
IDENTIFYING & RESPONDING EFFECTIVELY TO DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE

A TOOLBOX TALK



BUILDING AWARENESS & CAPACITY TO RESPOND



WHAT IS DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE?

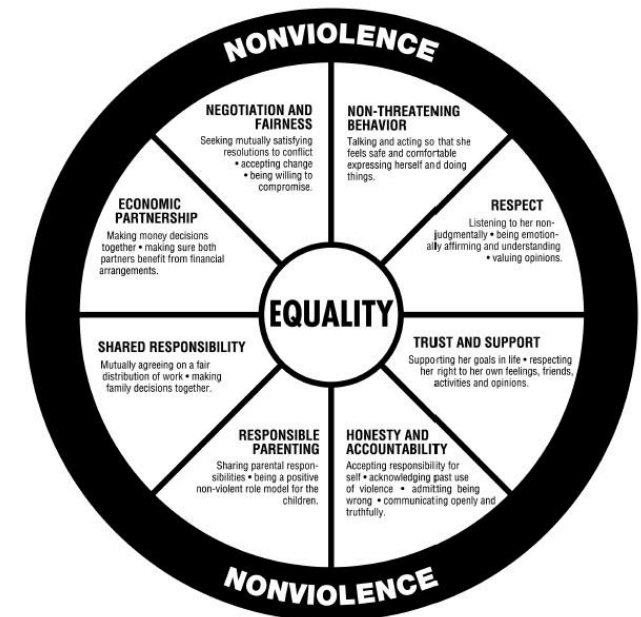
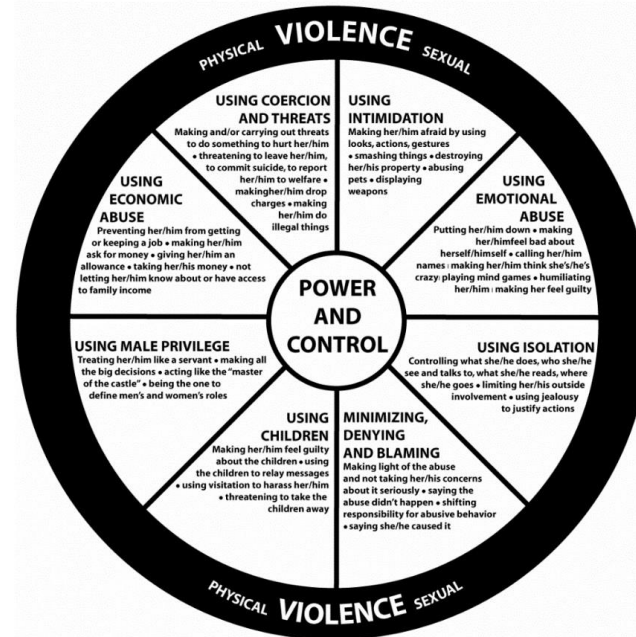
- Domestic and family violence refers to a situation where one partner in a relationship, or a family member, is using violent and/or abusive behaviours in order to control and dominate another.
- Abuse happens when one person tries to control or hurt another.
- Abuse may be physical, such as hitting, pushing or choking.
- Abuse can also be other things such as putting a victim down, making a victim feel worthless, or being possessive and jealous to prevent the person from speaking to friends or family.

THE DULUTH MODEL: BUILDING A CONSISTENT APPROACH

- The Duluth Model is a widely supported practice model that is used internationally.
- It defines domestic and family violence broadly to include social, emotional and financial abuse.
- Three principles of reducing risk, increasing safety and ensuring perpetrator accountability are the foundation of the model.
- The feminist theory underlying the Duluth Model is that men use violence within relationships to exercise power and control.
- This is illustrated by the Power and Control Wheel. According to the Duluth Model, "women and children are vulnerable to violence because of their unequal social, economic, and political status in society."

POWER AND CONTROL VERSUS EQUALITY

- Domestic & family violence is characterised by the pattern of actions that an individual uses to intentionally control or dominate his intimate partner.
- That is why the words "power and control" are in the centre of the wheel.
- A perpetrator systematically uses threats, intimidation, and coercion to instil fear in his partner.
- Making the Power and Control Wheel gender neutral would hide the power imbalances in relationships between men and women that reflect power imbalances in society.
- By naming the power differences, we can more clearly provide advocacy and support for victims, accountability and opportunities for change for offenders, and system and societal changes that end violence against women.



WHO IS AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE?

- Women & their children
- People in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex & Queer relationships
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities
- Culturally & Linguistically Diverse communities
- Older women
- Women with a disability
- Women in rural and remote communities
- Men though data tells us that in 2012, 87% of domestic & family violence victims were women

MYTHS ABOUT DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE

- **Myth:** Domestic and family violence happens only to poor, uneducated women and women from certain cultures.

