

Community Resource Guide

TO FAMILY VIOLENCE



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Mitchell Shire Council and Murrindindi Shire Council acknowledges that Mitchell Shire Council and Murrindindi Shire exists on Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country.

Mitchell Shire Council and Murrindindi Shire Council acknowledge the Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waterways in the areas now known as Mitchell and Murrindindi shires.

We pay our respects to First Nations leaders and elders, past, present and emerging, who are the keepers of history, traditions, knowledge and culture of this land.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VICTIM SURVIVORS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

Mitchell and Murrindindi Shire would also like to acknowledge anyone viewing this guide with lived experience and extend our support and solidarity. Your stories highlight the urgent need to create communities where safety and respect are upheld for all. This looks like coming together with a common goal of breaking the cycle of violence by embedding gender equality and promoting spaces of healing, empowerment and understanding.

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Why we need this guide

PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IS IMPORTANT

In Australia, 1 in 3 women (30.5%) have experienced physical violence since the age of 15.

OUR WATCH, 2021

Evidence shows that women with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ and gender diverse women, pregnant women, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, older women, First Nations women, women with mental illness and affected by substance abuse are more likely to experience violence. This is why everyone has an important role to play in the prevention of violence against women.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY IN PREVENTION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

'Addressing family violence requires a whole-of-community response and a coordinated system working together to support adult and child victim-survivors, address risk and safety needs, and promote perpetrator accountability'

THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT, 2022

COUNCILS COMMITMENT TO PREVENTING FAMILY VIOLENCE

Family violence has a serious impact on our communities, workplaces, families and individuals. Family violence increases the risk of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress and other health related issues. This is why Mitchell and Murrindindi Council is committed to prevention of all forms of violence, including family violence and gender-based violence.

We recognise it is not easy to know how to respond when someone shares that they are experiencing family violence. We hope this resource helps you to feel more confident to support the people you care about.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

- share information about what family violence is
- help to understand and identify the signs of family violence
- provide suggestions on respectfully responding to disclosures of family violence
- provide information about Family Violence Leave entitlements for those in employment
- list of resources and services that are available to support community members

Family violence defined

Family violence is often, but not limited to, intimate partner violence and is also referred to as domestic or family violence. Refer to the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic) for more information.

Family violence can take many different forms including, but not limited to, physical violence. Family violence does not discriminate. It can occur no matter your gender, age, where you live, your occupation, your abilities or disabilities, your sexuality, your religion, your ethnicity, your skin colour, your residential status, your education, whether you live with your partner, whether you have children or whether you are in a monogamous relationship or have more than one partner. These (and other) factors are often referred to as intersecting identities or intersectionality.

Be considerate of how an individual's cultural and linguistic background could determine their understanding and how they experience family violence. Consider that everyone has their own experience of family violence which makes it important to respond respectfully to anyone sharing their experiences.

<p style="text-align: center;">Coercion</p> <p>Making and/or threats to do something to hurt you.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Intimidation</p> <p>Threatening physical or sexual violence if you don't comply with their demands.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Emotional abuse</p> <p>Humiliating you, putting you down, making you feel bad about yourself, calling you names, playing mind games.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Isolation</p> <p>Controlling what you do, who you see, preventing you from participating in work or education, interfering with family obligations and making decisions about your life without you.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Denying, blaming or minimising</p> <p>Denying that family violence is happening. Blaming the violence or bad behaviour on a bad childhood, a bad day or on you. Minimising the violence and not taking your concerns seriously.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Using children</p> <p>Using children to keep you dependent by forcing you to have a(nother) baby. Denying money to maintain the children, making you solely responsible. Threatening to hurt your children or report you to child services.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Financial control</p> <p>Controlling your earning potential, money and what you own and owe. Denying access to finances and/or financial matters.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Spiritual abuse</p> <p>Ridiculing or putting you down for your beliefs and culture. Manipulating religious teachings or cultural traditions to excuse violence.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Physical abuse</p> <p>Smashing, destroying or throwing things. Pushing, shoving, hitting, slapping or using weapons.</p>

Risk factors

Research has shown that there are specific behaviours that increase the likelihood that someone experiencing family violence may be seriously injured or die because of the actions of their intimate partner or family members. These are known as 'evidence-based risk factors' and they can help identify when someone is in immediate need of support. These factors are related to the behaviours and or actions of an intimate partner or family member using family violence.

