



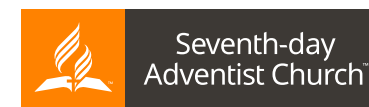
Teen Edition

BREAKING the SILENCE

LISTEN. BELIEVE. REFER.



AUCMinisterial



Children and Family Ministries



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

At this time, we acknowledge our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. We acknowledge you Lord because you are the creator, provider and supreme owner of all things.

We also respectfully acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are the traditional custodians of this land.

We pay tribute to elders past and present and acknowledge that they have cared for this country over countless generations.

We recognise the continuing contribution that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make to the life of Australia and pray that we can work together to leave a legacy of reconciliation, justice and hope for all future Australians.

The earth and everything on it BELONG TO THE LORD. The world and its people belong to him.

- Psalm 24:1

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TRIGGER WARNING:

Domestic violence isn't an easy topic to talk about, but it's something we need to face—even if it's uncomfortable. Domestic violence doesn't just happen somewhere else; it can happen in any home, even ones that seem stable from the outside, and it can affect anyone, including you. You might think, "That could never happen here," but the reality is it's more common than you'd expect.

In Australia, about **1 in 6 women** and **1 in 16 men** have been hurt by a partner through physical or sexual violence. And in New Zealand, the numbers are even more alarming—**nearly 1 in 3 women** have experienced this kind of violence. These numbers aren't just statistics; they mean that domestic violence is a reality in our communities. People you know—friends, family, or even you—might be affected.

Relationship violence among teens is a huge concern in both Australia and New Zealand. Recent data indicates that nearly one-third of teens aged 18-19 experienced some form of violence from their boyfriend or girlfriend in the past year.

Coercive control is a pattern of abusive behaviours aimed at dominating and controlling a girlfriend or boyfriend, often without physical violence. In Australia, data on coercive control among teenagers is limited. However, a study by the Australian Institute of Family Studies found that 25% of 18-19-year-olds experienced emotional abuse while dating, which can include coercive control behaviours.

In New Zealand, research indicates that young people are three times more likely than the general population to be victims of coercive control. Additionally, a 2017 report highlighted that teen girls in New Zealand have described behaviours known as coercive control as commonly used by boyfriends, such as constant phone calls to check their whereabouts and attempts to control what they wear.

These statistics highlight the importance of addressing and preventing violence in teen relationships.

Recognising what domestic violence looks like and knowing how to get support for yourself or someone you care about can make all the difference.

For many people, leaving an abusive relationship isn't as simple as walking away or breaking up; sometimes, it can be even more dangerous to leave.


This is why it's important to understand what's going on and know the best ways to help.

Take care of yourself as you read this. This is a heavy topic, and feeling many different emotions is okay. Just remember that help is available, and there's a list of support services at the end if you or someone you know ever needs it.

In our faith, we're taught to **help those who are hurting, support those who feel trapped, and bring hope to people facing dark times** (Luke 4:18). Talking openly about these hard issues is one step we can take to make our communities safer, more supportive, and compassionate for everyone.


Sources

- Australian Institute of Family Studies
- Ministry of Social Development
- NZ FVC



HELP THOSE
WHO ARE HURTING,
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PEOPLE FACING
DARK TIMES
(LUKE 4:18)

WHAT IS FAMILY VIOLENCE?



Let's break down what family violence really means. Family violence isn't just about physical harm; it includes any threatening, controlling, or abusive behaviour between people in a family or relationship that makes someone feel afraid. This can happen in dating relationships, too, and it's not always physical.

Family violence isn't just physical—it can include a lot of different harmful behaviours. Here's what it might look like:

- Physical assault or any type of sexual abuse
- Stalking or following someone around, online or in person
- Constant insults, name-calling, or put-downs
- Breaking or damaging things that belong to someone else on purpose
- Hurting or killing a pet to scare someone
- Controlling all the money or refusing to help with basic expenses
- Stopping someone from seeing friends, family, or being part of their culture
- Forcing someone to stay home or not letting them go where they want

If you're a kid or teen, seeing or hearing family violence affects you, too. This could look like:

- Overhearing threats or fights that make you scared for someone's safety
- Seeing someone get hurt
- Helping a family member who was hurt or cleaning up after things were broken
- Being around when police or ambulance officers show up because of a family fight

If you're dealing with this or know someone who is, remember you don't have to face it alone. Reaching out to someone you trust, like a friend, teacher, or counsellor, is an excellent first step. There's help out there; no one should have to deal with it alone. For more information, check out this resource: Family Assistance Guide.

guides.dss.gov.au/family-assistance-guide/1/1/f/15

TYPES OF ABUSE

Family and relationship violence can look different from one situation to the next. Abuse doesn't always leave visible marks—it can happen emotionally, financially, online, and more. Here's what different types of abuse can look like:

Social Abuse

- Isolating someone from friends or family
- Putting down or making fun of friends or family
- Preventing someone from going to school or work
- Constant jealousy or accusing someone of cheating
- Controlling how someone dresses or appears
- Sabotaging social plans and needing all their attention

