

# Personal violence

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## 1. Introduction

Most of us see violence every day. The media reports are full of entertainment, news and current affairs programs that show violence as a common part of life. Many films and TV series regularly show violence being used to express anger or resolve conflict.

For some of us, violence is experienced more directly, at home, on the streets or in other public places. Many of us think we face a risk of being physically attacked or threatened. Our fears and how we manage them can have a big influence on our enjoyment of life.

Those of us who are older may feel particularly vulnerable but we also tend to avoid potentially worrying situations. For example, we may not go out at night alone or use trains after dark. But most of us distinguish between the 'risk' of something happening and being worried or concerned about it. Even so, we still think the risk of attack is much higher than it actually is. In working to promote community safety, we need to respond to the actual level of criminal violence in our communities, as well as deal with our anxieties. The statistics below show some of the differences.

A Community Safety Survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in Tasmania in 1998 (the latest to be undertaken) showed that for both property crime and crime against the person (like assault or sexual assault), people's perception of the *risk* of becoming a victim was higher than their level of *concern or worry*. For example, 36.6 per cent of Tasmanians believed there was a high or moderate chance of being mugged or robbed, but the figure fell to 29.5 per cent when they were asked if they were very or moderately worried about this. Both figures were much higher than the number of those who reported being a victim of crime at any time in their life. Only 2.7 per cent of Tasmanians had ever been mugged or robbed and 8.1 per cent physically attacked or threatened with violence by a person they knew (11.9 per cent by a stranger). The survey reported that 12.1 per cent of females aged 18 and over reported being a victim of sexual assault.<sup>1</sup>

The *Fear of Crime* study for the National Campaign Against Violence and Crime (now National Crime Prevention) shows that our physical feelings of vulnerability are influenced by our gender and age. Other studies, like the Tasmanian community safety survey, show that people who have been victims of crime are more likely to think public places are unsafe, compared with those who had not been victimised. While there are lots of factors that influence why people worry about violence, it is clearly an issue that concerns many of us.

This module focuses on types of violence that particularly worry people or are most common. But you could use the same approach to look at aspects of violence that are not covered here. As with all the modules, this material is a resource. You don't have to go through each section or use all the discussion starters. Use local material and personal stories to make it more relevant for you.

### A reminder about discussing sensitive issues

People who have experienced violence may find that talking about it is difficult or troubling. For others, having their attitudes challenged can be confronting, particularly if those attitudes protect them from recognising that people similar to themselves—and possibly people they know—threaten or abuse their partners.

Domestic violence is an area where victim survivors and perpetrators may deny the significance of their behaviour. Material in this module and discussion may enable people to see their own circumstances differently. If the group feels safe or someone thinks other members will be sympathetic to their situation, they may talk about personal experiences. Disclosures of any kind need to be handled sensitively and appropriately.

The module *Getting the most from your learning circle* suggested that the group agree on how to handle particularly sensitive issues or situations if they arise. If your group did this, you might review your agreement before you start this session. Is there anything you want to add? If you haven't discussed this issue and agreed on your approach, you might want to take some time to do so now. You may find discussion easier if everyone has agreed on how to handle a situation before it happens.

The main thing is to provide support and understanding, and to give people space to talk. But a learning circle is not a counselling forum. It's not fair for anyone to expect this of others in the group, and the group shouldn't feel uncomfortable because it can't or doesn't want to play that role. Offer to help identify appropriate people for someone to talk with, but don't do something that requires specialist support. At the end of this module, in the *Additional Resources* section, you will find some information that might be useful if your group needs to support one of its members or identify appropriate support services.

All states and territories have legislation that requires mandatory reporting by certain professionals and service providers of disclosures or reasonable suspicions of child abuse and neglect. The laws differ, but people covered by reporting requirements include doctors, nurses, teachers, police and social workers. While your group may agree to protect confidentiality, laws may require a member of the group to ignore this commitment.

