

UNDERSTANDING DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

To determine if your relationship is abusive you need to look at what the other person is doing.

Think about:

- how the behaviour affects your life
- how it makes you feel
- where the balance of power lies in your relationship

Trust your intuition: If something does not feel right to you then it is not ok. Look at this wheel and see if you recognise any of these behaviours in your relationship.



Using intimidation

- Makes you afraid by using looks, actions, gestures
- Smashes things
- Destroys your property
- Abuses pets
- Shows weapons
- Monitors you using technology such as GPS tracking devices or spyware
- Goes through personal information such as emails, text messages, social media accounts or call logs
- Breaks your phone or cut the phone line when you try to call for help

Using financial abuse

- Prevents you from getting or keeping a job
- Makes you ask for money
- Gives you an allowance
- Takes your money
- Doesn't let you know about or have access to family income

Using isolation

- Controls what you do, who you see and talk to, and where you go
- Limits your outside involvement and social contacts
- Uses jealousy to justify actions

Using children

- Makes you feel guilty about the children
- Uses the children to relay messages
- Threatens to take the children
- Uses GPS tracking on children's devices to monitor your location

Adapted from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Centre Duluth, Minnesota.

Using emotional abuse

- Puts you down
- Makes you feel bad about yourself
- Calls you names
- Makes you think you're crazy
- Humiliates you
- Makes you feel guilty

Using coercion and threats

- Makes and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt you
- Threatens to leave or commit suicide or report you to welfare
- Makes you drop charges
- Makes you do illegal things
- Threatens to release intimate images or videos of you
- Threatens to withhold medication, things you need for your health or quality of life (eg, wheelchair)

Minimising, denying, and blaming

- Makes light of the abuse and not taking your concerns seriously
- Says it didn't happen
- Shifts responsibility for abusive behaviour
- Says you caused it
- Blames tiredness, stress, alcohol or drugs

Using male privilege

- Treats you like a servant
- Excludes you from making decisions
- Being the one to define men's and women's roles
- Threatens to share intimate images to prevent you leaving, or to humiliate you

UNDERSTANDING DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

The circle of abuse wheel



Adapted from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Centre Duluth, Minnesota.

More information and help

In an emergency, call the police on 000 or 112 from mobiles.

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For legal advice, assistance, referral and representation as well as social work support and financial counselling for victims of domestic and family violence call the **Legal Aid NSW Domestic Violence Unit** on **9219 6300**.

Family Violence Law Help is a website with easy-to-understand legal information about AVOs, family law and child protection. The information can be translated into different languages.

www.familyviolencelaw.gov.au

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This factsheet is an excerpt from the booklet *Charmed and Dangerous: A woman's guide to reclaiming a healthy relationship*, an initiative of the Tweed Shire Women's Services Inc.

This factsheet is available in Arabic, Dari/Farsi, Korean, Simplified Chinese, Spanish and Vietnamese.  © Legal Aid NSW

STRANGULATION OR SUFFOCATION

Strangulation is a serious crime. It can mean that violence is getting worse. It is the most lethal form of domestic violence.

What is strangulation?

You might think of this as choking.

Strangulation happens when pressure is placed around the neck area with enough force that breathing becomes difficult or impossible. The pressure around the neck can take many forms, either one or both hands, rope, clothing or anything else.

What is suffocation?

Suffocation happens by covering of the mouth or nose, preventing air from entering your lungs.

Why is suffocation and strangulation dangerous?

When strangulation or suffocation occurs, your brain can't get oxygen. The blood flow can't exit your brain and your airway closes. When this happens breathing is impossible or very difficult.

Each time that blood and air flow to and from your brain stops, your brain cells will die. Brain cells do not regenerate once this happens. This can cause long term health issues. Even if it only happens for a short time and there are no visible injuries, there might be serious internal injuries.

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When an act of violence like this happens, you may feel relieved that you survived. Over time, you may start to minimise the experience. This level of violence places you at high risk of losing your life. There may not be a next time if you do not get help.

What should I do?

