



the**purple**book



Domestic and family violence has a profound impact on individuals and families. We dedicate this resource to everyone who is or has been affected by domestic and family violence.

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WHAT WE DO

The Domestic Violence Prevention Centre Gold Coast offers **FREE** counselling, support, information and referral for women and their children who have or are experiencing domestic and family violence.

The service is confidential but a duty of care applies and information can be subpoenaed by a court with jurisdiction.

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About this book

Most people in intimate relationships disagree about things from time to time and this is normal. In a healthy relationship both parties respect each other and they are able to express their different points of view or concerns. They both feel comfortable and safe discussing these together. In a relationship where power and control is being used by one partner over the other to create fear and isolation, it is a very different type of relationship and it is likely that domestic and family violence is occurring.

It is helpful to know is that domestic violence, domestic abuse, intimate partner violence, and family violence can be used interchangeably when talking about domestic and family violence.

If you are experiencing domestic violence, getting the right support to be safe is important. At the Domestic Violence Prevention Centre we recognise the challenges and barriers those who experience domestic and family violence may face. The service is free and confidential and provides support, information and referral.

Violence against women and children is never acceptable and cannot be excused, justified or rationalised. Women and children who experience domestic violence are never to be blamed for another's use of violent and abusive behaviours.

The Purple Book contains general information that may assist you having more information and potentially making decisions about your situation, however we recommend that you seek assistance and support. A list of useful numbers and websites is included at the back of the book.

We acknowledge the Queensland Government who provided the funding for the development and printing of the book.

We hope you find this resource informative and useful.

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Section 1

Healthy relationships

In a healthy relationship power is shared and negotiated between partners, with neither partner believing they have a right to control the other person.

Both parties feel comfortable, safe and treat each other with respect.

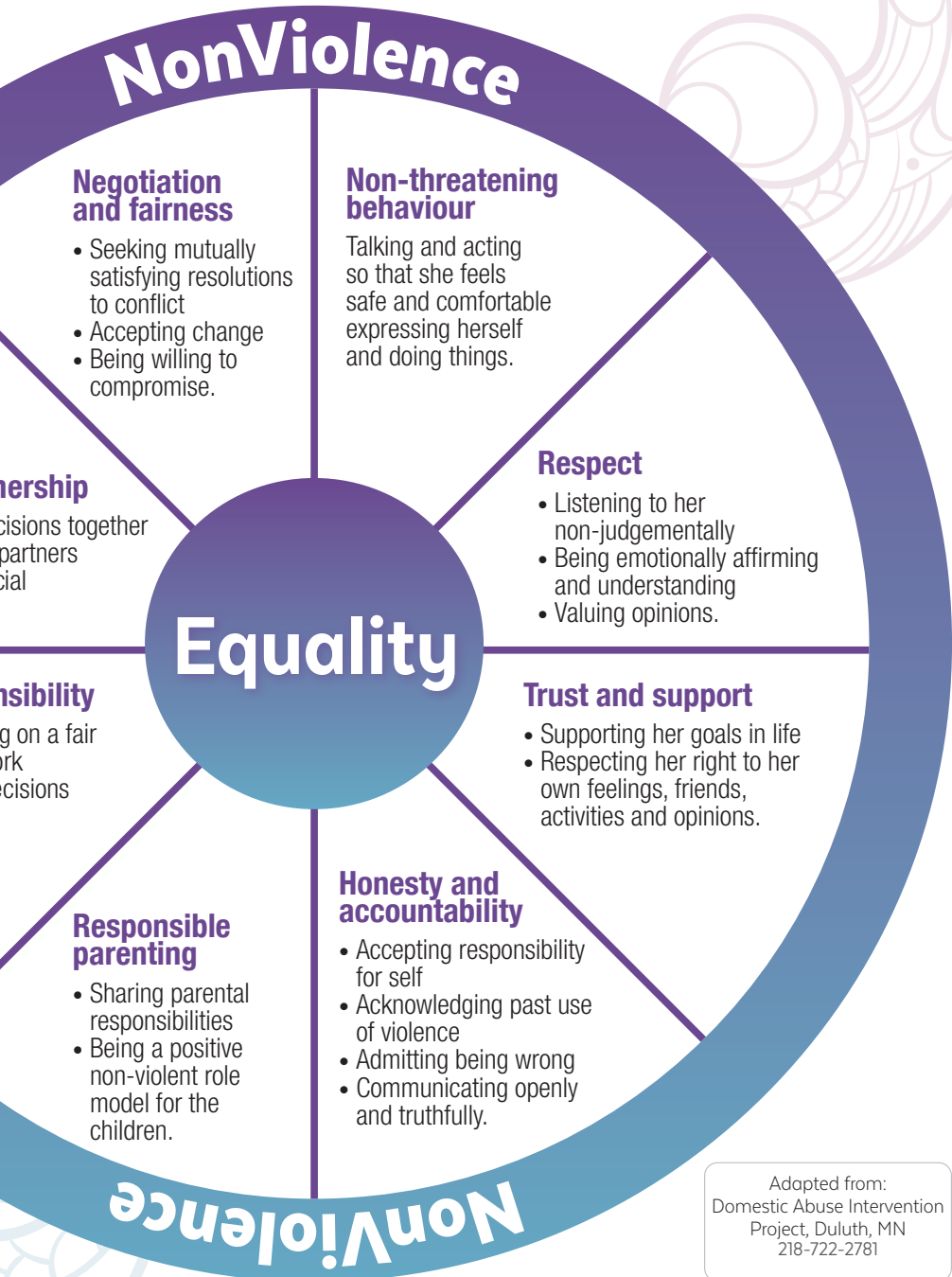
Economic partnership

- Making money decisions together
- Making sure both benefit from financial arrangements.

Shared responsibility

- Mutually agreeing on the distribution of work
- Making family decisions together.

NonViolence Equality Wheel



What is domestic violence?

Threats and intimidation are key elements in domestic violence and are powerful ways to control and make someone feel powerless and afraid. This can include smashing things, destroying possessions, putting a fist through the wall, handling of guns, knives or other weapons, using intimidating body language (angry looks, raised voice), interrogative type questions, and/or reckless driving. It may also include harassment at the person's workplace, persistent phone calls, following to and front work, and/or loitering near the other person's workplace or home. The person using threats and intimidation may also threaten to commit suicide, and/or harm or take the children.

Verbal abuse is aimed at destroying the other person's sense of self and can include screaming, swearing, shouting, put-downs, name-calling, and using sarcasm, ridiculing the other person's beliefs, opinions or cultural background.

Physical abuse can include pushing, shoving, hitting, slapping, strangulation, hair-pulling, punching etc. and can involve the use of weapons including guns, knives or other objects.

Emotional abuse is used with or without physical violence and is used to deliberately undermine the other person's self-esteem and confidence, often through 'mind games'. This can result in the person believing that they are stupid, 'a useless or bad mother', someone who is going crazy or is insane. Threats may include harm to the other person, to themselves, to children or others. Being silent and withdrawn, known as the 'silent treatment' is used as a means to abuse. Experiencing this type of abuse can be humiliating, degrading and demeaning.

Social abuse is used as a way to isolate the other person from their social networks and supports either by preventing them from having contact with family or friends, or by verbally or physically abusing them in public or in front of others. They may continually put the other person's friends and family down to try and get them to slowly disconnect from their support network and be more dependent on them.

Economic abuse can result in someone being financially dependent or controlled by the other. It can include being denied access to money, including their own or demanding that they and the children live on minimal funds for what they need. It can also include being forced to sign loans and being responsible for debts that they have not incurred.

What is domestic violence?

Sexual abuse includes any sexual type behaviours that the other person does not want and can mean being forced or coerced into watching pornography, having sexual contact, rape, having to perform sexual acts that cause pain or humiliation, and/or being forced to have sex with others. This can result in physical injury to the other person's sexual organs.

Cultural and spiritual abuse can include ridiculing or putting down the beliefs and culture that are important to the other person. Like social abuse, the person using this type of abuse may prevent the other from belonging to a group or practising ways that are important to their spiritual beliefs.

Other forms of abuse may include:

Deprivation of liberty can include dictating what the other person does, who they see, what they wear, even what they read. Additionally it can include not letting the other person express their feelings or thoughts, and not allowing them any privacy. It can even involve forcing them to go without necessities such as food and water.

Separation violence happens when the relationship has ended; however, the abuse and violence continues. This is known to be a high risk time for women and children. This ongoing violence may be because the person using violence perceives a loss of control and in trying to regain control, becomes more unpredictable and the violence escalates. The risk to others is increased requiring extensive safety planning.

Stalking is similar to threats and intimidation and can include loitering around places the other person is known to frequent, being watched, being followed, making persistent telephone calls, emails, texts and sending mail including unwanted love letters, cards and gifts.

Cyber abuse involves the use of social media, emails or technology to stalk abuse or intimidate. It might include posting pictures, videos or information about the the person without their permission.

Spousal homicide is the term used to describe the murder of a person that can be directly attributed to domestic violence. Research tells us that 7 to 10 women murdered in Australia are victims of family violence (Chan and Payne 2013).

Power and Control Wheel

Domestic violence usually evolves as a pattern of behaviours that are used by a person that is for the purpose of having **power and control** over the other person.

The patterned behaviours used by the person are intentional, deliberate and can be overt or subtle. The power and control exerted over the other can be viewed as a breach against their human rights.

PHYSICAL

Using economic abuse

- Preventing her from getting or keeping a job
- Making her ask for money
- Giving her an allowance
- Taking her money
- Not letting her know about or have access to family income.

