

Information about family violence and sexual assault and how to get help



Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention
and Legal Service Victoria
(FVPLS Victoria)

1800 105 303

FVPLS Victoria
'Standing Firm Against Family Violence'

What is family violence?

Family violence includes:

- physical harm e.g. punching, hitting, kicking
- sexual assault i.e. any sexual activity to which you have not consented or freely agreed
- emotional and verbal abuse e.g. constant ridicule, threatening to self harm, not letting you see family or friends
- threats of violence or revenge to you or other people
- stalking (e.g. by phone calls, text messages, emails or being followed)
- controlling your money
- harming pets
- damaging your property and belongings
- exposing a child to any of the behaviours listed above

Under Victorian law, 'Family Violence' can be caused by any person with whom you have had an intimate personal relationship or who or who is a family member or who you regard as being like a family member.

Assaults, sexual abuse, threats and stalking are against the law.

How does family violence affect you?

Family violence can result in:

- physical injury or death
- psychological trauma
- extreme fear
- isolation from family, friends and community
- depression
- negative feelings such as shame, anger, worthlessness and hopelessness
- use of drugs or alcohol to block out the pain
- health problems
- physical and /or emotional harm to children
- DHS Child Protection Unit investigating your family

How can you get help?

- **Police**
 - in an emergency, dial 000 for police/ambulance
 - ask a support person to help talk with police.
- **Family violence or sexual assault support services.**
 - make contact with a 24 hour family violence or sexual assault support service
- **Legal Service. A lawyer can:**
 - talk through your legal options
 - help you, as a victim of crime, to access payment for urgent expenses
- **Doctor/ Counsellor**
 - see a doctor if you have been injured.
 - contact a professional counseling service to talk through what is happening
- **A trusted adult**
 - talk to a person you can trust
 - if you are a young person, talk with an adult you trust such as a family or the Student Welfare Coordinator or School nurse
- **Safety Plan**
 - make a safety plan in case you have to leave your home quickly

How can legal assistance help?

Special laws exist to protect against family violence

- **Police can:**
 - take out an urgent after hours safety notice
 - take out an intervention order for you
 - lay criminal charges
 - take reports about abuse that happened in the past
- **Magistrates Court**
 - you can obtain an intervention order from the Magistrates Court to keep the violent person away from you, your children and your home
- **The Family Court**
 - can make orders about safe arrangements for your children when there is a dispute
- **Victims Of Crime Assistance Tribunal (VOCAT)**
 - may assist with urgent expenses and recovery
- **Lawyers can:**
 - Explain your legal rights and assist you to access them

Support services contact numbers

Police Ambulance 000

Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Legal Service Victoria
1800 105 303

Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service of Victoria
1800 015 188 (24 hr)/ 9332 3555

Sexual Assault Crisis Line 1800 806 292 (24 hr) (toll free from a landline phone)
Elizabeth Hoffman House Aboriginal Women's Refuge and Family Violence support
1800 796 112 or 03 9482 5744

Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service 1800 064 865

Women's Information and Referral Exchange 1300 134 130 (9:00 am – 5:00 pm)

Victims of Crime Helpline 1800 819 817

Kids Help Line 1800 551 800

Lifeline 131 114

This card does not replace legal advice. The information is current at time of publishing in anuary 2010 but may change.