going to first talk about consent.



consent

consent is:

- freely and enthusiastically given
- explicitly stated
- reversible at *any* time (yes, even during sex that was consensual at the start)
- ongoing: meaning consent should be obtained prior to and during sex and other intimate acts *every* time they happen (hugging, kissing, touching, undressing etc.)
- specific: consent can be given for *some* sexual acts without being given for *all*
- informed: where you know exactly what you are consenting to


consent can not:

- be coerced or pressured
- be assumed
- be a one time thing

NOTE: someone who is...

- under force, being pressured, intimidated or threatened
- unconscious or asleep
- under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- in fear of harm
- mentally unable (such as a person who has certain illnesses or disabilities)
- being deceived, such as is under a false impression regarding *who* and *what* they are consenting to

...is UNABLE to provide consent and therefore even a verbal 'yes' is NOT consent



The term 'consent' can also be understood as 'agreement' or 'permission'. To engage in a sexual act with another person, consent is a **MUST** for both parties. True consent should be **FREELY** and **VOLUNTARILY** given by a person who is mentally able to do so.

Only YES means YES – everything else means NO. Saying 'yes' is a whole-body experience that involves each person/partners enthusiastically agreeing both verbally and non-verbally. It is a 'yes' that is coupled with body language that shows each person's genuine desire to engage in sex or other intimate acts.

Consent is a necessary conversation that is required before **any form of sexual activity**. We know that consent is often not talked about or taught in places where young people are supposed to learn about this part of life – but consent is a critical conversation, because any kind of sexual contact without consent is sexual assault. Consent is an **ONGOING** conversation – this means it's not just a one-time question. It's essential to seek consent before every sexual activity – touching, hugging, kissing, removing clothing, and more.

Saying 'YES' to one kind of sexual activity doesn't mean consent for all and any type of sexual activity. Even if a person has said 'YES' on one occasion, this doesn't automatically mean that consent is given for any type of sexual activity that one person wants to engage in.

Consent can be reversed at any time; yes, even during a sexual act. Just because you consented to start having sex (or do some other sort of sexual activity with another person), does not mean you need to finish it. The same applies to conversations about contraception too – you may have consented to having unprotected sex one time but it's okay to ask your partner to use a condom the next time and to have conversations about your sexual history and getting tested for sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

A person cannot give their consent:

- If they are threatened, coerced, manipulated, or pushed to agree
- If they are physically unable to (they're drunk, high, drugged, passed out, unconscious, asleep)
- If they are mentally unable to (they have an illness or disability that prevents them)
- If they are under the age of legal consent (this differs depending on where you live)
- If they are being deceived as to *who* they are consenting to (swapping out with someone mid sexual act without their knowledge)
- If they are under care of the other party (counsellor, doctor, teacher, sports coach, religious instructor, employer)

IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW: if someone isn't putting up a physical fight or any physical resistance, THIS DOES NOT mean that consent is there. There is a trauma-response called **fawning** – this is an unconscious strategy that kicks in when you are feeling threatened and is an attempt to keep yourself safe. This is why so many people are 'nice' or appeasing during/after an assault or being abused; it's why many people doubt their own experiences and actions because they 'didn't fight back' or 'didn't say no'. This is why 'no means no' isn't good enough and why young people need to understand and learn about consent in a safe and respectful way. Having conversations about sex and consent can be embarrassing or challenging, but they are necessary because everyone deserves to be treated with respect.



sex

Being interested in sex is a normal part of development as a young person. While it is normal to be thinking about sex and talking about it amongst your peers, that doesn't mean you should feel pressured to start having or continue having sex (even if it seems like everybody else is).

'Sex' can also have various meanings to different people, and it is important that you consider which sexual acts you feel comfortable with and which sexual acts your partner feels comfortable with. You might also decide that you don't want to engage in some or all sexual acts at all. Whether this is because you identify as asexual, because of your personal values and beliefs around sex, because you don't feel ready right now, or for any other reason, that is okay too!

Across Australia, there are strict laws about sex, particularly when it comes to young people. These laws are in place to protect children and young people and preserve their right to healthy sexual development. The 'legal age' or age of consent in Queensland is 16 years old. This is when the law views you as mature enough to understand and negotiate the risks involved in sex and are therefore capable of providing consent (unless there are overriding factors such as those spoken about in the previous section). The law states that both people engaging in sex should be at least 16 years old.

While it is legal to have sex at 16, that doesn't mean that there is anything wrong if you are this age or older and don't want to have sex – yet, or at all. This is a personal decision that only you can make for yourself, and one that should be respected by others.



If you are under the age of 16 and have been or are sexually active and are feeling concerned about something that has happened to you, there are safe and non-judgmental people for you to talk to and that can help you. If you need to access support you can contact Kids Helpline, eHeadspace or 1800 RESPECT. You may not need to provide your name or any identifying details to access support from these organisations. For free legal advice you can contact Youth Law Australia or Youth Legal Advice Hotline. For health advice from a registered nurse you can contact 13 HEALTH. You may not need to provide your name or any other specific identifying information, however, you will need to provide your age and gender.

You can see the back of this resource for more information and contact details.

“I think it’s important people know that just because you said yes or wanted to do something one time doesn’t mean you have to do it again”

decisions about sex

Sex can be a normal and healthy part of many young people's relationships. Having sex may affect the way you feel about yourself or your partner. Many young people have told us that they feel 'unsure' about 'when it's the right time' to begin having sex but the truth is that the 'right time' is different for everybody. For example, some young people may want to wait until they are older and other may feel they are ready to take this step in their relationship sooner. Only you can decide what is going to be 'right' for you.

Signs you may be feeling ready to bring sex into your relationship:

- You feel respected and safe with your partner
- You can be completely honest and trust one another
- You can talk with your partner about difficult or uncomfortable things
- You feel safe sharing your feelings
- You can openly talk with your partner about past experiences and discuss safety around sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and contraception you would like to use
- You respect one another's personal decisions about sex

Signs that may signify your relationship is not ready for sex:

- Your partner is jealous or possessive
- Your partner is making you feel pressured into having sex
- Your partner is not respectful of your decisions about sex and contraception
- Your partner is using sex as an ultimatum (threatening to end the relationship if you do not have sex)
- Your partner shames you for previous sexual experiences

Having a healthy relationship with yourself:

It is a misconception that sex is only something you can do with a partner, you should also have a healthy relationship with your own sexuality. One of the best ways to understand what you want from sex is to understand what you like and what feels good for you! Masturbation is a helpful way to explore and learn what brings you pleasure and what doesn't. It is a healthy way to feel connected to your body and can help you to understand what your sexual boundaries and values are.

Starting the conversation:

Having conversations about sex may seem uncomfortable but they are a vital part of any healthy sexual relationship. Discussions about sex and what you and your partner enjoy should be an ongoing conversation (as likes and dislikes can change!). When having sex it is important to 'check in' with your partner to make sure they are enjoying their experience with you. It is also important to tune into your own body and ensure you enjoy what is happening and verbalising this to your partner. Here are some ways you could start conversations about sex and pleasure with your partner:

'I really like when you...'

'I would like to try... Is that something you would want to do too?'

'It feels really good when we...'

'How do you feel when I...'

'Does that feel good for you?'

