

# Safe from violence

A guide for women following separation



*Relationships Australia*

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## **Acknowledgements**

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### **About this booklet**

Making changes can be difficult. The authors encourage you to trust your feelings and yourself when making decisions about you and your children.

This booklet can be dipped into or read through. It includes input from women who have experienced violence in relationships.

It may be wise to conceal this booklet from others.

# Contents

What is domestic or family violence?	1
Are you a victim of domestic violence?	3
The effect of domestic violence on women	5
The effect of domestic violence on children	6
Breaking the silence	9
On the road to separation	10
Help along the way	11
Domestic or Family Violence Orders	14
Safety Plan (tear-out section)	16 – 19
Safe parenting after separation	20
Moving forward	26
Where to get further assistance	28
References	34

## What is domestic or family violence?

Domestic violence is a pattern of destructive behaviour which occurs in an intimate relationship where one person tries to dominate and control the other. It is also sometimes referred to as family violence.

**Domestic violence is a deliberate act and is rarely an isolated event. Over time, the violence tends to increase in frequency and severity.**

Domestic or family violence can include a range of behaviours, for example:

### Physical abuse

- > hitting, punching, pulling by the hair, choking, pinching, pushing, stabbing or restraining you in any way (physical injuries are often directed at parts of the body that other people will not see)
- > using weapons to frighten you or causing damage to property
- > not letting you sleep, eat, or take your medication

### Verbal abuse

- > harassing or threatening you
- > saying things to frighten you, for example telling you that the children will live with him if you leave
- > calling you insulting names
- > undermining you as a parent in front of the children

### Sexual abuse

- > forcing you to have sex when you don't want to or making you engage in sexual practices you are not comfortable with
- > making you wear clothes you are not comfortable with

### Emotional abuse

- > withdrawing from you and not giving you support
- > controlling you through anger or not speaking to you
- > expressing extreme jealousy
- > not letting you use the phone or transport

## What is domestic or family violence?

- > not giving you an opportunity to choose for yourself
- > harming your pets

### Social abuse

- > putting you down in front of others
- > lying to others about you
- > isolating you from those people who do support you
- > not letting you visit a doctor on your own
- > controlling your life; not letting you have a life outside the home

### Financial abuse

- > controlling the money so you are dependent on him
- > forcing you to sign for loans you might not agree with
- > questioning you about every purchase you make
- > using joint finances for personal use
- > incurring debts which you are also responsible for

### Spiritual abuse

- > not letting you practise your own religion
- > forcing you to follow a religion you don't want to

### Stalking

- > making constant phone calls and sending text messages, emails, faxes, letters or unwanted gifts to you
- > loitering near your home or workplace
- > spying on you or following you



*It was like a light bulb coming on! When he puts me down and calls me names in front of our friends...that's abusive.*



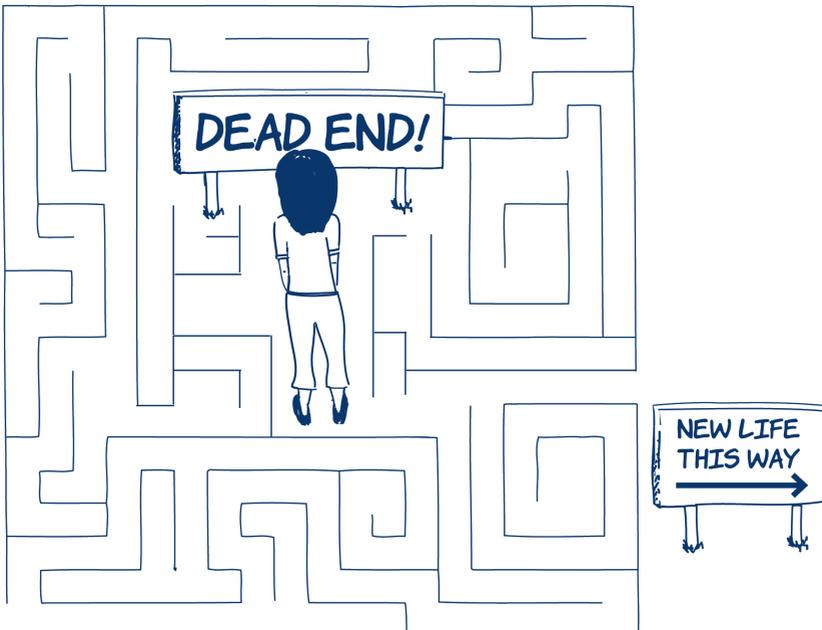
## Are you a victim of domestic violence?

If so, you are not alone. More than 33% of women in Australia are affected by domestic violence.

Every day, Relationships Australia works with women who are living through the experience of domestic violence. This booklet will help you understand the nature of violence in relationships and guide you through the process of separation.

Think about your relationship, your feelings and the behaviour of your partner.

If you answer yes to any of the questions on the next page, it is likely that you are a victim of domestic violence.



