

TOWARD A SAFE PLACE LGBTIQ⁺A+

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INFORMATION & RESOURCE BOOKLET



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What is LGBTIQA+?

The LGBTIQA+ acronym is used as an umbrella term to refer to people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and/or asexual. The + at the end of the acronym acknowledges that there are many other words that people may use to describe their gender, sex and sexuality identity. The acronym may also be used for those questioning their sexuality and/ or gender identity.

INTRODUCTION

Most LGBTIQ+ relationships are loving and respectful. However, LGBTIQ+ people can also experience violence and abuse in relationships. Australian research suggests that LGBTIQ+ people experience domestic violence at similar rates to cisgender/heterosexual people (Campo & Tayton 2015).

Most of the public information about domestic violence has focused on cisgender heterosexual people's relationships (e.g. violence by cis men against cis women). This may lead to a lack of awareness, understanding and research about LGBTIQ+ people's experiences of domestic and family violence.

This invisibility and silence can make it difficult for LGBTIQ+ people to understand and name their experiences as domestic violence, and to talk with friends and family about what they have been going through. Due to homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, many LGBTIQ+ people also worry they will not be believed or treated fairly if they access support services or report domestic violence to police.

Over the last 10 years, there has been growing awareness, resources, research and training in this area and 'mainstream' services are improving their responses to LGBTIQ+ people experiencing domestic violence. We acknowledge there is more work, conversations and further education needed to address this issue.

All people who have experienced domestic violence deserve to be listened to, believed and supported.

This booklet provides information to LGBTIQ+ people about domestic violence, including resources and support services to access help in South Australia.

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Domestic violence is any type of abusive behaviour used by an intimate partner (or ex-partner) to gain and/or maintain control over another partner (or ex-partner). Domestic violence is a repeated pattern of abusive behaviour that often escalates in both frequency and severity over time. Abuse isn't always physical. It can involve a number of abusive behaviours that make a person feel unsafe, hurt, scared, dependent and isolated.

Domestic violence occurs in all communities, social classes, ages, cultural backgrounds and geographical areas. Domestic violence can occur in long term relationships, as well as dating or casual relationships. Domestic violence can also occur in monogamous and non-monogamous (polyamorous) relationships. Although research is very limited, it is estimated that:

- 1 in 3 LGBTIQ+ Australians have experienced domestic violence (Pitts et al 2006).
- Bisexual women and transgender and gender diverse people are at particularly high risk of experiencing domestic violence (Walters et al 2013; James et al 2016).
- Gay and bisexual men experience higher rates of domestic violence than heterosexual men (Ovenden et al 2019).
- LGBTIQ+ people are less likely to seek support for domestic violence and many fear judgement and discrimination from service providers and police due to homophobia, biphobia and transphobia (see Carman et al 2020).

What is Family Violence?

Family violence is a broad term that describes violence between family members, including intimate partners, parents, children, siblings, in-laws, extended family and chosen family members. **Most of the information in this booklet is about violence between intimate partners (domestic violence) but it may still be relevant to people experiencing abuse in other relationships.** The services at the back of this booklet can provide assistance or referrals for family violence.

RELATIONSHIP CHECKLIST

A relationship checklist can be a useful tool to give insight into what is happening in your relationship. Abuse in relationships is not always obvious and it is not always physical violence. Read through the following questions and answer yes to any that apply to you:

Does your partner (or ex-partner):

- Make you feel scared, anxious or like you are “walking on eggshells” around them?
- Humiliate you, call you names or make fun of you?
- Threaten to “out” you to family, friends and/or work colleagues? (e.g. they threaten to tell people about your sexuality, gender identity, intersex variation or HIV status).
- Control who you can and cannot see socially?
- Prevent you from attending LGBTIQ+ events or venues?
- Have sudden outbursts of anger?
- Physically hurt or threaten to hurt you, other people in your family or your pets?
- Pressure or force you to have sex when you don't want to?
- Act over-protective, possessive or jealous for no reason?
- Control your access to your medication (e.g. hormones or HIV medication)?
- Monitor your text messages, email or phone calls?
- Convince you to doubt your own judgement or memory of events?
- Control your access to money and what you can spend it on?
- Pressure to act more or look more “male” or more “female” or to have medical treatment to change your appearance?
- Tell you: “*This is just the way LGBTIQ+ relationships are*” or that “*Domestic violence doesn't exist in LGBTIQ+ relationships*”?