'Would you like me to...'



questions to ask yourself about sex

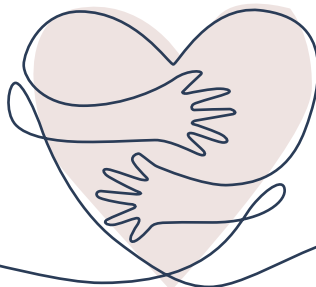
- What are my sexual values? e.g. do I want to be in an exclusive or open relationship? Have I communicated this to my partner?
- What are my boundaries? e.g. what do I enjoy? What would I like to explore more? What is a hard no?
- What sort of contraception is going to work best for me? Is my partner supportive of my contraception of choice? Remember, if a partner does not respect your decisions around contraception, then they are not deserving of access to your body
- How do I feel when I am with my partner? How might I feel after having sex with them?
- Do I want to have sex because this is what I want or am I only wanting to please my partner?
- How is my partner going to treat me after sex?
- Am I in control of this decision? e.g. if I am under the influence of drugs or alcohol, will I be able to make a clear choice about what I want?
- What do I feel comfortable doing with this partner?
- Do I feel comfortable asking my partner to stop at any point? How would they react?
- Is there anything I need before, after, or during this experience? How will my partner support my emotional needs? How can I talk to them about what my needs are?

pregnancy and parenting

It's normal to have mixed feelings or experience a range of emotions when you become pregnant and begin adjusting to the idea of being a parent.

If you are experiencing abuse in your relationship however, you might also be feeling shame, humiliation, embarrassment, anger, pressured, confusion, helplessness, feelings of self-harm or suicide, increased desire to engage in substance abuse (drugs/alcohol), self-blame and/or loathing.

- Pregnancy is known to be a time when abuse begins or escalates/ worsens in the relationship
- Young women between 18–24 years old are more likely to experience abuse during their pregnancy than any other age group (AIFS 2015)
- 1 in 5 pregnant Australian adolescents have reported experiencing violence from a partner or family member before the age of 16 (RACGP 2016)
- Reproductive control is a significant and prevalent issue especially amongst young women experiencing abuse. This may result in an unintended pregnancy and/or forced termination (AIFS)



- Some studies in the US found that adolescent girls in relationships where there was abuse, were more likely to become pregnant again within two years than girls who were in relationships without abuse. It is suggested that this may be because young women may find it difficult or unsafe to refuse sexual activity with a violent partner, and/or are less likely to have conversations with an abusive partner about contraception
- Even if the relationship has come to an end, parenting with an abusive ex-partner can be extremely challenging... not to mention that being a young single parent is difficult in itself
- There are support agencies available for pregnant and parenting young people. Please see the back of this resource for information on how to contact them

Refer to the 'Sexual Relationships' chapter for more information and details relating to consent (page 33).

technology & relationships



technology wheel

Technology-facilitated abuse involves the use of technology as a means to coerce, stalk or harass another person. Technological abuse can happen in a variety of ways, such as the following:



*Adapted from
Domestic Violence
Intervention Project - Duluth*

Economic abuse

- Tracking or accessing bank accounts or other financial information
- Controlling or denying your access to money
- Using your identity or bank accounts without your consent

Coercion and threats

- Using emails, texts and social media to make threats
- Posting false information about you online
- Threatening to share messages or images online, such as through social media (see more about this in the section 'sexting')
- Threatening to break your phone or take it away from you

Emotional abuse

- Putting you down or embarrassing you online
- Sending abusive messages or posting abusive comments about you online
- Using fake social media accounts to attempt to contact you (such as catfishing), harass you, or post negative comments about you online
- Using fake accounts to impersonate you online
- Misusing technology in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable or confused such as deleting things or changing settings

Minimising, denying or blaming

- Restricting your use of technology or social media and telling you that it's for your safety or benefit
- Making you believe that you are responsible for installing spyware or other tracking/monitoring programs, or getting a virus on your device

Using privilege and oppression

- Making decisions for you about your use of technology
- Locking you out of your devices or accounts by changing the password
- Controlling when and how you can use technology

Using others

- Getting other people to post abusive or threatening comments about you on social media, or send abusive or threatening messages to you
- Sharing personal information (e.g. phone number, home address) about you publicly online, 'doxxing' you

Isolation

- Limiting or refusing your access to your technology or social media, such as by changing your passwords or closing your accounts
- Controlling who you have on social media or what you do on social media (including whether you're 'allowed' to have social media accounts or not)
- Replying to your messages in a way that would harm or end your relationships with others
- Getting a virus on your device to prevent you from using it

Intimidating, monitoring or stalking

- Changing your device or account passwords without your consent
- Constantly contacting you through unwanted texting/calling or social media
- Using tracking or monitoring devices/apps to see where you are, such as findmyfriends or Snap Maps

- Following you on accounts where you may have attempted to block them
- Insisting on having the passwords to your accounts
- Checking your texts, social media activity or internet activity
- Using recording devices/apps to listen to your conversations
- Using fake accounts to monitor you

For more information on how to make your devices and social media safer, whilst still being able to use them, scan the following QR codes:



Tech safety
advice



eSafety – social
media safety

For information specific to individual websites/apps, see:
<https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-issues/esafety-guide>



sexting (image-based abuse)

'Sexting' is the sending/receiving/forwarding/creating of any kind of sexual content.

Research tells us that nearly 1 in 3 young people between the ages of 14 and 17 have either sent, received, or have been asked to send 'nudes'. Many young people may feel that sexting is just a normal and common part of dating as a teenager. Some might even feel like while having sex is a big step in their relationship, that sending 'nudes' or other sexual content is no big deal and can be casual.

In fact, the laws around sexting are extremely strict all across Australia meaning it is illegal to create, send or possess sexual images of someone under the age of 18 – yes, even yourself. As long as you are over 10 years old, creating/sending/possessing sexual content of a minor (a person under 18) can lead, and has lead, to criminal charges. This is the case even if you willingly took and shared an image, or if someone else willingly did the same. Under federal law, this is classified as 'child abuse material' or 'child exploitation material', and is a criminal offence that can carry serious, long-term consequences.

You may have heard of the term '**revenge porn**' – this description minimises the seriousness of the act and makes the harm caused seem less serious than it really is. This kind of abuse is called **image-based abuse** and is the **non-consensual sharing or creating of intimate or sexual photos, video or content** – this is not porn (we'll talk about what this is next).

IBA (or image-based abuse) is the **creation** of nude/sexual images or video footage, **distribution** (quickly showing your mates or sending it to the group-chat, screen-shotting it and sending it on, filming it off another person's phone... it's all distribution and it's all a crime), as well as **threats** to distribute these images/videos.

When 'sexting' involves harassment or threats, like someone who keeps bothering you to send them a nude, or someone that continues to send

you unwanted nudes, even if you tell them to stop, it is a crime.

IBA can come in various forms. It involves the sharing of 'intimate' content without the consent of the person pictured and can include images (or other content) that:

- Show a person's genital area (even with underwear on)
- Show a person's breasts (if the person identifies as female or transgender or is intersex)
- Shows a person engaging in private activity (undressing, using the bathroom, showering, bathing or engaged in sexual activity)
- Shows a person without attire of religious or cultural significance if they would normally wear such attire in public (such as a hijab)

NOTE: IBA includes images that have been digitally altered, such as if a person's face is Photoshopped or otherwise cropped onto an image of a person that is nude/posing in a sexual manner/engaging in private activity/without their normal religious attire.



eSafety Commissioner
reporting IBA



Policelink
reporting

If this happens to you or someone you know, you can report it to the police. You can also report anonymously using this link or access support through one of the suggested agencies at the end of this resource.