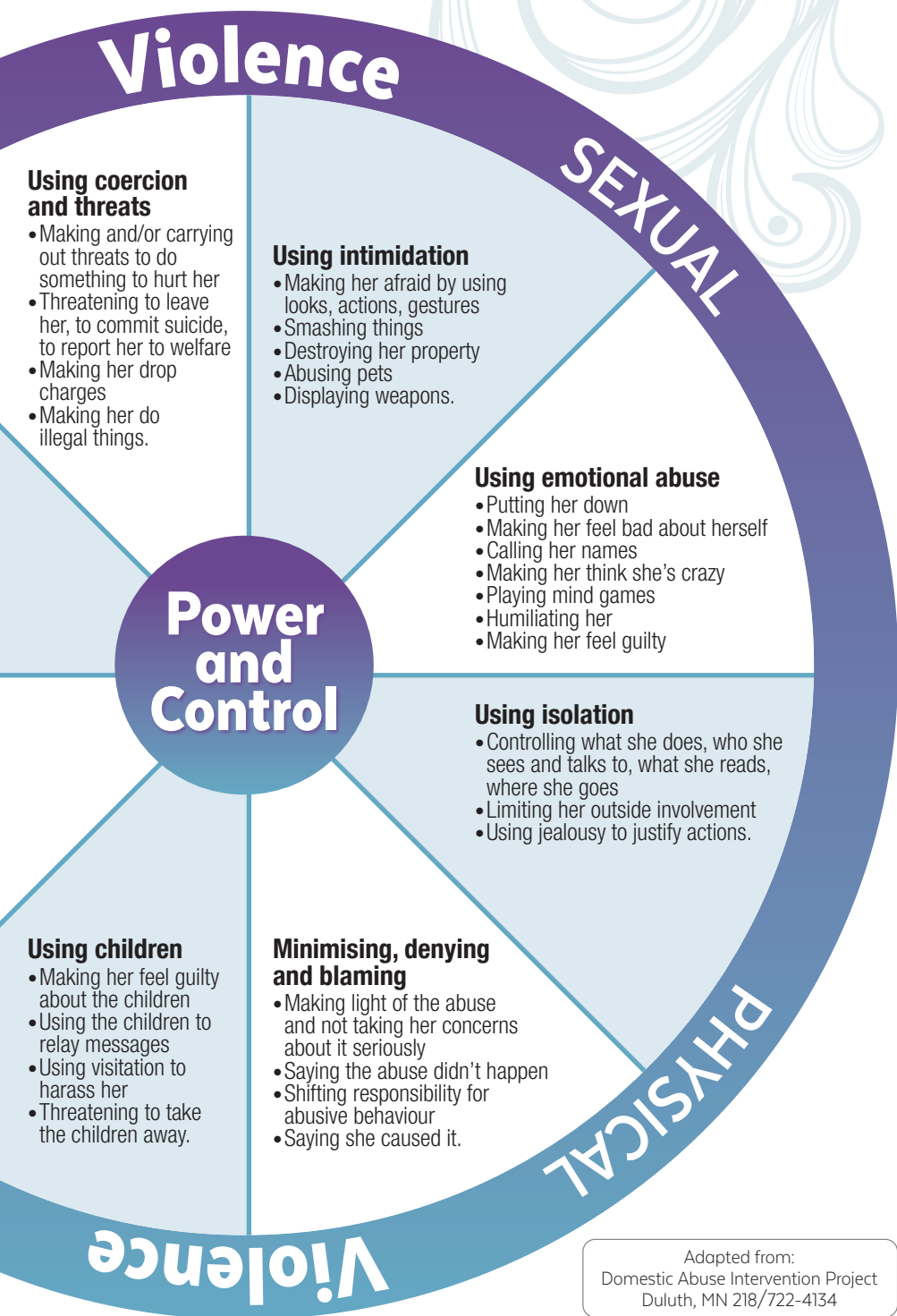
Using male privilege

- Treating her like a servant
- Making all the big decisions
- Acting like the 'master of the castle'
- Being the one to define men's and women's roles.

SEXUAL

Power and Control is at the centre of the wheel to represent the intention of the violent and abusive behaviours used against another.

Each spoke of the wheel represents tactics that can be used by the person against the other. The rim of the wheel represents physical and sexual violence that can be used and which reinforces the other non-physical power and control behaviours.



Adapted from:
Domestic Abuse Intervention Project
Duluth, MN 218/722-4134

Pattern of violence

Theories can help us understand complex issues such as domestic and family violence.

At DVPC our work is informed by evidence based theories and from working with thousands of women. We believe that women are our greatest teachers in this work given they are the ones who have, or are experiencing the violence and abuse.

When talking with women about their experiences and asking questions so we can acknowledge and assess their risk of the person continuing to use violence against them, we find that women often don't talk about the one behaviour or the one time the violence or abuse occurred. Rather, women tend to describe many different behaviours used, and sometimes their ability to predict a behaviour before it happens. Women are able to effectively use what they know as a way of trying to protect themselves and their children. From women's knowledge of their experiences, a pattern of violence can be assessed and this can be very helpful for future safety planning and decision making.

The following is important to note:

- The pattern of violence can change and is not static i.e. violence can increase during pregnancy.
- The pattern of violence is different for everyone and one pattern does not represent all patterns of violence.
- The pattern of violence against the woman may be able to be identified by her, however this doesn't place the responsibility or the blame on the woman for why this is happening.

Logging the pattern of violence

Asking yourself the following questions as a way of 'logging' a violent or abusive episode, can be helpful in identifying a 'pattern of violence' the other person uses. Your responses can also be helpful in developing a safety plan. Always remember the pattern of violence can change so this is merely a guide and context is important (i.e. separation/pregnancy/unemployment).

Actions:

- How would you describe what happened?
- What was happening prior to what they did to you?
- What statements did they make?
- What gestures did they use?
- How would you describe their tone of voice?
- What were their facial expressions like?

Intent:

- What do you think they wanted to make happen?
- Did they want to stop you from doing or saying something?
- Did they want to make you do or say something?

Beliefs:

- What do you think they believe or think that supports them to be ok with what they did to you?
- What thinking gave them self permission to do what they did to you?

Impact/Effect:

- What is the impact of what they did to you?
- What is the impact of what they did to others who were there? (i.e. children even if not in the same room)
- What is the impact on the person who did this to you?
- What is the impact on the relationship of what they did to you?

Relationship where there is DV

The following is a checklist of warning signals that may assist in identifying a relationship where violence and abuse is being used. It can relate to a current relationship and also relate to the behaviours of an ex-partner.

If any of the following boxes are ticked, a person may be choosing to use power and control over their partner, and we encourage them to speak to a specialist domestic violence support agency to discuss further.

Emotional and psychological abuse

- ☐ Does your partner call you names or make you feel bad about the way you look?
- ☐ Does your partner verbally degrade your self-worth by constantly putting you down?
- ☐ Has your partner ever humiliated you in front of friends, family or in public?
- ☐ Has your partner ever threatened to have you “committed” or tell others you are crazy?
- ☐ Has your partner ever played mind games with you?

Physical abuse

- ☐ Has your partner ever pushed, shoved, slapped, pinched, punched, or physically hurt you?
- ☐ Does your partner have a history of using violence with others?
- ☐ Has your partner ever attempted to strangle you or grabbed you around the throat or neck?
- ☐ Has your partner ever physically harmed you while you were pregnant?
- ☐ Has your partner ever stopped you from gaining access to medication/medical assistance?

Using male privilege

- ☐ Does your partner always see themselves as superior or always right?
- ☐ Does your partner treat you like you a possession that can be owned?
- ☐ Does your partner insist on making all the big decisions?
- ☐ Has your partner ever told you what to wear, read, or restricted where you can go and who you can talk to?
- ☐ Does your partner monitor and control the financial matters including spending, bills, assets, loans and bank accounts?

Using coercion and threats

- ☐ Does your partner use force or coercion to make you do things against your will?
- ☐ Has your partner threatened to hurt the children, friends, family members or pets?
- ☐ Has your partner threatened to report you to Centrelink, the Australian Taxation Office, Immigration, Corrections, Police, Child Safety, employers or others?
- ☐ Has your partner ever threatened to leave you, harm themselves or commit suicide?
- ☐ Has your partner ever insisted you dress more or less sexually than you want?
- ☐ Has your partner ever threatened to kill you and/or your children?

Using isolation

- ☐ Does your partner try to control your contact with your family and friends?
- ☐ Does your partner need to know where you are constantly?
- ☐ Does your partner demand that you are always at home, and only lets you out of the house if they are with you, or demands to know where you are going and exactly when you will return?
- ☐ Does your partner monitor or limit your phone calls, conversations and Facebook, internet access, emails?
- ☐ Does your partner check the mileage on the car as a way of tracking to see if they can work out where you have been or who you have seen?
- ☐ Does your partner check your browser history, phone calls or messages?

Sexual abuse

- ☐ Does your partner pressure you to have sex which is unpleasant, pressured or forced?
- ☐ Has your partner ever made you do something very humiliating or degrading?
- ☐ Has your partner ever made you have sex after emotional or physical abuse or when you are sick?
- ☐ Has your partner ever forced you to have unprotected sex?
- ☐ Has your partner ever forced you to engage in sexual practices without your consent?
- ☐ Has your partner ever drugged you, filmed you while having sex, shared images or uploaded sexual images of you to the internet without your consent?
- ☐ Has your partner ever forced you to have sex with objects, others or animals?
- ☐ Has your partner ever forced or coerced you into watching pornography or re-enacting scenes from pornography?
- ☐ Does your partner negatively compare you to women who are featured in videos or photos that are pornographic or sexually explicit?

Minimising, denying and blaming

- ☐ Does your partner blame you for their anger and violence, saying it was your fault?
.....
- ☐ Does your partner say that you were 'asking for it' after physically hitting or abusing you?
.....
- ☐ Does your partner deny using violence afterwards?
.....
- ☐ Does your partner say the violence 'wasn't really that bad'?

Using intimidation

- ☐ Does your partner damage or destroy your belongings or break things around the house?
.....
- ☐ Has your partner ever punched holes in the walls or doors?
.....
- ☐ Is your partner easily angered and prone to sudden mood swings?
.....
- ☐ Does your talking to others result in unfounded jealousy and suspicion that is out of proportion?

Economic abuse

- ☐ Has your partner ever taken away your money or controlled how you spend it?
.....
- ☐ Has your partner ever refused to pay the household bills or to give any money towards them?
.....
- ☐ Has your partner ever threatened to withdraw financial support?
.....
- ☐ Has your partner ever prevented you from working or jeopardised your employment?