If you answered 'yes' to any of these questions you may be experiencing domestic violence. To speak with someone for further support, go to the contacts list on page 23.

TYPES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence can occur in a variety of ways and involves a pattern of control by one partner (or ex-partner) over the other. Here are some examples of types of domestic violence:

- **Physical Abuse**
- **Sexual Abuse**
- **Emotional or Psychological Abuse**
- **Financial Abuse**
- **Spiritual Abuse**
- **Technology Facilitated Abuse**

Physical Abuse

Physical violence involves one partner hurting (or threatening to hurt) the other partner, their children or pets. It can also involve damage to property. Physical abuse can include:

- Hitting, punching, kicking, pushing, slapping, strangling, burning or throwing things at a partner, their children or other family members.
- Breaking possessions or punching/kicking walls.
- Threatening physical violence against a partner, their children, pets or other family members.
- Withholding or stopping a partner from getting medication or treatments (e.g. hormone treatment or HIV medication).
- Hurting/killing pets.

TYPES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Emotional or Psychological Abuse

Emotional or psychological abuse is any behaviour by one partner to make the other feel afraid, unsafe, helpless or worthless. Emotional or psychological abuse can include:

- Insulting a partner - e.g. telling them they are ugly or stupid.
- “Outing” or threatening to “out” a partner’s sexuality/gender identity/intersex status/HIV status to friends, family, work or cultural community.
- Gaslighting: telling a partner that they are “crazy” and playing “mind games” to trick and confuse them.
- Making a partner feel responsible for the abusive partner’s mental health – e.g. an abusive partner threatening to suicide if the other partner leaves.
- Being possessive and jealous (e.g. forcing them to cut off friendships or not allowing them to go out alone).
- Blaming a partner for violence, saying they deserve to be hurt or punished.

Financial Abuse

Financial abuse is any behaviour by one partner to control the other partner’s access and use of money to gain power over them. It can include:

- Controlling a partner’s income - taking their money or pressuring them to spend it in certain ways.
- Refusing to give a partner money or demanding to know how all money is spent.
- Refusing to financially support a partner and/or their children, including for household essentials (food, rent etc).
- Making a partner take on debt, including registering loans and credit cards in a partner’s name.

TYPES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is any behaviour that involves one partner forcing or pressuring the other partner to do sexual things that they don't want to do. No one has the right to force a person into sex, even if they are in a relationship. Sexual abuse can include:

- Pressuring or forcing a partner to have sex when they don't want to.
- Pressuring, forcing or tricking a partner into having unsafe sex (e.g. without a condom).
- Having sex with a partner when they are too intoxicated, under the influence of drugs or generally too unwell to say no.
- Having sex with a partner who is asleep or unconscious.
- Taking or sharing sexual pictures or videos of a partner without their permission

Consent is an important concept to understand and practise. Consent to sex must be verbally and willingly given every time. Consent can be withdrawn at any point before or during sexual activity. If someone is unconscious or intoxicated, they cannot give consent.

Spiritual Abuse

Spiritual abuse is when a partner uses spiritual/religious beliefs to control, shame and manipulate the other partner. It can include:

- Stopping a partner from practising their religious or spiritual beliefs.
- Forcing a partner to participate in religious/spiritual practices that they do not want to or are not interested in.
- Threatening to "out" a partner to their religious/spiritual community.
- Using religious/spiritual teachings to excuse violence - e.g. saying that a partner deserves violence because they have "sinned" or because of their LGBTIQ+ identity.