The eSafety Commissioner is in place to help you have such images removed as quickly as possible, and at times can also take the steps needed to take action against the person who posted, or threatened to post, an intimate image without consent. We know it can be extremely distressing when this happens. There is support available to you to have the images removed, either through the eSafety Commissioner or the social media platform/website it was posted on, as well as to manage the emotional and psychological impacts that follow.

porn

Young people have told us that porn is often where they learn about sex or explore their sexuality. Earlier in the resource we highlighted that porn is one of many influences on your beliefs about relationships, however when you use porn as your *only* source of information about sex, it can limit your ability to develop healthy ideas about safe and respectful sex.

It can also create unrealistic expectations for yourself or your partner and begin to normalise unsafe and violent sexual practices. In research with survivors of sexual violence, survivors reported that there are times where porn was clearly and directly related to their experiences of sexual violence in their relationships.

How can porn affect your relationships?

Porn disregards the importance of conversations about safe relationships, sex and consent

In porn it's obvious that there's no clear communication about consent or safe sex. There is no discussing each other's needs or boundaries and no fumbling for condoms or awkward discussions about STIs. These kinds of conversations are normal and expected parts of real-life sex and safe sexual relationships.

It's important to remember that you never have to have sex or do anything you don't want to. Consent is when you freely agree to participate in a sexual activity with another person (or people). And just because you've given your consent once doesn't mean you have to do anything again! Consent can also be withdrawn at any time. If there's no consent, and you're forced into something you don't want, then this is sexual assault.

It's illegal to show porn to someone under 18 years old

In Australia, it's an offence to show porn to anyone under 18 years old. If an adult tries to show you porn, you can tell an adult you trust. It's also illegal for someone under 18 years old to be featured in sexually explicit material. This includes videos or photos you've taken of yourself.

Expectations – online vs. IRL

People in porn videos are actors who are paid to act like they're enjoying themselves. In real life it's important to communicate with your partner(s) to ensure that everyone is on the same page about the type of sex they're happy to have.

Porn isn't representative or diverse

Media and pop culture are major factors in representing and influencing social issues involving race, gender, sexuality and violence. Porn is rarely included in this conversation. Porn has never been so widely and easily accessible, especially to young people. Like any other form of media, it has the power to teach cultural norms and influence your beliefs and attitudes.

For young people exploring their sexuality or gender identity, porn may provide 'sex education' representative of your sexual preferences and gender expression, however, mainstream porn often positions LGBTIQ+ people as the 'punchline of a joke' or as the object of a fetish by people outside of the community. Similarly, BIPOC people (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) are often subject to racist slurs or depicted in ways that uphold harmful stereotypes about their cultural identity.

Average bodies don't look like porn star bodies

Just like a Hollywood movie, how porn stars look can be exaggerated through styling, lighting and makeup which makes a big difference to how a person appears on screen. It can also shape your expectations about your own body and your partner's body but it's important to remember that no one should be expected to look a certain way.

In reality, people generally do not want to be treated like porn stars, nor do they want to look, or act like them. Porn star bodies do not represent the average body – the bodies and genitalia of porn actors are altered to look a certain way that fits the fantasy of porn. In reality, people come in all shapes and sizes.

You don't have to like porn

It's become normalised for young people to say they like porn, however it's okay not to like it, or to have some mixed feelings. You don't have to look at anything you don't want to and if someone tries to show you something that you're not okay with, you can always talk to someone you trust about it.

Violence and humiliation are not sexy

Regular exposure to porn can result in the normalisation of sexual violence where violence is viewed as romantic or sexy. **Porn** is only **fantasy** and not real life. Porn stars are paid adult actors who act out sexual scenes which do not represent how sex is experienced in healthy relationships. Porn often shows porn stars experiencing pleasure during aggressive and dominating sexual acts. Again, porn stars are actors who are faking 'enjoyment' when they may actually be experiencing pain, degradation or discomfort. You should not be expected to enjoy

sexual acts like the ones which are portrayed in porn, nor do you have to engage in these.

The consumption of 'aggressive' or 'hardcore' porn highly correlates with the use of potentially lethal sexual practices such as choking and 'breath play' and if these sexual acts are explored without full understanding, knowledge or informed consent from both partners they can have serious consequences including strokes, brain damage, loss of consciousness and death.

- Porn promotes unrealistic expectations of what is expected in sex and ideas that sex isn't good enough if a male partner isn't dominant or aggressive
- Porn sends powerful messages to its viewers about the norms of sex and gender roles and reinforces harmful and limiting stereotypes
- Porn upholds and promotes attitudes, values and beliefs that underpin violence against women



Where can I learn more about healthy sexual relationships?

Building healthy relationships involves open communication with your partner about boundaries, consent and sex, discussed earlier in the resource. You can also visit your local GP or sexual health clinic. Check out the back of this resource for a list of useful services.

Is porn a concern in your relationship?

- Are you (or your partner) having difficulty reducing or limiting your porn use, even though you (they) want to?
- Are you (or your partner) using porn/masturbation to replace physical intimacy?
- Is porn interfering with day-to-day activities such as going to school, work and hanging out with a partner, friends and family?
- Is porn impacting you (or your partner's) self-care including disrupted/reduced sleep, irregular meals, lack of exercise and drug or alcohol use?
- Are you (or your partner) using porn to manage moods, or cope with challenging feelings or situations?
- Are you (or your partner) continuing to view porn despite consequences such as distraction from studies, missing work, reduced wellbeing and relationship breakdowns?
- Is porn having a negative impact on your relationships such as difficulty becoming turned on without porn or romantic/sexual behaviour changes?
- Are you (or your partner) using strangulation (choking) or engaging in humiliating, aggressive or dominant sexual acts?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, it may be time to have a conversation about porn in your relationship and seek help.

How to talk with someone about their porn use

If you are worried about someone's porn use and the impact on your relationship, check out page 26 for tips on communicating your boundaries.

Seeking help

Checking in with a GP is a good place to start for support. You can also access free, confidential counselling support via the services listed at the back of this resource.

"We don't get taught much about it (porn) at school. It's like there's this taboo around talking about it and they think young people aren't watching it."

"I've known so many of my mates who have really really struggled with masturbation and watching porn... and then going to have sex with someone and not being able to ejaculate."

when things don't feel right: the red flags

If you don't feel safe, respected, and treated as an equal in your relationship, regardless of the type of relationship you're in, you may be experiencing abuse. There are many different ways someone can perpetrate or use abusive behaviour.



If you are feeling or noticing any of the following warning signs or red flags, it is important to firstly acknowledge and validate how you're feeling – **you are feeling this way for a reason.**

You might be feeling confused, tense, uneasy, worried, sad or just that something isn't 100% right. Trust your gut – how you feel is a good indicator that something in the relationship isn't right; whether that's the other person's actions, their impact on your life, or the unequal distribution of power.

There are several key indicators in relationships when someone is using violence or abuse. It is important to be able to identify and name how you're feeling, as well as the abusive behaviour.

Have you noticed any of these in your relationship?

threats and intimidation
coercive control
verbal abuse
physical abuse
sexual and reproductive abuse
emotional and psychological abuse
social abuse
financial abuse
stalking
technological abuse
religious, cultural or spiritual abuse
abuse within LGBTIQ+ relationships

threats and intimidation

Threats and intimidation can leave you feeling fearful, worried, scared, that you are not allowed to have your own thoughts or beliefs.

