

call me dad



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A **STUDY GUIDE** BY CHRISTIE COOK



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» SYNOPSIS

Call Me Dad is a story about men who have perpetrated, or are at risk of perpetrating, family violence. At stake is the safety of children and partners, the stability of families, and the power we as a society have to intervene. These men struggle to maintain intimate relationships without resorting to abuse, physical or otherwise. We follow these men over their journey through a Men's Behaviour Change Program as they attempt to take responsibility for their violence, change themselves – and perhaps heal fragile bonds with their loved ones.

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Documentary may be of use in connection with the Australian National Curriculum namely, Health and Physical Education for senior secondary students.

Please note that many of the questions asked in this guide are not intended to be answered definitively, as a wide range of answers are acceptable and will depend upon prior education of the subject matter, personal experiences and the maturity of individual students. Students are encouraged to

develop a broader and more comprehensive understanding of domestic violence as they enhance and learn from each others' views and the material presented.

As some of the subject matter may be confronting for students who have experienced family and domestic violence, please inform students of where and how to seek help should they want to. You may wish to involve your school's counselling or student welfare staff in the delivery of this lesson.

» PREPARATION FOR YOUR CLASS

It is important to be aware of some of the challenges in openly discussing the topic of male violence against women.

Here are some of the common challenges to be aware of:

- Some participants may have fixed views about gender and violence (refer to ABS Key Statistics data you may wish to use to respond).
- It is important to name the limits of discussions – that your event is only focused on men's behaviour change in the context of family and domestic violence.
- Each person has their own perceptions and opinions based on a range of historical and personal experiences.
- Watching the film may be an emotional experience for some participants for a number of complex reasons.

Suggestions that help to create a respectful discussion environment:

- Be clear about why the film is being shown (eg. Education, awareness raising, etc).
- Acknowledge before the film is shown that the content might bring some emotion into the room.
- Clearly state before the film that discussions will be respectful of all perspectives even where there is disagreement (have the group develop 'group rules' before the discussion begins).
- People can leave before, during and after the film and discussions if they are feeling uncomfortable.
- If your school has formal supports like a counselling or behavioural program, seek to involve relevant staff members and resources like brochures or other printed materials.
- Advise participants that it is important to speak with a trusted support person if affected by the film or the discussions.

Phone numbers and specific information can be found online.

Bravehearts Australia

www.bravehearts.org.au

1800 272 831

Educating, empowering and protecting kids from sexual assault.

1800RESPECT

www.1800respect.org.au

1800 737 732

Counselling for anyone experiencing sexual assault or domestic violence.

Kids Helpline

www.kidshelpline.com.au

1800 551 800

White Ribbon Australia

www.whiteribbon.org.au

02 9045 8444

Preventing men's violence against women. Offer respectful relationships programs for schools including 'Breaking the Silence'.

(See Family and Domestic Violent Support Services, page 17)



57
minutes
Directed by
Sophie
Wiesner

» TRUE OR FALSE

Can an abusive man really change and come to realise what's most important to him?

Before Viewing

- When you think of men who perpetrate domestic violence, what images come to mind? What sort of person is prone to perpetuating domestic abuse?

True or False

Have a look at the following statements about domestic abuse and decide whether you think the statement is true or false. Perhaps do this exercise both before and after viewing, *Call Me Dad*.

- Some people are naturally angrier than others and therefore prone to being abusive towards others.
- Yelling and threatening is a normal way for family members to relate to each other.
- Alcohol is to blame for most domestic violence.
- Domestic violence can include emotional abuse.
- Sometimes people deserve to be hit, controlled or forced to do something against their will.
- Domestic violence is often just a 'one-time thing'.
- It is normal for family members to invade each other's privacy.
- Wealthy people don't experience domestic violence to the same extent as poor people.



» MEN'S STORIES – DISCUSSION POINTS

Call Me Dad: Men's Stories, Men's Change

The stories in the men's behaviour change program give rare insight into their attitudes, behaviours, feelings and what motivates them to attend and stay in the men's behaviour change program. *Call Me Dad* shows the reality of change, that it takes time, commitment and a willingness to take responsibility for violent behaviours. The 'three steps forward, six steps back' associated with the change process is seen in the men's journeys throughout the film.

The three stories below encourage discussion about the complexity of behaviour change and the link between attitudes that support abuse and violence (excusing, justifying, victim blaming, entitlement etc) and what emotional and cognitive shifts are required for behaviour change to be sustained over time.

SASKO'S STORY

"She said ... I'm scared of you"

Sasko talks about his own father and his early experiences of his father's control and abuse. He openly shares his emotions about Suzanna's fear of him and her fear of what he will do to the children. Yet later in the film, Sasko reoffends, assaults his child, resulting in Suzanna leaving the relationship and the involvement of police and child protection.