TYPES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Social Abuse

Social abuse is any behaviour by one partner to control the other's social life, who they interact with and how they communicate. It can include:

- Stopping a partner from visiting or communicating with friends or family.
- Undermining the relationship between a partner and their children or other family members (e.g. fighting with a partner's family so they stop visiting/calling).
- Needing to know where a partner is at all times, monitoring their movements and who they are meeting with.
- Not allowing a partner to have any privacy or relationships with friends/family that do not involve the abusive partner.
- Being possessive and jealous.
- Preventing a partner from attending LGBTIQA+ events and venues or socialising with other LGBTIQA+ people.
- Isolating a partner from their cultural community or preventing them practising their religious beliefs.

Stalking

Stalking is when a partner (or ex-partner) repeatedly contacts the other partner to try to control and scare them. It can include:

- Following a partner wherever they go (home, work, socialising).
- Constantly watching a partner, their house or workplace.
- Repeated unwanted contact with a partner - e.g. phone calls, voicemails, emails, letters etc.
- Monitoring a partner's movements online - e.g. using tracking apps or hacking into their email/social media accounts.
- Calling, texting or emailing a partner's friends, family or work colleagues to try to get information about a partner.

TYPES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Technology Facilitated Abuse

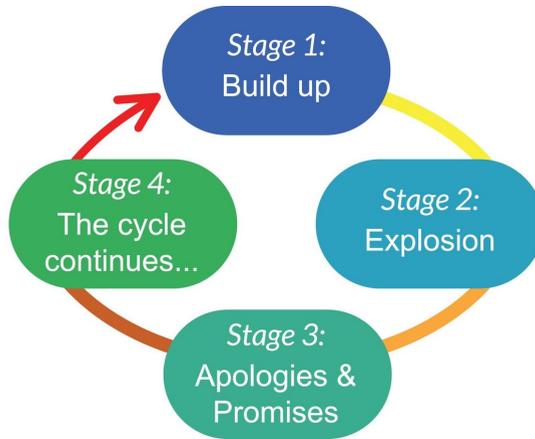
Technology facilitated abuse involves the use of technology to stalk, harass or control a person. This can overlap with other forms of domestic violence such as social abuse and stalking. This can include:

- Constantly calling, leaving voice messages, sending text messages to a partner.
- Harassing a partner online – e.g. sending rude or threatening messages to a partner or posting them publicly.
- Hacking into a partner’s phone, email account, social media and other communications.
- Publicly disclosing a partner’s private information - e.g. home address, workplace, telephone number, banking details, or other personal information.
- Sharing or posting pictures or videos of a partner without permission, including sexual pictures/videos.
- Using social media to try to track and intimidate a partner– e.g. by joining all the same groups/pages to keep track of their movements and friends.
- Installing tracking devices or apps on a partner’s phone or computer.

(Information about Types of Violence was adapted from Brisbane Domestic Violence Service et al (2012), LGBTIQ Domestic Violence Interagency (2014), as well as Say It Out Loud and 1800 RESPECT websites).

CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

Many people who have experienced domestic violence talk about their relationship as though they were living in an endless cycle of abuse.



The Cycle of Violence is a helpful tool used to explain how perpetrators of domestic violence use power and control to make it difficult for victims to leave abusive relationships.

It is important to remember:

- The perpetrator is responsible for their actions.
- Alcohol, drugs, and stress may exacerbate violent behaviour but they do not cause it - the perpetrator is making a choice to use violence to control their partner.
- Violence is never the victim's fault, even if the perpetrator might say they provoked or deserved it.

Not all abusive relationships follow a 'cycle' and sometimes violence occurs without warning.

If you are concerned about what is happening in your own relationship or a friend's relationship, please see the support resources at the back of this booklet.

CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

STAGE 1 - THE BUILD UP

A Build Up can occur where there is escalating tension in the relationship. This may occur over minutes, hours or days. During the Build Up stage, victims may feel like they are “walking on eggshells” trying to not to make the perpetrator angry, fearing they will become violent.

The Build Up can involve the perpetrator:

- Escalating verbal insults, criticism of friends & family or exclusion from them.
- Finding faults and complaining more frequently.
- Demanding to be treated differently or with more respect.
- Criticising everything the victim does.

STAGE 2 - THE EXPLOSION

After the build-up of tension, the perpetrator ‘explodes’. This is considered the most dangerous time and often where there is the highest risk of violence. This explosion stage may not be a ‘one-off’ incident but may last over a period of several days.

The Explosion can involve:

- Shouting arguments, insults and threats.
- Physical violence against the victim, their children, other family members or pets.
- Damaging property - e.g. throwing objects, punching walls.
- Refusing to allow the victim to leave the house or have contact with friends or family.
- Following the victim or checking-up on them constantly.

CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

STAGE 3 – AFTER THE EXPLOSION - REMORSE, BLAME, DENIAL

Although perpetrators act in different ways, there are 3 common responses after the explosion stage of the cycle - Remorse, Blame and Denial.

Remorse

The perpetrator says they are sorry and wants the violence to be forgiven and forgotten. Although they may apologise, they do not take real responsibility for their actions. The perpetrator may:

- Express guilt for their behaviour.
- Apologise and make promises to never to repeat the violence.
- Express love and be kind and romantic.



Blame

The perpetrator blames their partner or someone else in their life (children, boss, family) and uses excuses for the violence. The perpetrator refuses to take responsibility - e.g. saying "It's not my fault, I just had a bad day". The perpetrator may blame the violence on:

- Their partner or children for making them angry.
- Financial or work stress.
- Alcohol or drugs.
- Their "anger issues" or mental health.



CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

Denial

The perpetrator claims the violence didn't happen or that the victim is exaggerating about the seriousness of the situation. The perpetrator denies that they were violent and might say that:

- The victim imagined the violence.
- The victim is exaggerating/lying about the abuse.
- The perpetrator just "snapped" and lost control of their temper.



In all three responses, the perpetrator fails to take any responsibility for their actions.

STAGE 4 – THE CYCLE CONTINUES...

Despite apologies or promises to change, the perpetrator continues the cycle of abuse, using power and control over their partner. Abuse often increases in severity over time, as does the risk of the victim being seriously injured or killed.

Although many victims do leave abusive relationships, it can be very difficult and dangerous. When a victim attempts to leave, the perpetrator may escalate violence to try to keep them in the relationship. Many victims also feel ashamed and blame themselves - as the perpetrator has made them feel that the violence is their fault and that no one will support them. The onus should not be on the victim to leave, but on the perpetrator to stop harming their partner.

Instead of asking, "Why do victims stay in abusive relationships?", we need to ask, "Why don't perpetrators stop using violence?"

(Cycle of Violence information adapted from the Southern Domestic Violence Action Group (2016))

UNIQUE ASPECTS

Abuse in LGBTIQ+ relationships can involve the same types of violence as seen in cisgender/heterosexual relationships. However, there are some aspects which are unique to LGBTIQ+ domestic violence.

"Outing" as a method of control

Being "out" is the process of disclosing your sexuality, gender identity, intersex or HIV status to other people. "Coming out" is a process that can only be done by the person themselves. Not everyone wants or is able to be "out" to all people in all contexts of their lives. For example, a person may fear being rejected by their family, kicked out of their home or community, or fired from their job.

If a person is not "out" to their family, friends, workmates or cultural community, an abusive partner may use the threat of "outing" as a method of control. Alternatively, an abusive partner may force their partner to remain "in the closet" (not be "out") to keep their relationship a secret and make the person isolated and dependent on the abusive partner.