## 2. Violence: just part of our society?

### Discussion starters

- How would you define violence? Spend five minutes or so talking as a group. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary describes violence as 'the exercise of physical force so as to inflict injury on or damage to persons or property'.
- Do you think Australia is more or less violent now than it was 30 years ago? Draw on your own experiences or things you have read, seen on TV or talked about with family or friends.
- Is Australia more or less violent than other countries?
- Do you think violence is just part of human society? Or is it something we learn and can learn to control? You might find it easier for everyone to have a say if you break into small groups and agree on a time limit for discussions—say 15 minutes—and then discuss the main ideas with the whole group.
- In your experience, what kinds of factors influence whether someone is violent?
- Do you think violence is ever an acceptable way to deal with problems? Why/why not? If yes, in what kinds of circumstances is it acceptable?
- Do you think people have a right to live free from violence? What would

it mean to take this right seriously?

### **Computer games and TV—are they making kids violent?**

There is debate about whether the media encourages violence by showing how it's done or making children less sensitive to violence and what it can do to real people. Research indicates a connection between TV violence and violent behaviour, but it does not prove that watching violence *causes* violence, or that all children are affected in the same way.

However, the overall trend of the research evidence is clear. In essence, repeated exposure to TV violence has three areas of impact:

- children are more likely to use aggressive means to solve a conflict situation
- children are made anxious about the 'mean and scary' world in which they appear to live
- children become less sensitive to the use of violence in real life.

Young Media Australia Internet site: [www.youngmedia.org.au](http://www.youngmedia.org.au)

A major US study, the US National Television Violence Study, found that overall it is heavy viewers (over three hours daily), younger children, boys, children from violent homes, and the insecure who will be most affected by exposure to TV violence.<sup>2</sup>

In terms of computer games, a study by the Office of Film and Literature Classification<sup>3</sup> found no evidence of widespread negative effects, although it acknowledged that the amount of research available is small relative to that on other media.

### **Discussion starters**

- What is your experience with violent TV programs and arcade or computer games? Have they affected you or people you know?
- Do you think they influence how young people and children think about violence?

### **School bullying—violence starting young**

Bullying can be defined as the act of repeatedly and deliberately putting another person under stress.<sup>4</sup> Recent studies suggest that most children have either been bullied or witnessed bullying at school. Australia's best estimate is that around one in six children is bullied at least once a week. Teachers spend up to 40 per cent of their time controlling student violence in and out of the classroom. Studies in a range of countries indicate that bullying happens in all schools, regardless of age range, type, location or composition of intake.<sup>5</sup> The most common form of bullying is verbal—teasing, harassment and name calling. Extortion, physical violence, spreading rumours, excluding children from the group, damaging property and making threats are other common forms of bullying.<sup>6</sup> Children who appear 'different' in some way or who are not yet comfortable with themselves can be particularly vulnerable to bullying.

Bullying is a problem that affects the victim and the bully and their school performance, as well as adults in the school. It is also linked to criminal behaviour and criminal violence in a range of ways:

- Involvement in school bullying is associated with involvement in such behaviour as vandalism and petty theft.
- Involvement in school bullying increases the likelihood of anti-social behaviour and later violent offending.
- Bullying involves use of power to get one's own way or to prove one's superiority, reinforcing

the idea that might makes right. This is the same pattern you see in domestic and family violence, sexual assault, rape etc.

During a staff meeting, when I raised the matter of bullying, a staff member made the comment that those kids who complained about bullying were 'whussy'. That they had to learn to deal with these sorts of things themselves because bullying was a fact of life on the streets. This assertion went largely unchallenged, but I was aware that a number of staff, particularly those who had not been at the school for long, were also concerned about the amount of bullying. A senior teacher with whom I discussed the issue summed up the difficulty. She said that 'we' didn't really talk about it much because then people would think there was a problem.

T.Quong and A.Walker *Dealing with Bullying: Using Stories to Bring About Change*  
7th Annual Sydney Symposium of Social Psychology 2003.

