



# Family Violence

Family Violence in Australia is widespread but often hidden. It occurs across society, regardless of geographic location, socio-economic status, age, cultural and ethnic background, or religious belief. Family Violence often presents devastating short-term and long-term effects across psychological, social, developmental and economic factors, impacting on families, children, and the community as a whole.

Family violence is any kind of behaviour displayed by a family member or partner that makes you feel uncomfortable, frightened or unsafe. It's not just about being physically hurt, but can involve being repeatedly criticised, intimidated, threatened or forced to engage in activities you don't want to take part in.

Many of those experiencing domestic violence cope with it alone. While they may develop a range of active strategies to protect themselves and limit the impact of the violence, many do not seek any outside help — they tell nobody at all. When they do disclose the situation to a family member or friend, the first response is often crucial in determining how, and whether, they will proceed further.

It is important to know where to refer people and how to deal with those telling you about their experience. If someone discloses an abusive situation to you, some simple advice includes:

- Finding a safe/quiet space to talk
- Listening – this may be the first time they have spoken about the experience
- Having a non-judgmental attitude
- Believing the person's story
- Reassuring them that it is not their fault
- Holding the perpetrator responsible for the violence and abuse
- Providing emotional and practical support
- Supporting the person's choices

**If you or someone you know is suffering the effects of domestic or family violence, speak up and seek professional help. For emergency situations that require immediate and urgent assistance call 000. For further support call Converge International to arrange a convenient time and place for you to meet with one of our experienced consultants.**