Using the children

- ☐ Has your partner told you that you would lose custody or never see the children again?
- ☐ Does your partner question the children to find out information about you?
- ☐ Has your partner ever forced or manipulated the children into hurting you physically or emotionally?
- ☐ Has your partner ever sought to destroy or undermine your relationship with your children?

Technology abuse

- ☐ Has your partner ever made you, or emotionally coerced you to share or disclose your passwords?
- ☐ Has your partner used technology to track or monitor your movements?
- ☐ Has your partner ever posted embarrassing pictures or sent harassing or threatening messages on Facebook or other social media platforms?
- ☐ Has your partner ever changed your passwords without your consent to stop you having access to accounts?
- ☐ Has your partner ever stopped you from getting or sending emails to family or friends?
- ☐ Has your partner ever used your profile on social media and pretended to be you?

If you are worried about the behaviour of your partner please contact a specialist domestic and family violence service to discuss your concerns.

What is coercive control?

Coercive control is a pattern of domination that includes tactics to isolate, degrade, exploit and control the victims. It is a systematic strategy that involves various tactics used by the perpetrator that gradually erodes a victim's autonomy, self-esteem, and agency, effectively trapping them in a cycle of fear and manipulation. It may or may not include physical and sexual violence. Coercive control can also be described as a system of entrapment of victim-survivors and is designed to punish, hurt or control them. Coercive control is almost always an underpinning dynamic of family and domestic violence and is one of the most dangerous forms of abuse. It is predominantly experienced by women and perpetrated by men.

Impacts

The impacts of coercive control are pervasive, and can be physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual, cultural, social and financial. Victim-survivors commonly describe coercive control as feeling like 'walking on eggshells'. Coercive control has also been referred to as 'intimate terrorism'. Many victim-survivors identify it as the 'worst part' of domestic and family violence — more impactful and traumatic than physical violence, and more difficult to recover from. Many women say that non-physical abuse deeply impacts on their sense of self and freedom, and often continues to affect them years after separation.

Coercive control inflicts harms on the dignity, liberty, autonomy and personhood of victim-survivors as well as to their physical and psychological integrity. The impact of coercive control is cumulative rather than incident specific. Coercive control tactics are typically hidden and often it is the victim-survivor who is thought 'to have the problem'.

Tactics of coercive control

Isolation is extremely common in coercive control. Abusive partners isolate women from their family, friends, colleagues and any other social and professional supports. Isolation prevents her from making disclosures about the abuse, makes her dependent on the partner and stops her from getting help or support. It restricts her choices about life and opportunities of self-expression and autonomy. The partner's narrative shapes how she interacts with others as well as how she sees herself. Tactics of isolation include:

- Behaving badly with her family/friends/colleagues/social supports
- Talking poorly about her loved ones
- Turning them against her by telling lies
- Starting arguments before important events such as birthdays/weddings/work events etc.
- Embarrassing her in public
- Punishing her in some way if she has a good time with others
- Accusing her of infidelity
- Denying access to a phone, money, car, medical care or essentials

Threats violate a person's right to physical and psychic security and tranquillity. Threats can have an immediate effect on a victim-survivor's autonomy regardless of whether or not they are carried out. The intent is to let her know that if she leaves, she may be putting herself and/or her children/family/friends/pets/loved ones in danger. The idea of physical harm in the victim-survivor's mind can have more devastating effects than actual violence. Threats can be direct or indirect in nature. Some forms of direct threats are:

- threats to hurt her/children/pets/family or friends
- threats to kill
- threats to suicide
- dangerous driving
- property damage.

Indirect threats can be very difficult to identify or prove as threat. They can be as subtle as a look, a particular movement, certain tone of voice and sometimes a gesture that can otherwise seem quite harmless. Most of the times she is the only one who knows the meaning of the behaviour and the threat underneath it.

Surveillance is used to deprive a person of their privacy by monitoring their behaviour, usually to gather information without their knowledge. The intent is to make her feel that the offender is unstoppable and omnipresent.

Common tactics of surveillance include

- Stalking via social media, location tracking via smartphone apps, GPS devices.
- Controlling aspects of everyday life, e.g. what she wears, what she eats, who she talks to, how much she spends or what she buys.
- Checking the phone, personal diaries, social media, bank account statements, car odometer reading.
- Using 'checking-in' as a way of monitoring, e.g. calling and texting repeatedly, calling workplace to check if she is there.
- Insisting on going everywhere together, attending all her appointments with her, insisting on always picking her up and dropping her off. Some of these behaviours can even look like a caring gesture.
- Degradation is particularly harmful as it denies self-respect to victim-survivors. Name calling and treating her like an object is a very common tactic of coercive control. It can be in the forms of insults, put-downs, targeting her looks, weight, making fun of or embarrassing her in public.
- Shaming involves enforcement of a behaviour or ritual that is intrinsically humiliating or is contrary to her nature or values or best judgement. It can include forcing her to obey rules, to have sex, committing crimes, coercing her to take substances or controlling basic bodily functions such as eating, showering, using the toilet or dressing. Once a victim-survivor has done something of which she is ashamed, she is even more vulnerable to further degrading insults and threats.
- Violence is often used with other coercive control tactics, to establish dominance, prevent escape, subdue conflict and suppress resources. Partner assaults involve physical violence, sexual violence, sexual coercion or frequent, low-level acts of violence. The cumulative effect can be a hostage-like state, submission and chronic fear. Jealousy and accusations of infidelity are very commonly used to justify the use of violence. Women are then forced to cut off their friendships, limit their social activities and choices to prove their loyalty, which makes them further isolated from their supports.

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Effects of domestic violence

Domestic violence can have a significant impact on your health and well-being both in the immediate and longer term, continuing even after the relationship has ended. The psychological consequences of violence can be as serious and last longer than the physical effects.

They may include, however are not limited to the following:

- Physical injuries such as cuts, scrapes and bruises, fractures, dislocated bones
- Hearing or vision loss
- Miscarriage or early delivery
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Stress related illnesses – physical and emotional
- Depression
- Anxiety and Fear
- Suicide ideation/attempts
- Sleep disturbances/nightmares
- Confusion
- Low self esteem
- Concentration difficulties
- Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness
- Alcohol and substance use/misuse as a way of coping
- Hypervigilance/disrupted sense of reality
- Difficulty making decisions/questioning own judgement

If you are concerned about your health please talk to a health professional.

“ There is mounting evidence that domestic violence has long term negative consequences for survivors even after the abuse has ended.

(Campbell et al 2002)

Information for Aboriginal women

Aboriginal women continue to report higher levels of physical violence during their lifetime compared to non-Aboriginal women.

The close-knit nature and kinship networks for the Aboriginal Community means that family violence has the potential to affect a wide circle of people. An Aboriginal woman may be concerned about shame and the impact on their family and community if they speak about or do something in response to the domestic violence. Their obligations and loyalties may make it even more difficult to leave.

A specialist domestic violence service can provide confidential information and support without pressure or judgement about your choices. They can help to explore options and work out ways that may help the woman and any children to be safer. With consent, referrals or contact can be made to specific Aboriginal services.

Women with disability

Women living with disability and experiencing domestic and family violence is prevalent. They may also experience barriers to accessing support or justice outcomes.

Seeking support can be particularly complex for women especially when the person using violence is also their carer or support person. This can create a significant barrier and make any decision to leave a violent relationship very difficult.

A specialist domestic violence service recognises and understands some of the challenges that can face a woman living with a disability who is also experiencing domestic and family violence. They can provide support in response to the domestic violence and assist by linking with disability support agencies and advocacy services with the woman's consent.

Information for women from a CALD background

A woman from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background, who has experienced domestic violence, may be feeling extremely vulnerable and isolated. The woman may also have experienced challenges and barriers in finding out about what to do or where to get help. She may also be concerned about her residency or citizenship status, and what might happen if any reports of violence are made.

A specialist domestic violence service can provide support, information and referral, and may be able to assist by using a professional interpreter if consent is provided.

There are a number of other agencies that have information available in languages other than English. Their contact details are in the back of this book.

Information for women who identify as LGBTQI+

Domestic violence experienced by women who identify as LGBTQI+ is estimated to occur at approximately the same rates as heterosexual relationships. This estimation is believed to be conservative with incidents of violence not being reported because of barriers women face such as stigma. Women may also not wish to disclose their sexual identity or seek support from systems that do not have supportive and appropriate responses for women who do not identify as straight or are able to 'fit' within existing gender constructs.

Women who identify as LGBTQI+ and are experiencing domestic violence may be threatened by 'outing' as a means of control and coercion. They may also be concerned about seeking support, and fearful of their privacy and the impact on their relationships with families, workplaces and friends.

While the tactics of power and control may be similar for LGBTQI+, other forms of abuse specific to LGBTQI+ can include:

Using emotional abuse: humiliating and questioning whether they are a 'real' lesbian or woman.

Using coercion and threats and threatening to out them to family, friends and colleagues or threatening to leave, harm themselves or suicide.

Denying, minimising and blaming by accusing them of mutual abuse and trying to normalise it as normal behaviour.

Using privilege by defining roles or duties in the relationship and using systems against them to cut off or limit their access to resources.

Using intimidation by looks and actions used to reinforce power and control.

Using isolation and acting jealously about past partners and saying no-one will believe them about the violence because of their sexuality.

Using children by threatening to tell the authorities or or ex-partners their sexual identity and making them feel guilty and bad about the children.

What about women who use violence

Whilst the use of violence is never condoned it is helpful to understand that the violence used by women against their male partners can take several forms.

Self-defence is used when a woman exerts as much force as is reasonably necessary to defend herself against an assault in an effort to protect herself from further violence.

Retaliatory violence: Women may use a number of behaviours including force, to cope, survive and resist their partner's use of violence and coercive control. The intent is to stop the violence and protect herself, children or others. Retaliatory violence is also referred to as resistive violence or violent resistance. Women might use retaliatory violence when there is a pattern and history of ongoing perpetration of violence against them. Although she may use this type of violence, the woman is often not the person most capable of causing significant harm to the other and she often continues to fear for her safety.

There are a small percentage of relationships where women use violence as a pattern of abuse using power and control against their partners. However, statistics compiled from police reports, hospital accident and emergency departments, court data, and domestic violence counselling services suggests these types of relationships are only a small minority.

