



Family and Domestic Violence

Defence Community Organisation

Family and domestic violence is defined by the Department of Human Services as conduct that is violent, threatening, coercive, controlling or intended to cause the family or household member to be fearful.

Family and domestic violence is not only physical—it is any behaviour that is coercive, threatening or causes fear. It can include verbal, emotional, sexual, psychological, legal, spiritual or financial abuse.

WHO IS AFFECTED BY FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Anyone can be a victim of family and domestic violence. It is not confined to any single gender or cultural group.

Around 2.2 million (one in four) women and 703,700 (one in 13) men in Australia have experienced family and domestic violence (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Personal Safety Survey).

Family and domestic violence is not confined to opposite gender relationships and can happen within same gender relationships.

WHAT YOU CAN DO IF YOU ARE A VICTIM OF FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Every person—regardless of gender, religion, culture, ethnicity or sexual identity—has the right to live free from violence and the threat of violence. If you are experiencing any of the behaviours described in this guide, seek support as soon as possible.

The perpetrator is always responsible for their behaviour—you are not to blame and should not feel responsible for what is happening to you and your family.

STAYING SAFE UNTIL YOU ARE ABLE TO LEAVE

There are many factors that may prevent someone leaving a violent home including protection of children, shame, fear of reprisal, financial constraints, social isolation or loyalty to the perpetrator. This does not mean the violence is acceptable or not serious.

Remaining in a relationship where family and domestic violence is present does not take away your right to feel safe and to access support.

The support services listed can help you develop a safety plan for yourself and your children until you are able to leave, or until you are able to seek legal support to remove the perpetrator from your home.

STAYING SAFE WHEN YOU DECIDE TO LEAVE

The Special Accommodation for Emergencies (SAFE) scheme provides accommodation for ADF members, and the dependants of ADF members, in situations where they can't remain in their home due to threat of or actual domestic crisis. SAFE is accessed through the Defence Family Helpline (1800 624 608).



ENTITLEMENTS AND LEAVE FOR DEFENCE EMPLOYEES

There are leave provisions within ADF and Australian Public Service policy for those affected by family and domestic violence.

Reasons for accessing leave may include attending medical or counselling appointments, attending court hearings, police appointments, family dispute resolution, accessing legal advice, moving into emergency accommodation, seeking more permanent safe housing or organising alternative care and education arrangements for children.

APS employees - Refer to the [APS People policy guidance on miscellaneous leave for family and domestic violence purposes](#).

ADF employees – Refer to PACMAN or contact the Defence Service Centre (1800 333 362) for further information.

FINDING SUPPORT WITHIN DEFENCE

Defence Family Helpline 1800 624 608

Operated by Defence Community Organisation, the Helpline offers advice, intervention and referrals to people who are experiencing family and domestic violence. Contact can be made anonymously.

Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office (SeMPRO) 1800 736 776

A victim-focused Defence organisation that provides an advice service to ADF members, former members, and ADF families who have been impacted by, or are experiencing sexual misconduct.

ADF Chaplaincy

Defence Chaplains provide for the spiritual and pastoral needs of ADF members and their families. Chaplains are trained ministers from their respective faith groups but give support regardless of a person's background or beliefs. The Defence Family Helpline can provide contact numbers for ADF Chaplains.

FINDING SUPPORT OUTSIDE OF DEFENCE

1800RESPECT 1800 737 732

A professional telephone and online crisis and trauma counselling service available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Contact can be anonymous.

MensLine Australia 1300 789 978

A professional telephone and online support,

information and referral service, helping men to deal with relationship problems in a practical and effective way.

Lifeline 13 11 14

A free, private and confidential 24-hour telephone counselling service.

Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800

A free, private and confidential, telephone and online counselling service specifically for young people up until the age of 25.

Translating and Interpreting Services 13 14 50

Call 13 14 50 and ask them to contact 1800RESPECT

TTY/Voice Calls (133 667)

Call 133 677 and ask them to contact 1800RESPECT.

Speak and Listen 1300 555 727

Call 1300 555 727 and ask them to contact 1800 RESPECT.

If you fear that you are at imminent risk of harm either in an abusive relationship, or having recently left an abusive relationship, you should contact 000.

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE APPS

The following apps are available for download free of charge from the App Store and the Google Play store (for Android).

Daisy connects people experiencing family and domestic violence with a range of relevant support services.

Aurora has information and links to support services for people who may be experiencing family and domestic violence and their supporting friends and family.

Penda has legal and financial information as well as support services for people experiencing family and domestic violence.

Defence Community Organisation offers a wide range of support services for the families of ADF members.

For more information on this factsheet and other Defence Community Organisation support services visit www.defence.gov.au/dco or call the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608.

The information in this handout is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