Threats and intimidation can look like:

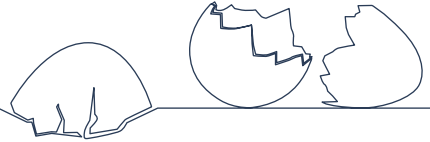
- Smashing things or destroying your possessions
- Putting a fist through a wall
- Handling weapons (like knives)
- Using intimidating body language towards you (angry looks, death stares, screaming in your face)
- Hostile or aggressive questioning
- Reckless or dangerous driving (including under the influence of alcohol or drugs)
- Threatening to hurt themselves or to take their life by suicide
- Persistent or uncomfortable phone calls, messages, social media interactions
- Following/loitering/stalking you at your home, workplace, school, anywhere they know you'll be
- Threatening to, or actually 'outing' your gender identity, sexuality or intersex status to others (your friends, family, workplace or people in your community) when you have not chosen to

coercive control

Coercive control can make you feel intimidated and scared into submission, powerless, afraid, constantly 'on edge' or 'walking on eggshells'.

Coercive control can look like:

- A pattern of deliberate behaviours
- Controlling who you hang out with, who you talk to, who you interact with, how you dress, how you spend your money, how you act around certain people, threatening to harm you or themselves if you don't do what they say, making you feel guilty if you set boundaries or disagree with anything they say/do



verbal abuse

Verbal abuse can make you feel as if you are constantly having to justify your existence or beliefs, as though you have no sense of self.

Verbal abuse can look like:

- Screaming, swearing, shouting, put-downs, name-calling (e.g. 'bitch', 'slut', 'whore'), using sarcasm, ridiculing your beliefs or opinions, making fun of your cultural background or heritage, mocking your religious beliefs

physical abuse

You might be you may be experiencing pain from an injury after being hurt.

Physical abuse can include the following:

- Pushing, shoving, hitting, slapping, hair-pulling, punching, burning, shaking
- Strangulation/choking (see 'Strangulation' section on page 68 for further information)
- Weapons such as guns, knives or other objects



sexual and reproductive abuse

Sexual abuse can leave you feeling scared, violated, or depressed.

Sexual and reproductive abuse can look like:

- Any unwanted sexual act or behaviour in which you do not provide informed consent
- Forcing you to have unprotected sex or forcing you to take/not take a form of contraception, preventing you from obtaining your choice of contraception
- **Stealth**ing: the act of non-consensual condom removal during sex. Stealthing *changes the terms of consent* and therefore undoes the consent given. In some countries, it is a criminal offence and offenders can be prosecuted. Currently, there are proposals for changes in Australian legislation, seeking to criminalise stealthing.
- Forcing an abortion or not allowing an abortion
- Knowingly exposing you to or transmitting an STI to you without your knowledge and consent, even if you don't actually become infected. *In Queensland, any person who, with intent to do some grievous bodily harm or transmit a serious disease to any person, is guilty of a crime.* (Queensland Criminal Code Act 1899)
- **Spiking**: when someone deliberately adds drugs *or alcohol* to your drink without your knowledge. Whilst the common understanding of spiking is adding illegal drugs to someone's drink, research shows that the most common form of drink spiking is actually the adding of *extra alcohol* (ADF 2019). A victim might therefore assume they're in control of how much alcohol they're consuming before quickly becoming intoxicated. Spiking is linked to 1/3 of cases of sexual assault (Australian Institute of Criminology, National Project on drink spiking 2004)

emotional and psychological abuse

Emotional abuse can make you feel like you have lost your sense of who you are, like you're nothing without this person or you don't deserve anything more/different, like you're going crazy or that people think you're crazy and won't believe you.

Emotional and psychological abuse can look like:

- Degrading your sense of self
- Deliberately embarrassing or humiliating you (in private or public – IRL or online) OR threatening to humiliate you
- Giving you the silent treatment or stone-walling you
- Ignoring you as a form of punishment or to making you fearful of losing them
- Being passive-aggressive towards you
- Guilt-tripping you
- Giving you back-handed compliments – 'you're not like other girls'
- Make you feel like you're 'walking on eggshells' because they are constantly 'angry or upset' but never explaining the reasons why
- You always have to apologise because everything always seems to be your fault
- Gaslighting you by causing you to disbelieve or doubt your own feelings and understanding of reality
- Gang-up on you with others to make you feel in the wrong/tell you you're crazy
- Denigrating your sense of self by calling you names
- Commenting negatively on the way you look/dress
- Playing mind-games with you

social abuse

Social abuse can make you feel alone, isolated, trapped, experiencing social withdrawal, increased social anxiety.

Social abuse can look like:

- Isolating you from your social supports or networks, e.g. telling you that people in your life don't love you or no one will love you like they do
- Preventing you from having any contact or making you feel bad for wanting to have your own friends
- Abusing you in front of others and making you feel like you need to defend/stick up for them, causing distance from your social networks
- Acting jealously; accusing you of having 'affairs' or cheating, seeing other people (intimately or just jealous of your friendships and you spending time with people other than them)
- Putting down your friends/family/social networks causing you to disconnect from them

financial abuse

Financial abuse can leave you feeling helpless, confused, angry and humiliated, unsure what to do next.

Financial abuse might look like:

- Using your money or forcing you to spend your money on things that you don't choose
- Being responsible for debts that you have not incurred yourself, signing loans or making purchases that you don't consent to or choose for yourself

stalking

Stalking can leave you feeling overwhelmed, anxious, completely controlled and trapped.

Stalking can look like:

- Loitering (hanging around) or following you places they know you will be
- Following you home, to school, where you work
- Watching you
- Sending you constant messages and/or giving you unwanted gifts

technological abuse

Technological abuse can make you feel uneasy, tense, anxious, angry, guilty or depressed.

Technological abuse can look like:

- Any abuse facilitated by social media or technology, including unwanted calls, messages, following you on accounts where you may have attempted to block them
- Ignoring your attempts to block them and creating fake accounts
- See 'Technology and Relationships' for more information

religious, cultural or spiritual abuse

Religious, cultural, or spiritual abuse can make you feel depressed, confused, anxious, humiliated.

Religious, cultural, or spiritual abuse can look like:

- Ridiculing, putting down or making fun of your cultural background, religious or spiritual belief(s)
- Preventing you from engaging in your religion/spiritual practice of choice
- Forcing you to practice a religion or engage in spiritual practice that you do not choose/believe in
- Blaming their choice of behaviour (abuse) on a cultural, religious, or spiritual belief or practice




abuse within LGBTIQA+ relationships

Although the forms of abuse spoken about previously can also be present within LGBTIQA+ relationships, there are also additional abusive behaviours that may be present specifically within (or more commonly in) relationships with LGBTIQA+ individual/s. These may include:

- Threatening to, or actually 'outing' your gender identity, sexuality or intersex status to others (your friends, family, workplace or people in your community) when you have not chosen to
- Pressuring you to act or look more 'male' or 'female'
- Insisting that you undergo medical treatment to appear more 'male' or 'female'
- Pressuring you to conform to a particular gender identity/expression
- Preventing you from attending LGBTIQA+ events or inhibiting your involvement with the LGBTIQA+ community
- Preventing you from accessing medications, treatments, or access to medical services (such as those to support the expression of your gender identity)
- Refusing to use your pronouns
- 'Deadnaming' you (when a person refers to a person who is transgender or non-binary by their non-affirmed name)

The rate of abuse within LGBTIQA+ relationships is believed to be around one in three – similar to the rates of abuse experienced by the wider female population (Our Watch).



LGBTIQA+ people can be less likely to identify their experience as abuse, to report it to police, or seek assistance from a domestic violence service. This may be for fear that the police or other service workers may have preconceived ideas about diverse gender identities or sexuality, previous negative experiences based on their gender identity or sexual orientation, lack of culturally appropriate services available, or even that it is not safe for the individual to come out yet.