- What did you notice about Sasko and the other participants in the group as they talked about their partners or ex-partners? What happens when they talk about their children?
- How did Sasko react when his partner became more knowledgeable about his abuse cycle and began to set boundaries?
- What did you think about how the Behaviour Change Counsellors (David and Jacqui) worked with Sasko? What did you notice about their strategies?
- Do you think Sasko would be a safe father in the future? How can we know? What were the effects of his assault on his child? On Suzanna? On Sasko?

NATHAN'S STORY

"Biggest thing for me, is learning to let go"

Nathan is a man who has very traditional ideas of gender, male privilege and entitlement. His violence towards his ex-partner was highly controlling and the last assault was terrifying for her and ended the relationship. His abuse and threats continued in a different way after she left him and also included her new partner.

- What kind of attitudes did Nathan have that supported his internal permission or 'entitlement' to control and abuse his partner?
- How do we make sense of Nathan's emotional pain when he signed the divorce papers and his view that she was 'still trying to hurt him'?
- How did David and Jacqui manage his behaviours in the group when he was challenged?
- What kind of thoughts and attitudes does Nathan need to 'let go of' for behaviour change to become real for him? Why did he continue to disrespect his ex-partner? What did it take for him to let go of his blaming attitude?
- What did you think about his fathering? What did his daughter think about her experiences of him over time?

JUSTIN'S STORY

"Don't expect me to change overnight!"

Justin calls himself 'an angry man' and had a vulnerable history, leaving home at fourteen and living on the streets. He's done time for violent offences and seems to reluctantly acknowledge that he may have some problems. His journey has also included addressing alcohol addiction. The film shows his strong motivation for change; this continues to grow as he opens up about his young son and the affect the violence and abuse has had on their relationship. He slowly becomes attuned to the need to experience feelings of shame and guilt.

- How does the choice to use abuse and violence affect Justin's fathering? What are the attitudes that kept him from having a meaningful relationship with his son?
- What do you think of Justin's view about behaviour change throughout the film?
- Why do you think it is important to connect men to the feelings associated with shame and guilt?
- What do you think of Justin's changes and the effect this might have on his relationship with his son and his estranged daughter?

"I've been controlling of the money, I've been controlling of her friends, and I've done everything from grabbing her to hit her to hold her on the ground, a lot a things way outta line."

Fact Sheet 1

What is family and domestic violence?

Family and domestic violence is when someone intentionally uses violence, threats, force or intimidation to control or manipulate a family member, partner or former partner.

While there is no single definition, the central element of domestic violence is an ongoing pattern of behaviour aimed at controlling a partner through fear, for example by using behaviour which is violent and threatening. In most cases, the violent behaviour is part of a range of tactics to exercise power and control over women and their children, and can be both criminal and non-criminal (COAG National Plan, 2010).

Domestic violence includes physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse (COAG National Plan, 2010).

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities prefer the term 'family violence'. 'Family' covers a diverse range of ties of mutual obligation and support, and perpetrators and victims of family violence can include, for example, aunts, uncles, cousins and children of previous relationships.

Let's talk about attitudes that support violence and abuse against women:

- Research tells us that violence supportive attitudes give 'permission' for actions and behaviours that would not normally be accepted (National Community Attitudes Survey 2013).
- Attitudes give permission to ignore or justify actions that harm others.
- The *Call Me Dad* film demonstrates these attitudes as well as the ways that men choosing abuse can change.
- It also demonstrates that one of the key motivators for change is to connect men to the harm their attitudes and actions are causing their children.

Let's talk about why social attitudes need to change:

- We need to challenge and change the attitudes that give permission for controlling behaviours and violent actions.
- We need to notice the everyday opportunities to debunk myths and become more aware of what to say and what to do when we become uncomfortable with abuse supportive statements and actions.

"I was violent to her, angry, smashed stuff, pushed her around, the verbal abuse was terrible." (Male participant)

Fact Sheet 2

What is the impact of men using abuse on their children?

More than two decades of international research shows that babies, children and young people experience serious negative psychological, emotional, social and developmental impacts to their well-being from the traumatic ongoing experiences of domestic violence. Some of the impacts include:

- Sleep difficulties: Frequent waking, nightmares, fear of falling asleep;
- Somatic complaints: Headaches, stomach aches, aches and pains with no clear medical cause;
- Increased aggressive behaviour, angry outbursts;
- Increased activity level: difficulty sitting and focusing on everyday activities such as homework;
- Hypervigilance: Worries, fears, overreaction to loud noises or sudden movements;
- Regression: Loss of skills learned at an earlier age, behaviours that you would expect from a much younger child;
- Withdrawal: Loss of interest in friends, school, or other activities the child used to enjoy;
- Numbing: Showing no feelings at all, not bothered by anything;
- Increased separation anxiety: Refuses to go to school, very upset when left with babysitter or child care provider;
- Distractibility: Has trouble concentrating at school or home;
- Changes in play: Repeatedly acts out or recreates violent events in play, less able to play spontaneously and creatively.

"Children play a huge role, in men really recognising their behaviour and making a change." (Jacqui, Behaviour Change Counsellor)

Most men using abuse can be strongly motivated to making a commitment to positive change by understanding the affects of their abuse on children and their roles as fathers and male role models.