Evidence-based risk factors

- Physical assault while pregnant/following birth
- Planning to leave or recent separation
- Escalation (i.e., an increase in severity and/or frequency of violence)
- Financial abuse/difficulties
- Controlling behaviours
- Access to or use of weapons
- Has ever harmed or threatened to harm person, family members, pets or other animals
- Has ever threatened or tried to strangle, choke or kill the person
- Has ever threatened or tried to self-harm/commit suicide
- Sexual assault or stalking of a person
- Previous or current breach of court orders/intervention orders
- History of family violence or violent behaviour
- Obsessive/jealous behaviour toward person
- Unemployed/disengaged from education
- Drug and/or alcohol misuse/abuse
- Mental illness/depression
- Physical harm
- Emotional abuse
- Property damage

Some of the evidence-based risk factors above suggest a higher likelihood that family violence could occur.

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call triple zero (000).

Behaviours that may indicate a person is experiencing family violence

- Regularly cancels appointments
- Physical injuries, often with unlikely explanations
- Social withdrawal
- Anxiety or fearfulness of their current or former partner
- Appearing distracted, depressed, avoiding eye contact and loss of confidence
- Lack of concentration or difficulty making decisions
- Personal calls, texts or visits that cause visible and/or emotional distress
- Seem scared, worried or withdrawn

Warning signs and indicators of family violence

Family violence can be experienced in many different ways and forms. Any behaviour that makes another person feel unsafe, uncomfortable, hurt, scared or unable to be themselves are unacceptable.

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call triple zero (000).

Does your partner, carer or a family member:

- Make you feel uncomfortable or afraid?
- Often put you down or make you feel bad about yourself?
- Constantly call or text to find out what you're doing?
- Make you feel scared of saying 'no' to them?
- Get possessive and jealous if you talk to others?
- Stop you from having access to money?
- Try to control who you see and where you go?
- Constantly check what you do on your phone or online?
- Scare you or hurt you by being violent?
- Threaten to hurt you, your children, pets or others?
- Threaten that you will never see your children again if you leave?
- Make you do sexual things you don't want to?

If you or someone you know answered 'yes' to any of these questions, you/they may be experiencing family violence and there is help available. For example, a family violence service can work with you to create a safety plan, which is a list of prepared steps (developed with you) and is designed to support your safety and the safety of your children, whether you are still in the relationship or have left.



Speaking with someone about family violence

The most important thing you can do is let them know you are there to support them. You can play an important role in someone's journey to safety.

Helpful statements and questions

- What you have described sounds like it could be [a form of] family violence (*name it*).
- I can understand this might be difficult for you to talk about.
- I am concerned about you and would like to help/support you where I can.
- You (and your kids) deserve to be safe.
- When you said earlier that your partner lashes out at you [*or whatever behaviour they've described*], I'm wondering if you can tell me what that means?
- A family violence service might be able to help you feel safer – would you like me to help you make contact?
- Whatever you choose to do, I am here to support you.

Important to note

- Listen without interruption or judgement. Allow them to speak at their own pace and in their own words.
- Reflect back that the violence is not their fault and it's never justifiable.
- Believe and validate their experiences.
- Provide information that will support the victim survivor to make their own choices (as much as possible) in what happens next.
- Do not try to figure out why they are experiencing family violence, as this can be experienced as victim-blaming.

The person experiencing family violence might not be ready to take action straight away. They might choose to stay, or they may need more time to make a plan that is right for them. It is important to respect the affected person's decisions. Be open and honest that you are not a counsellor and do not have skills or training in dealing with disclosures of violence. Let them know about specialist family violence services that can offer professional support (refer to page 9).

When supporting someone who may be experiencing family violence, it can be emotionally challenging, so taking care of yourself is essential. Remember to set healthy boundaries by prioritising your own well-being. While your support is valuable, you are not responsible for solving the situation. If you find yourself needing extra support, you can reach out to 1800 RESPECT in the first instance.