LGBTIQA+ people may also feel as though they wouldn't be believed based on the idea that a female would not be abusive, or a male could not be a victim of abuse. Additionally, it is important to note that research suggests the rate of sexual abuse of LGBTIQA+ individuals is higher than the general rate of violence against women. This is especially the case for transgender women, and even more so for transgender women of colour (Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety).



strangulation (choking or suffocation)

'They do it in porn... it's just a kink'

Porn depicts strangulation (or choking) as a normal and enjoyable part of sex and many young people have told us that they consider it a 'kink'. Often when we talk with young women, they tell us that they haven't experienced strangulation in their relationships, however when asked about their sex lives, many young women tell us that their partner has choked them during sex.

Strangulation (in or out of the bedroom) is an indicator that intimate partner violence is escalating and is the most lethal (deadly) form of intimate partner violence.

'But my partner's not a violent person... it only happens during sex...'

- It is about POWER and CONTROL
- Strangulation is any deprivation of oxygen or restriction of airways as a result of pressure to the neck
- It can be caused by placing their hand(s)/forearm/other parts of their body (leg/foot)/rope/clothing/other objects/items against your throat, neck, chest, mouth, nose to block or cause pressure to your airways preventing you from breathing normally, or that breathing is difficult or impossible
- Strangulation is a very serious crime (non-fatal strangulation and suffocation are a criminal offence in Queensland with the maximum penalty of seven years)

- Strangulation is also a **WARNING SIGN** of increased violence and risk of lethality
- After strangulation has occurred in a relationship, a victim is nearly eight times more likely to be killed
- When **any form of strangulation or suffocation occurs**, it means your brain is deprived of oxygen – even if it is for a split second, **BRAIN DAMAGE OCCURS IMMEDIATELY** with 32,000 neurons and 230 million synapses dying each second
- Any disruption of blood and air flow to your brain means that cells within your brain will die. These cells **DO NOT** regenerate, and this can cause serious and long-term health problems

‘What if we like it and both consent to it...’

- We know that 98.3% of perpetrators are male (in 2016–2018, the number of offenders **sentenced** [only those reported, charged *and* sentenced] for strangulation aged 15 years to 25 years was 90). We also know that it’s the easiest way to kill someone (it only takes between 1 and 2.5 minutes, and the strength of a thumb and forefinger; less force than it takes to break an egg). Remember that you cannot legally consent to being strangled
- In more than 50% of cases of non-fatal strangulation, there are **NO** physical signs of this occurring

- Given the health complications and the risk of lethality it's critical that you seek medical care whether you experience the following symptoms or not:



If you think you need more information or help

- If you've experienced strangulation, it is important to seek medical advice as soon as possible: you need to tell the doctor that you have been strangled/suffocated so that they can take the necessary tests and precautions
- It's normal to just feel relieved that you have survived an incident like this – you might just want to forget it even happened or you might start to 'play it down' (minimise), this is normal and doesn't mean there is anything wrong with you, but it is a very serious act of violence and statistics tell us that there is a high chance it will happen again
- It is important to tell someone when this happens, someone you trust like a support worker or friend
- It might also be helpful for you to take a support person or someone you trust with you to the doctor, so they can help you communicate the information you need to the health professional to ensure you get the right help

common reactions to sexual assault and rape – understanding your experience

If you have experienced a traumatic event, such as a sexual assault, it can be confusing to try and understand how you felt and how you reacted both during the event and in the time following. Behind the scenes, various parts of your brain are working overtime to deal with the situation. During the event, adrenaline rushes through your body and imprints the memory into your amygdala, which is a part of your limbic system. This system is the part of your brain that controls emotional and behavioural responses, especially those related to survival. We can think of your amygdala as the warning alarm that sends messages to the rest of your body to react in various ways. You might have heard of a 'fight or flight' response, but really it is also common for people to 'freeze' or 'fawn'.

FIGHT: physically fighting back, struggling, fighting verbally (such as yelling 'no' or 'stop')

FLIGHT: putting distance between you and the danger, backing away, trying to hide

FREEZE: dissociation, 'stuckness', 'numbness', immobility, 'shutting down'

FAWN: people-pleasing, over-niceness, compliance

It is important to know that no matter what your reaction was, this does not mean you gave 'mixed signals' or provided consent. Your reaction to a sexual assault does not change the actions of the perpetrator. These reactions are all natural ways of responding to danger and your body's way of responding to threats in a way to keep you safe.

After the assault or rape

Memories of trauma are stored in your brain a little differently to other memories, which might be recalled more like a story. Trauma memories, rather, are stored as fragments of our five senses – sight, smell, hearing, touch, and taste – which is why you might notice that there are certain ‘triggers’ even once you are out of the situation and feeling safe. Other common reactions in a person who has experienced trauma are:

- Feeling powerless – ‘will I ever feel in control of myself again?’
- Feeling numb – ‘why can’t I cry?’
- Confusion – ‘was that even sexual assault?’
- Loss of trust in what you know – ‘maybe it didn’t happen like that?’
- Troubles sleeping – trouble falling asleep and staying asleep, nightmares
- Memory loss – trouble recalling the incident or things in general
- Flashbacks – sometimes with no apparent cause or reason
- Feelings of guilt – ‘I must have done something to make that happen to me’
- Embarrassment – ‘what would people think of me?’
- Loss of confidence – ‘I’m useless, I can’t do anything anymore’
- Mood changes – ‘I don’t understand how I feel, it changes all the time’
- Depression – ‘I don’t know how to go on’
- Fear/anxiety – ‘I feel so nervous all the time, anything can set me off’
- Anger – ‘I hate them for doing that to me’
- Change in appetite – increases and decreases in appetite, maybe even both
- Difficulty concentrating – ‘I don’t have space in my mind for anything else’
- Feeling physically unwell – nauseous, stomach pain, ongoing sickness, weakened immunity

getting help after a sexual assault or rape

Going through a traumatic event, such as a sexual assault or rape, can be extremely difficult to cope with. It can feel like a very isolating experience and leave victim survivors questioning what to do next. You are not alone, and there are options available to you.

Some victim survivors may decide that reporting to police is not the right step for them. This is your experience and you are valid in whatever decision you make. Your decision not to report does not minimise the seriousness or impacts of what you have experienced. You deserve to be believed and supported no matter if you choose to report or not. If you were under the age of 18 at the time of the assault, there are no limitations to when you can report and have a sexual assault investigated.

Reporting a Sexual Assault (non-emergency)

If you are over 18 years old and have experienced sexual assault in Queensland, you can make a formal report online by scanning the following QR code:



Policelink: reporting
a sexual assault

or contact Policelink (131 444). Reporting through this method means that police will conduct an investigation, and it may result in court proceedings.

Alternative Reporting Options (ARO)

If you choose not to make a formal complaint to police but would still like to provide police with information about the assault, Queensland Police have Alternative Reporting Options. Through this method, you can choose to provide your details or can remain anonymous if you wish.

Police can use the information you provide to assist with other prosecutions against the offender and increase police strategy. Choosing to use ARO may be an empowering process for survivors to have their story heard, as well as know that the information they provide could be used to solve reported offences of a similar nature.