Let's talk about what happens to children and young people:

- Live daily with fear, anxiety and dread;
- Feel they need to be careful about what they say or do around their father;
- Worry about their mother being killed or injured;
- Become confused about relationships when they become adults.

"I'm here because I want to stop the abuse; I want my kids to be safe." (Male participant)

Fact Sheet 3

Why is it important to change abuse-supportive attitudes?

- Because when no one says anything – men using abuse take your silence to be acceptance of their behaviour;
- Because the National Community Attitudes Survey 2013 has demonstrated that attitudes supporting violence against women are not changing.

What are abuse supportive attitudes?

- Entitlement and male privilege (If I work all day, then she should have the house organised, dinner cooked, kids sorted out etc);
- Can use manipulative and distracting comments to hide accountability (she should have known what she was in for after I've had a few drinks);
- Usually have traditional views about women and family life (a woman's place is in the home);
- Abuse supportive thoughts (internal 'permission');
- Have a 'victim stance' (it's not my fault, my father was the same);
- Often blame others to justify or expect others to agree with their views;
- At times show self-centered expectations (his needs more important);
- Become upset when challenged by authority (they have no right to tell me what to do);
- Blame the victim (she is just as verbal as me, she gives as good as she gets).

But can these attitudes be changed? What are the benefits of behaviour change programs for men using abuse and violence?

- The film shows that change requires commitment, hard work and takes a long time. Men using abuse need to take responsibility and acknowledge their abuse and most importantly, men using abuse can change!
- Men's Behaviour Change Programs teach men using abuse the skills for taking responsibility, being accountable and to think about the harm their abuse causes their children and partner/ex-partner.
- Real change means that all the abuse has stopped and that it's safe for women and children to be themselves and not have to 'monitor' the man's moods and actions to stay safe.

Fact Sheet 4

Why talk about bystander actions?

Bystander action refers to the choice a person has to voice their opinion about someone else's language and/or behaviour, thereby interrupting violence or abuse as it is unfolding. Everyone can be involved in bystander strategies with those who use or support abuse and violence. Bystander strategies are a call for action to:

- Safely challenge attitudes;
- Safely challenge behaviours.

The first step is having a good understanding of the problem as well as challenging one's own attitudes and perceptions. A good way to start:

1. Be reflective about your own thoughts and actions – is there anything you do or say that has been disrespectful in the past? Have you stayed silent when you knew saying something was important but didn't know what to say? What do you think about these actions now? Drawing on your own experience of change can be a great way to start the conversation and be an inspiration to others.
2. Take time to talk to and listen to the women in your family, workplace and friendship networks about these issues.
3. Keep learning and share your learning! Use the resources given in this pack as the beginning of becoming more aware how you can be a part of the change. Share your learning on social media and in your family, friendship and community networks.

Staying silent about violence? Act Now:

- I can challenge attitudes that support abuse and violence.
- I can find the best ways to safely speak up.
- I can be a part of change, in my family, my workplace, my communities.
- I can take the White Ribbon Oath "I will stand up, speak out and act to prevent men's violence against women" White Ribbon - Australia's Campaign to Prevent Men's Violence Against Women.
- I can join Fair Agenda's campaign and add my voice to the call for full funding of family violence services at fairagenda.org/call_me_dad.

"There's no typical abuser, there's no typical client, and these men come from all walks of life." (David, Behaviour Change Counsellor)

For examples of bystander campaigns in Australia, see:

1. Rise Above the Pack: www.riseabovethepack.com.au
2. White Ribbon: www.whiteribbon.org.au/whatmencando
3. Our Watch: www.ourwatch.org.au/Preventing-Violence



» DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STATISTICS

The vast majority of dangerous, abusive and violent behaviour that occurs in the privacy of people's homes is committed by men against women.

- Just under half a million Australian women reported that they had experienced physical or sexual violence or sexual assault in the past 12 months.
- More than a million women had experienced physical or sexual assault by their male current or ex-partner since the age of 15 (some women may be counted twice if they experienced both physical and sexual assault).
- 37.8% of women who experienced physical assault in the 12 months before the survey said the perpetrator was a current or previous male partner and 34.4% said the perpetrator was a male family member or friend. Most incidences of physical assault against women in the 12 months prior to 2005 were committed in a home (64.1%).
- 33.3% of women had experienced physical violence since the age of 15.
- 19.1% of women had experienced sexual violence since the age of 15.
- 12.4% of women had been sexually abused before the age of 15, compared with 4.5% of men, between 1996 and 2005. There was an increase in the reporting of sexual assault to police from 14.9% to 18.9% between 1996 and 2005 and there was an increase in the reporting of physical violence to police from 18.5% to 36%.
- The majority of violence against men is committed by other men. Of men who reported that they had experienced physical violence in the 12 months before the survey, 73.7% said that the perpetrator was a male.