#### **Discussion starters**

- Was anyone in the group bullied at school? You might share your experiences. How did it affect you? Has it influenced your attitudes to other people? To violence?
- After listening to the group's stories, how would you define bullying?
- How worried should we be about bullying? Is it 'just kids being kids'? Does it help prepare children for the adult world by encouraging them to stick up for themselves?
- For those of you who care for children or have friends or acquaintances at school, do you know whether bullying is a problem for them? Your group might talk with some young people about their views and how they think bullying should be handled.

#### **Young people's attitudes to violence**

In 2002, the Australian Government published a report of research into young people's attitudes to violence.

The key findings of the report were released in April 2000 at *The Way Forward*, a Partnerships Against Domestic Violence (PADV) conference on children, young people and domestic violence.

The research provided national data on young people's attitudes to domestic violence and on the experiences that helped shape these attitudes. The research centred on a national survey of 5,000 young people aged 12 to 20 years.

To date the research has informed a range of Australian Government initiatives, including crime prevention priorities such as bullying, sexual violence, domestic and family violence, and violence prevention in Indigenous communities.

Key findings of the research have previously been released through a National Crime Prevention Program bulletin (2000) and an AIC Trends and Issues Paper (2001). Both publications attracted considerable media attention.

The research identified significant differences amongst young people's attitudes to and experiences of domestic and sexual violence according to age, gender, socio-economic background and cultural differences of respondents. Analysis of the survey results showed consistent findings relating to the significance of age, gender, socio-economic background and cultural differences. So, for example, the results revealed that:

Males, younger age groups and disadvantaged young people more than other groups expressed attitudes supportive of violence.

Those young people who reported witnessing domestic violence were more likely to be female, older teens, of lower socio-economic status, Indigenous, and/or to live in households other than with both parents.

Females from lower socio-economic backgrounds were significantly more likely to have experienced most aspects of dating violence, the impact of dating violence was experienced differently by males and females, and three times as many females than males had personally experienced sexual violence.

One of the more sensitive findings was that a third of all boys (37 per cent) and of all girls (36 per cent) who have been in a dating relationship had experienced some measure of physical violence in one or more of those relationships. Females were more likely to slap, whereas males were more likely to put down or humiliate, try to control the victim physically and to throw/smash/hit/kick something.

The same age effect was evident for males and females, with incidence levels for most behaviours increasing with age. Almost half of 19–20 year olds who had been in a dating relationship had experienced at least one act that could broadly be classified as violence. The rate at which young people experience dating violence is much higher for the less well off. Social class, however, was less significant for male experiences of dating violence.

The impact of the dating violence was experienced differently by males and females. The report shows that the effects of male to female violence were twice as severe as the effects of female to male violence. Females were more likely than males to have been both physically hurt and frightened.

#### **Activity: Role play**

*You can do this as a role-play or simply as a group discussion. Role-plays can be a good way of putting yourself in someone else's position and can help you see things from another perspective. But not everyone enjoys them. If the group doesn't want to do a role-play, skip it. If one or two people don't want to join in, they could be an audience or take notes about the process and provide feedback at the end.*

Imagine this survey was conducted in a school you are involved with. The results are listed as an item for discussion at a regular meeting of parents, teachers and student representatives. A researcher who conducted the survey has also been invited to attend.

If there are enough people in your group, have more than one parent, teacher, student, etc., with each person taking a different view. For example:

- A parent that thinks the results are nothing much to worry about—just boys being boys, and anyway, what are they supposed to do if a girl leads them on?
- A very protective parent of a female student.
- A teacher committed to providing male and female students with equal

opportunities and concerned about what the survey says about the attitudes of boys in the school.

- A teacher who believes the survey outcomes are not very different from what you would hear when talking with people at the local pub.
- A student who believes girls play the tease because it gives them power over boys.
- A male student who has been bullied by other boys.