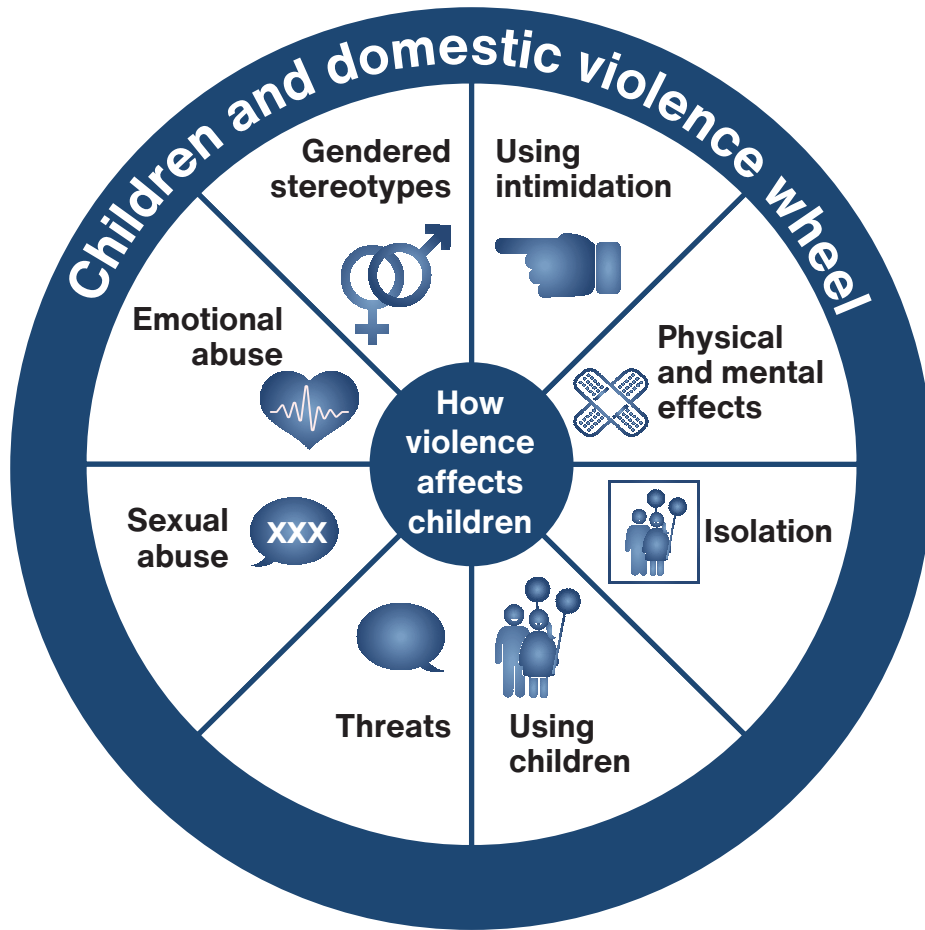
It is important that you do something if an act of violence like this happens to you.

You should:

- Seek medical attention as soon as possible
- Tell someone like a support worker, the police, or a doctor
- Document signs and symptoms. You might notice that some things may develop over days or weeks:
 - › Difficulty breathing, talking or swallowing
 - › Any neck or throat pain; including coughing
 - › Vomiting or nausea
 - › Any loss of bladder or bowel control
 - › Ringing in your ears, dizziness or headaches
 - › Any memory loss
 - › Confusion, feeling disoriented, restless or tired.

THE EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN

All family members experience the effects of domestic and family violence. Living with violence can have as much of an impact on children as the victims themselves. Children who see abuse or live in a violent household experience fear, intimidation and threat to safety like you do. This wheel shows how domestic violence affects children.



Using intimidation

- Putting children in fear by: using looks, loud actions, loud gestures, loud voice, smashing things, destroying property
- Fear of physical safety



Gendered stereotypes

- Copy abuser's dominant & abusive behaviour
- Copying victimised passive and submissive behaviour
- Unable to express feelings or who they are



Using isolation

- Inability to develop social skills
- Can't have friends over because of the need to hide the violence
- Keeping harmful "secrets"
- Not trusting of adults



Using children

- Being put in the middle of fights
- Children may take on roles and responsibilities of parents and give up being children
- Children seen and not heard
- Children being used to solve conflicts, asking them to take sides



Using emotional abuse

- Doubting reality
- Fear of doing wrong
- Inconsistent limits and expectations by caregiver
- Fear of expressing feelings
- Inability to learn at school
- Low self-esteem



Physical and mental effects

- Children may feel guilt and shame and think it's their fault
- May regress to early stages of development
- Demanding and withdrawn
- Crave/need attention



Using threats

- Learn to manipulate because of their own safety issues due to effect of violence in family
- Expressing anger in a way that is violent, abusive, or not expressing anger at all because of their own fear



Sexual abuse

- Shame of body
- Feeling threatened and fearful of their sexuality
- Learning inappropriate sexual talk and behaviour
- Children having access to pornographic magazines and movies

Adapted from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Centre Duluth, Minnesota.