Source: Department of Families, Housing and Community Affairs Fact Sheet 2 Women's Safety.

<http://www.domesticviolence.com.au/pages/domestic-violence-statistics.php>

» TOPICS FOR DEBATE AND DISCUSSION

Questions

- What is the cycle of domestic violence?
- Can abusers really change?
- How do support groups assist with recovery from abusive relationships?
- When do a person's words or actions become abusive?
- If they do change, why do abusers abuse?
- How does role-playing assist in teaching about behavioural change?
- Is it possible for men using abuse to be emotionally available and meaningfully involved in their children's lives if they are using violence and abuse towards the children's mother? Is this good fathering?
- What do you think are the attitudes that 'give permission' for men using abuse to think its okay to treat their families this way?
- Why is taking responsibility and being held accountable so hard? Where can we see this playing out in *Call Me Dad*?
- What are some ways that families, community, schools and friendship networks can challenge this? What are some ways that men who don't use abuse can challenge this?
- How do we explain the strong role that gender plays in family and domestic violence? Where do you think this has come from?
- The men's behaviour change program also had a women's support group and ongoing contact with women, particularly when safety may have become an issue. Why is this so important? What do you think our families, community and workplaces could do more of to support women and children experiencing this abuse and violence?
- What do you think about the hard work and cost involve in changing these men's attitudes and behaviours at this stage of their life? What are some ways that our families, communities and workplaces can make a difference in changing attitudes before these programs are needed?



» ACTIVITIES

1. Radio commercial

Write a radio commercial for a men's behaviour change group:

- Which radio stations would air the commercial?
- At what time of day would you air the commercial?
- How would you get the attention of your target audience?

Make a poster for a men's behaviour change group. Where would you put this poster so that your target audience will see it?

2. The Traditional Man's Rulebook

In *Call Me Dad*, the men participate in an activity that challenges widely accepted social expectations and conventions. What attitudes are widely held and accepted by Australians that perhaps aren't healthy regarding how men should act, think and feel?

Write down your thoughts regarding unhealthy attitudes before completing the exercise below. Exercise courtesy of 'Heavy M.E.T.A.L Group'.

- Men are biologically superior to women, and so better at activities using physical strength (the myth of the hulk).
- Men's thinking is rational and superior to women's thinking, which is emotive and illogical. (Men don't really understand women.)
- A man's image is based upon having power, being fiercely competitive, dominant, and in control. (If you are none of these things, then questions may be asked.)
- Masculinity rather than femininity is the more valued gender identity to have – men rule OK.
- Work and career success are the mark of a man. (Watch out for redundancy and unemployment.)

- Self-esteem is established through achievement, competence and success.
- A natural order exists whereby men are entitled to assume control over others – family, children, and their environment.
- A man who needs help to deal with issues or problems is weak, vulnerable and incompetent – the myth of "I can do this all on my own".
- Expression of emotion is unmasculine and a sign of weakness – "little and big boys don't cry".
- Communication based on sharing feelings, intuitions, and non-physical sexual contact is to be avoided. (I don't understand it so it must be wrong.)
- Sexuality is performance and goal oriented. Intimacy and sensuality are of less importance.
- Intimacy and sharing with other men means either homosexuality, or that the other man will take advantage in a competitive setting.
- It is acceptable for men to use power, dominance and violence to keep control inside and outside the home.
- Real men are tireless, invincible and keep working regardless of the personal or health risks. (Real men die early of heart attacks, lung cancer, alcoholism, or strokes.)

Some Questions to Ponder

- Which of the rules have you adhered to?
- Are there any other rules you need to add to this list?
- In what ways does the old rulebook contribute to you acting in disrespectful ways towards others?
- What does the old rulebook teach you about women and men? e.g. Who is more important? Who is responsible for what?
- What have you and other (partners, friends, children) lost by adhering to the Traditional Men's Rulebook?
- How do traditional restraints limit the choices of men and women in both their public and private worlds?
- Do these rules enhance or detract from having a caring and respectful relationship with others?
- What costs have you and others paid for living with these rules?
- Which of these rules would you like to change, and in what way?



» COMMON MYTHS

There are many false beliefs concerning domestic violence...

MYTH 1

Domestic violence occurs only in poor, uneducated and minority families.

Fact: Studies of domestic violence consistently have found that violence occurs among all types of families, regardless of income, cultural background, religion, or educational level.

- Can you name any television programs, films or novels where domestic violence is shown in wealthy, well-educated families?

MYTH 2

Alcohol abuse causes domestic violence.

Fact: Perpetrators of violence often use drinking as one of many excuses for their violence and as a way to place the responsibility for their violence elsewhere. Often violence takes place in different forms, such as emotional or psychological abuse when the perpetrator is sober. The underlying issues of power and control are always present. Alcohol and other drugs can sometimes be a catalyst for an explosive or violent incident.

- If alcohol is only a catalyst to violence, what is the underlying and real reason for domestic violence?

MYTH 3

Domestic violence is usually a one time, isolated occurrence.