If your group is small, make sure each person takes a different approach to the significance of the survey. Thirty minutes has been allowed for this agenda item. The head of the school has invited the researcher who conducted the survey to provide a brief introduction.

After you have finished, step out of your roles and de-brief. Was the exercise useful? What one or two things were most important for you?

Programs have been developed for schools to help students to think about their beliefs and values and where these come from, to understand the implications of aggression and violence, and to learn strategies other than violence for managing conflict.<sup>7</sup> For information about your state or territory, try the department of education or the main office of the teachers' union.

### 3. Violent crime

#### Discussion starters

- Not all violence in Australia is a crime. Brainstorm violence that is not treated as a crime, recording your ideas on a board or butcher's paper.
- When you've run out of ideas, ask yourselves whether they have anything in common. Are there things on the list that people think should be treated as a crime? Are they a crime in other cultures that you know of? Are there actions that are defined as a crime but which you think shouldn't be?
- What do you think is required for a violent action to be a crime in Australia? You might try naming some things that are now crimes but were not, say, 30 years ago. Why do you think things changed?
- How far are your views influenced by your cultural or religious background, gender or sexual preference? You might like to explore this issue in small groups.

#### Quiz: What are my chances of being a victim?

Go through the quiz on your own, writing down your best guess for each question. Then look at the actual figures in the *Additional Resources* section at the end of the module.

Question	Your best guess
How likely am I to be the victim of an assault? (For every 1,000 people, how many are likely to have been assaulted in the past 12 months?)	
Is the offender likely to be a stranger or someone I know?	
How much assault and sexual assault is reported?	

(What percentage?)	
How likely are women to be the victims of sexual assault? (For every 1000 women aged 18 and over, how many have been sexually assaulted in the last 12 months?)	
Is my risk of being a victim of physical violence greater than my risk of experiencing property crime?	

**How we see risk and safety**

In 2003, the Productivity Commission published figures about where Australians feel safe:

- 92 per cent feel safe or very safe in their house during the day
- 81 per cent feel safe or very safe in their house at night
- 64 per cent feel safe on public transport during the day
- 23 per cent feel safe on public transport at night
- 87 per cent feel safe walking/jogging during the day
- 41 per cent feel safe walking/jogging at night.<sup>8</sup>

The 2002 Australian Bureau of Statistics *Crime and Safety Survey* found that:

- The most commonly identified problems were property-related rather than personal crime: housebreaking/theft from homes (42 per cent), dangerous and noisy driving (39 per cent), vandalism/graffiti/damage to property (27 per cent) and car theft (25 per cent).<sup>9</sup>

**Discussion starters**

- How do these figures compare with your own feelings of safety or danger in different situations? What might explain any significant differences?
- Do you think that how safe you feel is affected by things like age, gender, cultural background and where you live?
- What concerns do you have about crime or public nuisance in your area? How do your group’s views compare with the results of the ABS Crime and Safety Survey?

**What influences our views about levels of violent crime?**

**Years after Lindy, Joanne suffers the same gossip**

During criminal trials and committal hearings, the media have a duty to keep the operation of the justice system open to public scrutiny. They are treading a dangerous line in their reporting of the committal hearing into the murder of British tourist Peter Falconio.

Have any lessons been learnt in the 22 years since the media vilification of Lindy Chamberlain? Once again any good faith in reporting has been replaced by rumour mill, character assassination and denigration of an individual who doesn’t behave in the acceptable manner befitting that of a distraught loved one.

Hopefully, a more savvy public has learnt the lessons that our media have failed to comprehend and will ignore the gossipy titbits thrown to them by desperate journalists.

Is it any wonder that many victims of crime choose to avoid the nightmare of media and public scrutiny in an open court of law?

Max Fischer, Scarborough, 29 May 2004

Oh, goodie Joanne Lees, another tortured victim who doesn't smile for the cameras. We've been waiting to get our hooks into someone like her since we put that Lindy Chamberlain away.