THE EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN

Children and domestic violence wheel



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PREPARING TO LEAVE

There are a lot of barriers faced by women leaving violence that may seem overwhelming. But it is important to remember that many women leave violent relationships and find safe and fulfilling lives for themselves and their children.

It is good to be prepared before you leave.

What should I do before I leave?

It is important to have a clear safety plan for you and your children before you leave. These are some things you can do to prepare:

- ✓ Contact the Domestic Violence Hotline and arrange safe accommodation for you and your children
- ✓ Contact RSPCA to arrange safe accommodation for your pets
- ✓ Seek support from a domestic violence worker to discuss your options and consider ways to keep yourself safe such as getting an ADVO
- ✓ Arrange your transportation in advance
- ✓ Practice travelling to your intended safe spot
- ✓ Prepare and safely store a leaving package with money, documents, clothes, spare keys
- ✓ Seek legal advice
- ✓ Program emergency services / contacts and support services into your phone
- ✓ Ask your doctor to document any injuries
- ✓ Only tell trusted people of your intended new location

What should I take when I leave?

This is a useful list to help you prepare to leave. Take the items below only if it is safe to do so. The safety of you and your children is most important.

You may be able to return with Police support at a later time to collect your possessions.

- ✓ Driver's licence, bank details, credit cards,
- ✓ Birth/marriage/divorce certificate/s for you and your children
- ✓ Centrelink, immigration documents

- ✓ Car & house keys
- ✓ Passports for you and your children
- ✓ Car registration papers
- ✓ Medical records, medication & Medicare details
- ✓ Taxation and employment documents
- ✓ Court papers including protection and family law papers
- ✓ Rental, mortgage, legal papers, copy of ADVO
- ✓ Clothing
- ✓ Personal address book
- ✓ Your children's favourite toys and other items of comfort
- ✓ Personal items which have value, or you fear may be destroyed such as jewellery and photographs

How do I protect myself online?

You might think that you should switch off your technology to stay safe. But technology can be an important tool to keep you connected to support and resources. There are some steps you can take to make your technology safer.

- If you are worried your phone is being monitored call 1800 937 638 for a free safe phone.
- Protect or change your passwords/PINs by choosing passwords that no one could guess. Make sure you don't select "save my password" on login pages.
- Use private browsing so no one can see the pages you have been looking at and clear your browser history of any sites that you don't want your abuser to see.
- Use a safe computer that is not accessible by your abuser. You could go to the library or ask a trusted friend.
- Change your social media setting to turn off your location and limit who can see your information.

The eSafety Commissioner has many resources to help with image-based abuse, spyware and creating alternative email accounts.

You can find out more on their website www.esafety.gov.au/women

PREPARING TO LEAVE

Parenting after domestic violence

This wheel is a helpful guide for you to use when you think about how you want to parent your children after you leave.



Encourage and support

- Be affirming
- Encourage children to follow their interest
- Let children disagree with you
- Recognise improvement
- Teach new skills
- Let them make mistakes



Give time

- Participate in your children's lives: activities, school, sports, special events and days, celebrations, friends
- Include your children in your activities
- Reveal who you are to your children



Provide discipline

- Be consistent
- Ensure rules are appropriate to age and development of child
- Be clear about limits and expectations
- Use discipline to give instruction, not punish



Trust and respect

- Acknowledge children's right to have own feelings, friends, activities and opinions
- Promote independence
- Allow for privacy
- Respect feelings for others
- Believe your children



Promote emotional security

- Talk and act so children feel safe and comfortable expressing themselves
- Be gentle
- Be dependable



Give affection

- Express verbal and physical affection
- Be affectionate when your children are physically or emotionally hurt