Disclosure guideline

WHAT DO I DO?	WHAT DO I SAY?
Believe the person's experience	Thanks for sharing your experience with me
Show empathy	That sounds like a terrible experience
Avoid judgement or blame	I imagine it has taken a lot of courage for you to share your story with me
Condemn the use of violence, but not the person using violence	No one should have to experience what you have been through
Be open and honest, including about your skills and knowledge	I don't have any special training in helping people with experiences like yours, but I can give you contact details for people who do
Establish whether there is an immediate risk to the safety of the person disclosing, their children or anyone else	Do you feel safe going home tonight? Are you concerned about this person hurting you today?
Provide options for the person to seek specialist support if required (sometimes a person just wants you to know and understand that this has occurred and is not necessarily looking for assistance)	I would like to make sure you know where you can get support from trained people; can I provide you with contact details for 1800RESPECT?
Enable the person to be in control of their decisions. Recognise that it may be more than one conversation for the time to be right for them to seek support.	What you choose to do with this information is up to you, but I can provide you with contact details for a free specialist service you can contact if you need to
Provide information on how a person can access referral information. Include a copy of this guide, access to a computer/phone.	Refer to page 9 onwards of this guide

Employers role in supporting employees

Family violence leave

Taking steps to seek support in relation to family violence can take time and may need to be done when the person is safe and away from the perpetrator. If the person is currently in employment, then they may be eligible to access paid family and domestic violence leave from their employer.

In accordance with the *Fair Work Amendment (Family and Domestic Violence Leave) Act 2018*, employers are required by law to offer family violence leave (this can be up to 10 days paid leave each year (in addition to other forms of leave, i.e., annual leave). This leave can be used for family violence related activities such as medical appointments, legal proceedings, time to find appropriate accommodation in situations where the employee is leaving an abusive relationship etc. The employer has obligations to ensure the leave is offered and recorded confidentially. Please reach out to your employer for further information on family violence leave. **It is unlawful for someone to be professionally or financially disadvantaged for accessing this leave.**

Paid leave is essential to supporting employees, particularly women, in that it gives them financial stability to be able to leave a situation where they may be experiencing family violence. For full information regarding entitlements to paid leave please visit www.fairwork.gov.au or speak with your employer.

Flexible work options

In addition to family violence leave, the Fair Work Act also entitles employees to request flexible work arrangements if they are impacted by family violence. As such, you may ask your employer to consider reasonable requests for flexible work - see below:

- Changes to span of hours or pattern of hours and/or shift patterns.
- Job redesign or changes to duties, either temporary or permanent.
- Relocation to suitable employment at other work sites.
- A change to their telephone number or email addresses.
- Any other appropriate measure including those available under existing provision for family friendly and flexible working arrangements.

Confidentiality

Disclosures of family violence should be treated as confidential. There may be circumstances where workplaces may need to be notified of safety risks, such as unwelcome phone calls or the potential for unexpected 'drop-ins' by a perpetrator. Notifying a workplace about these safety issues can help to minimise the risk to everyone involved. Obtaining consent from the individual who is experiencing family violence is essential before disclosing to anyone else. Your employer is not allowed to disclose private information unless it is required by law (i.e., a child has been or is likely to be harmed, for further information refer to Part 6A of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)); you or your colleagues are in immediate danger; or if you consent).



Community support services

The following lists some of the many services available to support a person experiencing family violence as well as those seeking to stop using violence. If you are unsure of which service to use, it is recommended that you contact 1800RESPECT in the first instance. This service can support in identifying the other services that may be relevant to your circumstances.

EMERGENCY/URGENT ASSISTANCE REQUIRED

Call 000 - Victoria Police for urgent support - they will also support a victim through referrals into safe accommodation if required and further supports for women and children as needed.

Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre - 1800 015 188

Provide 24/7 crisis support for women and children.

Nexus Primary Health - 1300 773 352

Nexus can provide connection to a Family Violence Support Worker. Available for both Mitchell and Murrindindi Shires.

1800 RESPECT - 1800 737 732

Visit 1800respect.org.au

Provide confidential information, counselling and support services. Open 24 hours to support people impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse. 1800RESPECT can support people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing family violence. They provide confidential information and counselling and can provide a referral to other services. The service is also available for workers and friends and family who need advice.

The Orange Door in Goulburn - 1800 634 245

Visit orangedoor.vic.gov.au or email goulburn@orangedoor.vic.gov.au.

Orange door is a free service for adults, children and young people who are experiencing or have experienced family violence and families who need extra support with the care, well being, and development of children. Available for both Mitchell and Murrindindi Shires.

Wallan: *42/80 Bentinck Street, Wallan, 3756*

Shepparton: *210 Corio Street, Shepparton, 3630*

Lifeline - 13 11 14

Visit lifeline.org.au

A national number which can help put you in contact with a crisis service in your state. Free service, 24 hours, 7 days a week.



