

What is Family and Domestic Violence?

Family violence is violence between family members, such as between parents and children, siblings, and intimate partners. **Domestic violence** is a type of family violence that occurs between current or former intimate partnersⁱ.

Domestic and family violence are behaviours intended to coerce, control or create fear within a family or intimate relationship. It involves a range of behaviours, such as:

Emotional & Psychological

Behaviour that aims to cause emotional or mental harm.

For example, threats of harm, emotional blackmail, humiliation, name-calling, destroying property, animal abuse, love-bombing, gaslighting, ghosting.



Sexual abuse

Any form of pressured / unwanted sex or sexual degradation, as well as causing pain during sex, coercive sex without protection, or sexually degrading insults.

Physical abuse

Deliberately hurting your body, or taking away control of your body. For example, restraining or locking up the victim, giving medicine or drugs to make them feel unwell, deprivation of sleep, food or medicine, and reproductive coercion.



Economic / financial abuse

Controlling and preventing your access to money, stopping you from getting a job, or forcing you to get loans you don't want.



Social abuse and isolation

Restricting an individual's interactions with others, leading to feeling alone and relying on the abuser.



Spiritual abuse

Denial and/or misuse of religious beliefs or practices to force victims into subordinate roles, misusing religious or spiritual traditions to justify abuse.



Other controlling behaviours that deny the victim's right to autonomy and equality (eg. coercive control, monitoring movements, stalking, harassment, technology-facilitated abuse, and legal abuse).

Family violence is a gendered issue

While anyone can experience or perpetrate family violence, there are patterns related to family violence that make it gendered in nature. Overall, most violent acts are **perpetrated by men** (95%)ⁱⁱ, with domestic violence and sexual assault mostly perpetrated **against women**ⁱⁱⁱ.

Domestic violence is one of the most common forms of men's violence against womenⁱⁱⁱ.

1 in 6 women

1 in 18 men

experienced **physical and/or sexual violence** by a current or previous cohabiting partner since the age of 15.

1 in 4 women

1 in 7 men

experienced **emotional abuse** by a current or previous cohabiting partner since the age of 15.

1 in 6 women

1 in 13 men

experienced **economic abuse** by a current or previous cohabiting partner since the age of 15. ⁱⁱⁱ

The nature of violence perpetrated by women and men also differs. Most violence perpetrated by women is in the context of self-defence, while men more often perpetrate violence for power and control. For this reason, women are more likely to be subjected to coercive and controlling behaviours, in private, and on an ongoing basis. They are also more likely to experience higher levels of fear, and more extreme forms of violence that result in serious injury or deathⁱ.

How to respond to disclosures safely

In an organisation, there may be occasions when people come to you and disclose that they have experienced family violence. This may be current (happened recently) or historical (in the past or childhood experience).

A basic understanding of how to manage disclosures and refer to appropriate support services is important to help those in need.

Follow these simple guidelines of brief intervention:

- Listen and believe what they tell you.
- Help them to understand that the violence is not their fault.
- Take it seriously and talk to the person about safety.
- Provide support and talk to them about services available.
- Respect their right to make their own decisions. Let them take the lead on how to handle their situation and ask them how you may be of assistance.

Perpetrating
domestic and family
violence is always a
choice.
It is never the fault
of victim-survivors.

Supports available for those who experience and/or perpetrate violence

If there are immediate and high risk safety concerns, it is recommend the person call **000**.

In non life-threatening situations, you can contact any of the services below:

Desert Blue Connect	(08) 9964 2742
1800 RESPECT	1800 737 732
Men's Referral Service	1300 766 491
Women's DV Help Line (WA)	1800 007 339
Men's DV Help Line (WA)	1800 000 599
13 YARN (Aboriginal)	1800 080 083 (10am – 7pm)
QLife (LGBTQIA+)	1800 184 527



ⁱ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2023, Family and Domestic Violence [FDSV summary](#)

