

What is domestic and family violence?

Domestic or family violence occurs when one person in a “relationship” uses violent or abusive behaviour to control another.

The behaviour which may be classified as domestic or family violence includes:

- ◆ Physical abuse
- ◆ Damage to property
- ◆ Sexual abuse
- ◆ Verbal abuse
- ◆ Harassment or intimidation
- ◆ Financial abuse, or
- ◆ Threatening any of the above.

Domestic violence does not just occur between spouses. There are a number of relationships offered protection under the laws of Queensland. These include:

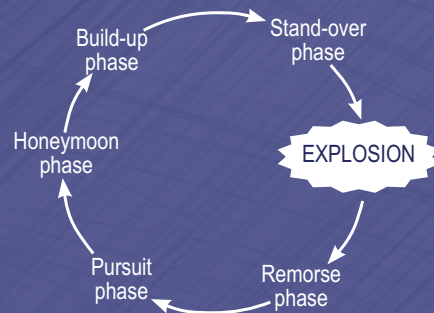
- ◆ Spousal — including defacto, biological parents of a child or same sex couples
- ◆ Intimate personal — two people in an established relationship (does not have to be sexual)
- ◆ Family — related by blood or marriage, or culturally related
- ◆ Informal care — unpaid carer who assists with day to day living.

A person under 18 can be named in a domestic or family relationship, as long as that relationship is spousal, intimate personal or informal care.

In Queensland, a person who commits violence or abuse is called a **respondent**. The victim or person affected by abuse or violence is the **aggrieved**.

The cycle of violence

Domestic violence often occurs in a cycle. This may mean the mood of a person who inflicts violence or abuse may change dramatically over time.



Risk factors

Research has identified the key factors associated with a person’s increased risk of being affected by domestic and family violence. The factors included here are in no way exhaustive, and above all, a person needs to assess their own situation for dangers.

Some indicators of increased risk include:

- ◆ Recent separation
- ◆ Escalation of attacks (becoming longer, more violent)
- ◆ Antisocial behaviour of the respondent
- ◆ Depression of the respondent
- ◆ Use of strangulation/hands around neck
- ◆ Threats of homicide or suicide
- ◆ Substance abuse.

How do I recognise it?

Victims of physical violence can be easier to identify than those who suffer from emotional or psychological abuse. Often this form of abuse can go on for long periods of time without being identified.

Some early warning signs can include:

- ◆ Jealousy
- ◆ Controlling what their partner wears
- ◆ Constantly checking up on who their partner sees or where they are going

- ◆ Controlling how much their partner spends
- ◆ Saying things to belittle or talk their partner down
- ◆ Continually placing blame on their partner if something goes wrong.

Who does this affect?

Exposure to domestic and family violence can have long term effects on a child. Extended exposure can often take away a child’s sense of security and safety.

Children often shape their behaviour and habits from the environment surrounding them. Being exposed to violence can increase the child’s chances of becoming involved in a violent relationship as an adult.

How do I stop this?

You must seek help. There are a number of services available that offer support and protection.

Counselling services are available to provide advice and support. There is also short-term emergency accommodation available to assist you.

The **role of Queensland Police** is to respond to threats or instances of violence and bring the matters before the courts.

Many police officers are called to domestic violence incidents by victims or concerned neighbours.

The first priority of a police officer called to an incident is to ensure the safety of the parties involved. **If you have limited English you must inform the officer so they can arrange for an interpreter immediately.**

If a police officer reasonably suspects an incident of violence (including physical, sexual, verbal or financial abuse; damage to property; harassment or intimidation; or threatening to do any of these), it is their duty to investigate the matter thoroughly.