

What is Violence?



Violence Against Women

Violence against women is one of the biggest human rights issues in the world. It is one of the main things that stops us from achieving equality between men and women.

Violence against women happens in many forms, in many places. This can include in the family, the community, at work, in politics, in sport, in educational settings, on the internet and when using services.

Violence against women can affect some women in different ways. For example, women with disability experience all forms of violence more often and more severely than women without disability. Women with disability also experience violence by more people and in more places.

The United Nations defines violence against women as ‘any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life’.



“There is no situation where violence is OK. It’s common to want to protect the person - but it’s OK to speak up.”

— Akii



Types of Violence

There are many different types of violence.

This Fact Sheet provides a summary of the different types of violence.

Physical violence

Physical violence is when someone deliberately hurts your body. It is also called physical abuse. Physical abuse can be anything that causes pain to any part of your body. This can include someone doing things to you like:

- hitting, punching or slapping you
- tying, locking you up or restraining you
- forcing you to take medicine, alcohol or drugs
- taking away medicine or equipment you need.

Domestic and family violence

Domestic and family violence is when one person in a relationship hurts the other person or makes them feel unsafe. This can happen in different kinds of relationships, including:

- relationships with partners, husbands, wives, boyfriends or girlfriends
- relationships with grandparents, parents, guardians, children and siblings, and other family members
- relationships with ex-boyfriends, ex-girlfriends, ex-partners, ex-husbands or ex-wives
- relationships with carers and paid support workers.

Emotional violence

Emotional violence is also called psychological abuse. It is when someone purposely or consistently says or does things to make you feel bad. This can include:

- threatening to harm you or others who are important to you
- treating you badly because of things you can't change like your religion, race, disability, gender or sexuality
- purposely ignoring you.

Sexual violence

Sexual violence is when you are forced, pressured or tricked into doing sexual things that you don't want to do. Some other words used to describe sexual violence are sexual assault and rape. Sexual violence includes someone doing sexual things to you without your consent. This can include:

- forcing you to have sex
- touching your genitals or private parts
- showing you their genitals or masturbating in front of you.

If you are affected by violence, you can contact 1800RESPECT for help and support on [1800 737 732](tel:1800737732) or [chat online](#).

If you are in immediate danger call 000.



Fact Sheet

Social violence

Social violence is when someone stops you from being involved in your society. This can include someone doing things like:

- stopping you being with your friends, family or partner
- telling you who you can talk to
- stopping you from using your phone or the internet.

Financial abuse

Financial abuse is when someone uses money in ways that hurt you or someone controls your money. This can include someone doing things to you like:

- not letting you choose how to spend your money
- making you buy things for them
- not letting you.

Institutional violence

Institutional violence is when groups or organisations like hospitals, group homes, nursing homes and schools are violent towards you or do things to control you. This can include someone doing things like:

- locking you in a place you cannot get out of
- making you take medication you do not want to take
- not letting you make choices about everyday things (like what you eat or when you go to bed).

Sexual health violence

Sexual health violence is also called reproductive violence. Sexual health violence includes stopping you from making choices about things like:

- contraception
- how to manage your periods and your menstrual cycle
- planning to have a child
- having an abortion
- having an operation to stop you having children (sterilisation)
- accessing sexual health services and information.

Medical violence

Medical violence or medical abuse is when violence happens in a medical or health professional setting. It may include things like:

- doctors, nurses, health or care professionals doing inappropriate things to you that make you feel uncomfortable or unsafe
- medication or food being withheld from you while you are in medical care like a hospital or clinic
- doctors or nurses doing medical procedures or treatments to you that are against your wishes.

If you are affected by violence, you can contact 1800RESPECT for help and support on [1800 737 732](tel:1800737732) or [chat online](#).
If you are in immediate danger call **000**.



Fact Sheet

Online violence

Online violence is also called cyber-violence or cyber-bullying. Online violence is when someone is violent towards you over the internet or social media. This can include someone doing things to you like:

- sending you harassing emails
- bullying you or threatening to hurt you through an online platform like Facebook
- sharing your photos, videos or information without your consent.

Stalking

Stalking is when someone will not leave you alone or does not respect your privacy. It can be in person or over technology. It may include:

- constantly making phone calls to you or sending text messages, emails, faxes, letters or unwanted gifts to you
- hanging around near your home, school or workplace
- spying on you or following you, including through the use of electronic devices.

If you are affected by violence, you can contact 1800RESPECT for help and support on [1800 737 732](tel:1800737732) or [chat online](#).

If you are in immediate danger call 000.

Workplace sexual harassment

Sexual harassment in the workplace is when someone you work with, provide a service to, or interact with at work acts in an unwanted sexual way towards you. This may include things like:

- touching you in private places without your consent
- making sexual comments or jokes about you or asking for sexual favours.

Spiritual violence

Spiritual violence or abuse is when someone forces you to take part in a religion or does not respect your religious beliefs. It may include:

- forcing you to go to church or pray when you do not want to
- hurting or threatening you for doing something that is against their beliefs.

Neglect

Neglect can happen when a person or people who care for you do not give you the things that you need to be healthy, comfortable and safe. Neglect can include things like:

- not having enough care and support
- not being given access to outings
- not being able to get to medical appointments
- not being able to do things that you enjoy.