Similar to some women, it can be difficult for some men to reach out to seek help as they may feel ashamed or are embarrassed to talk about it.

Domestic violence during pregnancy

Unfortunately for many women, pregnancy can be the beginning or escalation of domestic violence in their relationship. Research has shown that many women experience domestic violence during pregnancy and for some women their first experience of domestic violence occurs during their pregnancy.

If you are pregnant, the abuse is dangerous not only to you but also to your baby, especially if you sustain a blow to the abdomen. Studies show that intimate partner violence during pregnancy is associated with an increased risk of miscarriage, low birth weight babies and fetal injury or even death.

Further studies also show that women who experience violence during pregnancy have an increased risk of experiencing post-natal depression.

Warning signs

- Does your partner act like he is jealous of the baby?
- Does your partner threaten to take your baby when it is born?
- Does your partner try to harm your baby by striking, pushing, poking or twisting your stomach?
- Does your partner prevent you from seeing your doctor or obstetrician?
- Does your partner question the paternity of the baby saying he is not the father?
- Does your partner call you names such as 'stupid', 'bitch', 'fat', 'ugly'?

If you recognise any of the warning signs then you may be in a dangerous situation. You can call a specialist domestic violence service for support, counselling, and referrals to local resources.

“Domestic violence is relatively common during pregnancy.”

(Burch and Gallop 2004)

Effects of domestic violence on children

The effects of domestic and family violence are experienced by all family members. Children who witness violence can experience the same fear, intimidation and threat to their safety that the woman experiences.

Children can be witnesses to violence, experience the violence and may be co-opted into perpetrating violence.

Studies show that children who witness domestic violence are more likely to:

- Display aggressive and/or socially inappropriate behaviours
- Have diminished self-esteem and self-worth
- Have poor academic performance, problem solving skills and concentration
- Show emotional distress, phobias, anxiety or depression
- Have physical illness or concerns

As a consequence of the violence they may:

- Avoid having friends over in case violence occurs
- Be distrusting of adults
- Feel guilt, shame and feel responsible for the violence and for stopping it
- Learn inappropriate behaviours
- Copy the aggressive behaviour of the perpetrator
- Learn to comply, keep quiet and not express feelings
- Learn to keep secrets and 'keep up appearances'

“Children who live with and are aware of violence in the home face many challenges and risks that can last throughout their lives.”

(Behind Closed Doors, Unicef 2008)

Impact of domestic violence on parenting

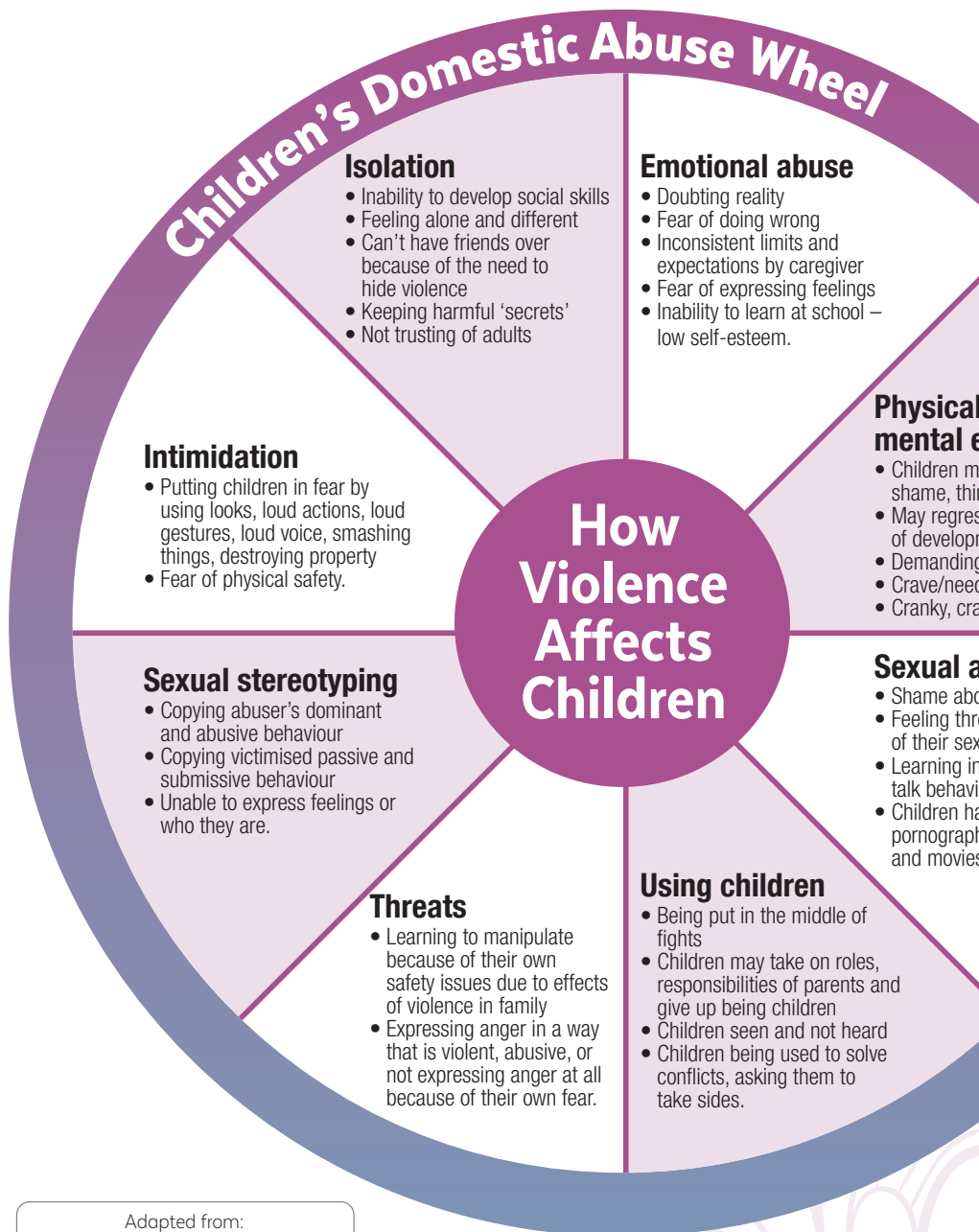
When domestic violence occurs in a family there can be an impact on the mother and child relationship. As a mother, her confidence in her parenting capacity and connection with her children may have been negatively affected. The way that the mother nurtures and attends to her children may have had to change in order to try and keep the woman and her children safe.

The person using violence may also be actively undermining the mother and her relationship with the children. Tactics used may include:

- Preventing her from attending to her baby or child when they need help or comfort
- Putting her down or ridiculing her in front of the children
- Co-opting the children into insults, i.e. “Tell mummy how stupid she is”
- Undermining her authority by making statements like “It doesn’t matter what mummy said I am the boss in this house”
- Blaming the mother for bad things happening, e.g. “It’s all mummy’s fault ...”
- Telling the children that the mother doesn’t love them or care for them
- Hurting the children and stopping the mother from protecting or soothing them
- Bribing with gifts and treats and comparing themselves to the mother – “mummy doesn’t buy you these – only daddy takes you to fun places”, etc.

Some ways to reclaim and rebuild the mother-child relationship:

- Work at keeping the channels of communication open by being present and listening to the children’s concerns
- Let children know that they are loved (a lot!)
- Take time to do fun things as a family
- Model non-violent problem solving techniques
- Reinforce positive behaviours
- Encourage and support children if they want to get counselling
- Design a safety plan with children involved that is age appropriate.



Adapted from:
Domestic Abuse Intervention Project
Duluth, MN 218/722-4134

Child or adolescent abuse towards mother

It is a normal part of development for adolescents to demonstrate healthy anger conflict and frustration as they move from childhood through to adulthood. Anger should not be confused with violence; violence, physical or non-physical, with the purpose of having power and control over the other person/s.

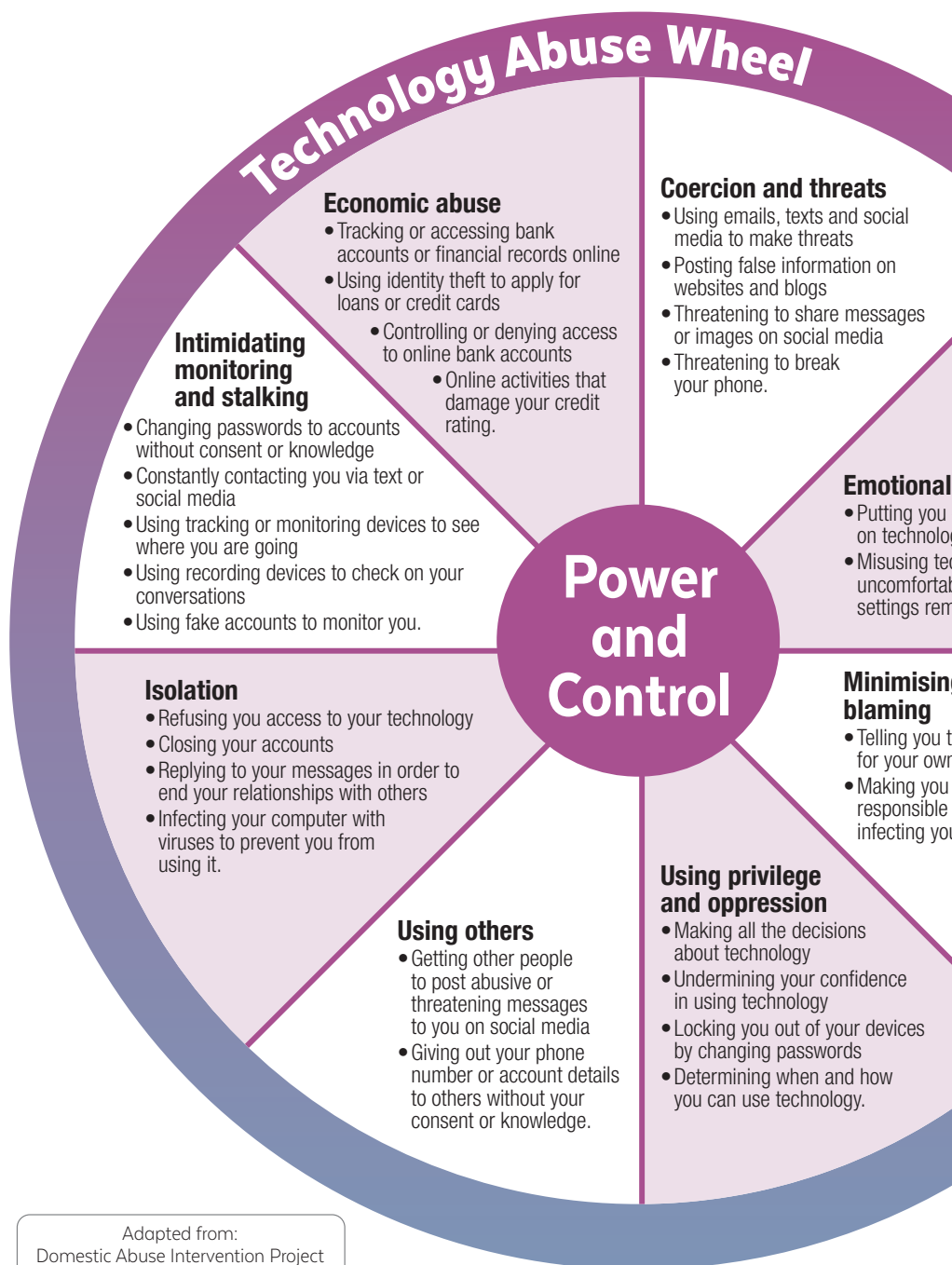
Abusive behaviour may include:

- Yelling, screaming and swearing
- Making intimidating and insulting comments
- Belittling and humiliating comments or behaviour
- Playing mind games such as threatening to run away or hurt themselves
- Pushing, hitting, throwing objects
- Breaking property
- Hurting pets

Some mothers feel ashamed, disappointed and upset if their child is behaving abusively and they may find it hard to disclose or share this with others. They may be fearful and feel like they are walking on eggshells. They may change their behaviour to try and avoid conflict. Some mothers also feel conflicted and are reluctant to seek support or call the police. Many mothers can feel alone, guilty and a failure as a mother.

Adolescents who use abuse can appear to share many characteristics as someone who perpetrates abuse against an intimate partner. This is because the attitudes and behaviours can be cyclical in nature and become learned behaviours/responses. In response to the violence or abuse, mothers may need to develop a safety plan to have in place in the attempt to increase their safety. Although it may be challenging to seek support, it can be harder to keep the abuse to themselves and this can leave them taking on the responsibility for the violence.

Family violence can occur between siblings and across generations, parent to adult child and adult child to older parent. Many of the behaviours may be similar to those used by the person who used domestic violence against them. This can include physical, emotional, psychological, social, financial and sexual abuse. Violence in any relationship is not acceptable. If you are concerned about violence and abuse in your intimate or family relationships, seek support from a specialist domestic violence service.



Adapted from:
Domestic Abuse Intervention Project
Duluth, MN 218/722-4134

Staying safe on social media

Keeping your details and whereabouts restricted can be difficult especially if you use social media to share information or photos. To try and avoid unintended sharing of information about yourself on social media, e.g. Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat, you could:

- Switch off any location settings in your phone, iPad or any other device that you use to photograph, make calls or send messages.
- Ensure your privacy settings are set appropriately on Facebook so that you cannot be tagged in photos without your permission and your posts shared to people you do not want.
- Do not accept friend requests from people you do not know or do not know well.
- Speak to people you are friends with on Facebook and tell them what you want and block people who are not willing to meet your requests.
- Logout every time you access social media and do not share your passwords with anyone. Change your passwords regularly.

abuse

down or embarrassing you
technology to make you
ple or confused, i.e. changing
otely, deleting items.

g denying or

that the restrictions are
safety
believe that you are
for installing spyware or
ur computer with a virus.

Maintaining your privacy and safety

Keeping your new location private and undisclosed

Some women who have left a relationship where they experienced domestic violence, may choose to keep their new contact details private. This may increase their sense of safety and security. If this is what you want, it is important that you explain this to all the people that you share your new details with and ask that they respect your need for privacy. You may choose to use a post office box address for your mail and on official documents. You can also apply to have your address withheld on the electoral role.

Safety tips for smartphones

Mobile phones can be an important safety device. We suggest that women have a fully charged phone with them at all times. However, phones can also be used to track a woman's location, to listen to conversations, and to search through text messages and emails.

Ways that might help to stay safe:

- Lock the smartphone and do not give the PIN to anyone.
- Turn off the GPS (location settings) on the phone and Facebook.
- Turn off Bluetooth on the phone when not in use.
- Avoid buying or using a 'jail-broken' phone as this phone will be more vulnerable to spyware.
- Talk to close friends and family members; ask them to have their phone on standby in case of an emergency call. Women may want to have a 'safe' word/phrase to let them know if they're in trouble.
- Memorise useful numbers such as DFV & emergency services and family members. Remember, the phone can be damaged or stolen when domestic violence is perpetrated.

Smart phones with internet capability are the most vulnerable to being used to spy and monitor. Spyware can be installed on a smart phone with relative ease and will enable another person to track calls, location, conversations, emails and browsing history.

Spyware can also turn a phone into a microphone, allowing the person using violence to hear everything that is being said, even with the phone turned off. If you are concerned that your phone has spyware installed take the phone to your service provider and ask them to investigate for you. If you want to be certain that a conversation is not being recorded or overheard, you may want to remove the battery, if possible, from the phone or leave it at another location.

Older mobile phones without internet capability are still available and cheap and allow the user to receive and make calls that are not able to be tracked or hacked.

If you suspect that your partner is monitoring you, plan carefully so you don't erase your entire browsing history on your computer as something maybe important. Instead, you can browse in 'incognito' mode, meaning that internet sites you visit will not show up on your history. You can temporarily go 'incognito' by pressing CTRL SHIFT N on your computer (PC) or CMD SHIFT N on an Apple. You can save or back up your files to a password-protected cloud account.

Section 2

If you have left or are thinking about
leaving the relationship

Leaving a relationship due to violence

For women who have experienced domestic violence in a relationship, the decision to leave can be a difficult one. The impact of domestic violence may mean low self esteem and self-confidence is experienced. It may take time for women to feel positive and hopeful about the future. This is common and to be expected.

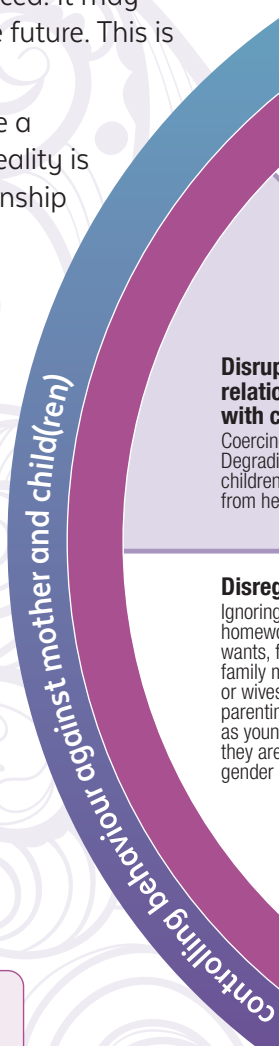
Some people think it 'should' be easy for a woman to leave a relationship where there has been domestic violence. The reality is that it may be much harder for women to leave this relationship in comparison to a relationship where there had been no violence or abuse. This can be due to the level of fear, isolation and the myriad of impacts. Some women may also believe that staying is the safest option and this can be linked to the threats made against them.

Women may also leave and return a number of times before they leave permanently. It is important to understand that leaving does not always equate to safety. In fact women, and children, may be at an increased risk of further harm and lethality from their ex-partner. Any attempt to leave needs to be planned with the safety of women and her children as paramount.

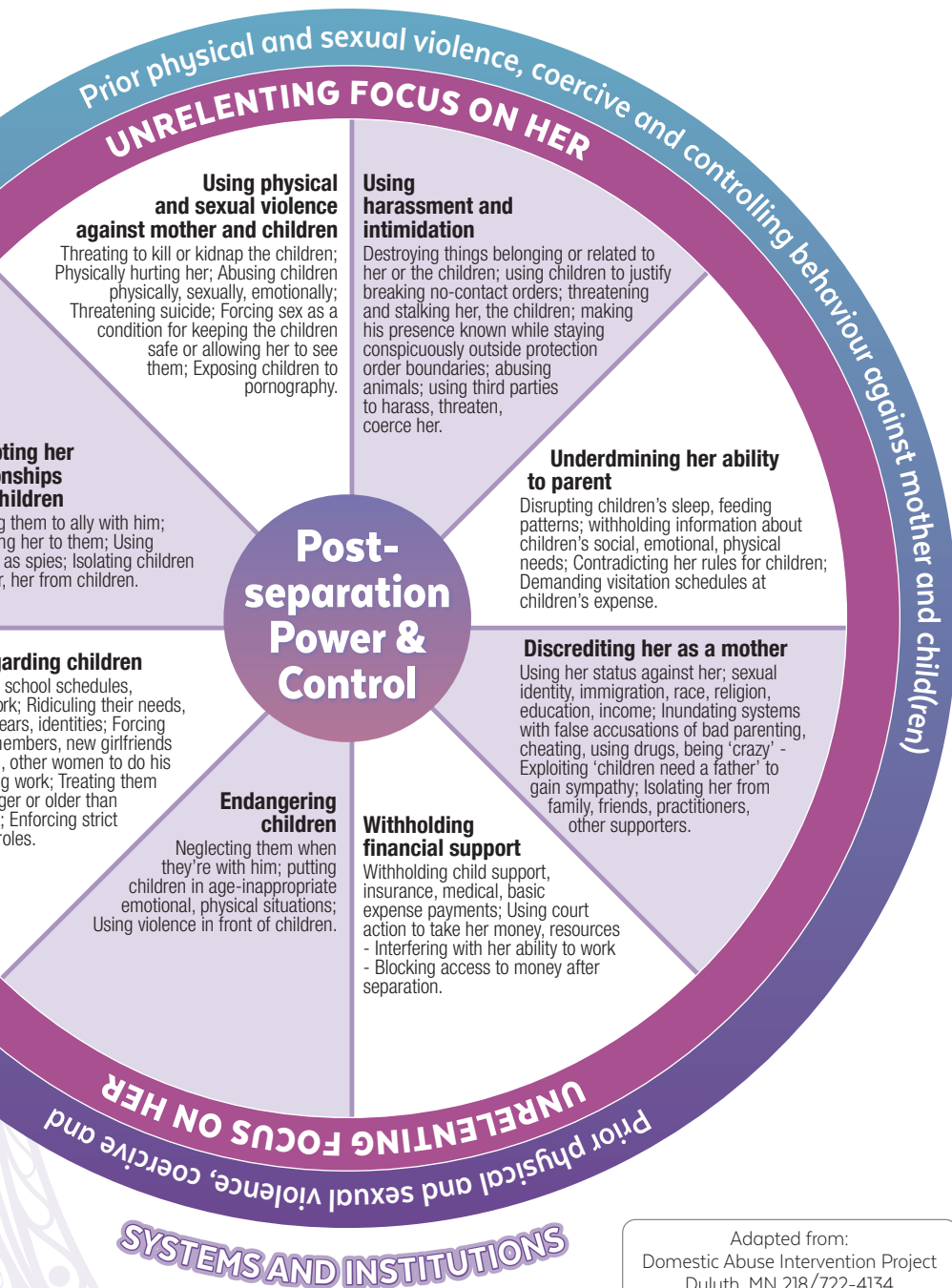
It is also important to remember that whilst the challenges may seem overwhelming, many women have been able to leave and move forward and live free from violence and abuse in their relationships.