## Are you a victim of domestic violence?

Do you feel that you are often 'walking on egg-shells'?  Yes  No

Is it difficult to disagree with or say 'no' to your partner?  Yes  No

Does your partner check up on what you are doing?  Yes  No

Does your partner try to stop you from seeing your friends and family?  Yes  No

Does your partner accuse you of flirting with others?  Yes  No

Does your partner dictate how the household finances are spent, or stop you having any money for yourself?  Yes  No

Does your partner pressure you to do sexual things you don't want to or to have sex when you don't feel like it?  Yes  No

Does your partner threaten you, push you, damage property, throw things or make you feel unsafe?  Yes  No

Do your children hear or see things that might be damaging to them?  Yes  No

Does your partner threaten to kill himself or take the children away from you?  Yes  No

*I had not wanted to admit it, even to myself. But in the end I stood in front of the mirror and said 'Yes, you are a victim of domestic violence and you are going to do something about it.'*

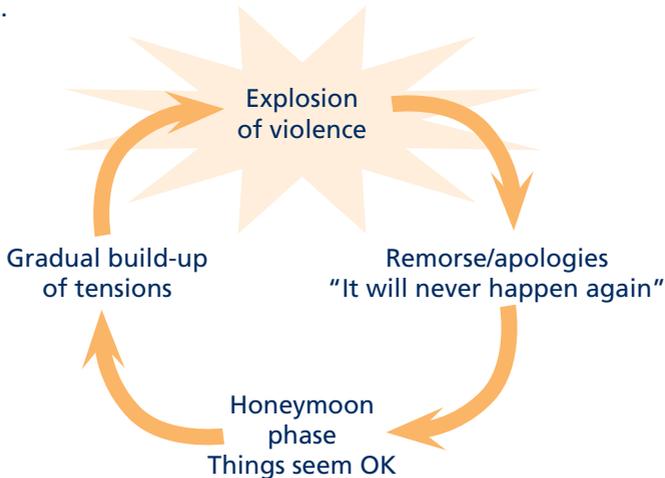
## The effect of domestic violence on women

Women often describe living with violence as a roller-coaster ride, never knowing what will happen next. You may feel confused and scared as your partner's behaviour swings from anger or abuse to guilty promises or remorse.

**Everyone has the right to live free of fear and violence.**

Little wonder that women's reactions can range from anxiety and eating disorders to medical problems, drug and alcohol abuse and decline in self-esteem!

Often there is a pattern to domestic violence. You might recognise the cycle in the picture below, or your situation might be a bit different.



Being aware of the pattern can help you see what might lie ahead so you can plan for your safety.

*I was feeling guilty but a friend reminded me that the violence was not my fault. I know it is not my fault. I hung onto that truth and it made me stronger.*

## The effect of domestic violence on children

Women understand that domestic violence is very damaging to children – whether they experience it themselves or see or hear it expressed against a parent, brother or sister.

Violence and witnessing violence affects children of all ages and can influence how they deal with conflict throughout their lives. They may even come to believe that violence is a normal part of an intimate relationship.

Violence leaves children feeling confused, sad, angry and frightened. How this is expressed depends upon their age and stage of development.

- > Babies' and toddlers' feelings will be reflected in their behaviour. If you are stressed it is likely that they will also become stressed.
- > Small children may blame themselves for the violence.
- > Primary-aged children may want to hide what happens at home from their friends.
- > Teenagers may feel angry and blame either the violent parent or the parent being abused. They may also feel resentful at having to protect you. Some may engage in violent or risk-taking behaviours.

Children may:

- > show side effects such as diarrhoea, nightmares and bedwetting
- > begin to stutter, become withdrawn and develop headaches, stomach aches and asthma
- > suffer from low self-esteem
- > experience difficulties at school
- > hurt other children or their pets.

## The effect of domestic violence on children

Here are some comments made by children living with domestic violence:

*When the yelling started, I had to take my little sister upstairs and shut the door.*

*I couldn't bring my friends home after school anymore in case Dad was in a bad mood.*

*It was pure hell – living like that.*

*I was so terrified – it was like a battlefield.*

The way children see the world is different to adults. It is important to talk with them about their feelings and experiences.

**Myth:**  
It is important to stay together for the sake of the children.

**Fact:**  
Children are not helped by living in a house where they are exposed to a father who hurts others.

## The effect of domestic violence on children

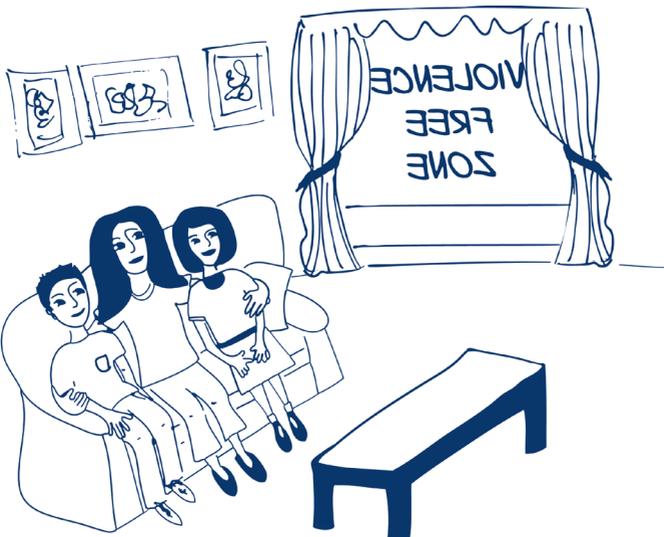
### Be a positive role model

You can provide your children with a positive role model by taking action to live without violence.