Community support services

Mitchell Shire

Primary Care Connect (5823 3200)

primarycareconnect.com.au/

Case Management services to assist victim survivors who experience current or recent intimate partner violence, working with adults who use family violence and Indigenous family Violence Support.

Family Care (1800 663 107)

familycare.net.au/

Case Management services aims to reduce the risk associated with the person who chooses to use family violence.

GV Centre Against Sexual Assault (1800 112 343)

gvcasa.com.au/

Services for victim/survivors of sexual assault, their non-offending family members, partners and friends.

The Bridge Youth Service (Seymour: 03 5799 1298) (Wallan: 03 5799 1298)

thebridge.org.au/

Free programs run by qualified supportive staff that can help young people improve their situation (referral required).

Nexus Primary Health (1300 773 352)

<https://www.nexusprimaryhealth.org.au/> / Email:

info@nexusprimaryhealth.org.au

Support for those experiencing family violence including safety plans, emergency accommodation, applying for an Intervention Order, getting you connected with legal services etc. and men's behaviour change programs.

Northern Community Legal Centre (03 9310 4376)

www.northernclc.org.au/ / Email: admin@northernclc.org.au

Northern Community Legal Centre provides free and confidential legal advice and assistance to people who live, work, or study in Merri-bek, Hume, and Mitchell Shire Council Local Government Areas.

Murrindindi Shire

Family Care (1800 663 107)

familycare.net.au/

Case Management services aims to reduce the risk associated with the person who chooses to use family violence.

GV Centre Against Sexual Assault (1800 112 343)

gvcasa.com.au/

Services for victim/survivors of sexual assault, their non-offending family members, partners and friends.

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<https://www.nexusprimaryhealth.org.au/> / Email:

info@nexusprimaryhealth.org.au

Support for those experiencing family violence including safety plans, emergency accommodation, applying for an Intervention Order, getting you connected with legal services etc. and men's behaviour change programs.

Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre (03 5831 0900)

arcjustice.org.au/ / Email: gvclc@gvclc.org.au

Lawyers are available to provide free legal advice over the phone to anyone experiencing debt, family violence or another family law matter. Located in Shepparton.

Community support services

Support for women

Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre (1800 015 188)

safesteps.org.au

Victorian state-wide service providing telephone support, information, referral, safety planning and risk assessment for women and children experiencing family violence. Free service, 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Centre Against Sexual Assault Crisis Line (1800 806 292)

sacl.com.au

A state-wide confidential, telephone crisis counselling service for people who have experienced both past and recent sexual assault. Free service, 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Marian Community/VincentCare (5821 9458 business hours, 1800 015 188 after hours)

vincentcare.org.au/our-services/marian-community/

A family violence service for women and children experiencing family violence. Free service, 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Support for men

Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre (1800 015 188)

safesteps.org.au

Victorian state-wide service providing telephone support, information, referral, safety planning and risk assessment for women and children experiencing family violence. Free service, 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Mensline Australia (1300 78 99 78)

mensline.org.au

Supports men who are dealing with family and relationship difficulties. Free service, 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Victims of Crime Helpline (1800 819 817) or text (0427 767 891)

victimsofcrime.vic.gov.au/

For adult male victims of family violence and victims of violent crime. Free service, 8am to 11pm, 7 days a week.

Men's Referral Service (1300 766 491)

ntv.org.au/

No to Violence works with men who use family violence, and the sector that supports them to change their abusive and violent behaviour.

Community support services

Support for children and young people

Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800

kidshelpline.com.au/

Free, private and confidential, telephone and online counselling service for young people aged between 5 and 25. Free service, 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Australian Childhood Foundation (1800 176 453)

childhood.org.au

Free counselling for children and young people affected by abuse. 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Child Protection (13 12 78)

services.dffh.vic.gov.au/child-protection

Free, for children and young people whose safety is at risk.

What's Ok at Home

woah.org.au/

A website for young people their adult allies about family violence, why it happens, how to recognise it, and how to help others experiencing it.

Support for First Nations community

Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) (03 9287 8800)

vacca.org/

Free state-wide support and drop in service for Aboriginal children and families.

Rumbalara (03 5820 0000)

rumbalara.org.au/

Support and protection for First Nations people who are affected by family or domestic violence, are feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping or staying safe.

Yarning SafeNStrong (1800 959 563)

vahs.org.au/yarning-safenstrong/

Telephone crisis line for Aboriginal people and families who need to have a yarn. Free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Djirra Aboriginal Women Support Service (1800 105 303)

djirra.org.au/

Telephone counselling service for Aboriginal women who are experiencing or have experienced family violence.

