



What is Family Violence?

This fact sheet has information on what family violence is, how you can stay safe, and how Legal Aid WA can help.

What is family violence?

Family violence means:

- » violence, or a threat of violence, by someone towards a family member, or
- » any other behaviour that coerces or controls another family member, or causes them to be fearful.

It is not just physical violence or threats of violence. It can include forms of financial, emotional and psychological abuse.

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What are some examples of family violence?

Some examples of family violence include:

- » physical violence such as assaults and sexual assaults,
- » threats to hurt you or a family member,
- » stalking,
- » making derogatory remarks,
- » publishing intimate images or threatening to publish intimate images,
- » damaging things you own or hurting your pets,
- » not letting you have financial independence,
- » not letting you have reasonable family support,
- » keeping you from family and friends, and
- » keeping you culturally isolated.

Some forms of family violence are a crime.

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Who is a family member under family violence laws?

Under family violence laws, there are many people who can be a family member.

For example, current and former partners, siblings, children, parents, grandparents and people in step-family relationships, as well as other relatives.

Members of intimate or family type relationships are also seen to be family members under the law.

How can you stay safe?

If you are experiencing or at risk of family violence, there are steps you can take to increase your safety and that of your children.

You may need to take immediate action to make yourself safe as well as plan for the future.

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How can Legal Aid WA help?

Legal Aid WA has a Domestic Violence Legal Unit that provides legal advice and assistance about family violence issues, including help applying for a restraining order.

Legal Aid WA's Family Court Services offer a duty lawyer and social worker service at the Family Court of WA for people who require urgent help with family law matters in court.

The Legal Aid WA website also has information, videos and self-help guides on family violence.