

Justice and Community Safety Directorate

Domestic Violence Protection

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Members of our community should live their lives free from violence in all its forms. This includes the right of everyone to be safe within their homes and their extended families. Violence within the family violates human rights by denying family members that safety.

Domestic and family violence is not to be tolerated in the ACT. The ACT Government holds the person using violence accountable and responsible for their violent and abusive behaviour, and will support those who have been affected by the violence and abuse.

Domestic and family violence is a crime. It occurs when actual or threatened physical violence, including sexual violence, is used against a person. It also occurs when any family member uses violent and abusive behaviour to intimidate, frighten, harm, gain or maintain power and control over other family member/s. These behaviours can include, but are not limited to emotional, verbal and psychological abuse such:

- as threats to harm children
- exposing infants and children to the behaviour
- bullying
- withholding and controlling finances
- harassment
- stalking
- intimidation
- isolating behaviours
- damage to property
- cruelty to pets, and
- manipulation and coercion.

Domestic and family violence is often hidden. Behaviours which may appear minor or trivial in isolation, when viewed together can form a pattern of abuse and coercive control.

Domestic and family violence occurs in all parts of society, regardless of age, culture, ability/disability, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, education, occupation, or religion. However, domestic and family violence is predominately committed by men against women.

It is critical that men who treat women with respect are encouraged as advocates and role models to assist in the call to prevent violence occurring. A community, working together, can stop domestic and family violence.

Those responsible for using domestic and family violence can include:

- men and women
- ex-partners
- dating partners
- same-sex couples
- siblings
- parents or step-parents
- children or young people
- older family members
- carers, and
- other family relationship combinations including extended family.

Domestic and family violence is a social, economic and political issue that has a devastating and far-reaching impact across our whole community, both now and into the future. It has profound consequences for the lives of infants and children, each individual and each family. It undermines and limits a person's ability to reach their full potential and their capacity to contribute meaningfully to our community.

To create and maintain a community free from family violence, the ACT Government recognises that whole-of-government leadership is required. Government must work with the community to stop family violence and to encourage caring and respectful family relationships.

[Family Violence...It's Wrong. A message to the young people of Canberra](#)

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