Fact: Domestic violence becomes a pattern of coercion and control that one person exerts over another. In most (but not all) cases a male over women and/or children. Domestic violence can include the use of a number of tactics, such as intimidation, threats, economic deprivation, isolation and psychological, physical and sexual abuse. Physical violence is just one of these tactics. The various forms of abuse utilised by perpetrators help to maintain power and control over others.

- If domestic violence is an on-going cycle, rather than an event, at what point in the cycle can outside influences best help the survivors of abuse to instigate long term change?

MYTH 4

Women experiencing domestic violence are masochistic and provoke the abuse. They must like it or they would leave.

Fact: Women living with violence often make repeated attempts to leave violent relationships, but are prevented from doing so by increased violence and control tactics on the part of the perpetrator. Other factors which inhibit a survivor's ability to leave include economic dependence, few viable options for housing and support, unhelpful responses from the criminal justice system or other agencies, social isolation, cultural or religious constraints, a commitment to the abuser and the relationship and a fear of further violence. The danger to a survivor can significantly increase when she attempts to leave, as the perpetrator may escalate his use of violence when he begins to lose control. This is why help and support is so vital during the process of leaving.

- Breaking the cycle of abuse is difficult when the abuser isn't interested in changing his behaviour. How can the community/ordinary citizens provide better support for survivors? Can ordinary Australians be taught to recognise abuse and provide appropriate intervention and support? What type of public campaign would work? What aspects of abuse do Australians need to be better educated about?

MYTH 5

All members of the family must change, in order for the violence to stop.

Fact: Only the perpetrator has the ability to stop the violence. Abusive and controlling behaviour is a choice for which the perpetrator must be accountable. Many survivors of violence make numerous attempts to change their own behaviour in the hope that this will stop the abuse. This does not work. Changes in family members' behaviour will not cause the perpetrator to be non-violent.

- Why do survivors think that they can change an abuser with their own behaviour?

MYTH 6

Domestic violence does not affect many people.

Fact: It is difficult to know the extent of domestic violence because of the hidden nature of the problem. Domestic violence is the most common form of assault in Australia. Women and children who experience domestic violence are much more likely to suffer a number of physical and mental health problems, as well as being at risk of homelessness and other forms of social disadvantage.

- How does fear keep survivors from reporting abuse? What is it that survivors fear will happen if they report abuse?

One in three Australian women will experience physical or sexual violence in her lifetime.



Frequently Asked Questions about domestic physical and sexual abuse

Excerpt taken from...AFL, *Taking the Tackle: Respect is for Everyone. Prevention of Violence against Women. Instructional Manual.*

1. Can boys and men be sexually assaulted?

Yes.

- 1 in 6 men are abused before the age of 18 (Fergusson & Mullen. 1999)
- 1 in 20 men have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15 years (Australian Bureau of Statistics, Personal Safety Survey, 2005)
- 93% of offenders are male (National Crime and Safety Survey, 2002)

2. Can't women just leave if their partner is violent?

It can be extremely difficult for victims to escape a perpetrator's control. It may also feel safer to stay – many victims are threatened with violence or death if they leave. Most victims take several attempts to leave a violent relationship before they are successful. Victims may also

stay because of a combination of other factors: they can't afford to leave, there is nowhere for them to go, they don't know what their legal options are, there is nobody to care for children if they get a job, and they may be worried about whether police and courts will be helpful. (VLRC)

3. Why do women talk about being a victim/survivor of sexual assault sometimes years after it happened?

Victim survivors of sexual assault talk about there often being a lot of barriers to speaking about being sexually assaulted. Fear of not being believed is often a significant barrier. Also, feeling unsure about the response they will receive can make it difficult.

4. It happened so long ago (being sexually assaulted) so shouldn't I be over it?

Sexual assault is a traumatic experience and as such can have long lasting impacts on a person's emotional, psychological and physical health. It can also have a negative and destabilising effect on other aspects of a person's life, such as their education, employment, finances and relationships.

5. Shouldn't women say 'No' if they don't want sex?

There are various ways in which people might indicate that they don't want to have sex.

If you are instigating sexual contact with someone it's important that you check if the other person really wants to do it. When people feel pressured, threatened or forced into sexual contact, they do not have the power to say 'No' and may rightly believe that if the person they are with is pressuring them, then they may not listen to 'No' anyway. It is important to make sure that both people feel comfortable.

6. Don't some women lie about being sexually assaulted?

Police statistics reveal that 'false' reporting of sexual assault is minimal, representing 2% of all reported assaults. These statistics also include statements withdrawn by victim/survivors due to fear of revenge or fear of going through the legal system.

7. I don't want to interfere with people's relationships, don't people need to sort that stuff out privately?

This is a common fear amongst the community. However, your response to a person experiencing sexual assault or family violence is really important. If a woman feels supported and encouraged, she may feel stronger and more able to make decisions. If a woman's situation is ignored it can mean she feels alone and unsupported and therefore unable to leave an abusive situation.