Post-separation Power and Control Wheel

For many women leaving a relationship does not mean the end to the violence and abuse. The violence may escalate and can take on different forms. The Post-separation Power and Control Wheel can help to identify and recognise common post separation tactics.



Post-separation violence



Adapted from:
Domestic Abuse Intervention Project
Duluth, MN 218/722-4134

Safety planning considerations

If a woman prepares to leave or has already done so, it is important that she has a safety plan to assist her and her children in the attempt to be safe from further harm. It may be helpful for women to consider and develop a safety plan prior to leaving, so they have an idea of what to do if they are in a future situation where there is risk of abuse or violence.

It is important for women to review their safety plan and ensure that it is still relevant with changing circumstances. For a safety plan to work, it is important that the partner/ex-partner does not see the contents especially when the woman is preparing to leave. It can be very helpful for women to talk about their safety plan with someone they can trust.

Prior to leaving, it is unusual for a partner to have a sense that something has changed, or may be about to change. This might be because the woman seems different. Therefore it is important that women keep to their usual routines and activities. It is also important to know that whilst steps can be taken to avoid violence, women cannot stop the violence. The only person who can do that is the person who uses the violence and abuse.

Preparing to leave:

If you are in this situation, consider the following:

- Plan where you could go to be safe such as friends, family or a women's refuge. Always try to take the children with you.
- Only tell friends and family whom you are sure you can trust of your plans.
- Arrange your transport in advance, a lift from a friend or book a taxi.
- Ask your GP to carefully note any evidence of injuries on your records.

Make a list of personal papers and special items you want to take with you.

These may include:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birth certificates for yourself and children | <input type="checkbox"/> Bank account numbers and statements |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage certificate | <input type="checkbox"/> Bank cards, cheque books, credit cards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence Protection Order | <input type="checkbox"/> Department of Immigration & Citizenship documentation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Court Orders | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical records |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Passports for yourself and children | <input type="checkbox"/> Medication |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drivers licence | <input type="checkbox"/> Leases or mortgages |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance policies | <input type="checkbox"/> Car registration papers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Taxation, employment and income documents | <input type="checkbox"/> Jewellery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Centrelink card or number | <input type="checkbox"/> House keys |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School records | <input type="checkbox"/> Phone numbers in case you cannot take your phone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medicare card or number | |

Try and keep together a small amount of money to make emergency calls, key cards, house keys, essential medications and important papers, in a place you can access quickly or have someone else retrieve them for you. You may wish to leave a copy of important documents with someone you trust.

- Once you have left, you can request police to accompany you back to the house to retrieve your personal possessions. Never place your safety at risk to retrieve property or possessions.

Safety planning considerations

After you have left:

- Do you have a current Domestic Violence Order? Are the conditions relevant to you and your current situation? Do you need it amended or varied? If you have a Domestic Violence Order, keep the paperwork or a screenshot with you at all times, stored in a secure place.
- Inform your children's school and/or child care centre who has permission to collect your children. If you have a Family Court Order or a Domestic Violence Order, a copy may be left with the school.
- Arrange for your mail to be redirected to a post office box instead of your new address if you have moved.
- Consider reviewing your banking and postal arrangements.
- If possible try not to frequent places where you used to go. Use different shops and banks to those you used previously.
- Increase security on your house or unit.
- Plan for extra safety between where you park your car and enter your home, e.g. an automatic garage door opener, safety lighting or removal of shrubs or trees in the area.
- Change the locks on your house and ensure the windows are secure. Have security chains fitted to all entry doors and make sure they are used at all times when the door is answered by you or your children.
- Arrange for your phone line to have calling number display/caller ID and arrange for a private unlisted number.
- Keep a mobile phone with you at all times and pre-program any numbers you might need in an emergency, including the Police and DV Connect (1800 811 811 - 24 Hour Refuge Referral Line).
- Vary your travel routes to and from work.
- Tell neighbours that your partner does not live with you and ask them to call the police if he is seen near your house or if they hear an assault occurring.
- Tell your employer if you have a protection order and ask for your telephone calls at work to be screened.
- If your ex-partner breaches the protection order, telephone the police and report the breach. If the police do not help, contact your advocate or a legal service for assistance to access support with making a complaint.
- Contact the Australian Electoral Commission and ask for your name and address to be excluded from the published electoral role.
- Contact Centrelink or the Family Assistance Office to notify them of your change in circumstances.
- Attend a women's domestic violence support group or counselling to assist you with ongoing risk and safety planning and support.

Accommodation options

Leaving a relationship can be even more difficult when there is the need to consider housing and accommodation. Everyone's situation is different and there are different options to consider when making plans for the future. Thinking about your options prior to leaving is preferable, however this isn't always possible especially when you may have needed to leave due to a domestic violence incident.

Refuges (sometimes called shelters or safe houses) can provide safe and secure accommodation for women and children experiencing domestic violence. If you need to access a refuge, it is important to know that every refuge can be different so you will need to talk to the workers to find out more. The location and details of refuges are confidential and not available to the public. It is a condition of entering most refuges that you agree to not reveal the location of the refuge to **ANYONE** including your family.

If there are no places available at the refuge or no refuges in your area, you may be supported to stay in a motel or hotel for a few days. There are services that may be able to help you access a refuge or motel at any time of the day.

If you are leaving a domestic violence situation and you need to access crisis accommodation you can contact DV Connect on 1800 811 811. They operate 24 hours a day every day of the year.

Other services that may be able to assist can be found in Section 4 of this booklet.

“Refuges offer short term safe accommodation to women and children who are escaping domestic and family violence.”

Legal protections

In Queensland the 'Domestic & Family Violence Protection Act 2012' provides protection to people who are experiencing domestic and family violence. The purpose of the Act is to provide safety and protection against further acts of domestic violence. It does this by seeking to restrict the behaviour of the person committing abuse or violence.

In Queensland a domestic violence order can be applied for, by you, at a courthouse by completing an application form. It can also be applied for by the police, if they have attended an incident where violence or abuse has occurred.

A Domestic Violence Protection Order is a civil (not criminal) order made by the Magistrate's Court under the 'Domestic & Family Violence Protection Act 2012' (The 'Act'). An Order will only be granted in Queensland for behaviour covered under the Domestic Violence Protection Act 2012.

The Order will refer to the perpetrator of the violence the 'Respondent' and refer to you as the 'Aggrieved'.

There are two basic conditions are made on all Domestic Violence Orders:

1. The Respondent must be of good behaviour towards the Aggrieved and not commit domestic violence; and
2. The Respondent must be of good behaviour towards any named person in the order and not commit an act of associated domestic violence against the person.

In addition to these standard conditions, the court can impose extra conditions to help protect the Aggrieved and others named on the order from further domestic and family violence. Other conditions may include preventing the Respondent from:

- Approaching the Aggrieved, or any place where the Aggrieved lives, works or frequents.
- Contacting or attempting to contact the Aggrieved directly or indirectly (telephone, text messaging, email, post, social media etc).
- Remaining in a home where the Aggrieved and Respondent reside (this is known as an Ouster Order).

For the application of the order to be made final, the application has to be presented in a Magistrate's Court. This process can be different depending on whether the defendant agrees or disagrees with the order being in place. In some cases it may need to go to a hearing where evidence from both sides is heard.

Service of a protection order

In the Southport Court there are specialised domestic violence court advocates that can assist during the court process by providing information and advocacy. They can also provide a quiet and safe place to meet with duty lawyers for legal advice, or to wait in until the matter is heard. Advocates can also explain what to expect in court and support afterwards with what has occurred.

When attending court, it is recommended that women bring along copies of any paperwork relating to their domestic violence matter, and any material relating to family law agreements or orders relevant to their children.

New laws were introduced on 25 November 2017 under the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme so any domestic violence orders (DVOs) that were issued in that state or territory are recognisable and enforceable nationwide.

If you have a current DVO that was issued prior to 25 November 2017 it can become nationally recognised by applying to a court. It does not have to be in the state or at the court that the DVO was issued.

Local courts across Australia can also amend a nationally recognised DVO regardless of which state it was issued.

If you have moved to Australia from New Zealand, you will need to register your order in Australia by taking a copy of the order and evidence that the order has been served on the respondent, to the clerk of the court at the local courthouse where you reside.