Sandra K. Eckersley, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 May 2004

#### Discussion starter

- What do you think about these views? Have you seen examples of sensational media reporting or exaggerated claims by politicians? Does it affect how you feel?
- What factors do you think contribute to people's fear of violence? Do you think there is a difference between fear of something and worrying about it?
- How do you think personal experience of violence influences the way we assess risk?

Those most at risk of violence in Australia fall into three groups: first, young men who get into an argument or fight with other men; second, women; and, third, children.<sup>10</sup> In 2003, men were 57 per cent of all assault victims. Men in the 20–24 and 15–19 age groups had double the overall male victimisation rate.<sup>11</sup>

## 4. Gender and Violence

In terms of offenders, women commit few violent crimes. Of those found guilty in New South Wales Criminal Courts of violent offences against the person, hurting, abusing or killing people, 95.4 per cent were men, many of them young men.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, men, and young men in particular, make up the vast majority of those who come before the criminal justice system, outnumbering women for every offence except prostitution.

Just why men are responsible for most violent crime is the subject of much debate. There are four questions that immediately come to mind when considering the links between gender and violence.

- Why is violence so common among men?
- Is communication the key?
- Is the root of the problem what boys think it means to be a man?
- Is there a link between variations in the culture of masculinity reflected in Australia's multi-cultural communities?

#### Discussion starters

- You might break into three smaller groups and take one perspective each. Or you might prefer to talk together as a group; it's up to you. The four questions raise lots of issues, so you may want to set a time limit for discussion.
- What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the various arguments? How far do they reflect your own experiences?
- What would it mean to take the argument seriously? What sorts of actions would we need to take as individuals? As partners? As a family? As colleagues?
- A 1998 National Crime Prevention report on working with adolescents to

prevent domestic violence found that expectations of men and ideas about what it means to be a man are central to understanding male violence. In small groups, talk about your own experiences and whether they fit with this finding.

### **Women and violence**

Quite a bit of this module focuses on women. This section provides a brief overview. Later sections look at issues like domestic violence in more detail.

In April 2002, the Australian Bureau of Statistics conducted the latest Crime and Safety Survey. It found that during the previous 12 months, 385,100 Australian women (2.5 per cent), aged 15 and over (except sexual assault 18 and over) had experienced violence.<sup>14a</sup> In 1996 the ABS Women's Safety Survey found when asked about their experience since age 15, 2.6 million women (38.4 per cent) responded that they had experienced one or more incidents of violence.<sup>13</sup>

Women were four times more likely to experience violence by a man than by a woman. Younger women were more at risk than older women. Of women aged 18–24, 19 per cent had experienced one or more incidents of violence in the previous 12 months, compared to 7 per cent of women aged 35–44 and 1.2 per cent of women aged 55 and over. The pattern is the same for physical and sexual violence.

Of those women who have ever been married or in a de facto relationship, 23 per cent had experienced violence by a partner at some time during or following the relationship. They were considerably more likely to have experienced violence in a past relationship than in a current relationship (42 per cent compared with 8 per cent).

Pregnancy is a time of particular risk. Of those women who experienced violence by a previous partner, 42 per cent had experienced violence during their pregnancy and 20 per cent experienced violence for the first time while they were pregnant.

In 2003, there were 3,255 male and 14,892 female victims of sexual assault. The highest victimisation rates were recorded for males aged 0–14 years and for females aged 15–19 years, with 62 per cent of all victims aged under 19 years. Fifty-eight per cent of women victims knew the offender and 29 per cent of all offenders were family members. Two-thirds (67 per cent) of all sexual assaults occurred in a residential location and almost all sexual assaults did not involve the use of a weapon. Nationally, the rate of sexual assault was 92 per 100,000 people, but the picture was worse in the Northern Territory (153 victims per 100,000 people) and Queensland (134 victims per 100,000).<sup>14</sup>

### **Discussion starter**

- Do any of these figures surprise you? Do they fit with your experience or the experience of people you know?