8. What can individuals possibly do about this huge social problem?

We are all different and therefore the way we feel able to contribute to changing this problem will differ from person to person. By accepting personal responsibility for being respectful in our relationships with others and in our attitude to those around us, this in itself can go along way in helping to make a safer community for everyone.

9. Should I intervene even if I'm worried about being hurt myself?

Your safety is always important. If it's not safe to intervene when you see someone being hurt or otherwise being treated badly there are other things you can do to help the victim in this situation. You can call the police on 000, ask for someone else to come and help you to intervene, explore what other options are available to you so that your safety is not compromised.

10. Is verbal abuse (name calling, put downs etc) really that harmful?

Yes, verbal abuse can be extremely damaging to a



person's mental health, their self-esteem and confidence. This in turn can have a negative impact on all other aspects of their life such as their capacity to work, study and parent. Verbal abuse makes up a large component of bullying behaviour and we are well aware of how much this can affect a person's life and sense of self worth.

11. What effects does violence have on children?

Children are extremely vulnerable to exposure to violence. There is increasing evidence that even as babies and toddlers, children can experience long-term developmental, emotional and psychological problems as a consequence of their exposure to violence. These problems can in turn impact on a child's future relationships, education, and employment.

12. Why don't we provide more services to men?

There are many services for men where they can get help and support.

It can be more difficult for men to seek help because they fear that they might be judged and seen as being weak, crazy or just not coping. There is a prevalent social expectation that men should be able to cope and deal with their problems on their own. This is a barrier that prevents many men from contacting services that are available to them either as victims of sexual assault themselves or as perpetrators of violent behaviour.



» MANAGEMENT OF DISCLOSURE

Definition

Disclosure means telling another person about an incident or experience of violence/abuse. This may be a recent incident, or it may have occurred in the past, or be ongoing. Disclosure is about support-seeking or providing unique expertise. It's important that disclosures are responded to in a supportive and appropriate way wherever possible.

Recognising disclosure

It is not always easy to identify disclosure when it happens. In fact, most people do not name their experiences as 'violence' at first and disclosures can occur when and where you least expect them. Therefore, it is important to keep an 'open mind' and learn a little about how disclosures can be made. Commonly held misconceptions about violence against women can make it difficult for victims/survivors to speak about their experience. These misconceptions include the beliefs that: perpetrators of sexual assault are always strangers; victims are partly to blame for the violence; that women and children lie about violence; sexual assault always involves the use of physical force or physical violence; a weapon would be involved; it occurs in dark, dangerous public places; or additional physical

injuries are sustained. Disclosure should be approached as an opportunity to assist someone to link up with appropriate help and support (see Family and Domestic Violent Support Services, page 17).

Effective support

- Believe and validate the person's experience.
- Affirm that the survivor is blameless.
- Enable the survivor to regain control.
- Accept difference of opinion, be non-judgmental.
- Be supportive, encouraging, open and honest.
- Give accurate information.

Things to remember:

- If someone discloses experiences of violence to you they are showing trust.
- If you are concerned for someone's current safety then it is important to consider helping them to act; however in some instances it may be enough to simply acknowledge and thank them for sharing their experience with you and to pass on information that is supportive.
- It is important that someone making a disclosure is not forced into acting. You can talk about their options but they must feel in control of the situation and what happens next.
- You are not expected to be a counsellor. The most important things you can do are: listen to the person, show you believe them and give information.
- Make sure you care for yourself after hearing their story.

Reference and acknowledgement: Information contained in this guide was sourced from White Ribbon Fact Sheet 11





Violence against women: key statistics

Research from the 2012 ABS Personal Safety Survey and Australian Institute of Criminology shows that both men and women in Australia experience substantial levels of violence.

Domestic and sexual violence is overwhelmingly committed by men against women.

89 women were killed by their current or former partner between 2008-10. *This equates to nearly one woman every week.*

Rates of violence against women and men

Since the age of 15:

1 in 5 Australian women had experienced **sexual violence**.

1 in 6 Australian women had experienced **physical or sexual violence** from a current or former partner.

1 in 4 Australian women had experienced **emotional abuse** by a current or former partner.

1 in 3 Australian women had experienced **physical violence**.

1 in 22 Australian men had experienced **sexual violence**.

1 in 19 Australian men had experienced **physical or sexual violence** from a current or former partner.

1 in 7 Australian men had experienced **emotional abuse** by a current or former partner.

1 in 2 Australian men had experienced **physical violence**.

It is more likely for a person to experience violence from a male rather than a female perpetrator.

Over 3 times as many people experienced violence from a male.

Our WATCH
End violence against Women And their Children

For more information on how to prevent violence against women, or for media comment visit www.ourwatch.org.au

ANROWS

AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY
to Reduce Violence against Women & their Children

For more information and research about violence against women visit www.anrows.org.au

If you are experiencing domestic and family violence, or have experienced sexual assault, seek support, call **1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)**.

