

Family Violence

Family violence refers to violence between family members, including between current or former intimate or domestic partners, extended family and kinship relationships. This includes elder abuse, violence between children, parents, guardians or siblings, and violence perpetrated by a carer or in-law.



Family violence includes violent or threatening behaviour, or any other form of behaviour that coerces or controls a family member and causes that family member to be fearful for their safety or wellbeing.

The **Family Violence Act 2016 (ACT) s8** defines family violence as:

- Physical violence or abuse
- Sexual violence or abuse
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Economic abuse
- Threatening behaviour, or
- Coercion or any other behaviour that is controlling or dominating

Physical violence: can include slaps, hits, punches, being pushed, choking, burns and the use of weapons.

Sexual violence: can include rape, sexual abuse, unwanted sexual advances or harassment and intimidation, being forced to watch or engage in pornography, sexual coercion, having sex out of fear of what a partner might do, forced prostitution and human trafficking.

Emotional or psychological abuse: can include intimidation, belittling, humiliation, and the effects of financial, social and other non-physical forms of abuse.

Coercive control: can include isolating victim-survivors from family and friends, controlling access to finances, monitoring their movements and restricting access to information and assistance.

Family violence also includes behaviour where children hear, witness or are otherwise exposed to such behaviour and its effects, such as:

- Overhearing threats being made in another room of the house
- Witnessing an assault or seeing injuries on a family member that has been assaulted
- Witnessing people comfort a family member who has been abused.



Intimate partner violence

Intimate partner violence, also referred to as '**domestic violence**', refers to a pattern of behaviour by a current or former intimate partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological and emotional abuse and controlling behaviours.

If you are experiencing family violence and fear for your safety or that of another family member, you can contact the police, a local Legal Aid centre, domestic violence helpline or a person you trust. In an emergency, call 000.