By having the courage to leave a violent relationship you show your children that:

- > they do not need to put up with violence or abuse
- > they have a right to be safe
- > you are deserving of respect and will not tolerate being disrespected by others.

*After I left I made it very clear to the kids, 'Verbally abusing or physically hurting others is not okay.'*



## Breaking the silence

Many women feel ashamed of being in an abusive relationship. His violent behaviour is not your fault.

It takes a lot of courage to break the silence. Choosing to speak up about your experiences is a big step.

**Remaining silent** can put you and your children at risk **but** sometimes speaking out can be a risk. Only you can decide. Trust your instinct.

Who are you going to tell? Is there a friend, family member or workmate you can trust?

You may choose to contact one of a number of understanding support services. They will help you make sense of your experience and support you in your next steps.

The domestic violence services on page 28 are a good start or ring

**Violence Against Women, Australia Says NO  
24 hour Confidential helpline: 1800 200 526**

*Before I told my best friend about the violence I was shaking inside, I thought I'd be blamed and feel so ashamed. Instead I felt this huge relief! It came as a surprise.*



## On the road to separation

**It often takes six to eight attempts before a woman finally leaves a violent relationship.**

Many women report that separation is one of the most difficult experiences of their life. They may feel too scared to leave and worry about what might happen if they do. And it's true that separation is often a time when women and children are at most risk of harm.

- > Many women don't want the relationship to end – they just want the violence to stop.
- > Many women go through a long period with feelings of fear, anger and sadness before separation, hoping that the situation will change long after they realise it won't.
- > Separating is even more difficult for women with children.
- > Women from immigrant, Aboriginal, rural communities and women with disabilities often face additional difficulties.

*Loyalty is one thing but in the end I realised my constant hopefulness was simply unrealistic.*

Planning ahead is an important component of leaving safely.

It takes a lot of courage to leave an abusive relationship. It's very important to maintain and widen the circle of supports you may have around you: family, friends and workmates.



## Help along the way

Domestic Violence Crisis Services assist women living with violence. They will:

- > give you practical advice
- > put you in touch with support groups and others in your situation
- > link you up with services that can help keep you safe.

Refer to page 28 for the phone number of your closest Domestic Violence Crisis Service.

*The Violence Against Women, Australia Says NO 24 hour confidential helpline (1800 200 526) can also refer you to support services.*

Relationships Australia offers programs and counselling (1300 364 277 or [www.relationships.com.au](http://www.relationships.com.au))

### **The police can help**

The police will respond to any call for assistance whether it comes from you or from a friend or family member. Call 000.

Reporting what is happening to police will send a clear message to your ex-partner that his behaviour is not acceptable.

If you continue to feel intimidated and threatened by your ex-partner, get legal advice and assistance.

## Help along the way

### Financial help

Even before you move out of home or are having financial difficulties you can contact Centrelink (13 61 50). They can give you immediate financial advice and assistance in accessing benefits.

Financial Counsellors can help you prepare a household budget to manage paying bills and debts. They will also help you access services that can provide transport, food and household items.

The Child Support Agency (13 12 72) is set up to assist parents who have custody of children by collecting child support payments.

### Help with accommodation

If you need to leave your home, alternative accommodation can include family and friends, emergency housing such as women's refuges, private rental or public housing. Funds are available to assist women with children in these situations. Contact your Domestic Violence Crisis Service or an Accommodation Service in your state or territory (refer to Where to get Further Assistance, page 28).

### Women's refuges and shelters

A Women's Refuge/Shelter is usually a cluster of secure units or rooms. They offer:

- > safe secure shelter, from a couple of days up to a few months
- > assistance in getting you and your belongings to the refuge including furniture moving and storage
- > facilities for cooking and washing
- > linen and bedding
- > information, support and advocacy
- > referrals to legal advice, financial assistance, longer term housing and appropriate community resources
- > confidentiality.

## Help along the way

### Legal advice

The Women's Legal Service or Legal Aid Office can provide you with legal advice and explain your rights (refer pages 32 and 33). Some local courts can also provide assistance.

### Safety plan

Working through the tear-out safety plan in the centre of the booklet will help you know what to do if your situation becomes risky.