Information has been sourced from the ABS. Produced by Our Watch (www.ourwatch.org.au) and ANROWS (anrows.org.au).

Age

- People aged 16-24 have a lower level of understanding of violence against women and are more likely to excuse it. They are more likely to endorse relationships where men exert power over women.
- Although young people are more supportive of equality in some areas (e.g. they support women's equal right to education), they are also more likely to endorse men dominating decision making in relationships.
- In older groups (35-64), there is less tolerance of attitudes that excuse violence and more support for gender equality.
- People aged 65-75+ are less likely to understand the complexity of violence against women, have low levels of support for gender equity and are more likely to condone violence.
- Socio-economic status was found to have a negligible influence on attitudes and there were no pronounced differences in rural vs metro.

Conclusions

- Those with high levels of support for equitable gender roles and relationships are more likely to understand that violence against women can involve physical, physiological, social and economic means of intimidation and control (versus only physical violence and forced sex).
- Those who understand violence against women as comprising this range of behaviours and have more equitable attitudes to gender roles and relations are less likely to be supportive of violence against women.
- After taking attitudes against gender and understanding of violence against women into account, the survey found that demographic factors have a limited influence on Australians' attitudes.

- 43% believe that rape results from men not being able to control their need for sex (increase from 35% in 2009).
- 64% believe women are more likely to be raped by a known person than a stranger (decrease from 70% in 2009).
- 9% of respondents said a man is less responsible for rape if he was drunk/on drugs (increase from 8% in 2009)
- 10% believe that if a woman does not physically resist rape, then it is not rape (2009 data unavailable).
- 42% believe women with disabilities are less likely to be believed when reporting sexual assault (increase from 37% in 2009).

Victim blaming:

- 19% believe if a woman is raped while drug or drug-affected then she bears responsibility for the rape (increase from 18% in 2009).
- 16% believe women say no when they mean yes (increase from 14% in 2009).
- 11% believe domestic violence is excused if the victim is affected by alcohol (increase from 9% in 2009).
- 12% believe that if a woman goes to a room alone with a man at a party it is her fault she is raped (2009 data unavailable).

Attitudes towards gender

- Up to 28% of Australians endorse attitudes supportive of male dominance of decision-making in relationships, a dynamic identified as a risk factor in partner violence.

Preparedness to intervene

- 98% say they are prepared to intervene if a known woman is being assaulted by her partner (2009 data unavailable).
- 92% say they are prepared to intervene if an unknown woman is being assaulted (2009 data unavailable).

Demographics

Attitudes towards women are fairly consistent across the population, regardless of your education, where you live or how much money you earn. The survey found virtually no differences between respondents in rural, remote, urban and regional areas or between states and territories.

However, there are some differences between groups. Groups who have the poorest understanding of what constitutes violence against women and those least likely to support gender equality are:

- men, especially young men and those experiencing multiple forms of disadvantage.
- older (65+) and younger (16-25) people
- people from countries in which the main language spoken is not English, especially those who have recently arrived in Australia

The National Community Attitudes Survey 2013 – key findings

The National Community Attitudes Survey (NCAS), conducted by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth), is a unique Australia-wide study designed to track how the population view issues related to violence against women including their knowledge of what violence means, attitudes toward violence and gender roles and awareness of sources of assistance.

It is conducted every four years to assess changes over time, first in 1995, again in 2009 and most recently, 2013. In 2013, it consisted of 17,500 20-minute phone calls with people aged 16 years and over between January and May 2013. The data is evenly weighted to account for gender, age, socioeconomic status and cultural background.

This research shows a need to maintain an urgent focus on strengthening awareness and understanding of violence across the community and among young people in particular. The better people's knowledge about the patterns and dynamics of violence, the less likely they are to hold violence supportive attitudes.

It is important to note that although negative attitudes around gender equity and violence against women still exist in all segments of the Australian community, the issue has only recently become a national priority and it will take many years before we see gradual shifts in attitudes and behaviours. It will take some time before any subtle changes are observed across NCAS data.

Key findings

Attitudes about domestic violence:

- 68% believe violence against women is common (decrease from 74% in 2009)
- 86% believe women are more likely to suffer physical harm from domestic violence than men (decrease from 89% in 2009)
- 64% perceive that the main cause of violence against women is some men not being unable to manage their anger (2009 data unavailable)
- 53% believe women fabricate or exaggerate domestic violence in family law cases (increase from 51% in 2009).
- 21% believe domestic violence can be excused if the person regrets it (decrease from 25% in 2009)
- 12% say domestic violence can be excused if the violent person is under a lot of stress (2009 data unavailable).
- 9% say violence is excusable if the person is heavily affected by alcohol (increase from 8% in 2009)
- 78% find it hard to understand why women stay in violent relationships (decrease from 82% in 2009)
- 51% think most women could leave a violent relationship if they wanted to (decrease from 54% in 2009)
- 57% say they would know where to go for help with a partner violence issue in 2013 (decrease from 62% in 2009).