Once a Domestic Violence Protection Order has been made, it needs to be served by police on the Respondent. The order will not be in place until the Respondent is served, and you will not be protected by the order. It may take up to five days or longer to serve the order depending on how quickly police can locate the Respondent. However, if further incidents of domestic violence occur whilst you are waiting for the order to be served, you should still report the incident to the police. Be sure to tell them you have a protection order however you are uncertain whether it has been served.

Reporting a breach of the order

A 'breach' occurs when the Respondent either personally, or through another person, commits any act which disobeys any of the conditions on the order. It needs to be proven that the Respondent knew about the order and the conditions on the order before they can be charged.

If you are in this situation, you are encouraged to report the matter to the police and you may be asked to provide a statement. This statement would detail what happened, when and where it happened and if there were any witnesses present.

The Respondent can then be charged with a breach of the Domestic Violence Order. It is a criminal offence to breach a Domestic Violence Order. If you believe that your order has been breached, record all details. Also try to keep as much evidence as possible including what happened, when and where it happened and the names of any witnesses.

If the police charge the Respondent with a breach of the protection order they will be arrested and brought before a Magistrate at the courthouse. If the Respondent pleads guilty they may be sentenced. Depending on the circumstances of the case, the Respondent may be either given a fine, ordered to complete a Men's Domestic Violence Education Program, given a community service order or given a prison sentence.

If the Respondent pleads not guilty, the matter may be sent to a trial or hearing. If the matter is sent to trial you may be required to give evidence at court.

**A respondent who breaches
or disobeys an order
commits a criminal offence.**

(Dept. of Communities, Child Safety and
Disability Services Info Sheet)

Remaining aware of safety

After leaving a relationship where domestic violence had occurred, many women may find that they still need to remain aware of concerns relating to their safety, privacy and confidentiality.

Family Law

After leaving the relationship women may need to continue having contact with their former partner if they have children together and he has shared care of the children, or has regular contact with them. The conditions that he spends time with the children may be the subject of a Family Law Order and/or included in a Parenting Plan.

It is important that women remain aware of the children's and their safety at all times. If women are concerned, they can arrange to meet in a public place for handovers such as a police station or a family contact centre. They can also consider taking a third party as part of their safety planning.

If violence or abuse occurs and you have a DVO, this is a breach and the details can be recorded and reported to the police.

Women who are concerned about the safety of their children may be able to help them develop a safety plan if appropriate. Children's workers at a specialist domestic violence service may be able to assist them to do this.

In the event that the children are at risk of violence or abuse if they continue to see the other party, seeking urgent legal advice is encouraged.

If women decide to leave the family home and move to another area including interstate, it is important that they check this is not a breach of any conditions of current Family Law Orders.

Ongoing contact with extended family

After a woman leaves, she may also be at ongoing risk due to the relationship she had or still has with family members of their former partner. Women may want to maintain contact and connection with the extended family.

If you are in this situation and wanting to maintain contact, you are encouraged to consider the safety of yourself and the children when making this decision. Any decision can be reviewed over time and/if circumstances change.

You may also choose not to have contact yourself or only limited contact with the extended family but there may be Family Law Orders in place that direct children to maintain contact with their grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. It can sometimes be challenging, especially if you are concerned about the dynamics and activities of the family. It is important that you seek advice to ensure that your actions do not breach the Family Law Court Order.

Taking care emotionally

Leaving any relationship can be difficult, whether there was abuse or not. The transition can be hard with many challenges. It can be helpful for women to find support that feels right for them to assist with the emotional and practical needs and/or requirements.

Emotionally, women can feel a loss of identity and grieve for the relationship and this can be difficult for them to make sense when they were harmed by their former partner. It can be helpful for women to talk to someone who understands this and help them to work with the emotions.

It can take time for women to start feeling some sense of safety and confidence to make decisions about their future – this is okay and varies for all women. Some women may feel intense emotions such as anger, betrayal, grief, joy and freedom. These feelings may feel overwhelming and uncomfortable and women may believe there is something wrong with them and want to ‘get over it’, however these experiences are very common as part of the transition.

Some feelings experienced can include:

GRIEF - This is part of moving forward from the relationship and working with the emotions experienced. Even if there was violence, women may mourn for the ‘good times’ they also experienced in the relationship and the ‘family unit’.

EUPHORIA - Women may experience a sense of euphoria that could last for weeks or months after leaving. This can be energising and help women to feel they have made the right decision. This euphoria may also be followed by anger or depression due to any new or unexpected challenges.

ANGER - A woman may be surprised by the intensity of anger she feels after not being able to express this in the relationship. She may also feel frightened by the feelings of rage, however this is common and expected. Anger can be helpful for motivation and empowerment when managed safely and constructively.

ANXIETY - It is not uncommon for women to experience anxiety from what they have gone through and this can be felt even more after leaving. Women have expressed that a sense of having more control over their lives and decision making helped to decrease the anxiety.

LONELINESS - After leaving, women may find they have few connections with people and can feel lonely and isolated. This is often due to the isolation from being in the relationship and having less contact with friends and family. It may be due to having to relocate to a new area. Women may feel concerned about making new friends and struggle with who they can trust. This is not uncommon and again, expected due to what they have experienced. In time, new trusting connections can be made and the feeling of loneliness can decrease.

Taking care physically

Women may also experience a range of physical symptoms. These can include sleep disturbances, changes in heart rate, bowel issues, menstrual changes, body changes, skin conditions, hair loss, heartburn and nausea. Women may experience poor concentration, poor memory, indecisiveness, and/or irritability. Remember a woman's experience and journey is unique.

Women are encouraged to take care of themselves with self kindness and compassion. Women may find this difficult and find it helpful to talk to a health professional or people in their life who are supportive and understanding.

Some women may want to talk to a GP about a Mental Health Care Plan. These plans can help to access counselling sessions with a local psychologist or social worker who are registered with Medicare. The sessions are sometimes free or have a small gap payment, depending on the provider. They can be different so it is encouraged that women talk to them about any fees or charges.

If you require support after hours there is a national phone line 1800 Respect (1800 737 732) that you can also call for support and counselling.

Returning to the Relationship

After leaving, women might have feelings of remorse and regret and consider reuniting with their partner. This is not uncommon and while women may believe it is because they want to be with their partner, it might be influenced by experiencing loneliness, fear, pressure from friends or family and/or their former partner, concerns about children and feeling overwhelmed, as well as fear and uncertainty about the unknown future.

If you are relating to this, it can be helpful during these times to remain connected to support networks and agencies. Specialist domestic violence services understand the challenges women can face, the emotions that can be felt, and are non judgemental and respectful of women's decisions. They can provide support unique to you, your feelings and your situation, and can help you to know you're not alone and you can work through this together.

Section 3

If you are still in the relationship

Deciding to stay

A woman and her children's safety is extremely important regardless of whether she stays or leaves the relationship. Women make the decision to stay or leave for many different reasons. Some women may decide stay as they consider it to be the safest option at that time.

A domestic violence service can work with women and discuss their safety concerns while they are residing with their partner. The service respects where a woman is at and her decision, and she will not be pressured to do anything that she is uncomfortable with. The service works with women about their safety and can plan for the safety of them and their children. This is paramount. Women may also be interested in understanding the use of domestic violence behaviours that can be used in a relationship by a partner.

Women can find it helpful to consider and develop a safety plan in advance so that if at any time they want to leave, they can feel prepared.

To reiterate, for a safety plan to work it is important that the partner using violence doesn't know or see the plan, however it can be helpful to discuss the plan with someone you can trust.

A safety plan to use could include:

- Leaving the unsafe situation if possible.
- Knowing the easiest escape routes from the house doors, windows etc.
- Planning where you will go in advance.
- Having a safe place to stay organised in advance.
- Identifying a neighbour that can be asked to call the police if they hear a disturbance.
- Developing a code or signal with a trusted person so that they will know there is an unsafe situation occurring.
- Teaching children to phone 000 and practicing what to say.
- Having important numbers memorised or in a place that is easy to find.
- Calling the police as soon as it is safe to report the incident. The police may also assist with accessing safe accommodation for women and their children.

Children who are age appropriate may want to be included in developing a safety plan so they feel that they know what to do when domestic violence is occurring. This could include:

- Not placing them in the middle of the violence.
- Knowing a safe place they can go when they feel unsafe.
- Knowing how to use police and other emergency phone numbers and what to say
- Knowing people they can trust and talk to when they are feeling unsafe (neighbours, teachers, relatives, friends).

Getting support

If you are experiencing domestic violence and seeking support, knowing how to go about this is important. Safety needs are the first and paramount consideration for you and your children.

Although it is changing, not everyone understands domestic violence and the dynamics involved. Be mindful that some individuals may be dismissive of your needs and concerns, or discount or minimise your experiences. This may be due to a lack of understanding. It is important that you trust your feelings, and if you do not connect to the person or feel they are not taking your issues seriously, trust this and seek support elsewhere.

Many women seek support and information from a GP and/or from other community-based agencies that provide counselling. Domestic violence is a complex issue and it is recommended that you seek support from a specialist domestic violence service. Contact details for local services can be found in Section 4 of this booklet.

If you require support after hours there is a national phone line 1800 Respect (1800 737 732) that you can also call for support and counselling.

Counselling can assist in making sense of your experiences for you and your children. However counselling cannot help you to change the person who perpetrated the violence or abuse or identify strategies to stop them perpetrating again. This responsibility needs to be placed solely on the person who is using the violence or abuse, and with their willingness, readiness, and the right support, changes can be made.

Legal protection

Can I still get legal protection if I am still in the relationship?

If a woman remains in the relationship, this does not exclude her from protection under the Domestic Violence Protection Act 2012. Women are still able to seek a Domestic Violence Order instructing her partner not to use violence against her and/or the children. Safety planning and support by a domestic violence specialist service are also encouraged.

Section 2 of this booklet contains information about applying for a protection order, reporting a breach, and registering an order from within another state or territory. The information is relevant regardless of whether you are still in the relationship or whether you are not in the relationship.

Child Protection Issues

Police and child protection agencies can become involved with families and their concerns about the safety and impact for children when there is reported domestic violence. The agency may make contact with women as a result of a notification made to the agency. It is also possible that their involvement may have positive outcomes for you and your children.