*The day before my appointment I was really nervous but the support worker was great. She really listened and understood what living with him was like for me.*

## Domestic or Family Violence Orders

### What is a Domestic or Family Violence Order?

It is an order made by the Magistrates Court in your state or territory to protect you and your children from future violence or threats.

Domestic or Family Violence Orders are known by different names in different states and territories throughout Australia. Orders can be made that specifically relate to you and your situation.

For example your ex-partner could be ordered not to:

- > come to your home or place of work
- > go to your children's school or child care centre
- > approach or follow you
- > contact you in anyway
- > threaten, intimidate or harass you.



## Domestic or Family Violence Orders

### How do I get a Domestic or Family Violence Order?

To obtain an Order you will need to make an application at your local Magistrates Court. This is a legal hearing: you may be required to tell the magistrate what has happened and in some cases present any other evidence you have. The best way to prepare for a legal hearing is to get legal advice. A lawyer can explain how the process works, what evidence there is and what your options are.

Once the Order is made and given to your ex-partner, the police have the power to arrest or detain him if he breaks its conditions. He may then be charged with the criminal offence of breaching a domestic or family violence order.

For legal advice and how to go about applying for an Order, call the Women's Legal Services or your Legal Aid Office (refer to pages 32 and 33).

If your Order also covers your children

- > make sure staff at their school or child care centre know who can and cannot pick up the children
- > show them a photograph of your ex-partner
- > give the school a copy of your Domestic or Family Violence Order or Parenting Order if you have one (see page 24).

### Always keep your Order with you

*I was terrified at the thought of going to court. But the people there really helped me through and explained what I needed to do. Now I have the Order and he knows he is not allowed to come to the house. I feel so relieved!*

# Safety Plan

## Be prepared to leave

You and your children may need to leave in a hurry. Use this information to make sure that you have everything covered to ensure your safety. It may help to detach it and keep it in a secure place.

### Actions

Done ✓

Have a bag ready with things you will need (see Emergency suitcase below). Hide it yourself or give it to a trusted family member or friend to keep for you.

Have a code word that tells a friend, family or neighbours that you feel unsafe and need assistance.

Decide on the best way to leave the house (which doors or windows) if you and the children need to do so in a hurry.

Ask neighbours to call the police if they hear a commotion from the house.

## Your emergency suitcase

If you have to leave a violent situation very quickly it is a good idea to have a bag packed with essential items. These could include:

- > money, credit cards and cheque book
- > forms of identification (or copies) that you don't need to carry with you at all times
- > birth certificates for you and your children
- > marriage certificate
- > your passport and your children's passports
- > lease, rental agreement, mortgage papers for your house
- > bank account details
- > insurance papers

- > any medications for you or your children; medical records, immunisation details and Medicare card
- > Centrelink information
- > your children's school records
- > legal papers and copies of Domestic or Family Violence Orders
- > address book
- > clothing and personal hygiene items for you and your children
- > a recent photograph of your ex-partner
- > a recent photograph of your house
- > a spare key to your house and car.

You may also need to include jewellery, small saleable objects and you and your children's personal treasures.

## Safety and Children

Discuss these actions with your children and practise them as necessary.

### Actions

Done ✓

Discuss your safety plan with your children (if they are at an age where it is appropriate).

Help your child choose a room in the house where they feel safest but can escape from if necessary. Tell them to go to this room if there is a fight and not to get involved in the fighting.

Develop a code word that signals that they need to go now.

Teach your children how to contact family, friends or neighbours they will be safe with.

Teach your children how to call 000 (Police, Fire, Ambulance). Tell them not to hang up afterwards. This assists the services to monitor what is happening and to find you if necessary.

Practise what each child should say if they have to report violence eg "My address is.....  
My name is ....., and my mum is being hurt."

Rethink this safety plan on a regular basis to ensure it continues to contain the most appropriate action for your circumstances.

# Safety Plan

## In your safe house

Living in the family home or elsewhere? Once you have separated there are things you can do to ensure your safety.

### Actions

Done ✓

Apply to your local Magistrates Court for a Domestic or Family Violence Order.

Change the door locks if you remain in the family home.

Fit window locks and install outside lighting.

Arrange to have a silent telephone number.

Use caller ID or an answering machine or message bank service so you know who is calling before you answer the phone. (This can also provide evidence of harassing phone calls).

Tell your neighbours and/or landlord that your ex-partner no longer lives with you. Show them a photograph. Ask them to let you know if he is seen near the property.

Get your neighbour's phone number in case of emergency. Provide a code word that lets them know that you are feeling unsafe.

If your ex-partner breaks a Domestic or Family Violence Order, ring the police and report him.

**At work**

You will want to get on with your life but make sure you are safe when getting out and about or going to and from work.

**Actions****Done ✓**

Tell your employer, work colleagues and building security section that you have separated and that the relationship was violent. Provide them with a photograph of your ex-partner.

Make sure the address of your workplace is on your Domestic or Family Violence Order and that reception, security and other relevant people have a copy.

If you do not want to communicate with your ex-partner, ask co-workers to screen your phone calls. Save any abusive email or voicemail messages as they may provide future evidence.