Confidentiality and isolation for people in LGBTIQ+ relationships

LGBTIQ+ communities are often very small and this can make it difficult for people who are experiencing domestic violence to reach out for support, as they may fear that they will not be believed or supported by people who know their partner. Abusive partners can also threaten to turn friends against the victim or claim that the victim will lose their community if they speak out about the abuse.

An abusive partner may also isolate their partner from contact with other LGBTIQ+ people. This can be especially difficult for people in their first LGBTIQ+ relationship who may not have had much contact with the community before the relationship began.

UNIQUE ASPECTS

Using homophobia biphobia transphobia as a method of control

Perpetrators of domestic violence against LGBTIQ+ people can use homo/bi/transphobia as a method of control, regardless of whether they identify as LGBTIQ+ themselves. For example, a straight man might act possessive and jealous of his bisexual girlfriend when she is socialising with women and men friends, saying that she "can't be trusted" because of her bisexual identity. Similarly, an abusive partner might insult their trans partner's gender identity or expression, saying they don't look or act like a "real" man or woman.

Due to societal homo/bi/transphobia, many LGBTIQ+ people fear not being taken seriously if they report domestic violence. Sadly, some people have experienced service providers and police who have made judgmental comments and assumptions based on stereotypes - e.g. *"Women can't perpetrate domestic violence"* or *"You're both men, why don't you just hit him back?"*, leaving the person unsupported, distrustful of services and at risk of further violence.

Family violence against LGBTIQ+ young people

LGBTIQ+ young people may be at particularly high risk of experiencing violence from their biological family/family of origin (Campo & Tayton 2015). This can include parents, siblings or other family members 'punishing' a child physically or verbally for acting in gender non-conforming ways (e.g. playing with dolls, dressing up in high heeled shoes). Kicking a child out of home, or threatening to, due to their LGBTIQ+ identity is a form of family violence and may be a contributing factor to the high rates of homelessness among LGBTIQ+ young people.

Children and young people may also be part of LGBTIQ+ families where there is domestic violence occurring. It is important to remember that witnessing domestic violence between parents/caregivers is a form of violence that can severely effect children. The safety of any child in a family

INTERSECTIONALITY & LGBTIQA+ DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

An intersectional approach to LGBTIQA+ domestic violence recognises that systems of power such as racism, ableism, classism and/or ageism may work together with homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and sexism to influence violence and inequality. For example, LGBTIQA+ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people may experience dual forms of structural oppression - racism as well as homo/bi/transphobia. LGBTIQA+ people with disabilities may experience ableism as well as homo/bi/transphobia.

'Mainstream' and LGBTIQA+ services may not always be accessible to people living with disability or provide culturally safe spaces, meaning LGBTIQA+ people may have difficulty finding appropriate support. Unfortunately, LGBTIQA+ communities can also perpetuate discrimination and not take into account the needs and experiences of all people in our diverse community.

Racism & Domestic violence against LGBTIQA+ people of colour

LGBTIQA+ may have unique experiences of domestic violence and face additional barriers to accessing support (WOC Network, 2018). Racism may play a role in LGBTIQA+ domestic violence - e.g. an abuser may isolate their partner from their cultural community, or use racist and derogatory language about them/their family. As noted above, abusive partners may use the threat of "outing" someone to their family or cultural or religious community to control them. People who are applying for refugee status, undergoing immigration sponsorship or applying for a partner visa may be especially vulnerable to domestic violence. Fears of experiencing racism (in addition to homo/bi/transphobia) from police or support services may make it difficult for LGBTIQA+ people to seek support for domestic violence (WOC Network, 2018).