For more information about ARO and to access the online form, please scan the QR code with your smart device:



ARO

For more information about understanding the impacts of trauma, reactions to trauma, tips of managing trauma and healing and more (online PDF), scan the QR code:



Care Package
(PDF)


**In case of an
emergency
contact 000**

impacts of intimate partner violence


Relationships where there is abuse – or intimate partner violence – can have significant impacts on **you as a whole person**. These types of relationships can influence your physical, mental, social, and emotional health, both in the short and long-term. You can be affected at any point of the relationship – both during and after it has ended.

Here are some common reactions that young people may experience following an abusive incident or relationship:

Physical health

- 
- Physical injuries (cuts, scrapes, bruising, fractures, dislocations, or hearing/vision loss)
 - Stress-related illnesses (IBS, chronic pain syndrome)
 - Sexually transmitted diseases
 - Unintended pregnancy, coerced abortion, miscarriage, or early delivery

Mental health

- 
- Depression
 - Anxiety
 - PTSD
 - Self-harming
 - Suicidal ideation

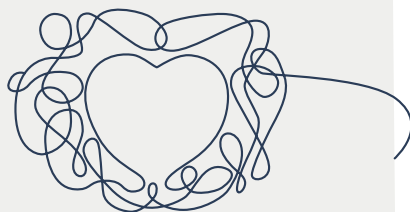


Thoughts and beliefs

- Confusion and concentration difficulties 'nobody gets it'
- Difficulty making decisions 'it's not fair'
- Loss of identity 'what's the point?'
- Low self-esteem 'I should have...'
- Lack of self-worth 'I should not have...'

Feelings and emotions

- Sadness
- Anxiety
- Anger
- Shame
- Loneliness
- Guilt and self-blame
- Grief and loss



Behaviours

- Sleep problems (insomnia, disrupted sleep, nightmares)
- Eating issues (increase/decrease in appetite)
- Hypervigilance and being on 'high alert'
- Difficulty focusing in class/drop in grades
- Increased alcohol or substance use/misuse
- Withdrawal from family, friends and interests



next steps... weighing it up

If you're in a relationship and things are not going well, these questions can help you work through your feelings:



- Are there times where I feel I'm not treated 'right' or with respect?
If yes, when?
- Are there times where other people (family, friends, workmates) tell me that I'm not being treated 'right' or with respect?
- What does this other person get from treating me this way?
- How do those times make me feel?
- How do I cope during these times?
- How have I changed since I've been in this relationship? What changes have others noticed?
- If I end the relationship how could my life improve?
- When I think about being single how do I feel?
- What's my biggest fear if I stay?
- What's my biggest fear if I leave?
- Who can I talk to about my relationship?
- Do I feel safe to end the relationship? If not, support is available to help you to plan to end the relationship and leave it safely?
(See services at the back of this resource)
- What or who could help me get through this difficult time?



(Adapted from Love: the good, the bad and the ugly online resource, 2021)

choosing to stay and being safe

For young people, DVPC is here to support you whether you decide to stay in or leave your relationship – and it's totally okay if you're still figuring things out. We can work with you wherever you're at with your relationship, so you feel safe and supported. People seeking support for their own aggressive or violent behaviour can refer to the list of services that can help at the back of this resource.

There are many different reasons you might decide to stay in or leave a relationship.

A specialist domestic violence service can support you regardless of whether you remain or leave the relationship. This involves being respectful of your choices, exploring your options and helping you to understand the dynamics of an unsafe relationship.

It can be helpful to think about developing a safety plan to increase safety in your relationship and to help you feel prepared if you do decide to leave. It's important that you don't let your partner see this plan, but it's a good idea to talk about it with an adult you trust like a safe elder or family member, teacher, guidance counsellor or support worker. You can use the Safety Planning chapter in this resource (page 87) to assist you in making a plan and the steps on the following pages can help increase safety in your relationship. It is important to understand though that while you can take steps to avoid violence, you cannot stop the violence. The only person who can do that is the person who is using violence.

choosing to end the relationship and how to break up with someone

It's natural for feelings to change over time, for people to grow apart, or to realise that they have different ideas and values that make staying in a relationship hard. And if that happens after a week, a month, a year or longer – it's always okay to end a relationship that you don't want to be in.

If you're considering ending a current relationship, it can be helpful to ask yourself: how would I like to be treated if someone was breaking up with me?

Although conversations about breaking up can feel awkward and hard, or leave one or both people feeling pretty crappy, you can still show care for someone in how you choose to break up by being open, honest and treating them with respect.

Choose your timing: breaking up with someone on their birthday, before an important event like an exam, or after sex, are not showing respect for the person, yourself or the relationship.

Choose your place: try and have the conversation face to face and avoid breaking up with someone through their friends, by text or announcing it on social media.

Remember: if you're worried about your safety a call or message is perfectly okay.



If you're concerned about their reaction, break up in a public place like a cafe and have a plan for who can be close by to support you or who you can call if things escalate.

Choose your words: e.g. you might say 'I invited you here because I wanted to talk to you about our relationship. I feel like...and I need to...', or 'Hi, I wanted to send you a message to let you know I feel...and I need to...'

They might feel crappy but they'll be okay. And even if you're the one doing the breaking up you might feel crappy too, but these feelings will pass.

Focus on your own self-care and check out the resources from headspace and ReachOut on coping with relationship break ups:



headspace



ReachOut

where to get help



helping a friend

Supporting a friend experiencing domestic and/or family violence

If you are worried that your friend might be experiencing abuse in their relationship, you may notice the following signs:

- Withdrawing from friends, spending all their time with their partner
- Injuries that can't be reasonably explained, or injuries for which they make excuses that just don't appear to add up
- Your friend may present with injuries they attempt to hide or do not want to talk about
- Your friend might talk about being or feeling that they are being monitored by their partner. They may tell you that they feel they are being watched/their movements kept track of
- Your friend might talk about feeling pressured to have sex when they don't want to or in ways they do not feel comfortable with, such as anal sex, strangulation during sex, or feeling pressured to have risky or 'rough' sex

OR

If you are worried that your friend is experiencing violence at home/with their family, you may notice the following signs:

- Avoiding friends being able to go to their house, wanting to always be away from home

OR

- Not being allowed to spend time with friends, being distant from social groups

- Your friend's behaviour may unexpectedly change, they may start missing school, changing the way they dress, say they are feeling sick/unwell all the time

You can start the conversation by:

- Reaching out – asking if they are okay?
- Letting them know you've noticed they don't 'seem themselves', respectfully and non-judgmentally share with them why you are concerned

If they disclose abuse to you, support them by:

- Listening respectfully
- Reassuring them that you believe them and that this is not their fault
- Reassuring them that you are there for them and will not judge them
- Helping them access support through a specialist domestic and family violence service, such as DVPC

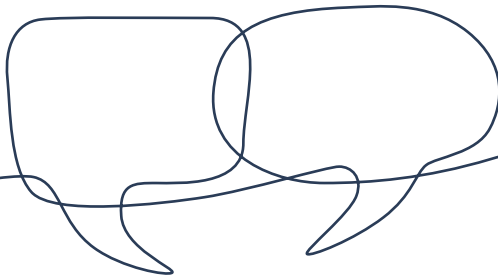


help for you

Experiencing violence, especially within a relationship where there should be trust and care, is extremely difficult. These experiences can feel isolating and confusing, but you don't have to go through it on your own.

Speaking about your experiences can feel daunting, so it's important to find a safe and trusted person that you feel comfortable opening up to about what has been happening in your life. Friends can be a great support, but if you have a safe adult support person in your life it can be really helpful to talk to them too. This could be someone like a parent or other family member, an elder or other trusted person in your mob, a teacher, lecturer or guidance officer, or even someone like a doctor or counsellor.