Neglect

- Inadequate supervision for long periods of time
- Disregard for potential hazards in the home
- Failure to provide adequate nutrition, clothing and personal hygiene
- Forcing the child or young person to leave home early
- Failure to seek needed or recommended medical and dental care

Emotional/Psychological Abuse

- Threatening self-harm to manipulate someone
- Emotional blackmail (e.g., "If you leave, I'll hurt myself")
- Breaking down someone's confidence or self-esteem
- Criticising their appearance or body shape
- Spreading rumours about mental illness
- Turning children or friends against a person
- Making fun of or dismissing their feelings
- Humiliating them privately or invading their privacy
- Denying them a chance to get an education

Financial Abuse

- Controlling all money and spending
- Setting strict conditions on how money can be used
- Gambling shared money away
- Controlling what they can buy or own
- Hiding assets or shared money

Sexual Abuse

- Forcing any sexual acts or behaviours
- Restricting access to birth control
- Enforcing certain sexual practices
- Involving unwanted pornography or risky behaviour

Physical Abuse

- Physical harm like hitting, punching, or slapping
- Reckless driving to scare or control someone
- Using weapons or threatening to use them
- Pulling hair, spitting, or locking someone in/out of the house
- Breaking their things or harming pets
- Forcing substance abuse or unhealthy diets
- Denying access to medical help

Verbal Abuse

- Insults, name-calling, or put-downs
- Giving someone the "silent treatment" to punish them
- Constant sarcasm, public humiliation, or yelling
- Dominating conversations and constantly "correcting" them

Technology Abuse

- Tracking locations with apps or demanding passwords
- Sending threats through social media

- Sharing or threatening to share private photos
- Restricting or hiding access to phones or devices
- Spreading false information online

Stalking

- Non-stop calls, texts, or DMs
- Showing up at their house, school, or work uninvited
- Taking or reading their mail without permission
- Vandalising property
- Following them in public or shadowing their movements

Spiritual Abuse

- Forcing specific beliefs or stopping someone from practising their own
- Making fun of their faith
- Using religious beliefs to justify abusive behaviour
- Controlling their children's spiritual beliefs without discussion

If you or someone you know is experiencing these behaviours, know that help is available. Abuse in any form is never okay, and reaching out for support—whether it's a friend, counsellor, or helpline—can be the first step toward finding safety and peace

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT FAMILY VIOLENCE

The Bible makes it clear that family violence goes against everything God wants for us. The teachings of the Bible emphasise love, respect, and peace in our relationships—especially with family. Let's break down a few key verses that can help us understand how God views family and relationships and why abuse has no place in them.

Our Bodies Are Sacred

“Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17) The Bible teaches that our bodies are like a sacred temple where God's Spirit lives. Violence and harm disrespect this sacred gift. We're called to treat our bodies and each other's bodies with care and respect.

Protecting the Innocent

“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.” (Matthew 18:6)

Jesus' words here show us how seriously He protects the innocent—especially children. Abuse, whether emotional, verbal, or physical, has no place in a home where kids need to feel safe and loved.

Words That Heal, Not Hurt

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up.” (Ephesians 4:29) The Bible encourages us to speak in ways that uplift others. This means no name-calling, insults, or hurtful language. Healthy communication is about encouraging and helping each other, not tearing each other down.

Understanding Our Worth

“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!” (1 John 3:1) Every person has worth because they're a child of God. A healthy family helps each person understand this worth, while abuse and disrespect distort it, making people feel worthless or unloved.

Creating Harmony at Home

“The Lord desires His people to give in their homes a representation of the order and harmony that pervade the heavenly courts.” (E.G. White, Counsels on Health) God's plan for families is to live in peace, order, and respect. Violence and chaos go against this divine design, and instead of peace, they create fear and suffering.

God's Plans for Us

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11) God wants us to live with hope and a sense of safety. Family violence, in any form, goes against His plan for us to feel secure and loved.



By living out the teachings of the Bible, we can help create homes that reflect love, safety, and respect.

If you or someone you know is dealing with family violence, remember you're not alone, and seeking help is a step toward the safe, loving life God wants for you. We're called to protect, support, and heal, just as God wants us to.



SIGNS OF AN ABUSIVE PARENT/RELATIVE

Recognising the signs of abuse from a family member, like a parent or sibling, can be tough, especially because abuse can start in subtle ways. Understanding these warning signs can help you see when behaviour crosses the line, and knowing what to look for can help you seek support sooner.

Warning Signs of an Abusive Parent or Sibling

- **Constant Accusations and Blame**

They often accuse you of things you didn't do or blame you unfairly for problems in the family. This might include accusing you of lying or being disrespectful without reason.

- **Threats of Harm**

They might threaten to harm you, other family members or pets to make you feel afraid or powerless.

- **Public or Private Humiliation**

They put you down, insult you, or embarrass you in front of others to make you feel small and isolated.

- **Intimidation and Fear**

They make you feel too scared to speak up by using loud yelling, intense looks, or gestures that feel threatening.

- **Excessive Monitoring**

They try to control every aspect of your life, tracking your movements, checking your messages, and deciding who you can spend time with.