INTERSECTIONALITY & LGBTIQA+ DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ableism & Domestic violence against LGBTIQA+ people with disabilities

LGBTIQA+ people living with disability experience violence, neglect and abuse at higher rates. (Leonard & Mann 2018). If an abusive partner is also a carer for a person with a disability, this can make it very difficult to seek support - as the perpetrator may have significant control over their partner's mobility, money, and communication with other people. Support services and LGBTIQA+ community spaces may not be accessible for LGBTIQA+ people living with disability or understand their unique needs and experiences, and this can increase isolation and disconnection (WithRespect 2021). As the WithRespect (2021) website says: "While people with disabilities experience higher rates of family violence . . . they have less choice and access to support services".

Ageism & Elder Abuse against older LGBTIQA+ people

Older LGBTIQA+ people can experience abuse by their partners, ex-partners, adult children, and other family members - this can be understood as a form of 'elder abuse' as well as family or domestic violence. If family members are not supportive of an older person's LGBTIQA+ identity, this can add to their risk of harm - e.g. family members may withdraw support from the older LGBTIQA+ person and/or prevent them from living as their true identity. As the WithRespect (2021) website says: "Many older LGBTIQA+ people are [also] fearful of the health, care, advocacy and justice systems due to past experiences of persecution, anti-LGBTIQA+ legislation, criminalisation and imprisonment of LGBTIQA+ people, and harmful medical and psychiatric practices. This can lead to a reluctance to seek support or disclose abuse."

**For an overview of Crenshaw's theory & work, see her TED talk in 2016 titled 'The Urgency of Intersectionality'*

(Information in this section developed with reference to Brisbane Domestic Violence Service et al (2012), LGBTIQ Domestic Violence Interagency (2014), WOC Network (2018) and Say It Out Loud and WithRespect websites)

SAFETY PLAN

If you or someone you care about is experiencing domestic violence, then consider making a safety plan. Safety plans can include ways to remain safe while in a relationship, planning to leave or after you leave the relationship.

A safety plan involves assessing:

- The strategies you already have for keeping yourself safe.
- Your safe contacts & how you can contact them - e.g. neighbours, friends, family, support workers, crisis lines etc.
- Your assets and materials - money, transport, important documents or other things you might need if you had to leave in a hurry.
- Who you are responsible for and arrangements for their care- e.g. children, pets, other family members.

There are a number of free resources on trusted websites for making a safety plan:

- **Say It Out Loud** website - Safety Planning tool for LGBTIQ+ people experiencing domestic/family violence and for people who are supporting them: <https://sayitoutloud.org.au/professionals/safety-planning-tool/>
- **1800 RESPECT** website - General safety planning checklist for domestic/family violence: <https://www.1800respect.org.au/help-and-support/safety-planning/checklist>

The domestic violence support services on page 24 can help you make a safety plan for yourself or to help someone you care about.

SUPPORTING FRIENDS & FAMILY

Friends, family and community members can play an important role in supporting LGBTIQ+ people who are experiencing domestic violence.

Information and helpful advice is readily available on how to support people experiencing domestic violence, including LGBTIQ+ people:

- The **Say It Out Loud** website (www.sayitoutloud.org.au) has a Friends and Family Toolkit for supporting LGBTIQ+ victim/survivors of domestic and family violence.
- **1800 RESPECT** website (www.1800respect.org.au) has information for people worried about their loved ones and anyone, including friends and family, can call the 24/7 support line for advice (1800 737 732).
- The **Domestic Violence Crisis Line** in SA (1800 800 098) can be called by friends and family for advice, information and support for people they care about.

Remember, if someone's life is in danger or you are concerned about their safety, call Emergency Services on 000.

Understanding Domestic Violence

One of the best ways to support friends, family members and community members who may be experiencing domestic violence is to educate yourself about the dynamics of abuse. It is important to understand what domestic violence can look like, the diversity of people who experience it and how it can impact people's lives. This booklet and the resources recommended on page 24 are a good starting point.

SUPPORTING FRIENDS & FAMILY

Warning Signs

If you think a friend or family member is experiencing domestic violence and abuse, there are a number of things you can look for:

Your friend may:

- Seem fearful of their partner or anxious when they are around.
- Be withdrawn from friends and family.
- Mention their partner is jealous or needs to know where they are at all times.
- Have unexplained injuries - e.g. cuts or bruises.