Care for yourself

- Give yourself personal time
- Keep yourself healthy
- Maintain friendships
- Accept love



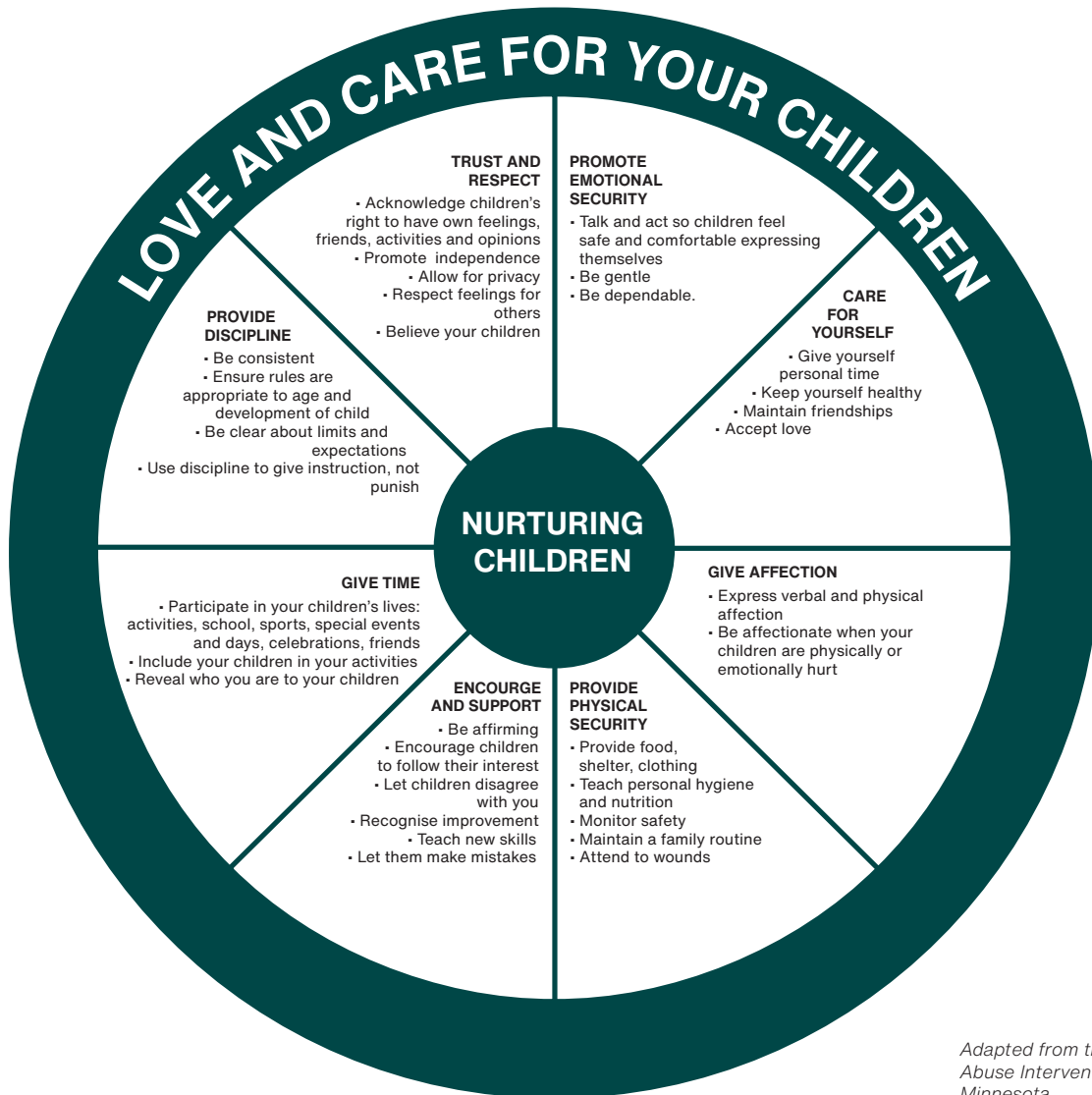
Provide physical security

- Provide food, shelter, clothing
- Teach personal hygiene and nutrition
- Monitor safety
- Maintain a family routine
- Attend to wounds

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PREPARING TO LEAVE

Parenting after domestic violence wheel



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