- **Constant Criticism**

They criticise your appearance, choices, or personality, wearing down your self-esteem and making you feel like you can't do anything right.

- **Lack of Respect for Boundaries**

They don't respect your privacy or boundaries. They enter your room without permission, read your messages, and disregard your right to make decisions.

- **Financial Control**

If you have money, they control how you use it or may take it from you without your consent.

- **Physical Intimidation Disguised as 'Jokes'**

They may hit, pinch, or physically hurt you and brush it off as "just kidding" or "just playing around."

- **Ignoring Your Feelings**

They make fun of your emotions, tell you you're "too sensitive," or dismiss your feelings altogether.

- **Destruction of Property**

They damage or destroy things that belong to you to scare or punish you, whether breaking items in your room or ruining something important to you.

- **Excessive Jealousy or Possessiveness**

They act overly possessive, jealous of your relationships with friends or family members, and make you feel guilty for spending time with others.

- **Threatening Looks or Actions**

They might use intense stares, angry body language, or subtle threats to control you without saying a word.

- **Twisting the Truth**

They deny things that have happened or twist events to make you feel like you're imagining things or that it's "all in your head."

- **Never Taking Responsibility**

They blame you or others for everything, never take responsibility for their actions, and make you feel like everything is somehow your fault.

If these behaviours sound familiar, know that they aren't okay and are not your fault. Talking to a trusted adult, counsellor, or friend can be a huge first step toward getting help. Abuse in any form—emotional, physical, or verbal—is harmful, and support is available to help you navigate this and find a safer, healthier environment.



RED FLAGS IN A BOYFRIEND/GIRLFRIEND

Subtle red flags that may indicate your boyfriend/girlfriend could be leaning toward controlling or abusive behaviour often appear early in a relationship. These signs can be easily overlooked, especially when masked by affectionate or seemingly caring gestures. Here are some subtle red flags to watch for:

1. Intense Interest Early On

They may want to move the relationship forward very quickly, talking about commitment, exclusivity, or even marriage early on. While some people naturally fall fast, a rush to solidify the relationship can sometimes be a way to create dependence or isolation.

2. Excessive Need for Contact

They frequently text, call, or want to know where you are at all times. At first, it can feel flattering, but it may be a sign of overstepping boundaries. This behaviour can progress to tracking your whereabouts, needing constant updates, or becoming upset if they don't hear from you immediately.

3. Isolation from Friends and Family

They subtly discourage you from spending time with friends or family, maybe by making you feel guilty ("Don't you want to spend time with me?") or by criticising your friends or loved ones. Over time, they may push to be your primary source of companionship, creating dependency.

4. Disregard for Your Boundaries

They ignore or dismiss boundaries, whether physical, emotional, or otherwise. For example, they might invade your personal space despite being asked not to or pry into aspects of your life you're not ready to share. It can start with "innocent" things, like wanting to know your phone password "just in case."

5. Making Decisions for You

They insist on choosing what you wear, where you go, or how you spend your time, often under the guise of "helping" you. While this may seem caring, if it happens frequently and without your input, it may indicate a desire to control your choices.

6. Jealousy Disguised as Protectiveness

They get upset when you talk to or spend time with others, especially if they're of the opposite sex (or anyone they perceive as a "threat"). They may frame it as being worried about you, but it's often a way to control who you interact with.

7. Subtle Put-Downs or Criticisms

They make "jokes" at your expense or offer backhanded compliments, making you question yourself or feel inadequate. For instance, they might say, "You'd look better if you dressed like this" or "It's cute when you try to cook." These comments can start small but escalate over time.

8. Inconsistent Affection or Withholding Love

Their affection fluctuates based on your behaviour, making you feel like you're "walking on eggshells." They may withhold affection, sulk, or give you the silent treatment if they're displeased, using love or attention as a tool for control.

9. Financial Control

They start commenting about your spending or subtly discourage you from purchasing. In more severe cases, they may suggest “sharing” financial responsibilities to limit your access to your own money.

10. Gaslighting and Minimising Your Feelings

They make you feel like you’re overreacting or being too sensitive when you bring up concerns. Gaslighting can make you question your reality and start doubting your perception of their behaviour.

11. Possessiveness Framed as “Passion”

They might frequently say things like, “I can’t stand the thought of anyone else being with you,” or “I get jealous because I care so much.” Possessiveness can easily be misinterpreted as passionate love, but it’s often a form of control.

12. Monitoring or Controlling Communication

They might subtly suggest reading each other’s texts or ask for your social media passwords. Even if framed as a “trust exercise,” it’s a violation of your privacy and a way to monitor your interactions with others.

13. Frequent “Testing” of Loyalty

They often seek reassurance about your commitment or make you “prove” your loyalty. This could involve testing your reactions or setting up situations to see if you prioritise them over others.

14. Use of Guilt or Emotional Manipulation

They make you feel responsible for their happiness or well-being, saying things like, “I don’t know what I’d do without you.” Emotional manipulation can make it difficult to set boundaries or leave the relationship when needed.

