

HOW MEN CAN HELP STOP FAMILY VIOLENCE

Hume Region Integrated Family Violence Services work to enhance the capacity of organisations, service providers and the community. Its aim is to prevent violence against women and children and to work with men to ensure a violence free future.

Although it is largely men who commit acts of family violence the majority of men conduct their relationships in respectful and non-violent ways. Family violence is extremely serious and prevalent, however, it is also preventable.¹ In recent years there has been increasing recognition that men play a crucial role in ending violence against women and children. Everyone in the community, including men must act to ensure a culture of safety and respect.

WHY IS IT MOSTLY MEN WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE?

Some men are violent towards family members for a variety of complex reasons. The social construction of masculinity and traditional gender norms play a major role in influencing the behaviour of men who use violence.² Many men learn from an early age to behave in ways that are dominant, aggressive and forceful. Men who uphold traditional attitudes about gender roles, such as a strong belief in male dominance and superiority, are more likely to be violent towards women and children.³ Men who use violence against their partners often have a sense of entitlement and feel the need to use power to coerce and control others. Violent men commonly deny, trivialise or excuse their behaviour through justifications such as 'it's her fault', 'she deserved it', 'she provoked me', or 'I had no control'.



WHAT CAN MEN DO TO STOP VIOLENCE?

There are many practical ways that men can take action to help end violence.

- Listening to women and learning about the problem is an important part of the solution. You might be shocked to discover that many women are not safe in their own home. Despite what the media reports, it is a myth that women are at greatest risk of violence from a stranger. Women mainly experience violence at the hands of men they know; their husbands, partners, boyfriends, fathers, relatives and carers.⁴
- Understand that violence in the home is not a 'two way street'. Some men report that they are victims of violence caused by women. While women can also be abusive, research shows that men and women do not experience violence in the same way. Research shows that women are overwhelmingly the victims of family violence. Women also experience more frequent and more severe violence than men, and are more likely to sustain physical injuries and feel that their lives are in danger.⁵
- Act as a role model for other men by behaving in non-violent ways, demonstrating respect for women and speaking out against violence. This includes challenging language and behaviour that degrades and demeans women, such as sexist jokes and unwanted sexual advances.
- Take action if you are confronted with a situation where someone is experiencing violence. Provide assistance by calling the police, telling the violent person that their behaviour is unacceptable or acting to ensure the victim's safety. Many men don't feel comfortable challenging other men's violent behaviour. When you stay silent the person using violence continues to believe that their behaviour is acceptable and the victim continues to have their safety threatened.
- Examine and reflect upon your own behaviour and attitudes. While the majority of men recognise that physical and sexual violence is unacceptable, most men are likely to have used emotional or verbal abuse against another person at some stage in their lives.⁶ Non-physical forms of violence can have a significant impact on a person's health and wellbeing and can be equally as harmful as physical abuse.⁷

If you are experiencing family violence or hurting the people you care about, help and support is available.

Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service:
1800 015 188

Centre Against Sexual Assault:
1800 806 292

Kids Help Line:
1800 551 800

Women's Legal Service Victoria:
1800 133 302

Men's Referral Service:
1800 065 973

Centrelink Crisis Payment:
132 850

Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention & Legal Service:
1800 105 303

WIRE:
1300 134 130

In the case of an emergency call 000

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU ARE USING VIOLENCE AGAINST SOMEONE YOU CARE ABOUT?

Men who use violence always make choices about their behaviour. If you are hurting the people you love, help and support is available. Men's Behaviour Change Programs are one of the main services available for men who use violence. These programs are designed to assist men who use abusive and controlling behaviour to learn to conduct themselves in non-violent, non-threatening ways. Men's Behaviour Change Programs offer a place where men can talk, share information and support one another to make positive changes in their lives.

Men who want to stop using violence against a partner or family member can get assistance from the **Men's Referral Service:**
1800 065 973.

MensLine Australia offers 24 hour telephone support, information and a men's referral service:
1300 789 978.

Men's Behaviour Change Programs operate locally throughout the Hume region.

Mitchell Community Health:
1300 773 352

Gateway Community Health:
02 6022 8888

Ovens and King Community Health Service:
03 5723 2000

Relationships Australia
03 5820 7444

Generalist men's counselling is also available from **FamilyCare:**
03 5735 4600

WE ALL BENEFIT FROM A VIOLENCE FREE COMMUNITY.

Men have much to gain from a community free from violence. The women in their lives will be safer and able to live free from the threat of abuse. Men who choose to conduct themselves in non-violent ways will gain relationships and friendships that are based on freedom and mutual respect. Boys and men are also victims of violent and abusive behaviour, usually committed by other males.⁸ For many boys and men being a victim of violence can be a source of embarrassment and pain. Working towards ending all violence will help to ensure a future where everyone's right to equality, freedom and safety is valued and upheld.⁹



For more information about these fact sheets go to www.familyviolenceservices.com.au

1 VicHealth (2004) The Health Costs of Violence: Measuring the burden of disease caused by intimate partner violence, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne.

2 VicHealth (2007) Preventing Violence before it Occurs: A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria, Victorian Health

Promotion Foundation, Melbourne.

3 Ibid.

4 White Ribbon Day (2009) Fact Sheet Four: What men can do, White Ribbon Foundation, Sydney.

5 VicHealth (2008) Practice guidelines: Women and children's family violence counselling and support programs, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne.

6 B. Pease (2008) Engaging Men

in Men's Violence Prevention: Exploring the Tensions, Dilemmas and Possibilities, Australian Domestic & Family Violence Clearinghouse, Sydney.

7 The National Council to Reduce

Violence against Women and their children (2009) Time for Action: The National Council's plan for Australia to Reduce Violence against Women and their children, 2009-2021, The Commonwealth of

Australia, Canberra.

8 White Ribbon Day (2009) Fact Sheet Three: The positive roles that men can play, White Ribbon Foundation, Sydney.

9 Ibid