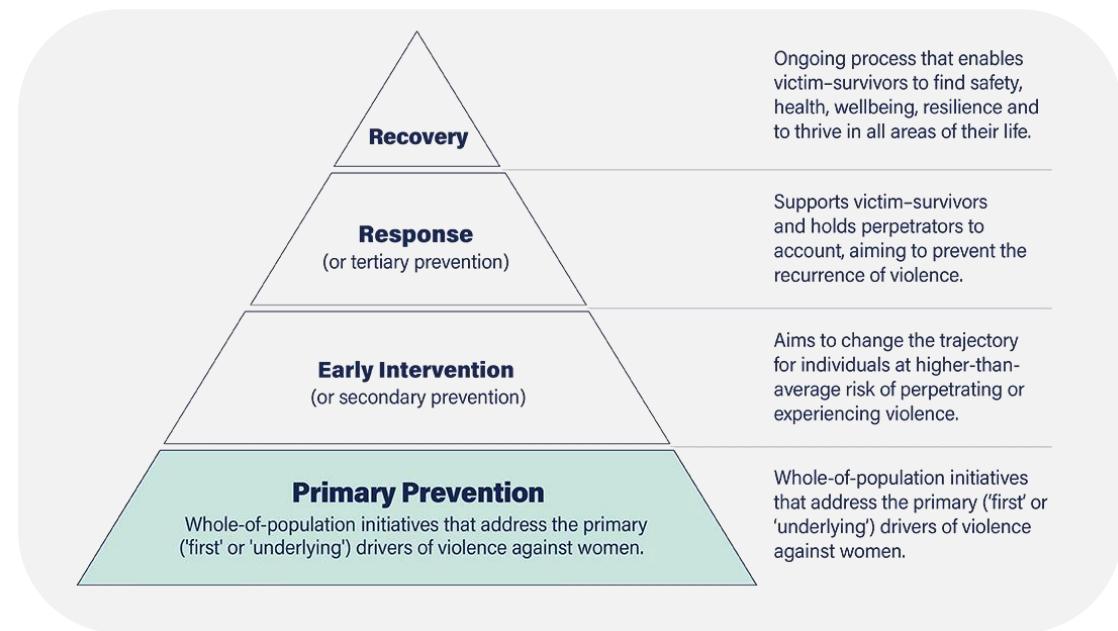
ⁱⁱ Diemer, K. (2015) [ABS, Personal Safety Survey: Additional analysis on relationship and sex of perpetrator](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ ABS, Personal Safety Survey 2021-2022. [General feelings of safety, 2021-22 financial year](#)

Can we prevent violence against women?

Violence against women is preventable. That means we can stop violence before it happens. This is called **Primary Prevention**. While crisis support (response & recovery) is vital, research shows that these types of interventions to address family violence do not reduce rates of violence against women in a community (Ellsberg et al., 2015).

We can't end violence without prevention. What's more, the people who can make the biggest difference in the prevention of violence against women are you.



Everyone has a part to play. Prevention efforts are most effective when they are carried out across all areas of peoples' lives - where they live, work, study and socialise - to address the attitudes, practices and structures that drive violence against women.

While this may seem difficult to achieve, it's an approach that has been used successfully for a range of other public health issues in Australia, like skin cancer, smoking, and road safety.

Violence against women is preventable if we all work together.

Violence against women and gender inequality

Extensive research across Australia, and globally, has demonstrated that men's violence against women is gendered in nature, and driven by gender inequality. Gender inequality occurs where **men and women are not valued equally**, and where power, resources and opportunity are not distributed equally. This inequality is rooted in our structures and policies, as well as more informal channels, such as social norms and gender expectations – all of which can be changed.



This iceberg image illustrates how disrespect towards women, sexist language, unequal pay, and harmful gender stereotypes lie below the surface and can be harder to see. However, this disrespect and **gender inequality creates the necessary social context** for the tip of the iceberg to emerge, where we see the worst forms of violence against women.

While only a minority of men perpetrate violence, many more men and women participate in, or don't challenge, the social norms, practices and structures that maintain gender inequality. This goes against the prevention of violence against women.