## **5. Violent crime and its impact**

### **Assault: Who is at risk?**

*Assault means directly inflicting force, injury or violence on a person, including attempts or threats.*

Across Australia, assault has fluctuated in the last few years—decreasing by 0.9 per cent in 2003 compared with 2002 and increasing by 5 per cent in 2002 compared with 2001. But these figures

hide varying differences between states. For example, the rate of assault in South Australia is almost 3 times that in Victoria, and in 2003 assault increased by 7 per cent in the Northern Territory but decreased by 7 per cent in Victoria and 3 per cent in South Australia.<sup>15</sup>

Men make up over half the victims of assault (57 per cent in 2003). Those most at risk are young men aged 15–24 years.<sup>16</sup> Male victims were likely to be assaulted by a stranger while female victims were more likely to be assaulted by someone known to them. The most frequent locations for assaults were private dwellings, and then streets and footpaths.

Older Australians have a low risk of assault, and those aged 65 and over have the lowest victimisation rate of all,<sup>17</sup> but factors like concern about potential effects on their health may make the fear of attack considerable. Media coverage of attacks on older people can increase the sense of risk. Most deal with this by avoiding potentially risky situations. But this can affect their lifestyle.

### **LOCAL KNOWLEDGE FANS FEAR OF CRIME**

Everyone is afraid of crime but a new study by UNSW has shown particularly high levels of fear of crime in some small rural communities. It appears the increased fear comes from greater knowledge of the victim and increased familiarity with the scene of the crime.

The study found that 82.5 per cent of respondents avoided an area within five kilometres of their home through a direct fear of crime, yet Bega, where the study was conducted, has a lower than average crime rate. Most of the areas that were avoided were near the main shopping and business districts of the community, meaning that everyday movements are likely to be altered due to fear of crime.

The study has also found that the gender gap in fear of crime is significantly less in a rural community like Bega. Studies have shown that on average four to five times more women than men are fearful of crime. The gender gap in Bega is less, with 87 per cent of women displaying a fear of crime compared to 75.6 per cent of men. In Bega behavioural crimes such as drug abuse and vandalism make up 64 per cent of crime, while sexual assault makes up only two per cent.

Traditionally the elderly have been by far the most fearful of being home alone. However, the study found that in Bega, respondents between 15 and 39 experienced a much greater than normal fear of being home alone. Fear of crime outside the home was most commonly experienced by people over 60 and by women.

‘This project found that word of mouth is very important to the spread of crime information in rural areas,’ says Duncan Peake of the UNSW School of Geography. ‘Specific crime information is received more through these channels of communication rather than through the media. However, an evocative link between the rural community’s familiarity with their local landscape and knowledge of crime and the crime reporting of the media was established.’

Duncan Peake, UNSW School of Geography 30 October 2000

#### **Discussion starter**

- Is assault something you fear? How far is your response influenced by experience? How do you try to minimise or manage risk?

## Violence against gays and lesbians

Recorded crime statistics and court statistics do not routinely contain information on whether victims are homosexual. But interviews with assault victims in New South Wales indicate that about 16 per cent of participants had been threatened or actually physically assaulted because the motivation was homophobia.<sup>18</sup>

In Autumn 2003, a large survey on violence against homosexuals in Australia was conducted across NSW, through the Internet and by post. Six hundred people responded to the survey (approximately equal numbers by post and via the Internet). More than half (56 per cent) of the respondents reported having experienced one or more forms of homophobic abuse, harassment or violence in the past 12 months. Eighty-five per cent had at some time experienced such abuse, harassment or violence.<sup>19</sup>

Most of the incidents involved two or more perpetrators. In 75 per cent of cases the perpetrator was unknown to the victim, 14 per cent knew the perpetrator personally and 8 per cent knew them by sight or knew where they were from. Sixty-nine per cent of survey respondents felt vulnerable to violence or harassment from strangers (74 per cent in inner Sydney and 63 per cent outside Sydney).<sup>19</sup>

### Broader impact

Violence against gays and lesbians doesn't affect just them. It affects their friends and family. It's a reason some parents worry about their child's sexual preference.