Alternatively, your local domestic and family violence service can provide a safe and non-judgmental space for you to share with them what you have experienced and assist you through counselling, safety planning, advocacy and other support. For more information about services that can provide emotional support and practical assistance for managing your safety when experiencing violence, see the end of this resource.



safety planning: staying safe...

Whether or not you decide to do so with the help of a support service, one practical step you can take to manage your safety is engaging in safety planning. The following pages have some things to consider when creating a safety plan.



at school

Safety getting to and from school:

- If you need to walk, can you have a trusted adult or friend with you?
- If you drive, can you take a different route? If you park at school, could you reverse park for a quicker exit?
- Is your phone on and charged at all times if you need to call for support or in an emergency? You would need credit on your phone and reception to contact a support person like a parent or friend, however **your phone will be able to dial emergency services (000) even in an area without reception and if you don't have a SIM card in the phone**

While you're at school:

- Can a friend walk with you to and from classes?
- Do you have any teachers or adults at school that you trust (chaplain, guidance counsellor, social worker, school nurse) that you could talk to about what is happening for you?
- Is there a part of the school that you can spend lunch times at that is well supervised by teachers?
- If you have a Domestic Violence Order (DVO), have you provided it to the school?



at home

- Can you keep doors and windows locked?
- Do you have a designated safe room in the home that you can go to, one that has a safe exit route?
- Do you have a contact list available for if you need to be in touch with a support person or emergency services?
- Are your family/roommates aware of what is happening in your relationship?
- If you drive and park in the driveway, could you reverse the car in for a quicker exit?
- If you need to leave home is there somewhere you can go that is safe/public/unknown to your partner?
- Do you have a codeword with friends/family/other trusted support people that you can use to alert them or call for help?

online



Online safety
checklist



Social media
checklist

Things to think about:

- Are your social media account settings private?
- Can you turn off location services for certain apps? (e.g. Snap Maps) and use location services to your advantage, e.g. allow safe trusted adults/support people to view your location
- Are you mindful of sharing your location? e.g. avoid posting that you are home alone or where you are
- Avoid accepting followers/friends of people you don't personally know (even if you have a lots of mutual friends)
- If you feel comfortable to do so, speak to your friends about what they post about you and how they include you on their social media, e.g. identifying your whereabouts
- Consider setting up a code word/emoji for your trusted support people to check in on you/call for help

emotionally

- Identify support people
- Identify support organisations (e.g. Kids Helpline, eHeadspace, DVPC)
- Identify useful strategies for when you're feeling down/anxious

legal protection

As a part of their safety plan, some people may choose to access legal protection.

If you are a young person experiencing abuse in your relationship, or with an ex-partner, there is support available to you. Under Queensland legislation, you may be eligible to access a 'Domestic Violence Order' (DVO). Making sense of this can be confusing for anyone, but especially so when you and/or your partner are under 18. For clarity, we have included the definitions of some terms you might come across when looking at applying for a DVO:

Aggrieved: the person who needs protection

Respondent: the person you apply to be protected from

Intimate personal relationship: couple relationship, engagement relationship, or spousal relationship (married or de facto)

Informal care relationship: a relationship where one person is dependent on the other for help in activity of daily living (e.g. dressing, hygiene, feeding). This does not apply in cases of parent-child relationships or where there is a commercial agreement (e.g. a nurse)

Family relationship: a relationship between relatives; not limited to relation by blood or marriage, rather inclusive of broader definitions of 'family' including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people kin relationships or people with particular religious beliefs

Conditions: the restrictions in place specified in the Order

myths and facts: domestic violence orders and young people

myth

I'm under 18 so I am too young to take out a Domestic Violence Order

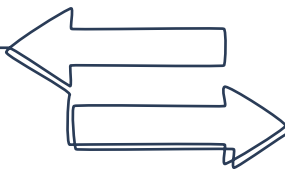
fact

If you are under 18 years of age you CAN apply for a Domestic Violence Order if:

- You are or were in an *intimate personal relationship* or an *informal care relationship*
- Both you and the respondent are at least 16 years of age

If you are under 18 years old, you cannot be named as the aggrieved nor the respondent in a DVO when it is within a *family relationship*. If you require protection from a family member, you can contact 000 in the case of an emergency or a specialist Domestic and Family Violence service such as DVPC for support and advice.

If you and/or the other party are under 16, it is recommended that you seek legal advice due to the laws around consent and minors. Please see the back of this resource for where you can access legal support.



myth

I can't afford to go to court for a DVO.

fact

There are no fees associated with applying for a DVO. In addition, Magistrates Courts across Queensland have duty lawyer services available that can provide you with free legal information and advice, information on what to expect when appearing in court, referrals to other support organisations and more. The duty lawyer can also appear with you in court.

For information about the availability of a duty lawyer in your location, see the Legal Aid website under 'Domestic and Family Violence Duty Lawyer' or scan the QR code:

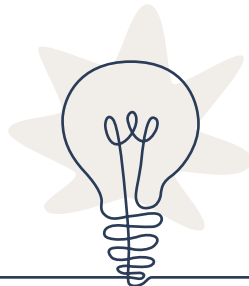


myth

I don't understand how to make an application and I don't have support.

fact

There are support services available to help you understand the process of applying for a DVO as well as assist you with your application. You may like to contact your local courthouse to find out what support services are available near you.



Some of the content in this resource may have been difficult for you to read. It may have triggered some uncomfortable feelings and thoughts for you. It's really important to be kind and gentle to yourself.

self-care

What is self-care?

When you hear the word self-care what do you think of? For some people it could be 'doing a face mask' or 'buying myself a treat' and it's true these things can be enjoyable and be a part of someone's self-care routine, but in truth self-care is much broader than that! Self-care is about taking care of your basic needs to keep you physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy. Self-care is not a luxury; it is a necessity. Here are some simple ways to make space for self-care in your life:

Physical self-care:

- Creating healthy and regular sleep habits
- Rest when you need to
- Taking time to stretch and breathe
- Going for a walk
- Doing an exercise or sport you enjoy
- Eating foods that will nourish your body
- Drinking enough water
- Setting boundaries
- Saying 'no'
- Spending time alone when you need to
- Asking for what you need

Emotional self-care:

- Journaling
- Being mindful of your inner voice
- Focusing on your strengths
- Talking to yourself with love
- Forgiving yourself
- Talking to someone who cares about you
- Tuning into your body
- Doing an activity you enjoy

Social self-care:

- Cancelling plans when you need to
- Prioritising yourself and your needs
- Spending time at home when you need to
- Unfollow/unlike/unjoin people, pages, and groups that aren't adding value to your life
- Taking a break from social media when you need to
- Being mindful of what you are consuming online and how it is making you feel

Spiritual self-care:

- Practice mindfulness
- Meditating
- Praying
- Bullet journaling
- Engaging in rituals that are important to you
- Spending time in nature



Personal self-care:

- Doing something creative
- Engaging in a hobby or activity you enjoy
- Setting manageable goals for yourself
- Focusing on what is unique and special about you

Environmental self-care:

- Creating spaces, you can relax and unwind in
- Keeping your room/home clean
- Setting goals for yourself when tidying spaces (focusing on one area at a time)
- Taking time away from places that are draining you

Financial self-care:

- Setting goals for your savings
- Taking control of your money
- Budgeting
- Paying bills when they are due
- Setting boundaries for yourself when spending



notes

services

For free and confidential counselling and support, you can contact:

Domestic Violence Prevention Centre (DVPC)

Counselling, safety planning, advocacy, information and referrals to women, children and young people in the Gold Coast and Beenleigh region.