What drives violence against women?

Decades of research has helped identify the contributing factors that most consistently predict men's violence against women at a population level, known as **gendered drivers**. They are:

Driver 1.	Driver 2.	Driver 3.	Driver 4.
Condoning of violence against women	Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public and private life	Rigid gender stereotyping and dominant forms of masculinity	Male peer relations and cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance and control

Four **reinforcing factors** have also been identified. While these do not drive violence against women on their own, they can increase the prevalence and severity of violence. For example, the gendered drivers are what start the fire, and the reinforcing factors add fuel to the flames.

REINFORCING Factor 1.	REINFORCING Factor 2.	REINFORCING Factor 3.	REINFORCING Factor 4.
Condoning of violence in general	Experience of, and exposure to, violence	Factors that weaken prosocial behaviour	Resistance and backlash to prevention and gender equality efforts

These drivers and reinforcing factors play out at **every level of society**: from individual attitudes and behaviours, to social norms, organisational practices, policies and laws.

Gender inequality and other forms of discrimination (“Intersectionality”)

While gendered drivers are always relevant in violence against women, other forms of oppression can also contribute, such as **racism, ableism, ageism, and homophobia**. In other words, the value afforded to women and men, is not the same for all women and men, particularly where other forms of discrimination intersect with gender inequality.

Gender inequality and other forms of oppression
form the underlying **social context** for violence against women.

What is Community, Respect & Equality?

Community, Respect and Equality is a primary prevention program that works across Geraldton to address the underlying drivers of family violence. Community, Respect & Equality was launched in Geraldton in 2017 by an alliance of organisations who wanted to do what they could prevent family violence. **It is the first of its kind in Western Australia.**

The program is guided by National and State frameworks, including *Change the Story* (Our WATCh, 2021), and *Foundations for Change* (Preventing Violence Together, 2022).

Community, Respect & Equality across the Geraldton community

With the majority of the adult population engaged in **work, study, sport, community and media**, these settings are well-placed to reach a broad cross-section of the population. They also serve as microcosms of broader society, where norms and values are reflected and reinforced. This means that every conversation, policy and action within these settings has the potential to either reinforce or challenge gender discrimination, and the kinds of attitudes and norms that drive violence against women. In doing so, they demonstrate a safer and fairer community, and are more likely to thrive and improve performance.

62% of women

subject to intimate partner violence are employed.

(Cortis & Bullen, 2016)



2 in 5 women

reported experiencing unwanted or unwelcome sexual behaviours at work in the last 5 years.
(Safe Work Australia)



Violence at home has negative impacts

on work performance, workplace safety and job satisfaction.
(Coris & Bullen, 2015)



Community, Respect & Equality Agreement

The Community, Respect & Equality Agreement presents an opportunity for organisations – across all settings - to play a role in addressing the drivers of violence against women, and the prevention of family violence. Organisations become involved by signing the **Endorsement Certificate**, pledging to take action to prevent family violence before it occurs.

The Agreement offers guidance on how this can be achieved, by working through three levels of simple, meaningful actions. To achieve each level, organisations must complete **seven actions - including one from each category**. Using the *Community, Respect & Equality Agreement Guide* is the best place to start to get assistance in implementing actions.

Once you are accredited, the journey of creating a socially responsible and gender equitable organisation isn't over. You can continue to be involved with Community, Respect & Equality to ensure the actions you have implemented are sustained.

Community, Respect & Equality

Agreed Values & Codes of Behaviour



Community Collaboration



Stand up, speak out and work together with others for a violence free community.

Respect and Cultural Diversity



Acknowledge and value traditions and cultural differences, and demonstrate respectful relationships with family, friends, work colleagues and other community members.

Equality



Support gender equality by promoting women's independence and decision-making in the workplace.

Safety



Promote non-violent attitudes, language and behaviour to create a safer community.

Social Justice



Work together to address unequal norms, practices and structures that lead to increased family violence.

#CommunityRespectAndEquality
#WeSayNOtoFamilyViolence

