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| Family violence and abusive behaviours |
| Information for supported residential services (SRS) |
| OFFICIAL |

# Defining family violence

Family violence is a pattern of abusive behaviour where a family member or someone ‘like’ a family member seeks to control and dominate another person.

The *Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic*) defines ‘family violence’ as ‘behaviour that is physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically or economically abusive; threatening or coercive; or in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes them to feel fear for the safety or wellbeing of that family member or another person.

# Family violence and abusive behaviours in SRS

Violence and abusive behaviours can occur in shared living environments, including in SRS.

In an SRS, family violence or abuse can happen between:

* residents who are in a relationship
* a resident and a friend (who may be another resident)
* a resident and a family member
* a resident and someone else who lives outside the SRS.

### Examples

Some examples of family violence and abusive behaviours include:

* stopping a resident from seeing their friends or family
* controlling a resident’s access to money
* damaging property
* verbally threatening or physically abusing a resident
* stopping a resident from practising their religious beliefs or cultural practices.

# Signs

Residents may be vulnerable to abuse and violence because of physical and/or intellectual disability. Staff should be aware of signs that a resident may be experiencing abuse or violence, including if a resident:

* seems nervous, ashamed or evasive
* can’t access their money
* describes their partner/friend/family member as controlling or prone to anger
* seems uncomfortable or anxious around their partner/friend/family member.

# Identifying and responding to family violence and abusive behaviours

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| **Assess** | the situation and make the environment safe for the affected resident(s) |
| **Support** | the affected resident(s) by discussing their options with them and asking them how they would like to be supported |
| **Seek consent** | from the resident(s) to:   * **Inform** their case manager * **Inform** the resident’s person nominated /guardian as soon as possible |
| **Complete** | an incident record |
| **Notify** | the department if it is prescribed reportable incident by the end of the next business day |

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| In an **emergency call 000** for police assistance or if emergency medical assistance is required. Police should also be called if a crime has occurred or is suspected of having occurred.  **Advise** police if the resident(s) has difficulty communicating and organise an Independent Third Person (ITP) by calling **1300 309 337**. |

## Resources and assistance

## For women

| Service | Description | Contact |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Safe Steps Family Violence Resource Centre** | Provides a ‘no cost’ service to women including, refuge and accommodation options, outreach services and information and advocacy support. | 03 9928 9600  Toll Free 1800 015 188 (regional)  (24 hours, 7 days a week) |
| **Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria (DVRCV)** | Provides information by phone or website and has a referral book with contact details for family violence services throughout Victoria. | 03 9486 9866  [Safe+Equal](https://safeandequal.org.au/) <https://safeandequal.org.au/> |

## For men

| Service | Description | Contact |
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| **Men’s Referral Service** | For men who want to stop violence or abusive behaviour towards family members. | 03 9428 2899  Free call 1300 766 491  (9:00 am to 9:00 pm, Monday to Friday) |

## For older people

| Service | Description | Contact |
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| **Seniors Rights Victoria** | A free helpline, specialist legal service and advocacy service to provide information, support, advice and education to help prevent elder abuse and safeguard the rights, dignity and independence of older people. | 1300 368 821  [Seniors Rights Victoria](https://seniorsrights.org.au/) <https://seniorsrights.org.au/> |

## For people whose first language is not English

| Service | Description | Contact |
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| **Statewide Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Domestic Violence Service** | Provides information and resources for CALD community members who are dealing with domestic violence or homelessness issues. | [ANROWS](https://www.anrows.org.au/research-areas/culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-communities/)  <https://www.anrows.org.au/research-areas/culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-communities/> |

## General information

| Service | Description | Contact |
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| **The Lookout** | Referral and other information about family violence specifically for workers. | [Working in Family Violence](https://safeandequal.org.au/working-in-family-violence/)  <[Working in family violence | Safe and Equal](https://safeandequal.org.au/working-in-family-violence/)> |

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