Change your daily travel route. Park close to your building. Consider asking someone to accompany you to and from the car.

Let work colleagues and family members know your expected times of arrival.

*Relationships Australia*

## Safe parenting after separation

There are things you can do to help your children through:

- > Stick to routines and predictable timetables as much as you can.
- > Maintain discipline – children need limits to feel safe.
- > Ask teenage children how they are getting along.
- > Give all children love and attention, with hugs and positive words. Be patient, observe and listen to them.
- > Give young children simple but truthful explanations. For example, 'This isn't your fault' and 'It's okay to love both me and your Dad'.
- > Allow your child to be sad. Sit with them when they are tearful.
- > Talk to them about feelings. Let them express their feelings through drawing, painting and play.
- > Discuss safe ways for them to show their anger. Tell them that it is okay to be angry but it is never okay to hurt people.
- > Encourage them to be physical to reduce tension (eg sport, outdoor activities).
- > Talk to them about safety and the importance of feeling safe. Reinforce the fact that you and your children are now living in safety.
- > Give them opportunities to make choices and help them follow through with these choices. This will help them feel they have the power to get on with their lives.
- > Let them know if you are feeling sad, but tell them you will be okay. It is important that your children do not feel that they need to look after you.
- > Look after yourself so that you can care for your children in the best possible way.

If you have concerns about the emotional or physical wellbeing of your children, contact a specific children's support or counselling service in your state or territory. Some Domestic Violence Support Services have specialist children's workers. (see page 28 for contact numbers).

The Family Relationship Advice Line (1800 050 321) can help you locate appropriate services.

## Safe parenting after separation

### Child safety and the legal system

It is important that you get good legal advice to preserve your rights and the safety of your children. Remember that legal advice does not necessarily mean a court battle.

Contact the Women's Legal Service in your state or your Legal Aid Office for information and advice (refer pages 32 and 33 at the back of this booklet).

It is likely you will need to find a lawyer experienced in family law. Many will give you a free or reduced rate consultation. Ask them if you are eligible for Legal Aid.



## Safe parenting after separation

### Parenting Plans

Parenting Plans set out written parenting arrangements such as:

- > who the children will live with
- > what time will be spent with each parent
- > education and other important issues.

Your safety and the safety of your children must be the first priority of any arrangement between you and your ex-partner.

Where there has been violence, parenting plans can include very specific guidelines to ensure the safety of your children. For example:

- > Exact times for exchange and time spent with your ex-partner.
- > If the children are returned more than 15 minutes late you will go directly to the police station.
- > If your ex-partner is late picking up the children, the handover will not take place.
- > The location of a safe handover place or contact centre.



*I was able to negotiate what would happen if he is late to pick up or drop off the kids.*

## Safe parenting after separation

### Assistance with preparing your Parenting Plan

It is important that anyone giving you assistance or advice understands your history and concerns.

It is recommended that you use a specialist dispute resolution service staffed by practitioners with extensive training in domestic violence.

Dispute resolution is provided by Legal Aid services, and organisations such as Relationships Australia.

For further information about preparing for dispute resolution:  
<http://www.dvirc.org.au/HelpHub/MediationTips>

### Family Relationship Centres

These Centres provide information advice and dispute resolution to help separated parents focus on the needs of their children, resolve conflict and develop workable arrangements for their children without going to the courts.

Information, referral and individual sessions are free of charge. Centres also provide up to three hours of joint sessions free of charge, or up to six hours where an interpreter is required. They may charge fees after this, depending on your circumstances.

For more information go to  
[www.familyrelationships.gov.au](http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au)



## Safe parenting after separation

### Parenting Orders through the Family Court

If you and your ex-partner cannot agree on a Parenting Plan or you believe that you or your children are at risk of harm, you can apply for a Parenting Order through the Family Court.

A Parenting Order is a court order which sets out each person's responsibilities. An order can set out:

- > where the children live
- > the amount of time the children spend with each parent and other people
- > how parental responsibility is to be shared by each parent.

With assistance from experts, the Family Court will consider how, and if, your children's safety can be maintained while having contact with their father.

The Court has a number of measures in place to ensure your safety. These include:

- > separate interviews if you fear attending a court appointment at the same time or in the same place as your ex-partner
- > having a phone interview
- > safe rooms with separate entry and exit points.

Contact the Court before you attend to find out what arrangements can be put in place for you. **Make sure you tell the Court about any Domestic Violence Order in place.**

*My lawyer and the court support staff really helped me understand my rights and my children's rights. Now I feel clearer about how to keep us all safer when the kids see their dad.*

## Safe parenting after separation

### Breaking a Parenting Order

You may have concerns about the safety of your children when they are spending time with the other parent.

Even if you are intending to act in the children's best interests, remember breaking a Parenting Order is a serious action and you should seek urgent legal advice should you decide to do this.