Monday – Friday, 9am – 4:30pm

PH: (07) 5532 9000

E: info@domesticviolence.com.au

W: <https://domesticviolence.com.au/>

Kalwun Health Services

Psychology and/or psychiatry services available at health clinics in Coomera, Miami and Bilinga on the Gold Coast.

Monday – Friday, 8:30am – 5:30pm

Coomera PH: (07) 5514 7100

Miami PH: (07) 5589 6500 (Psychiatry only)

Bilinga PH: (07) 5526 1112

W: <https://www.kalwun.com.au/health-services/allied-health-services>

eHeadspace

Online and telephone counselling support for young people aged 12–25 years old.

9am – 1am (AEDT), 7 days/week

PH: 1800 650 890

W: <https://headspace.org.au/>

Kids Helpline

Telephone, email and webchat counselling support to children and young people aged 5–25 years old.

Phone line and webchat 24/7, 365 days of the year

Email 8am – 10pm, 7 days/week

PH: 1800 55 1800

E: counsellor@kidshelpline.com.au

W: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/>

QLife (LGBTIQA+ Brotherboy & Sistergirl)

Counselling support, information, and referrals to LGBTIQA+ Brotherboy & Sistergirl people of all ages via telephone or online chat.

3pm – Midnight, 7 days/week

PH: 1800 184 527

W: <https://qlife.org.au/>

If any of the content in this resource has raised concerns for you regarding sexual assault, you can access support from the following services:

Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence (GCCASV)

Telephone, video, or face to face counselling, support, advocacy, information, advice and referral to Gold Coast women and female-identifying folk aged 14 years and over who have experienced sexual violence.

Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm

PH: (07) 5591 1164

E: admin@stopsexualviolence.com.au

W: <https://www.stopsexualviolence.com/>

Bravehearts

Counselling services for children and young people who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing sexual assault. Free to those in catchment areas for Gold Coast, Logan, and Strathpine location (also covering Morayfield and Caboolture areas). Virtual support available nation-wide.

Monday – Friday, 8:30am – 4:30pm

PH: (07) 5552 3000 (Gold Coast)

or

PH: 1800 273 831 (nation-wide)

E: intake@bravehearts.org.au

W: <https://bravehearts.org.au/>

DV Connect Sexual Assault Helpline

Counselling support and referrals to anyone in Queensland who has, or thinks they have been sexually assaulted, as well as those who are concerned that someone they care about might have been assaulted.

7:30am – 11:30pm, 7 days/week

PH: 1800 010 120

1800 RESPECT

Telephone or online chat information, counselling and support nation-wide.

24/7, 365 days of the year

PH: 1800 737 732

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

To find further information and specialist sexual assault support services in another part of Queensland go to:

Queensland Sexual Assault Network (QSAN)

PH: (07) 3808 3299

W: <https://qsan.org.au/>

Alternative Reporting Options

An alternative method of reporting that does not involve making a formal complaint or involve any judicial process. Can be used by survivors of sexual assault where the assault occurred in Queensland, no matter their age or how long ago the offence took place.

W: <https://www.police.qld.gov.au/units/victims-of-crime/support-for-victims-of-crime/adult-sexual-assault/alternative-reporting>

For legal support and advice, you can contact:

Gold Coast Community Legal Centre (GCCLC)

Legal advice, assistance, information and referral to Gold Coast residents face to face across three offices or via telephone.

Monday – Friday, 8:30am – 4pm and Tuesdays from 5pm

PH: (07) 5532 9611

E: office@gcclc.org.au

W: <https://www.gcclc.org.au/>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (ATSILS)

Legal services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Queensland in 20+ locations state-wide or via phone hotline.

State-wide hotline 24/7

PH: (07) 5532 6988 (Gold Coast)

or

PH: 1800 012 255 (State-wide)

E: info@atsils.org.au

W: <https://www.atsils.org.au/>

Youth Law Australia

Legal advice, assistance and referrals to people under 25 years old via online and telephone.

Phone line Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm

Online chat 24/7, 365 days of the year

PH: 1800 950 570

E: advice@lawmail.org.au

W: <https://yla.org.au/>

Youth Legal Advice Hotline (Legal Aid QLD)

Legal advice, assistance and referrals for people under 18 via telephone.

Monday – Thursday, 9am – 9pm or Friday – Sunday, 8am – 5pm

PH: 1800 527 527

W: <https://www.legalaid.qld.gov.au/Find-legal-information/Criminal-justice/Young-people-and-the-justice-system>

For support through pregnancy and parenting, you can contact:

Brave Foundation SEPT Program (Supporting Expecting and Parenting Teens)

National, virtual interactive pathway plan supporting expecting and parenting teens connecting them to parenting, educational and other support.

PH: 0448 088 380

E: SEPTProject@bravefoundation.org.au

W: <https://bravefoundation.org.au/>

Children by Choice

All options telephone counselling, information, and referrals for Queenslanders experiencing unplanned pregnancy or who are post-abortion.

Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm

PH: 1800 177 725

E: info@childrenbychoice.org.au

W: <https://www.childrenbychoice.org.au/>

For other medical advice or support, you can contact:

Kalwun Health Service

Access to general practitioners, health checks, allied health services, dental services, and other treatments. Clinics located at Coomera, Miami and Bilinga on the Gold Coast.

Monday – Friday, 8:30am – 5:30pm

Coomera PH: (07) 5514 7100

Miami PH: (07) 5589 6500

Bilinga PH: (07) 5526 1112

W: <https://www.kalwun.com.au/health-services>

True Clinic

Reproductive and sexual health services, located in Headspace Southport in addition to other locations across the state.

Monthly, 9:30am – 1:30pm

PH: (07) 3250 0200 (True Brisbane)

or

PH: (07) 5509 5900 (Headspace)

E: clinicreception@true.org.au

W: <https://www.true.org.au/>

13 HEALTH

Health information and advice to Queenslanders via telephone.

24/7, 365 days of the year

PH: 13 43 25 84

W: <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/contacts/advice/13health>

For men's support services, you can contact:

DV Connect – Men's line

A free, confidential telephone crisis counselling, referral, and support service especially for men.

9am – midnight, 7 days

PH: 1800 600 636

W: <https://www.dvconnect.org/mensline/>

Mensline Australia

A national support, information, and referral service for men across Australia, specialising in family and relationship concerns (online chat 15+ years, video chat 18+ years).

24 hours

PH: 1300 789 978

W: <https://mensline.org.au/>



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disclaimer

Information in this publication should not be regarded as a substitute for specialist domestic violence or legal advice. The information provided in this resource is offered as a guide only.

The Domestic Violence Prevention Centre Gold Coast Inc. accepts no responsibility for any loss or risk suffered by any person as a consequence of using or relying on the information contained in this resource, or for any loss or risk which may arise due to an error or omission in the information.

All contact numbers and addresses contained within were current and correct at the time of printing (December 2021).



Domestic Violence
Prevention Centre

emergency numbers

Emergency: 000

DV Connect: 1800 811 811

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800

Sexual Assault Helpline: 1800 010 120
(open until 11.30pm)

Homeless Persons Information Centre:
1800 474 753

National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family
Violence Counselling Service:
1800 010 120 (1800 RESPECT)

Domestic Violence Prevention Centre Gold Coast Inc.

PO Box 3258, Australia Fair Q 4215

Support enquiries: 07 5532 9000

General enquiries: 07 5591 4222

www.domesticviolence.com.au