15. Unrealistic Expectations

They expect you to meet all their needs, often saying things like, “You’re the only person I can rely on,” or “No one else understands me like you do.” This puts intense pressure on you and creates a dependency that can be unhealthy.

RECOGNISING RED FLAGS EARLY

Early awareness of these subtle signs can help you assess the relationship more clearly. Trust your intuition; if something feels off, don’t ignore it. Seek support from friends, family, or even a counsellor if you feel uncertain or uncomfortable..



DEBUNKING MYTHS ABOUT ABUSE AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

There are a lot of myths out there about abuse, and they can stop victims from seeking help and let abusers avoid responsibility. Knowing the truth can help us create a safer and more supportive environment for everyone. Here are some common myths about abuse and family violence—and the real facts to set things straight.

Myth 1: Abuse is just a moment of lost temper.

TRUTH: Abuse is not just “losing control” once; it’s a repeated pattern used to gain power over someone. It’s done on purpose and happens over and over.

Myth 2: Abuse only happens to uneducated or poor people.

TRUTH: Abuse can happen to anyone, anywhere. It doesn’t matter what school you go to, where you live, or how much money you have.

Myth 3: If a victim really wanted to leave, they could just leave.

TRUTH: Leaving an abusive relationship is often complicated and risky. Many people stay because of fear, lack of support, or because they’re financially dependent on the abuser.

Myth 4: Men can’t be abused by women.

TRUTH: Men can also experience abuse from women. Abuse is about power and control, and it can happen to anyone, regardless of gender.

Myth 5: Only people with mental health issues experience abuse.

TRUTH: Abuse can happen to anyone. Mental health problems often come from the trauma of abuse, not the other way around.

Myth 6: Alcohol or drugs cause people to be abusive.

TRUTH: While substances can make abusive behaviour worse, they are not the root cause. Abuse is a choice people make to control others.

Myth 7: High levels of stress can make people abusive.

TRUTH: Abuse isn’t caused by stress. Many people go through stress without being abusive. Abuse is about control, not stress.

Myth 8: If kids aren’t directly targeted, they aren’t affected by abuse.

TRUTH: Children who witness abuse are deeply affected. Even if they aren’t the direct target, they can have emotional and psychological issues from growing up in an abusive environment.

Myth 9: Abuse survivors exaggerate their experiences.

TRUTH: Survivors often downplay their abuse because of fear, shame, or manipulation by the abuser. Their experiences are real and valid.

Myth 10: Some people “ask for it” or want to be abused.

TRUTH: No one deserves abuse. Blaming victims for someone else’s abusive behaviour is harmful and wrong.

Myth 11: It's wrong for Christian victims to take legal action against an abuser.

TRUTH: Seeking justice and protection is not a sin. Christian teachings emphasise protecting the vulnerable, and victims have the right to seek help and legal protection.

Myth 12: Some people just deserve to be abused.

TRUTH: No one deserves abuse. Every person deserves respect and kindness, no matter what.

By challenging these myths and knowing the facts, we can make it easier for people to get the help they need and work toward ending family violence. Understanding abuse, supporting those affected, and holding abusers accountable are essential steps in creating a safer community.

LISTEN, BELIEVE, REFER

When someone opens up about experiencing abuse, it can be hard for them to talk about, and they're often feeling alone, scared, or ashamed. Your support can make a huge difference, so here are some simple steps to help them feel safe and supported:

1. Listen

If someone tells you about their abuse, focus on listening. Give them your full attention, letting them know you're there for them. Don't interrupt, judge, or try to fix things—just let them share their story.

2. Believe

Believe what they're telling you. Doubting or downplaying their experience can make them feel even more isolated and might stop them from seeking help again. Reassure them that their feelings are real and valid.

3. Refer

Once you've listened and shown you believe them, encourage them to reach out to someone who can help—whether it's a counsellor, trusted adult, or support service. Remind them that they're not alone and that there are people who want to help them through this.

Knowing someone cares and believes them can be the first step for a person to get the support they need. Just being there and listening without judgment can mean more than you know.



Avoid Accusatory or Dismissive Statements

When supporting a victim of abuse, avoid making statements that blame or dismiss their experience. Some harmful statements to avoid include:

- “I’m sure he/she didn’t really mean to hurt you.”
- “It’s no big deal; you’ll get over it.”
- “What did you do to provoke it?”
- “Are you making this up?”
- “Don’t tell anyone about this; it’s too embarrassing.”

Use Comforting Statements

Instead, use statements that offer comfort, validation, and support:

- “I’m so sorry you had to go through this; no one should have to be hurt.”
- “I believe you and know you’re telling the truth.”
- “It’s not your fault; you didn’t do anything to deserve this.”
- “I’m here for you whenever you feel like sharing and praying.”
- “I’m glad you confided in me; together, we can find you some help.”

Steps to Take

1. Listen Actively:

- Provide your undivided attention.
- Avoid interrupting or making assumptions.
- Show empathy through your body language and words.

2. Believe Unconditionally:

- Affirm the victim’s experience.
- Avoid expressing doubt or skepticism.
- Validate their feelings and reassure them that they are not to blame.

