

## Family Violence

What is Family Violence, who is affected by it, and how can you help?

**Family Violence** (FV) is a pattern of behaviours (no matter how trivial these may seem individually) including physical, sexual or psychological abuse perpetrated by someone on others with whom they are in a domestic relationship e.g. close personal, family or kin relationship or shared living/caregiving arrangements.

Perpetrators of FV use fear and intimidation to control their victims. Common abusive behaviours include:

*Psychological abuse*

*Verbal abuse, put-downs, name-calling  
Threats to kill or harm self or others  
Withholding love and affection  
Minimising or denying that behaviour is abusive  
Using privilege to justify abuse*

*Economic abuse*

*Refusing access to financial resources  
Appropriation of property or money  
Raising debt in others' name*

*Neglect of others' physical, social or health needs*

*Physical abuse*

*Hitting, punching, slapping, pushing, choking  
Throwing things, destroying property*

*Sexual abuse*

*Forced sexual contact, assault, rape, incest  
Coercion/harassment to perform unwanted acts  
Neglect of sexual health needs, e.g. safe sex*

**Anyone** can perpetrate FV and anyone can be a victim.

Some groups of people are known to be more vulnerable to victimisation, e.g. women and children, vulnerable adults such as elders, disabled or chronically ill people, and those without legal status in New Zealand.

The kinds of perpetrator/victim relationships where FV commonly occurs include (but are not limited to):

*Male/female intimate partner (or former partners)  
Parent/child (child abuse)  
Adolescent/parent or sibling (parent/sibling abuse)  
Adult child/elderly parent (elder abuse)  
Caregiver/vulnerable adult*

### How can you help?

*Believe someone who tells you about abuse at home and tell them its not ok*

*Ask about the children, how are they?*

*Find out about services in your area (see below) and ask their advice about safe interventions*

*Support victims or perpetrators to make contact with services, but don't judge victims if they don't want to*

*Help victims make a safety plan that includes the kids*

*Understand that sometimes staying in a violent relationship is the safest option for now*

*Be there when you are needed*

Family Violence can affect anyone but some people are more vulnerable.  
You can help by asking services how best to offer support.

*Are you concerned about your own or someone else's behaviour?*

*Find out about the services available in your area by contacting:*

**Family Violence Helpline: 0800 456 450 (9am–11pm)**

**Women's Refuge Helpline: 0800 REFUGE (733 843) website: [www.womensrefuge.org.nz](http://www.womensrefuge.org.nz)**

**National Network of Stopping Violence Services website: [www.nnsvs.org.nz](http://www.nnsvs.org.nz)**