If you become involved with Child Protection Services, it can be important to remember that throughout any interactions with child protection workers, you are able to seek support and express your needs, seek clarification, and information to help you understand and to be informed. Domestic violence specialist services may also be able to assist you at this time.

If you have legal concerns seek legal advice. Contact numbers for Legal Aid and community legal services are in the back of this booklet.

Can the person using violence change?

Domestic violence and couples counselling

Sometimes there is a suggestion that 'couples counselling' is appropriate for domestic violence, however it can be completely ineffective and even dangerous. Therefore it is generally not supported by domestic violence specialist agencies. Couples counselling can reinforce the myth that abuse is a 'relationship problem' and not a 'use of abuse' issue used by one person. A 'therapeutic' environment may be used to create a false sense of safety for the woman to open up and express things that she otherwise may not feel safe to do. Unfortunately, this openness may be 'punished' with more violence once they leave. Couples or relationship counselling should only be considered after all forms of violence and abuse have stopped and there is no longer any fear of unintended consequences for the woman.

What about anger management programs?

The person using violence may offer or be mandated to attend an 'anger management program' to address their use of violence. The term 'Specialised Perpetrator Programs' is more accepted due to the understanding that domestic violence is not about anger, but instead is more about the person's intent to control their partner through any means that will work. Anger management programs often do not address the fundamental beliefs pertaining to the use of domestic violence, nor do they have a strong focus on the safety of the victim by holding the person accountable for their violence.

Specialised Intervention Programs

Women who experience violence and abuse may be hopeful that the violence will stop so the relationship can continue. This hope can keep women believing in the relationship or returning to the relationship a number of times. Although people who use coercive control and abuse are usually very capable of stopping, they need to want to stop, so that their participation in an intervention program is preempted by an openness, willingness and readiness to learn other ways of regulating their emotions. Additionally, programs for those who use violence in their relationships also review and explore individual and societal attitudes, beliefs and actions that underpin and support the use of violence and coercive control.

Attendance may be mandatory as a condition on a parole or probation order, or self-referred. A domestic violence education and intervention program may cover the following themes:

- Respect
- Accountability and honesty
- Economic partnership
- Shared responsibility
- Support and trust
- Sexual respect
- Responsible parenting
- Negotiation and fairness

It is important to know that not all intervention programs operate in the same way. If a person is attending a group because of their abuse towards you, you may be able to contact the agency delivering the program to understand how it is delivered and what content is in the program. You can also ask if they provide a women's advocate to support you while the person is attending the program.

Pressure from friends and family

Some friends and family may find it difficult to understand a woman's decision to stay in a relationship in which violence or abuse is used against them. They may place pressure on the woman to leave, threaten to withdraw their support, or refuse to have contact with her with the condition that she must leave. This can be very upsetting and leave women feeling confused and further isolated.

A woman may have left and returned to the relationship and this can also be difficult for others to understand. If you are in this situation, it may be comforting to remember that their upset is often due to their care for you, and their desire for you (and any children) to live a violence-free life. This doesn't mean you need to do what they want based on pressure and a lack of understanding your situation.

Women may also stay or return to the relationship because of the pressure of economic concerns and/or the pressure from members of religious or cultural communities they are associated with.

It is also important to note that some social networks may not understand why a woman is leaving at all given the 'image management' the person using violence can use. Women may be judged with comments such as "Why, he's such a nice guy?" "He's a great father and provider, what are you doing?" or "Why are you being so selfish and not thinking about your family?". These comments can place enormous pressure on women leaving them to feel judged, worthless, and incredibly confused about their situation.

“Regardless of your decision to remain in the relationship or to leave it, your safety and that of your children is of paramount importance.”

Section 4

Contacts

Useful contact numbers

WOMEN'S SUPPORT SERVICES

DV Connect - 24/7 support + accommodation	1800 811 811
Domestic Violence Prevention Centre Gold Coast Inc.	07 5532 9000
Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence Inc.	07 5591 1164
Centre Against Sexual Violence (CASV) Logan	07 3808 3299
Sexual Assault Helpline	1800 010 120
Elder Abuse Prevention Unit Helpline	1300 651 192
Disability Gateway - information and services	1800 643 787
1800RESPECT - 24 hour counselling and support	1800 737 732
SARA - Support Assessment Referral Advocacy	07 5571 0381

MEN'S SUPPORT SERVICES

DV Connect Mensline	1800 600 636
MensLine Australia - 24 hours	1300 789 978

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Child Safety Service Centre - Beaudesert	07 5542 4300
Child Safety Service Centre - Beenleigh	07 3094 7000
Child Safety Service Centre - Labrador	07 5675 4300
Child Safety Service Centre - Logan Central	07 3094 7400
Child Safety Service Centre - Loganlea	07 3094 7300
Child Safety Service Centre - Mermaid Beach	07 5675 4100
Child Safety Service Centre - Nerang	07 5675 4400
Child Safety After Hours Service Centre	1800 177 135
Kids Helpline	1800 551 800
Family and Child Connect	13 32 64

Useful contact numbers

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Beenleigh Fire Station	07 3094 5140
Beaudesert Hospital	07 5541 9111
Logan Hospital	07 3299 8899
Robina Hospital	07 5668 6000
Gold Coast University Hospital	1300 744 284

LEGAL ADVICE

Legal Aid Queensland	1300 651 188
Women's Legal Service	1800 957 957
Gold Coast Community Legal Centre	07 5532 9611
First Nations Women's Legal Services Inc.	1800 082 600
Logan Legal Advice Centre	07 3826 1500
Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Service (QSTARS)	1300 744 263
Caxton Legal Centre - South Brisbane	07 3214 6333
Qld Law Society	1300 367 757
Refugee and Immigration Legal Service (RAILS)	07 3846 9300
Basic Rights Qld	1800 358 511
Residential Tenancy Authority (RTA)	1300 366 311
Robina Community Legal Centre (Thurs from 5pm)	0423 466 286
Southport Community Legal Centre (Tuesdays)	0411 896 401

LGBTIQA+ SUPPORT SERVICES

Open Doors Youth Service	07 3257 7660
Diverse Voices/Qlife	1800 184 527
Relationships Australia Rainbow Program	1300 364 277

Useful contact numbers

MULTI CULTURAL SERVICES

Immigrant Women's Support Service (IWSS)	07 3846 3490
Translating & Interpreting Service (TIS)	131 450
Department of Home Affairs Immigration & Citizenship	131 881
Access Community Services	07 3412 9999
Multilink Community Services	07 3808 4463
Multicultural Families Organisation	07 5571 0381
SARA - Support Assessment Referral Advocacy	04 05 06 55 44

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SERVICES

Murrigunyah Family & Cultural Healing Centre	07 3290 4254
Mununjali Housing and Development Company	07 5541 2575
Kalwun	07 5578 3434
Krurungal	07 5536 7911

POLICE

Policelink	131 444
Beenleigh Police Station	07 3801 0777
Broadbeach Police Station	07 5581 2800
Coolangatta Police Station	07 5589 8444
Coomera Police Station	07 5519 5555
Logan Central Police Station	07 3826 1888
Loganholme Police Station	07 3489 8555
Mudgeeraba Police Station	07 5559 3888
Nerang Police Station	07 5503 8999
Palm Beach Police Station	07 5534 0222
Runaway Bay Police Station	07 5557 6999
Southport Police Station	07 5571 4222
Surfers Paradise Police Station	07 5657 6888
Watchhouse - Southport	07 5571 4333

Useful contact numbers

COURTHOUSES

Beenleigh District Court	07 3081 2100
Beenleigh Magistrates Court	07 3081 2100
Beenleigh Domestic Violence Assistance Program (DVAP)	07 3807 7622
Brisbane Magistrates Court	1800 325 085
Brisbane DV Court Assistance Service	07 3917 0590
Southport Magistrates Court	1300 516 700
Coolangatta Magistrates Court	07 5513 9700
Family Court Australia	1300 352 000

QLD CORRECTIVE SERVICES

Probation & Parole Beenleigh	07 3080 4200
Probation & Parole Burleigh Heads	07 5569 7910
Probation & Parole Logan City	07 3081 4700
Probation & Parole Southport	07 5503 5255

QLD DEPT OF HOUSING

Dept of Housing Logan Office	07 3086 3700
Dept of Housing Robina Office	07 5645 8100

GENERALIST FAMILY SUPPORT AGENCIES

Centacare Family & Relationship Services Gold Coast	07 5552 6500
The Benevolent Society Loganholme	1800 236 762
The Benevolent Society Upper Coomera	07 5644 9400
The Benevolent Society Nerang	1800 236 762
The Benevolent Society Beenleigh	1800 236 762
The Benevolent Society Labrador	1800 236 762
Act for Kids Labrador	07 5656 8600
Act for Kids Varsity Lakes	07 5508 3800

Useful websites

DVPC GC Inc
www.domesticviolence.com.au

Gold Coast Centre
Against Sexual Violence
www.stopsexualviolence.com

Queensland Centre for Domestic
& Family Violence Research
www.noviolence.org.au

Australia National Research
Organisation for Womens Safety
www.anrows.org.au

Australian Federal Police
www.afp.gov.au

Family Court of Australia
www.fcfa.gov.au

Elder Abuse Prevention Unit
www.eapu.com.au

Queensland Government
www.qld.gov.au

Department of Home Affairs –
immigration and citizenship
www.homeaffairs.gov.au

Queensland Family & Child
Commission
www.qfcc.qld.gov.au

Queensland Health
www.health.qld.gov.au

Queensland Police
www.police.qld.gov.au

Immigrant Women's
Support Service
www.iwss.org.au

Centrelink
www.servicesaustralia.gov.au

Queensland Department
of Housing
www.housing.qld.gov.au

Kids Help Line – 1800 55 1800
www.kidshelpline.com.au

Queensland Department of
Justice & Attorney-General
www.justice.qld.gov.au

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Unicef; 2008, *Behind Closed Doors - the impact of domestic violence on children*.

Disclaimer

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All contact numbers and addresses contained within were current and correct at the time of printing (May 2025).

