How can we build communities that prevent domestic and family violence?

We all have a role to play in creating communities of respectful relationships that prevent domestic and family violence. A community of respectful relationships is one that:

- **Calls out behaviours and beliefs that condone violence against women**, such as: telling sexist jokes, blaming women for not leaving a violent partner or excusing violence as a normal response to stress.
- **Encourages both men & women to be decision-makers, take leadership roles and participate in all aspects of society**, both in public as well as personal relationships, eg. encouraging equal participation in all aspects of school or parish life
- **Challenges rigid gender stereotyping** such as: the belief that women should be submissive to men; that men must be tough and in charge; phrases such as 'boys will be boys' or referring to girls as 'bossy' when they express their opinion
- **Challenges cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance and control** such as: the idea that men must never show emotion or that a guy that doesn't fight back when pushed by others is weak; the belief that a man should act strong even when nervous and should be the main earner for his family
- **Calls out sexual harassment**, including rude or inappropriate behaviour, stalking and online abuse.

"Love one another, bear with one another, and let charity guide you all your life...Never see a need without doing something about it"
- Saint Mary MacKillop

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE RESOURCES

Police - 000
24/7 Emergency Support

1800 Respect - 1800 737 723
1800respect.org.au
24/7 Confidential Counselling and Support

The Orange Door
orangedoor.vic.gov.au/contact-us
9-5 weekdays, network of access points for people experiencing family violence

Safe Steps - 1800 015 188
24/7 family violence crisis & safety planning service

InTouch - 1800 755 988
9-5 weekday service for migrant and refugee women

Men's Referral Service - 1300 766 491
Counselling and information for men concerned about their behaviour

Dardi Munwurro - 1800 435 799
24/7 counselling for Aboriginal men experiencing famliy violence issues

Dijirra - 1800 105 303
Aboriginal Family Violence Legal Service and family violence prevention

Rainbow Door - 1800 729 369
or text 0480 017 246
9-5 weekday free specialist LGBTQIA+ helpline

Let's build respectful communities

RECOGNISE | RESPOND | PREVENT
Domestic and Family Violence

Catholic Social Services Victoria

What is Domestic & Family Violence?

The behaviours of a person who uses domestic and family violence vary, and stem from a need to exert power and control, instilling fear in the other. **If you experience violence you are never to blame and violence in any form from an intimate partner, family member or carer is unacceptable**.

Domestic and family violence almost always involves a deliberate, ongoing and repeated pattern of behaviour to control another person. This is sometimes known as coercive control.

Abuse and violence can take may forms, including:

- **Physical** abuse - physical violence or taking away control of your body
- **Psychological** abuse (also called emotional or mental abuse) - includes: name-calling and put-downs, intimidation, making threats to harm you or those important to you, and intentionally making you question your own memory or mental health (gaslighting)
- **Sexual** abuse - unwanted or inappropriate sexual or intimate contact or being coerced into watching sexually explicit material
- **Spiritual** abuse - use of religious beliefs to hurt, scare or control; or preventing you from practicing your faith
- **Financial** abuse - using access to money or financial information to control you or limiting/preventing you going to work
- **Social** abuse - controlling who you contact, when or how often
- **Stalking** - following or tracking you, including online

Domestic & Family Violence Continues Today

Domestic and family violence negatively affects the lives of many people and creates serious and long-lasting impacts including: injuries or poor physical and mental health, loss of housing, loss or limited access to employment, precarious financial security and or immigration status, isolation and alienation from family and support networks, and in some cases, death.

Quick Facts:

- An estimated **8 million Australians (41%)** have experienced violence (physical and/or sexual) since the age of 15
- **1 in 4 women (27%) and 1 in 8 men (12%)** have experienced violence by an intimate partner or family member since the age of 15
- **22% of women and 6.1% of men** have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15
- **18% of women and 11% of men** have experienced childhood abuse before the age of 15
- **1 in 6 women (16%) and 1 in 9 men (11%)** witnessed violence during childhood
- In the year 2021/22, **5,606 women (average of 15 women per day) were hospitalised** due to family and domestic violence
- On average **one woman a week is killed** by her current or former partner

References:

- *ABS 2021-22 Personal Safety Survey Findings*
- *'Our Watch' website, updated Oct 2023*

What can I do if I'm experiencing violence?

The signs of abuse are not always obvious. No one else may know you're experiencing abuse. You may feel like it's your fault (it's not) or that it's normal (it's not). Nothing you say or do makes it OK for someone to abuse you.

If someone is making you feel unsafe, is trying to control or manipulate you, or is harming you in any way - that's abuse. It's OK to talk about it with someone and ask for help. You deserve to be respected and to feel safe, always. If you don't feel safe, please reach out and consider:

- Seeking advice from a family violence service (see back page)
- Calling '000' if you're in immediate danger
- Seeking support from trusted friends, family or community members if you feel comfortable to do so.

"The true strength of the Christian is the power of truth and love, which leads to the renunciation of all violence. Faith and violence are incompatible "
- Pope Francis

How can I support a person affected by violence?

It is hard finding out a person you know is being harmed. The good news is there are simple things you can do:

1. In an emergency or if someone is in immediate danger, call '000'
2. Provide gentle openings for the person to share: 'Is everything OK?'
3. Listen without interrupting and non-judgementally
4. Believe them and take their fears seriously
5. Understand that they may not be ready or it may not be safe to leave - be led by them in how best to offer support
6. Help explore options for more information and support from services - seek advice from people with expertise (see back page)

It is important that you do **NOT**:

- Blame the person experiencing violence
- Make excuses for the person who has used/is using violence
- Make decisions on someone's behalf or try to force them to do what you think is best.