Your friend's partner may:

- Insult their partner a lot - make jokes about them or put them down.
- Order their partner around or seem to make all the decisions in the relationship.
- Control their partner's contact with friends and family.
- Get angry easily with their partner.

Any of these things may indicate there are elements of domestic violence occurring. If you are concerned, you can call 1800 RESPECT to talk confidentially about what you have noticed (1800 737 732)

Approaching a friend/family member

If you are concerned that a friend or family member is experiencing domestic violence, you can ask them if they are ok and need support. If you decide to approach them:

- Ensure you are in safe and private place with enough time to talk, without their partner or other people overhearing or interrupting.
- Express your concerns – e.g. by saying “*I’m worried about you*”.
- Don’t push them to talk – they may be uncomfortable, scared or just not ready.
- Be ready to listen without judgement
- Let them know you are there for them if they ever want to talk.

SUPPORTING FRIENDS & FAMILY

How you can help

If a friend/family member tells you that they are experiencing domestic violence:

- **Listen to them without judgement** – it can be hard to hear that someone you care about is hurting but if you react with blame or shame, they may not feel it is safe to speak to you again.
- **Believe them**
- **Acknowledge their fear and take their concerns seriously**
- **Let them know the abuse is not their fault**
- **Ask them how you can help** - they may just want you to listen, or they may need more practical support - e.g. a place to stay, a lift to an appointment, someone to look after their pets etc.
- **Follow their lead and respect their decisions** - they may not be able to leave the abusive relationship yet but they may still need your friendship and support.
- **Check in about their safety** - if they are scared that their partner will hurt them or their children, take this seriously. ***If there is imminent risk of harm, you need to call 000.***
- **Suggest seeking professional support** - suggest national helplines and local services to contact (see page 23). Offer to make a phone call or go to an appointment with them
- **Respect their confidentiality** - do not tell other people unless they give you permission to. ***If there is an imminent risk of serious harm, please call 000.***

SUPPORTING FRIENDS & FAMILY

What not to do

If a friend/family member tells you they are experiencing domestic violence, do not:

- React with blame or judgment - e.g. by asking what they have done to provoke the abuse?
- Confront the perpetrator - this can be dangerous for you and the victim.
- Try to mediate between the partners.
- Act angry or disappointed with them for being/staying in the relationship - they are living in a very difficult, dangerous situation and need your support.

Looking after yourself

Supporting someone you care about who is experiencing domestic violence can be difficult. It is important to look after yourself in the process:

- Seek support for yourself - talk to a counsellor, a domestic violence service or helpline (page 23), or a trusted person in your life (but be careful not to break confidentiality).
- Allow yourself time and space to step back from the situation - it can be hard to hear that a person you care about is suffering and you may worry about them, seek additional support & time for yourself too.
- Be clear with yourself and your friend/family member about how much and what type of support you can give.
- Gently encourage your friend/family member to seek additional support - it is important for both you and the person you are supporting that more than one person knows about their situation and they have options of who to call in a crisis.

RSPCA SAFE KENNELS DV PROJECT

There is a known connection between animal abuse and domestic violence, with pets being hurt or killed before and during human abuse in domestic violence situations.

Family pets provide positive relationships for people experiencing domestic violence, helping to improve their physical and emotional well-being. Perpetrators may harm pets as a way to control their partner and/or children. Witnessing the threat or actual abuse of pets can cause significant trauma and concern for family members. Many people will also delay leaving an abusive relationship due to being unable to make arrangements for the safety of their animals.