### Family Dispute Resolution

Under Australian family law, most separating parents are required to attend Family Dispute Resolution before they can go to the Family Court. **However this is not compulsory where there has been violence.** You can contact a Family Relationship Centre or call the Family Relationship Advice Line (1800 050 321) to discuss your situation.

*I didn't see my ex at all during the mediation. He was in another part of the building and the mediators moved between us.*

## Moving forward

It is quite normal to feel overwhelmed sometimes by your decision to leave the relationship. Some days you might even think it would be easier to return to your ex-partner. Your ex-partner may:

- > tell you that he has changed and he wants you back
- > recognise that he does have a problem
- > attend a men's behaviour change group.

Research shows that it is very difficult for many men to stop their violent behaviour. Attending a men's behaviour change group is not a guarantee of change or that women and children will be safe.

In order to stay positive:

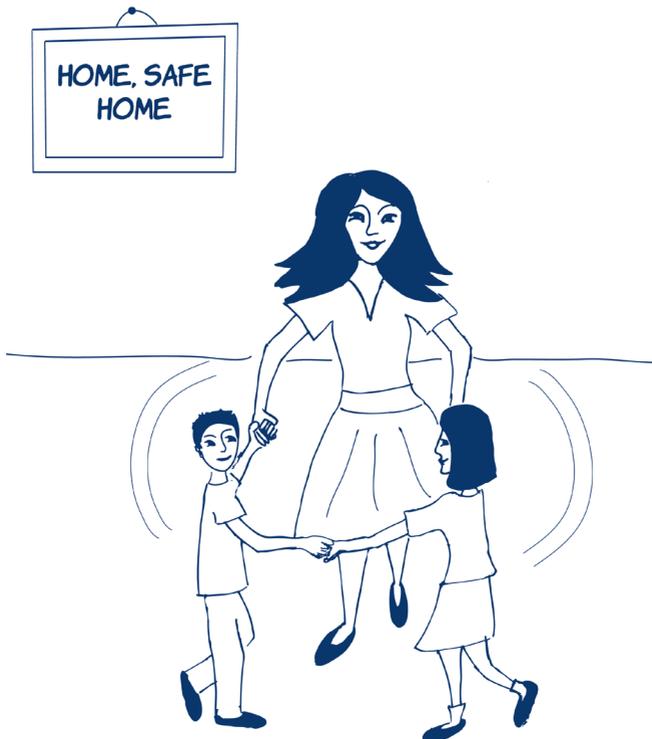
- > Express your feelings. Talk, or write about them in a journal. Use your journal as evidence of what you have endured and how you have grown as a result of what you have been through.
- > Recognise that bad feelings pass; if you are feeling sad, cry.
- > Exercise regularly to help relieve anger, stress and depression, walk the dog, go for a swim, ride your bicycle with the kids or go to the gym.
- > Write positive statements on post-it stickers and place them around the house.
- > Play music with positive messages.
- > Learn relaxation techniques. For example have a warm bath or practise breathing techniques.
- > Think about the people that you admire and list their qualities, then think about yourself and the similar qualities that you have or are developing.
- > Set simple, short term goals for yourself. Achieving these will give you the confidence to set bigger, longer term goals.
- > Build a community of support (for example with your domestic violence support worker, counsellor, support group, family and friends).
- > Be kind to yourself and make time to do things that you enjoy.
- > Acknowledge your achievements, large and small. Celebrate each step you take on the path to personal safety and empowerment.

## Moving forward

### Don't forget

When you are in a relationship, you have a right to:

- > be treated with respect
- > participate in decision-making
- > not be intimidated or put down
- > make decisions that affect your life
- > have access to your own money
- > have a partner who takes responsibility for their own behaviour
- > be free from violence and abuse
- > raise children in a home free from violence
- > be safe.



## Where to get further assistance

### Domestic violence services

Contact the organisation in your state or territory – they can refer you to appropriate services in your area.

Australian Capital Territory	> Domestic Violence Crisis Service	(02) 6280 0900
New South Wales	> Domestic Violence Line	1800 656 463
Northern Territory	> Dawn House	(08) 8945 1388
	> Domestic Violence Counselling Service	(08) 8945 6200
	> Alice Springs Women's Shelter	(08) 8952 6075
	> Katherine Domestic Violence Counselling Service	(08) 8972 1733
Queensland	> DVconnect womensline	1800 811 811
South Australia	> Domestic Violence Crisis Service	1300 782 200
Tasmania	> Family Violence Referral Line (Statewide)	1800 608 122
	> Northern Tasmania	1800 633 937
Victoria	> Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service	(03) 9373 0123 1800 015 188
Western Australia	> Women's Domestic Violence Helpline	(08) 9223 1188 1800 007 339

### Violence Against Women Australia Says NO

24 hour Confidential Helpline

1800 200 526

[www.australiasaysno.gov.au](http://www.australiasaysno.gov.au)

### Family Relationships Advice Line

Provides information and advice about:

1800 050 321

- > family relationship issues
- > services funded by Government
- > law, the family law system and legal aid
- > children's contact centres
- > counselling services and mediation (dispute resolution)
- > finances

[www.familyrelationships.gov.au](http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au)

## Where to get further assistance

### A–Z Listing

#### Accommodation services

As well as Domestic Violence Resource Centres you can also contact the following specific services in your state.