I was devastated when I found out my son was gay, mainly because I feared for him. I was worried about AIDS, I worried about him being rejected, bashed, and in general I thought life would be so much harder for him. My love for him never altered. I only felt I wanted to protect him so much more.

Parent quoted on the Outreach website, <http://www.also.org.au>

### Discussion starters

- Has anyone experienced or do you know of incidents of violence against lesbians and gays? You might share the story with the group.
- Why do you think such violence is so common?
- What do you think should be the priority—changing hostile attitudes or preventing physical violence against gay and lesbian people?
- Some attackers claim they acted because the victim made a homosexual advance towards them. Do you think this should be allowed as a defence to violent crime?
- How do you think you could help reduce the rate of violence against individuals in your community? Would it help heterosexual and homosexual people?

## Homicide: strangers aren't the main problem

Homicide is rare in Australia. In the 2002–2003 period, the murder rate was 1.6 victims per 100,000 people.<sup>19</sup> Despite sensational reports of random murders by strangers, the majority of murders are committed by people known to the victim. Only about 19 per cent of homicides during the 2002–2003 period occurred between strangers.<sup>20</sup> In 2002–2003, nearly 42 per cent of all homicides took place within the family. Half of these were between spouses (current and separated).<sup>21</sup>

For children under one year, death by homicide is by far the most common external cause of death (exceeding motor vehicle accidents, accidental poisoning, falls or drownings). The actual situation may be worse: 20 per cent of deaths for this age group are described as 'sudden death, cause unknown'. Children under the age of 15 make up 10 per cent of all homicide victims. The greatest risk of homicide to children is from members of their own family. Family members were responsible for the death of all child victims (n=29) for 2002–2003. Child victims are most at risk of being harmed by a female family member; 37 per cent of female homicide offenders killed a child under the age of 15 compared with 4 per cent of male homicide offenders.<sup>24a</sup>

Of all homicide incidents recorded in the 2002–2003 financial year, 19 or 6 per cent were murder-suicides. Murder-suicides in 2002–2003 involved three female offenders and sixteen male offenders.

Fifty-one per cent (n=55) of female homicide victims in 2002–2003 were murdered for a domestic motive compared to seventeen per cent of male victims (n=37).<sup>24a</sup>

### **Guns and homicide**

- In 2002–2003, 16 per cent of homicides were committed with a firearm.<sup>22</sup>
- Approximately seven out of ten firearm deaths involved males in 2002–2003.
- From 1991 to 2001, 81 per cent of all male firearm deaths were suicides.<sup>23</sup>
- In 2001, people aged 65 years and over had the highest firearm death rate (4.9 per 100,000).<sup>24</sup>
- In 2003, women were more likely than men to be murdered by someone known to them. Offenders are known to their female victims in almost two-thirds (63 per cent) of murder cases. The offender was a family member in 51 per cent of cases of female victims, whereas for male victims this figure was 18 per cent.<sup>25</sup>

### **Discussion starters**

- Do any of the figures in this section surprise you? How do they compare with the picture of murders you get from TV or films?
- If you want to discuss this further, you might get a weekly TV guide, mark programs likely to involve deadly violence and divide the programs among the group. Those without access to a TV might look for stories in a newspaper. For a week, list how many murders, attempted murders or cases of manslaughter were shown or discussed, the circumstances of the crime, the relationship between victim and offender and the age of those involved. Come back to the group and talk about your conclusions.
- Does the media outlet you looked at give a realistic picture of homicide crimes?

