

Women and children are overwhelmingly the victims of domestic and family violence, and perpetrators are overwhelmingly male.

## About Domestic and Family Violence

Domestic and family violence includes any behaviour, in an intimate or family relationship, which is violent, threatening, coercive or controlling, causing a person to live in fear and to be made to do things against their will.

DFV can happen to anyone and can take many forms. It is usually as part of a pattern of controlling or coercive behaviour.

An intimate relationship refers to people who are (or have been) in an intimate partnership whether or not the relationship involves or has involved a sexual relationship, i.e. married or engaged to be married, separated, divorced, de facto partners (whether of the same or different sex), couples promised to each other under cultural or religious tradition, or who are dating.

A family relationship has a broader definition and includes people who are related to one another through blood, marriage or de facto partnerships, adoption and fostering relationships, sibling and extended family relationships. It includes the full range of kinship ties in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (See below - Family Violence), extended family relationships, and family of choice within lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer (LGBTIQ) communities. People living in the same house, people living in the same residential care facility and people reliant on care may also be considered to be in a domestic relationship if their relationship displays an imbalance of power, which may foster coercive and abusive behaviours.

## The behaviours that may represent domestic and family violence include:

- physical violence including physical assault or abuse
- sexual assault and other sexually abusive or coercive behaviour
- emotional or psychological abuse including verbal abuse and threats of violence
- economic abuse; for example denying a person reasonable financial autonomy or financial support
- stalking; for example harassment, intimidation or coercion of the other person's family in order to cause fear or ongoing harassment, including through the use of electronic communication or social media
- kidnapping or deprivation of liberty, as well as unreasonably preventing the other person from making or keeping connections with her or his family or kin, friends, faith or culture
- damage to property irrespective of whether the victim owns the property
- causing injury or death to an animal irrespective of whether the victim owns the animal.

## What is Family Violence?

The term 'family violence' is preferred in an Indigenous context. It is used to describe the range of violence that takes place in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities including the physical, emotional, sexual, social, spiritual, cultural, psychological and economic abuses that may be perpetrated within a family. The term also recognises the broader impacts of violence; on extended families, kinship networks and community relationships. It has also been used in the past decade to include acts of self-harm and suicide, and has become widely adopted as part of the shift towards addressing intra-familial violence in all its forms.

Gordon, S Hallahan, K, Henry, D (2002) Putting the picture together, Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Western Australia.