3. Refer to Resources:

- Offer information about local support services, hotlines, and shelters.
- Help them create a safety plan if they are in immediate danger.
- Encourage them to seek professional counselling or legal assistance.

Supporting a victim of abuse involves more than just listening—it requires believing their story and guiding them towards the help they need. You can make a significant difference in their healing journey by avoiding harmful statements and using comforting, validating language. Remember, your response can empower victims to seek further assistance or discourage them from contacting them again. Always choose to listen, believe, and refer.



UNDERSTANDING & SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF ABUSE

Abuse impacts people in many ways—emotionally, mentally, and physically. Knowing what abuse can do to someone can help you understand what they might be going through and show you how to support them. Here are some common effects victims of abuse might experience:

Depression

Feeling sad and hopeless all the time, like there's no way out.

Increased Anxiety

Constant worry, fear, or nervousness that can feel overwhelming.

Suicidal Thoughts

Sometimes, people might think about ending their lives because they feel trapped by the abuse.

Changes in Sleep, Eating, and Physical Health

Trouble sleeping, changes in appetite, or other physical health issues can happen due to stress and trauma.

Distrust of Others

Abuse can make it hard for victims to trust people, including those in authority, like teachers or counsellors.

Loss of Self-Esteem and Feelings of Hopelessness

Abuse can make people feel worthless and powerless like things will never get better.

Isolation and Withdrawal

Victims often feel alone and cut off from others, making it hard to reach out for help.

Turning to Substances

Some people use drugs or alcohol to cope with the pain and stress of abuse.



If someone you know is experiencing any of these effects, remember that they need compassion and support. Simply being there for them, offering a safe space, or helping them find resources can make a big difference. Abuse is never the victim's fault, and with support, recovery is possible.

WHY DO SOME PEOPLE STAY IN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS?

It can be hard to understand why someone might stay with an abusive partner, but there are often complicated reasons. Knowing what these reasons are can help you show understanding and support. Here are some common reasons people might stay in an abusive relationship:

- **Fear for Their Life** They may believe leaving could lead to serious harm or even death.
- **Fear of Losing Family** They might worry the abuser will get custody of their kids or try to hurt family members.
- **Embarrassment** Feeling ashamed about their situation or worrying about what others might think can make it hard to ask for help.
- **Religious Beliefs** Some feel it's their duty to keep the relationship together because of their faith.
- **Guilt** They might feel responsible for the abuser's well-being or worry about what will happen if they leave.
- **Blaming Themselves** Many victims end up thinking it's their fault, believing they somehow "deserve" the abuse.
- **Lack of Support** They may feel like no one will believe or support them if they try to leave.
- **Fear of Worse Abuse** They worry that leaving could make the abuse even worse.
- **Money Problems** They may feel financially dependent on the abuser and worry about how they'll survive without them.
- **Hope for Change** Many victims believe that things might get better and that their partner will eventually change.

Understanding these reasons can make it easier to offer real support. If someone you know is in this situation, letting them know you're there for them without judgment can mean a lot. It's important to remember that abuse is never their fault, and help is available.

HEALTHY VS. UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS: KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE

Understanding what makes a relationship healthy or unhealthy can help you make good choices and recognise when something doesn't feel right. Here are some clear signs of a healthy relationship and tips on setting boundaries and building self-confidence.

Signs of a Healthy Relationship

Both people feel respected, supported, and valued in a healthy relationship. Here are some important things you should expect from a healthy relationship:

- **Mutual Respect:** You and your partner listen to each other's opinions, even if you disagree. Respect means understanding that each person has their own thoughts, feelings, and beliefs.
- **Support:** In a healthy relationship, you feel like your partner has your back and cares about your happiness and goals. You should be able to turn to each other for support when things get tough.
- **Healthy Communication means you feel comfortable talking openly and honestly.** It is about sharing what's on your mind, listening to each other, and working through disagreements without making each other feel bad.



Setting and Respecting Boundaries

Boundaries are the lines we draw around our time, personal space, and emotions to feel safe and comfortable. Everyone's boundaries are different, so it's important to know your own and expect others to respect them.

- **Identifying Your Boundaries:** Consider what makes you comfortable or uncomfortable in a relationship. This could be anything from needing alone time to not wanting to share your passwords or always being available to hang out.
- **Expressing Your Boundaries:** It's okay to say what you need! A simple "I need some time to myself today" or "I'd rather keep that private" is enough. Healthy partners will understand and respect this.
- **Respecting Each Other's Boundaries:** Just as you expect your boundaries to be respected, it's important to respect your boyfriend/girlfriend's boundaries too. If they need space or don't want to talk about something, trust and respect their wishes.

Building Self-Esteem and Confidence

- **Self-confidence** can help you make better choices and avoid relationships that don't respect your worth. Here are some ways to build self-esteem:
- **Know Your Worth:** Remember that you deserve respect, kindness, and honesty. Valuing yourself makes recognising when someone isn't treating you well is easier.
- **Stay True to Your Interests:** Keep doing what you love, whether it's a hobby, spending time with friends, or focusing on your goals. Stay connected to your interests builds confidence and helps you stay true to yourself.
- **Surround Yourself with Positive Influences:** Being around people who lift you and make you feel good about yourself reinforces your self-worth. Seek friends and mentors who encourage you to be the best version of yourself.

