

Family violence

Family violence means violent or controlling behaviour between a husband and wife, partners or between members of a family.

Family violence is behaviour that hurts you physically, sexually, emotionally, or spiritually.

If it is happening to you, **you might wonder**, “*what did I do to deserve this?*” You might think, “*it only happened once so it is ok*”. But violence is not ok. You deserve to be safe.

Family violence is usually done by a man to a woman. The man might say it helps him deal with stress. They might warn you not to tell anyone about what they are doing. This is part of the violence.

You might not be sure what is happening. This is part of the violence – the person abusing you will make you wonder if anything bad is happening. They might make you feel like you are imagining things.

You might feel ashamed. This is part of the violence – the person abusing you will make you think it is your fault, or that it is a private family matter.

Believe in yourself. If something doesn't feel right, ask someone to help you – it could be a friend, the MRC bicultural worker or your TAFE English teacher. They can help you understand what is happening and help you contact a service that can give you support.

If you think someone you know is being hurt, you might wonder, “*should I help?*”, “*what do I know about it?*”, and “*it is best not to interfere*”. It is likely the person being hurt is unsure what to do and doesn't know how or who to ask. You could ask them, “*are you ok?*”, “*do you want to talk?*”, “*do you want help?*”

What happens next is up to you. You might choose to leave your husband. You and your husband might go to separate counselling sessions to talk about what is happening and how to stop it. Whatever you decide to do, you deserve to be safe and there are services in Tasmania that can help you.

In Tasmania, we have laws to protect people against violence.

It is against the law for someone to:

- Hit you, push you, hold you, throw things at you
- Threaten you or control you
- Stop you from seeing friends or family
- Force you to have sex

There are services that can help you decide what to do:

- If you are in immediate danger, call the police on **000** and ask for an interpreter.
- If you need a safe place to sleep, call **13 14 50** - tell them your language and ask them to connect you to the Family Violence Counselling and Support Service on **1800 608 122**.
- If you want to talk to a counsellor, call Engender Equality on **6278 9090** and ask for an interpreter. If they have a long waiting list, call **Women's Health Tasmania** on **1800 675 028** and ask for a free counselling appointment to help you while you wait for Engender Equality.