Attitudes about rape:

- In 2013 on average, people are less tolerant of domestic violence, but more likely to excuse sexual assault compared to 2009.

» **FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUPPORT SERVICES**

NATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732): 24 hour, National Sexual Assault, Family & Domestic Violence Counselling Line for any Australian who has experienced, or is at risk of, family and domestic violence and/or sexual assault.

Lifeline has a national number who can help put you in contact with a crisis service in your State (24 hours)
131 114

Police or Ambulance

000 in an emergency for police or ambulance.

Translating and Interpreting Service

Phone to gain access to an interpreter in your own language (free)
131 450

Mensline Australia

Supports men and boys who are dealing with family and relationship difficulties
1300 78 99 78

Kids Help Line

Telephone counselling for children and young people
Freecall: 1800 551 800.
E-mail and web counselling www.kidshelp.com.au

Australian Childhood Foundation

Counselling for children and young people affected by abuse
1800-176-453 or 9874 -3922
www.childhood.org.au

Relationships Australia

Support groups and counselling on relationships, and for abusive and abused partners.
1300-364-277 or Vic (03) 9261-8700. Website: www.relationships.com.au

ASCA (Adults Surviving Child Abuse) A service to adult survivors, their friends and family and the health care professionals who support them.
Support line: 1300 657 380
www.asca.org.au

National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline

An Australia-wide telephone hotline for reporting abuse and neglect of people with disability.

Ph. 1800 880 052

Safe Relationships Project

Provide men and women who are experiencing domestic violence in Same Sex relationships with support, advocacy, referral and information.

The Department of Community Services Domestic Violence Line is the primary information service for people experiencing domestic violence in NSW. The DV line is free and staffed 24 hours, 7 days a week. Ph. 1800 65 64 63

LGBTIQ Domestic Violence Information:

Another Closet

www.anothercloset.com.au

Transgender and Transsexual People:

Gender Centre

Services for people with gender issues.

Phone: (02) 9569 2366

www.gendercentre.org.au

Intersex People:

The Australian affiliate of Organisation Internationale des Intersexues (OII Australia)

www.oii.org.au

Email: info@oii.org.au

Healthdirect Australia

Healthdirect Australia is a non-commercial, government funded organisation providing trusted health information to all Australians.

<http://www.mindhealthconnect.org.au/abusive-relationships>

STATE SUPPORT SERVICES

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Domestic Violence Crisis Service
02 6280 0900

Rape Crisis Centre (24 Hours)
02 6247 2525

Canberra Men's Centre
02 6230 6999

NEW SOUTH WALES

Domestic Violence Line
1800 65 64 63
1800 671 442 TTY (Hearing
impaired)

Rape Crisis Service
1800 424 017

Interrelate Family Centres
1300 736 966

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Domestic Violence Crisis Line
1800 019 116

Sexual Assault Referral Centre
08 8922 6472

QUEENSLAND

**Domestic Violence Telephone
Service**
1800 811 811

Sexual Assault Help Line
1800 010 120

Men's Info Line
1800 600 636

QLD DV Weblink (a directory of
QLD support services)
www.qlddomesticviolencelink.org.au/

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Domestic Violence Helpline
1300 782 200

**Yarrow Place Sexual Assault
Service**
1800 817 421

TASMANIA

**Family Violence Counselling
and Support Service**
1800 608 122

**Family Violence Response &
Referral**
1800 633 937

Sexual Assault Support Service
03 6231 1817

Mens Line Australia
1300 364 277

VICTORIA

**safe steps Family Violence
Response Centre**
1800 015 188

Sexual Assault Crisis Line
1800 806 292

Men's Referral Service
1800 065 973

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**Women's Domestic Violence
Helpline**

08 9223 1188/ 1800 007 339

Crisis Care

1800 199 00808 or 08 9233 1111

Sexual Assault Res. Centre

08 9340 1828 or 1800 199 888

Men's Helpline

08 9223 1199 or 1800 000 599

LEGAL SERVICES

Legal Aid NSW

Call 1300 888 529

Legal Aid ACT

Call 1300 654 314

Legal Services Commission of South Australia

Call 1300 366 424

Victoria Legal Aid

Call 1300 792 387

Legal Aid WA

Call 1300 650 579

Legal Aid QLD

Call 1300 651 188

Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission

Call 1800 019 343

Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania

1300 366 611

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

To find contact details and links to more organisations refer to the **Domestic Violence Resource Centre** www.dvrcv.org.au

NSW Victims Services Mobile

app, The Justice Journey, has been designed to reduce the stress often experienced by victims involved in the criminal justice system, and provides information and guidance for victims from the time they become a victim until after the court process has finished.

The Immigrant Women's Health Service (IWHS)

was established in 1987 to address the needs of immigrant and refugee women in regard to health information and health services.

Visit: <http://www.immigrantwomenshealth.org.au/>

Our Watch has been established to drive nation-wide change in the culture, behaviours and attitudes that lead to violence against women and children.

Visit:

<http://www.ourwatch.org.au>



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