DEALING WITH PEER PRESSURE AND SOCIAL INFLUENCE

Peer pressure and social media can sometimes make dealing with abuse or unhealthy behaviour even more difficult. Here's some advice on how to stand up for yourself or a friend and navigate social media safely.

Handling Pressure from Friends to Stay Quiet


Sometimes, friends might encourage you to ignore a problem or keep it quiet—especially if it involves someone in your friend group. But staying silent can make things worse, especially if someone is being hurt. Here's how to handle the pressure:

- **Trust Your Instincts:** If something doesn't feel right, it's important to listen to your gut. Standing up for yourself or a friend might be uncomfortable, but your safety and well-being are more important than fitting in.
- **Speak Up with Confidence:** If you feel like something is wrong, be confident in your feelings. It's okay to say, "This isn't okay," or "I don't think we should ignore this." Even one person's voice can make a big difference.
- **Reach Out for Support:** If you're nervous about speaking up, find an adult or another friend who supports you. Talking to someone who understands can help you feel more empowered to take action, even if others don't agree.

The Influence of Social Media

Social media can complicate relationships, especially when it comes to sharing personal information or dealing with drama. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- **Think Before You Post:** Once something is online, it's hard to take it back. Avoid posting private details about relationships, arguments, or sensitive topics, and respect others' privacy too.
- **Watch for Cyberbullying:** If someone is being mean, spreading rumours, or sharing embarrassing content about you or a friend, it's a form of cyberbullying. Don't hesitate to block or report users who make you uncomfortable or threaten your safety.
- **Handle Public Drama Carefully:** Avoid engaging publicly if someone tries to shame you or start an argument on social media. Private conversations, or even just stepping away, are often the best way to handle these situations.
- **Protect Your Privacy:** Only share personal information with people you trust, and consider keeping sensitive topics offline. Sharing too much can sometimes lead to misunderstandings, rumours, or even dangerous situations if the wrong people see your posts.



Navigating peer pressure and social media can be tricky, but staying true to yourself, protecting your privacy, and being mindful of what you share can keep yourself and your friends safe. Remember, you have the right to stand up for what feels right and to choose what's best for you—no matter what others say.

HOW TO HELP A FRIEND WHO MIGHT BE IN AN ABUSIVE SITUATION: LISTEN, BELIEVE, REFER

If you think a friend is being abused, your support can make a huge difference. Here's how you can help:

1. Prioritise Safety

- If you think your friend is in immediate danger, don't wait. Safety comes first, so if needed, call the police to get help right away.
- If it's not an emergency but they still need help, offer to go with them to talk to an adult, counsellor, or even the police to create a plan for their safety.

2. Provide Information

- Look up local services, support hotlines, or counsellors they can contact. Share this info with them, so they know there's help out there.

3. Listen and Support

- Just listen. Let them talk without interrupting or giving advice. Often, just having someone to listen can be a huge relief.
- Encourage them to think about counselling or talking to a trusted adult.
- Avoid criticising the person hurting them; this could make your friend feel defensive.
- Invite them to hang out or do things that help them feel connected and supported without bringing up the abuse.

Encourage Self-Advocacy and Empowerment

- Empower your friend by reminding them of their worth and right to be treated with respect. Abuse often makes victims feel powerless, so gentle reminders of their strength and rights can be impactful.
- Respect their choices. It's important to let them decide when and how they seek help. Pushing them too hard might feel overwhelming or even make them retreat.

Be Mindful of Digital Safety

- Encourage caution with shared devices. Abusers sometimes monitor phones or social media to track messages or locations. If your friend is worried about this, suggest safe ways to talk or connect.
- Remind them to clear browser history or use private browsing if they look up resources, in case the abuser has access to their device.

Help Them Identify a Trusted Adult

- Encourage talking to a safe adult, like a school counsellor, teacher, or family member, who might be able to offer more help. Sometimes hearing it from multiple people can make a big difference.

Offer Practical Help with Basic Needs

- Abuse can sometimes limit access to things like money, transportation, or basic necessities. If your friend needs a safe way to access resources or even a ride to a safe place, be ready to offer help if possible.

Be Patient and Understanding

- Check-in regularly, but don't force conversations about the abuse. Just being there as a friend can make them feel less alone.

- Avoid making judgments or ultimatums (e.g., "You have to leave them"), as these can increase their stress and make it harder for them to reach out.

Remind Them It's Not Their Fault

- Many victims feel guilty or responsible for the abuse. Remind your friend that no one deserves to be treated this way, and the abuse is not their fault.

These additional tips can help create a safer, more understanding approach to supporting a friend in an abusive situation and might make it easier for them to take steps when they feel ready.

Keeping in touch and being there for them can be really powerful. Knowing the signs of abuse, understanding why people might stay in these situations, and offering non-judgmental support can help your friend feel less alone and take steps toward a safer, healthier life.