Australian Capital Territory	> Doris Women's Refuge Inc. > Inanna Women's Service	(02) 6278 9999 (02) 6295 3323
New South Wales	> NSW Women's Refuge Resource Centre > DV Hotline > Homeless Person's Information Centre	(02) 9698 9777 1800 656 463 (02) 9265 9087 1800 234 566
Northern Territory	> Dawn House – crisis accommodation (24 hours)	(08) 8945 1388
Queensland	> Community and Public Housing > Queensland Department of Housing	(07) 3225 1573 1800 642 902
South Australia	> Domestic Violence Crisis Service > Migrant Women's Support and Accommodation > Crisis Care	1300 782 200 (08) 8346 9417 13 16 11
Victoria	> St Kilda Crisis Centre > Wombat Housing	(03) 9536 7777 1800 887 775
Western Australia	> Women's Domestic Violence Helpline	(08) 9223 1188 1800 007 339

## Where to get further assistance

### Benefits and financial support

#### Centrelink

For advice about benefits and immediate financial help:

13 61 50

- > Family Assistance Office and Parenting Payment Line (for payment information for people on family assistance).

[www.familyassist.gov.au](http://www.familyassist.gov.au)

- > For information on benefits available.

[www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)

#### Child Support Agency

For help in receiving child support payments.

13 12 72

[www.csa.gov.au](http://www.csa.gov.au)

#### Family Relationship Advice Line

can also give you advice about finances and Government services available.

1800 050 321

[www.familyrelationships.gov.au](http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au)

### Children's services

Some **Domestic violence services** can provide specialist children's workers.

Contact the centre in your state: refer to list on page 28

#### Family Relationship Advice Line

can provide information about children's contact centres.

1800 050 321

[www.familyrelationships.gov.au](http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au)

#### Australian Childhood Foundation

Provides counselling for children and young people affected by abuse.

1800 176 453

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

[www.stopchildabuse.com.au](http://www.stopchildabuse.com.au)

#### Kid's Help Line

(for children's use)

1800 551 800

## Where to get further assistance

### Children's services cont.

Support and counselling for children is also available from these state services:

Australian Capital Territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Child at Risk Health Assessment Unit</li> <li>&gt; Parent Helpline</li> </ul>	(02) 6244 2712 (02) 6287 3833
New South Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Children's Hospital at Westmead</li> <li>&gt; Kidsnet Helpline</li> <li>&gt; DV Hotline</li> <li>&gt; Parent Helpline</li> </ul>	(02) 9845 0000 (02) 9845 2432 1800 656 463 13 20 55
Northern Territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Royal Darwin Hospital</li> <li>&gt; Crisis Line</li> </ul>	(08) 8922 8888 1800 019 116 (24 hours)
Queensland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Royal Children's Hospital</li> <li>&gt; Parent Helpline</li> </ul>	(07) 3636 3777 1300 301 300
South Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Women's and Children's Hospital</li> <li>&gt; Parent Helpline</li> </ul>	(08) 8161 7000 1300 364 100
Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Royal Children's Hospital</li> <li>&gt; Interpreter and NESB Services</li> <li>&gt; Berry Street Northern Family and Domestic Violence Outreach Service</li> <li>&gt; Women's Health West</li> <li>&gt; Parentline</li> </ul>	(03) 9345 5522 (03) 9345 5998 (03) 9458 5788 (03) 9689 9588 13 22 89
Western Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Princess Margaret Hospital for Children</li> <li>&gt; Family Helpline</li> <li>&gt; DV Children's Counselling Service (4 to 18 years)</li> </ul>	(08) 9340 8222 (08) 9221 2000 1800 643 000 (08) 9328 1888
Tasmania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Royal Hobart Hospital</li> </ul>	(03) 6222 8308

## Where to get further assistance

### Counselling, family and individual support

<b>Relationships Australia</b> For help and support for victims of family violence.	1300 364 277 <a href="http://www.relationships.com.au">www.relationships.com.au</a>
<b>Centacare Australia</b>	1300 138 070
<b>Family Services Australia</b>	1300 365 859
<b>Family Relationship Advice Line</b> can provide information about Family Relationship Centres.	1800 050 321 <a href="http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au">www.familyrelationships.gov.au</a>

For counselling services for children see **Children's services**.