Community support services

Support for First Nations community

Elizabeth Morgan House (03 9403 9400)

emhaws.org.au

Refuge accommodation and specialist family violence services to Aboriginal women and their children.

Dardi Munwurro's Brother to Brother (1800 435 799)

dardimunwurro.com.au

Telephone crisis support for Aboriginal men with family violence issues. Free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

VAHS (Victorian Aboriginal Health Service) (03 9419 3000)

vahs.org.au/

First Nations free health service for Aboriginal people in crisis, children and women health services and multidisciplinary supports and referrals.

Multicultural support and support in your language

Translating and Interpreting Service (131 450)

tisonational.gov.au/

Free phone service to gain access to an interpreter in your own language. 24 hours, 7 days a week.

InTouch - Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence (1800 755 988)

intouch.org.au/

Free and confidential support services for migrant and refugee women.

Multicultural Centre for Women's Health Multilingual Library

mcwh.com.au/multilingual-library-catalogue/

Catalogue for resources, including about family violence.

Family Safety Pack (available in 46 languages)

dss.gov.au/family-safety-pack

Information on Australia's laws regarding domestic and family violence, sexual assault and forced marriage.

Family violence: what police do - multi-lingual fact sheets

police.vic.gov.au/resources-and-fact-sheets-2

Fact sheets about what Victoria Police do in response to family violence.

Support for Pasifika community

Fale (0411 287 728)

thefalemail@gmail.com

Fale Advocacy and Peer Support Services is a non-for-profit service specialising in Pasifika community support in the areas of family violence, Senior advocacy and case management, men's mental health and parenting assistance.

Community support services

Support for Seniors

Rights Victoria (1300 368 821)

www.seniorsrights.org.au

Free and confidential support services to support older Victorians experiencing abuse.

Support for LGBTIQ+ communities

Rainbow Door (1800 729 367) or (text 0480 017 246)

Rainbow Door provides free advice to LGBTIQ+ people and their friends and families.

QLife (1800 184 527)

qlife.org.au

An after-hours, peer-to-peer support service run by volunteers in the LGBTIQ+ community. QLife is not a crisis support service. Peer supporters cannot provide counselling however they can provide referrals to LGBTIQ+ inclusive counselling services if needed.

Queerspace (03 9663 6733)

queerspace.org.au

Family violence counselling and support for any LGBTIQ+ person, their family or friends, who are affected by family violence.

Thorne Harbour Health (03 9865 6700)

thorneharbour.org/

Family violence counselling and case management services to LGBTIQ+ communities and Family Violence Flexible Support Packages for those who are considering leaving or have recently left a violent relationship.

Elizabeth Morgan House (03 9403 9400)

emhaws.org.au

Refuge accommodation and specialist family violence services. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, non-binary, sistergirls, brotherboys, intersex and two spirit queer folk who identify as women or feel comfortable accessing a women's service welcome.

Rainbow Door (1800 729 367)

www.rainbowdoor.org.au

Rainbow Door is a free specialist LGBTIQ+ helpline providing information, support, referral and short term case management. We support people of all ages and identities with issues including family and intimate partner violence (including elder abuse), relationships, mental health and wellbeing.



Prevention information

If you want to know more about how you can be a part of preventing family violence before it occurs and/or contributing to violence-free communities, check out the below resources:

Our Watch

ourwatch.org.au

Our Watch is an independent, not for profit organisation established to raise awareness and engage the community in action to prevent violence against women and their children.

ANROWS

anrows.org.au

ANROWS is a national research organisation that aims to build evidence that will guide policy and practice aimed at addressing the high rates of domestic, family and sexual violence against women and their children.

Women's Health Goulburn North East (WHGNE)

whealth.com.au/

Women's Health Goulburn North East is a feminist organisation, leading change towards women's empowerment, women's health, the prevention of violence against women and ultimately, gender equality, in rural and regional Victoria.

Safe Schools Hub

safeschoolshub.edu.au

The Safe Schools Hub is a one-stop shop for information and resources on safe school strategies to assist teachers and school leaders, students, parents, specialist professionals supporting students and pre-service teachers.

Family violence reform

vic.gov.au/family-violence-support

Support service details, resources for the family violence workforce as well as news, plans and progress of the reform.

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Acknowledgements

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PREPARED BY



Mitchell Shire Council



Murrindindi Shire Council