EMERGENCY CONTACTS AND HELPFUL WEBSITES

FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUPPORT IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

In an emergency, please call 000 in Australia
and 111 in New Zealand.

AUSTRALIA

NATIONAL SERVICES

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1800 737 732 (1800 RESPECT)
Website: <https://www.1800respect.org.au/>

Lifeline Australia: 13 11 14
Website: <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>

Beyond Blue (Mental Health Support): 1300 22 4636
Website: <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

STATE-SPECIFIC SERVICES

New South Wales

NSW Domestic Violence Line: 1800 65 64 63

Victoria

Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre: 1800 015 188
Website: Safe <https://www.safesteps.org.au/Steps>

Queensland

DVConnect Womensline: 1800 811 811
Website: <https://www.dvconnect.org/>

South Australia

Domestic Violence Crisis Line: 1800 800 098

Western Australia

Women's Domestic Violence Helpline: 1800 007 339

Tasmania

Family Violence Response and Referral Line: 1800 633 937

Northern Territory:

Domestic and Family Violence Helpline: 1800 737 732 (1800 RESPECT)

Australian Capital Territory:

Domestic Violence Crisis Service: (02) 6280 0900
Website: <https://dvcs.org.au/>

NEW ZEALAND

National Services:

Women's Refuge: 0800 733 843 (0800 REFUGE)
Website: <https://womensrefuge.org.nz/>

Shine Domestic Abuse Services: 0508 744 633
Website: Shine

Are You OK (Family Violence Information Line): 0800 456 450
Website: <https://www.areyouok.org.nz/>

Lifeline New Zealand: 0800 543 354 or text 4357
Website: <https://www.lifeline.org.nz/>

Youthline: 0800 376 633 or text 234
Website: <https://www.youthline.co.nz/>



EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Australia:

Police, Fire, Ambulance: 000

National Relay Service: 13 36 77

New Zealand:

Police, Fire, Ambulance: 111

Deaf Emergency Text: 111 (Register first at Police Deaf Portal)

These contacts and resources provide vital support for individuals experiencing domestic violence, ensuring they have access to the help they need in times of crisis.

If You Have Been Abused, Help Is Available to You!

Reading this brochure is a healthy step toward finding the help you need. No one deserves to be abused; God does not want any of His children to suffer. You are not alone: your pastor, church leaders, doctor, family members, friends, or a Christian therapist may all serve as wonderful resources. There is help available!

See the list of referral services at the end of this booklet and visit www.enditnowaustralia.org.au to find more support services.



IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS



New South Wales:

Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ)

- Child Protection Helpline: 132 111

Victoria:

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH)

- Child Protection Crisis Line: 13 12 78

Queensland:

Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women

- Child Safety Services: 1800 811 810

South Australia:

Department for Child Protection

- Child Abuse Report Line: 13 14 78

Western Australia:

Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support

- Crisis Care Helpline: 1800 199 008

Tasmania:

Department of Communities Tasmania

- Child Safety Services: 1300 737 639

Northern Territory:

Territory Families

- Child Protection Hotline: 1800 700 250

Australian Capital Territory:

Child and Youth Protection Services

- Child and Youth Protection Services: 1300 556 728

ADSAFE'S ROLE IN ADDRESSING ABUSE WITHIN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Adsafe offers protection services for children and vulnerable adults within the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia. While issues of family and domestic violence are initially best handled by reporting to the police and child protection authorities and by seeking assistance from specialist family and domestic violence services, Adsafes plays a crucial role when the individual perpetrating domestic and family violence is associated with the Church.

When to Involve Adsafes

If the person committing the abuse is an employee of the SDA Church or a Church entity (including schools), or is a volunteer, contractor, consultant, or a person in a work placement directly working with children in the SDA Church or a Church entity, it is necessary to consider reporting the concerns to Adsafes. Although Adsafes typically does not intervene in strictly familial situations, the law may require the Church to respond, particularly when a child or children are exposed to the violence.

Situations Requiring Adsafes's Involvement

- Any sexual offence or child sexual misconduct committed against, with, or in the presence of a child.
- Any physical abuse of a child.
- Any sexual offence or sexual misconduct committed against, with, or in the presence of a vulnerable adult.
- Any physical abuse of a vulnerable adult.

In these circumstances, Adsafes will conduct an investigation on behalf of the Church to determine the individual's ongoing suitability

to work or volunteer in the Church and to enable the Church to manage risk properly. Adsafes will not begin its investigation until the police and/or child protection authorities have completed their work and provided clearance.

Support Provided by Adsafes

Adsafe supports children and vulnerable adults in our faith communities who have experienced physical or sexual abuse by providing:

Tailored Case Management

A case officer works with victims/survivors to assess their needs and goals, assist in coordinating services, and provide ongoing support.

Advocacy

Advocacy to relevant church entities and external service providers on behalf of victims/survivors.

Trauma-Informed Counselling

Connections to appropriate counselling services.

Legal Reporting Support

Assistance through required legal reporting and church investigations, including reporting to the police when a crime has been committed.

