



Exploring your options — Help and support for women and children

The best way to explore your options is to talk with a family violence worker. She can give you emotional support, and provide information about:

- your legal options (including Intervention Orders)
- different housing options in case you decide to leave
- making plans if the man threatens your safety in any way
- money matters.

Women sometimes decide, for a whole range of reasons, that staying with their partner is the best choice for them at the moment. Choosing this doesn't mean giving up or resigning yourself to the violence. A family violence worker can help you to make a plan for looking after yourself and your children if you decide to stay. She can also help you if you choose a different course of action in the future.

Children who want to talk about what is happening at home can contact **Kids Help Line**, nationwide 24 hour phone support for children and young people.

Phone: 1800 551 800, or visit the
 Website: www.kidshelpline.com.au

If you feel your Internet use is being watched or you are being stalked online see our brochure on *Cyberstalking*.

To contact the nearest family violence worker to you, call:

Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service

Phone: (03) 9322 3555 (24 hours)
 STD toll free 1800 015 188
 Website: www.wdvcs.org.au

WIRE (Women's Information)

Phone: 1300 134 130
 (Monday - Friday 9am—5pm)
 Website: www.wire.org.au

Mornington Peninsula Domestic Violence Service (Peninsula only)

Phone: 5971 9454
 (Monday - Friday 9am—5pm)

WAYSS Family Violence Outreach Service (Case management & ongoing support)

Phone: 9781 4658 Frankston area
 (Monday - Friday 9am—5pm)

Visit these websites for information about making plans for your safety.

Domestic Violence Victoria

Website: www.dvvic.org.au

Domestic Violence Resource Centre

Website: www.dvrcv.org.au

Some information in this brochure provided by
Men's Referral Service
www.mrs.org.au



COMMUNITY SUPPORT FRANKSTON
 Inc. Reg. No. A0000431J ABN 95 426 151 625

Family Violence

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Support for Women



EXPLORING YOUR OPTIONS



35 Beach Street, Frankston
 Phone: 9783 7284

“Every woman has a right to live freely, without fear, and to make her own choices and decisions.”

For emergency assistance Call the Police on 000

If you are currently unsafe phone **WAYSS**
Family Violence Crisis Service
9791 6111 or **1800 357 397**
(Monday - Friday 9am—5pm)

After 5:00pm weeknights and weekends
Phone: **0400 503 338**



Violent and controlling behaviours

It is never right for a man to:

- hurt you physically — or even threaten you
- scare, frighten or intimidate you
- call you names
- shame or humiliate you
- damage your property or things you care about
- try to control how you look, where you go, who you see, or what you do
- keep you under any kind of surveillance
- make you take part in sexual acts when you don't want to
- take control of finances or incur debts in your name without your permission
- do anything else that makes you feel unsafe, violated or unable to live freely.



It's never your fault

All couples disagree and argue from time to time, but all of the above actions are forms of violent and controlling behaviour. Chances are, you've made huge efforts to keep yourself and your children safe. You've probably been very brave on occasions, and you've probably stood up for yourself in lots of ways — big or small. But regardless of what you say or do, you are never responsible for his abuse. He is. Using violent and controlling behaviour towards a female family member is a choice.

Men who are violent towards a family member usually don't act the same way towards other people. Your partner or ex-partner might already have offered you excuses for his behaviour. Perhaps he blames his upbringing, or alcohol, or stress. Maybe he blames you, something you've done, or something he thinks you've done. This is common. Men often blame someone or something else for their behaviour. It's part of not taking responsibility for their actions.

Whatever his excuse, we all need to remember that there are other men with similar upbringings, or who are abusing alcohol or feeling stressed, who aren't violent or controlling. Men who are genuinely respectful of the women in their lives don't blame or punish them if something — big or small — goes wrong.



Your safety and wellbeing

Violent behaviour can be physically dangerous. As well, violent or controlling behaviour puts you at risk of a range of other physical, emotional and mental health problems. It might also be making you feel powerless, worthless or bad about yourself.

It's important to remember that violence rarely stops by itself. If anything, it's likely to get worse. Men need to want to change, and they need support from a trained professional to make it happen.



Your children's safety and wellbeing

Children are always affected by violent and controlling behaviour. Even if they never witness violence directly, they pick up on feelings and what's happening. Research shows that children of all ages can develop physical and mental health problems when somebody uses violence and abuse towards their mum. As well, they are likely to have their own behavioural problems, including difficulties at school or with their peers.