### Family Court

For information about:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| > the function of the Family Court                  | 1300 352 000  |
| > safety arrangements for you when attending court. | (25 cents per call)<br><a href="http://www.familycourt.gov.au">www.familycourt.gov.au</a> |

### Legal services

For information about legal aid for all states and territories:  
[www.nla.aust.net.au](http://www.nla.aust.net.au)

	Legal Aid	Legal help and advice
Australian Capital Territory	Legal Aid Commission of the ACT 1300 654 314 0429 440 084 (AH)	Women's Legal Centre ACT and Region (02) 6257 4499
New South Wales	Legal Aid NSW (02) 9219 5000	Women's Legal Resource Centre NSW (02) 9749 5533 1800 801 501

## Where to get further assistance

### Legal services cont.

	Legal Aid	Legal help and advice
Northern Territory	Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission (08) 8999 3000 1800 019 343	North Australian Aboriginal Family Violence Legal Service (08) 8923 8200
Queensland	Legal Aid Queensland 1300 651 188	Women's Legal Service (07) 3392 0670 1800 670 864
South Australia	Legal Aid Services Commission of South Australia 1300 366 424	Women's Legal Service South Australia (08) 8231 8929
Tasmania	Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania 1300 366 611	Women's Legal Service Tasmania (03) 6224 0974 1800 682 468
Victoria	Victoria Legal Aid (03) 9269 0234 1800 677 402 (country callers)	Women's Legal Service Victoria (03) 9642 0877 1800 133 302 (country callers)
Western Australia	Legal Aid Western Australia 1300 650 579	Women's Law Centre of Western Australia (08) 9272 8800 1800 625 122

### Legal services for indigenous women

Indigenous Women's Legal Contact Line 1800 639 784

### Regional Law Hotline

Information and referral service to legal advice 1800 050 400

## References

Relationships Australia gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre Victoria Australia. With their permission we drew on their training materials and website [www.dvirc.org.au](http://www.dvirc.org.au)

We also gratefully acknowledge, with permission, the use of material from the *Choosing Positive Paths Parenting Kit*: a joint initiative of Women's Health West and Berry Street Victoria funded by the Northern and Western Regional Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program (SAAP), financed by the Commonwealth and State Governments (June 2003).

### **What is domestic or family violence?**

*Partnerships Against Domestic Violence Summary Findings from Phase 1: For Professionals - Why should maternal and child health nurses know about domestic violence?* Fact sheet available online at [http://ofw.facsia.gov.au/downloads/pdfs/d\\_v/prof\\_papers\\_mch\\_nurses.pdf](http://ofw.facsia.gov.au/downloads/pdfs/d_v/prof_papers_mch_nurses.pdf)

### **Are you a victim of domestic violence?**

Statistics on the number of women affected by domestic violence derived from Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006) *Personal Safety Survey Australia*, ABS, Canberra (Cat. 4906.0) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

Questions adapted with permission from the Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre Victoria Australia:  
[www.dvirc.org.au/HelpHub/WarningSigns.htm](http://www.dvirc.org.au/HelpHub/WarningSigns.htm)

### **The effect of domestic violence on women**

Cycle diagram from *Choosing Positive Paths Parenting Kit*: a joint initiative of Women's Health West and Berry Street Victoria funded by the Northern and Western Regional Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program (SAAP), financed by the Commonwealth and State Governments (June 2003).

## References

### *On the road to separation*

6-8 attempts before a woman finally leaves a violent relationship.  
From [www.letswrap.com/dvinfo/whystay.htm](http://www.letswrap.com/dvinfo/whystay.htm)

Statistics showing that separated women are most at risk from harm:

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006) *Personal Safety Survey Australia*, ABS, Canberra (Cat. 4906.0) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

Kershner, M., Long, D., and Anderson, J.E. (1998). Abuse against women in rural Minnesota. In *Public Health Nursing*. Dec: 15(6): 422-31.

### *Safety Plan*

The following web pages were referred to in the development of the safety plan:

[www.awap.org/safety.htm](http://www.awap.org/safety.htm)

[www.womenaresafe.org/kids.html](http://www.womenaresafe.org/kids.html)

[www.ncsmc.org.au/wsas/violence\\_and\\_abuse/long\\_term\\_safety.htm](http://www.ncsmc.org.au/wsas/violence_and_abuse/long_term_safety.htm)

### *Moving Forward*

In relation to the effectiveness of men's groups.

Laing, L. (2003). *Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearing House*

[www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au](http://www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au)

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## Give us your feedback!

Help us improve this booklet for other women.

If you can find a moment to give us your suggestions, please mail anonymously to the address overleaf (no charge for posting).

Many thanks!

Your feedback:

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## Are you a victim of domestic violence?

You are not alone. Over a third of Australian women are affected by domestic violence.

Every day, Relationships Australia works with women who are living through the experience of domestic violence. This booklet will help you understand the nature of violence in relationships and guide you through the process of separation.



*My relationship didn't turn out like I expected and some days I get sad, but I can handle it. I am very clear now that I must have respect in my relationships.*

## Relationships Australia

Relationships Australia  
1300 364 277

Relationships Australia provides counselling, mediation, family violence prevention, relationship skills courses, family skills and parenting courses, and other relationship services.

Branches across all states and territories of Australia.

[www.relationships.com.au](http://www.relationships.com.au)