Redress Applications

Assistance in facilitating redress applications for eligible survivors of child sexual abuse.

Ongoing Support

Continuous support for victims/survivors.

Recognising Psychological Harm

Family and domestic violence is recognised to cause psychological harm to a child. Actions that cause substantial emotional or psychological harm fall under the category of 'reportable conduct'. This term refers to legislative frameworks in place across most Australian states and territories, which oversee how organisations handle and report allegations of specific behaviours towards children by employees and volunteers. Reportable conduct includes:

- Sexual abuse.
- Physical abuse.
- Severe neglect.
- Substantial emotional or psychological harm.

While Adsafe primarily focuses on addressing sexual and physical abuse, there may be situations where churches and church entities must look into cases of substantial psychological harm or neglect if the perpetrator is an employee or volunteer of the Church or Church entity. In these instances, even though Adsafe will not investigate unless there is evidence of sexual and/or physical abuse, Adsafe is available to offer advice and support services.

Biblical Perspective on Protecting the Vulnerable

The Bible emphasises the importance of protecting the vulnerable and caring for those in need. Here are some key verses that highlight this principle:

Psalms 82:3 (NIV): *“Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.”* This verse underscores our duty to defend and support those who are vulnerable.

Matthew 18:10 (NIV): *“See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.”*

Jesus emphasises the value and protection of children.

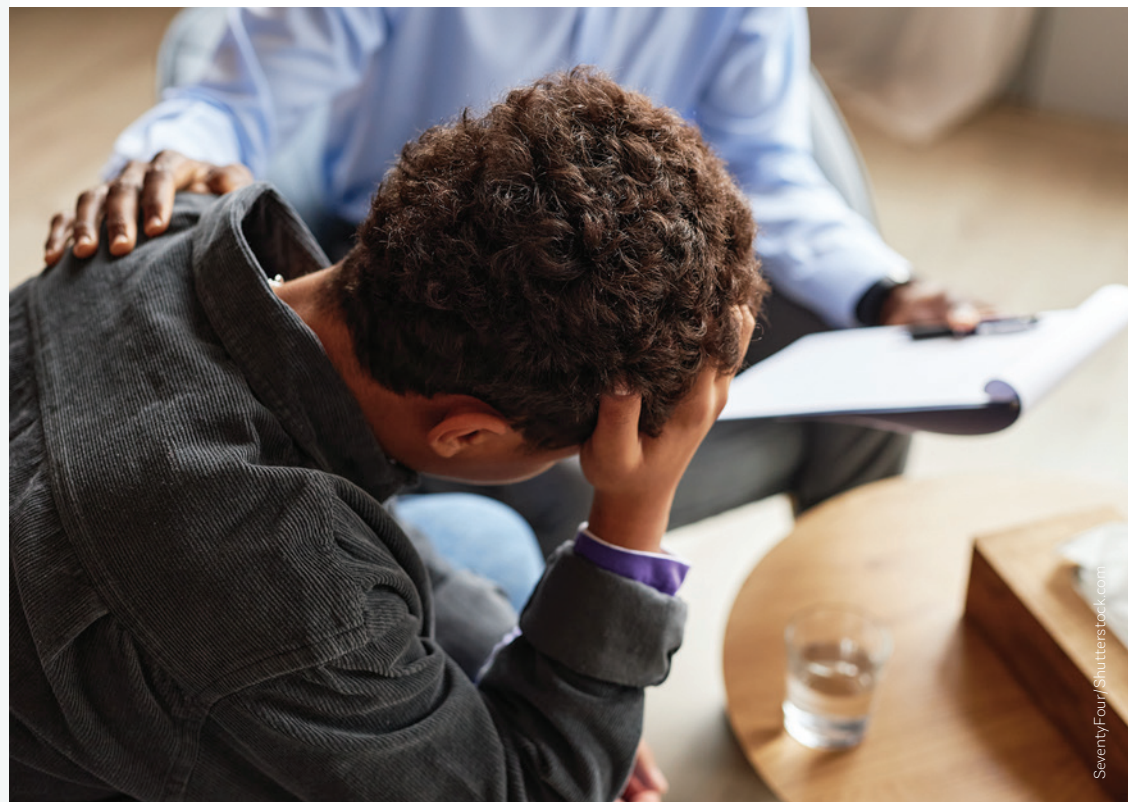
Proverbs 31:8-9 (NIV): *“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”*

We are called to advocate for and defend those who are unable to protect themselves.

Adsafe plays a vital role in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults within the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia. By understanding when and how to involve Adsafe, and by utilising the support services they offer, we can ensure a safer environment for all members of our faith community. The Bible calls us to protect and care for the vulnerable, and Adsafe's mission aligns with this sacred duty. For more information and resources, visit Safer Resource.

Safer Resource for Churches: Visit Safer Resource for a comprehensive resource to help Australian churches understand, identify, and respond to domestic and family violence.

By taking care of yourself, seeking support, and pacing your involvement, you can better sustain your ministry and provide effective, compassionate support to those in need. Remember, your well-being is essential for the long-term support of others.





AUCMinisterial



Children and Family Ministries