Truth: People of any class, culture, religion, sexual orientation, marital status and age can be victims or perpetrators of domestic violence.

- **Myth:** Most people who commit violence are under the effects of alcohol or drugs.

Truth: Although many abusive partners also abuse alcohol and/or drugs, and some are more likely to be physically violent or use more extreme violence when their judgement is impaired, this is not the underlying cause of the abuse. Many people who abuse alcohol or drugs are not violent and abusive. Alcohol and/or drugs do not cause domestic violence.

- **Myth:** Some people deserve to be abused; they are responsible for the violence or they provoke it.

Truth: No one deserves to be abused. The only person responsible for the abuse is the abuser. Abusers tend to blame the victim for their behaviour.

MYTHS ABOUT DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE CONT...

- **Myth:** If the victim didn't like it, she would leave.

Truth: There are many reasons why a woman may not leave, including fear for herself, her children and even pets. Often women face significant practical barriers to separating from their partners, including a lack of money and housing options. Due to the effects of the abuse, many women lack confidence in their own abilities and accurate information about their options. Not leaving does not mean that the situation is okay or that the victim wants to be abused. The most dangerous time for a woman who is being abused is when she tries to leave. Often a victim does not necessarily want to leave the relationship but wants the violence to stop. Providing non-judgmental support is vital.

- **Myth:** Abusers are mentally ill, psychopathic or have a personality disorder.

Truth: Research does not support this view. Most men who use violence against family members demonstrate acceptable behaviour in other settings. Many are considered respectable members of the community, and other people are often reluctant to believe they could be abusive.

- **Myth:** Domestic and family violence is a personal problem between a husband and wife.

Truth: Domestic and family violence affects everyone and is everyone's business.

MYTHS ABOUT DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE CONT...

- **Myth:** Stress and anger lead to violence.

Truth: Violent behaviour is a choice. Perpetrators use it to control and dominate their victims, and their actions are very deliberate. Usually perpetrators of domestic and family violence are never violent outside the home or in public, even when under stress.

- **Myth:** Violence is about anger and rage. The perpetrator just snapped because they were angry.

Truth: Domestic and Family Violence is about power and control. Family violence nearly always happens in private, with no witnesses. Perpetrators do not generally abuse their workmates or bosses, regardless of the amount of stress they experience at work. Very often abusers hurt victims in parts of their bodies where the injuries won't show. Perpetrators are often highly manipulative and blame the victim when they are physically violent for making them angry. This is not acceptable.

STRENGTHENING PRACTICE: INTERVENING EARLY

- Housing professionals have a key role to play, alongside their colleagues in social services, health and the police, in keeping people safe.
- Housing professionals are ideally placed to identify victims of domestic and family violence, but only if they know what to look for.
- Signs of domestic and family violence can be difficult to detect. Sometimes people may not even be aware that they are a victim.
- It is vital that housing professionals are able to identify abuse and recognise possible indicators.

HOUSING PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

- Establishing & maintaining strong working partnerships with Specialist Homeless Service Domestic & Family Violence services
- Identifying possible signs of domestic & family violence:
 - Maintenance & repairs (broken locks / broken windows / holes punched in walls etc.)
 - Nuisance & annoyance complaints from neighbours
 - Neighbour's concerns about the safety of other tenants
- Referring & escalating internally to explore issues & offer support & referral to specialist domestic & family violence services to victims
- Maintaining strong confidentiality & privacy policies and practice
- Participating in planning meetings with tenants & support partners to maximise opportunities to keep victims safe

CURRENT NSW DFV POLICY RESPONSES JULY 2016

Current NSW Government responses:

- **Start Safely** – Start Safely subsidy has been expanded in 2016.
- **Staying Home Leaving Violence** – has been expanded to 4 new sites in 2015-16 (now in 23 locations).
- **Safer Pathway** – Central Referral Point, Local Coordination Points, automatic referrals from Police to Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service or Victims Services.
- **NSWPF DV Evidence in Chief** (means victims are now interviewed when police are at the scene).
- **Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme – Police/NGO partnerships for DVDS** being trailed in 4 sites.
- The availability of **temporary accommodation** to support DFV victims through FACS Housing offices and Link2Home. The Link2Home telephone service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year on **1800 152 152**. This is a free call from a landline.
- **Domestic Violence Line** is a statewide free call number and is available 24 hours, 7 days a week on **1800 656 463**.
- **Specialist Homeless Services** that places a key importance on accommodation and support in response to DFV.

USEFUL RESOURCES

- Useful information about domestic and family violence can be found on the 1800 RESPECT National Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence Counselling Service www.1800respect.org.au
- Daisy is an app that connects women around Australia to services. Daisy can link you up with a service phone number, be used to search the internet for more information and let you know what to expect when contacting a service. Family members and friends can use Daisy to gather information and support a loved one's decision making. It is available through both Google Play and the Apple App Store