The **RSPCA SA** recommends you have a plan for how to keep your pet safe if temporary care is required in a crisis situation. For example:

- Keep your pet's leash, carrier, collar, and ID tags easily accessible
- Have a photo of your pet, a document containing their name, age and feeding schedule, what they normally eat, details of any medical conditions, their temperament, likes and dislikes (including whether they can be boarded with children/other animals).
- Keep details of your pet's current veterinary clinic alongside any copies of medical records, proof of vaccination records and/or microchip details.
- Have documentation to prove you own the pet (for example: registration or vet bills in your name).
- Ask family and friends if they are willing to provide temporary boarding.

In some cases local councils, community groups or social workers may be able to help you. Alternatively temporary pet sitters often advertise online on websites and groups such as Safe Pets Safe Families here in SA, offer free foster care for animals.

**For more information see the RSPCA SA website:
<https://www.rspcasa.org.au/safe-kennels-project/>**

SERVICES FOR HELP & SUPPORT

*If you are in immediate danger, call Emergency Services on 000
(Police, Ambulance, Fire)*

National Services

- **1800 RESPECT** - National phone & online counselling for domestic, family & sexual violence - 24 hours, 7 days a week - 1800 737 732 - www.1800respect.org.au
- **QLife** - Peer counselling for LGBTIQ+ people - 3pm-midnight, everyday - 1800 184 527 - [www.qlife.org.au](http://www qlife.org.au)
- **Lifeline** - Crisis support & suicide prevention - 24 hours, 7 days a week - 13 11 14 - www.lifeline.org.au
- **Men's Line** - Counselling & support for men - phone & online - 24 hours, 7 days a week - 1300 789 978 - www.mensline.org.au

South Australian Services

Please note - this is a list of major services that can help or refer you if you are experiencing domestic violence. Please note, while not all services may be able to support the whole LGBTIQ+ community, they may still be able to refer you to a service to meet your needs.

- **SA Domestic Violence Crisis Line** (including Aboriginal Family Violence line)- 24/7 - 1800 800 098
- **Yarrow Place Rape & Sexual Assault Service** - 24/7 - 1800 817 421
- **Homelessness Gateway Service** - 24/7 - 1800 003 308
- **Victims of Crime Counselling and Support** (Relationships Australia SA (RASA)- Mon-Fri 9-5pm - 1800 310 310
- **KWY Aboriginal Family Support Service**- Mon-Fri 9-5pm - 8377 7822
- **Uniting Communities -BFriend-** support for LGBTIQ+ people - Mon-Fri 9-5pm - 8202 5190
- **SHine SA** Sexual Health, including **Gender Wellbeing Service** - Mon-Fri 9-5pm - 1300 883 793
- **Legal Services Commission SA** - Mon-Fri 9-4:30pm - **1300 366 424**

REFERENCES & RESOURCES

- **1800RESPECT**- National website for domestic, family & sexual violence: www.1800respect.org.au
- **Say It Out Loud** - National website for LGBTIQ+ domestic, family & sexual violence (ACON): www.sayitoutloud.org.au
- **DVConnect** - Queensland website for domestic violence: www.dvconnect.org
- **WithRespect** - Victorian LGBTIQ+ domestic & family violence service: www.withrespect.org.au

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Originally published in 2018 by Catalyst Foundation, South Australia, with funding from SA Government Attorney General's Department.

This updated resource has been developed by Catalyst Foundation, in consultation with SA LGBTIQ+ Domestic, Family & Sexual Violence Action Group (established 2020).

Catalyst Foundation would like to acknowledge and thank the following people and organisations:

*Our Project Partners: Uniting Communities- BFriend & Pride of the South
Towards a Safe Place Project Reference Group*

Members of the LGBTIQ+ community in SA who shared their stories and experiences of surviving domestic violence to guide the creation of this resource.

Catalyst Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation and the leading provider of community information in South Australia. We connect people to services and we provide free and independent information to all South Australians.

To find out more about the Toward A Safe Place project, visit our website:

<https://catalystfoundation.com.au/lgbtiqa/project-toward-a-safe-place/>



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