## **6. Violence in the family**

### **Overview**

For many people, their family and home are supportive, loving, enjoyable and safe. But for too many people, especially women, children and the elderly or vulnerable, the family can be a place of real danger. For a long time, ideals of family life, together with a belief that what happened in the family was a private matter, hid the level of violence and abuse. What would have been a crime if it happened outside a pub was kept hidden or justified as okay because it happened in the home. In the 2002 Crime and Safety Survey (ABS, 2003), family violence accounted for 20.8 per cent of recent incidents of assault. All Australian states and territories now recognise violence within the home as a crime.

The term 'family violence' is sometimes used to make clear that violence by one partner against another (usually called domestic violence) is not the only kind of violence in families, although it is the most common form. Violence and intimidation by adolescents towards their parents, or by family members against an older relative, or by adults towards children, are also part of the picture. This module uses domestic violence to refer to violence by one partner against another, and specifically names other kinds of violence within families, like elder abuse, child abuse and parental abuse.

## Domestic violence

### What counts as domestic violence?

Domestic violence is more than physical abuse. It's any behaviour adopted by a person to control their partner which results in:

- physical and/or psychological damage
- forced isolation or economic deprivation and/or exploitation
- a person living in fear, disempowered and/or questioning their worth.

Family or domestic violence is defined slightly differently in different states and territories. The Crimes Act (Victoria) provides a fairly typical definition. Family/domestic violence is violence and abuse perpetrated by:

- a partner in a marriage or marriage-like relationship (husband/wife, de facto, boyfriend/girlfriend)
- an ex-partner
- a person who has been, or is, a relative
- a person who is living with or has lived ordinarily in the same household (not a boarder or tenant)
- a person who is, or has been, in an intimate relationship with the victim.

### Activity

- Get five sheets of butcher's paper and write one of the following at the top of each:  
Physical abuse  
Emotional abuse  
Social abuse  
Economic abuse  
Male power abuse
- Display the sheets around the room. Each person should go to each sheet and write in examples of the behaviour. Allow about 10 minutes for this.
- Take some examples from each sheet. How would this behaviour be treated if it happened in public or in the workplace or some similar situation outside the home?
- At the end of the module, you'll find examples of different kinds of behaviours that constitute domestic violence. How do they compare with your lists?

Below is an article from *The Bulletin* (4 June 2004) which highlights the tragedy of violence on family life.

I might have been 10 years old when my mother first called me urgently in the night. I can summon it now. She is barefoot, wearing a pale nightgown in the bright light of the lounge. She is doubled over and panting, silent, not looking at me or my father. He is

standing over her, close, breathing hard. I can't remember what happened next and I don't know what was expected of me then. Maybe my mother hoped that, with his young daughter as witness, my father would be shamed into stopping the beatings we had been hearing from behind closed doors for a long time.

Hers continued and mine soon began. My younger sisters got it too when they were big enough to get in the way; full-force punching, kicking, abuse and more. My father had a rifle—for no reason I know—and another image that comes is of our grey-and-white kitten dragging itself across the kitchen, crying in distress, its back broken after he took aim and shot it; a clear message, even to young girls. There are flashes of those terrible years but, to tell the truth, I don't remember most of it. I do know that childhood was a dangerous place and that we are lucky to be alive.

The saying goes that what doesn't kill us makes us strong, but that's not true for those from violent homes. Women and children who survive repeated physical and emotional abuse are permanently marked—sometimes dangerously so because a disturbing number of these children grow up to repeat the cycle, as abusive bullies and as sufferers. Many of them, unable to learn how to develop normal relationships—turn to the abnormal, including crime, drugs and self-destructive acts. They are dogged by inadequacy, fear, anger and guilt and I do grieve for what our family could have been had we not lived so long with terror and uncertainty. This story is not meant to invoke shock or pity; most of us face adversity or know people whose lives are blighted by it. It reports the state of the biggest—but least discussed—social problem in Australia today. More prevalent than poverty, more personally devastating than theft or gambling, less treatable than drug addiction, domestic violence has another sinister distinction: endurance. Not all abusers have themselves been abused. Likewise, victims can and do come from happy, non-violent homes, but the odds of copy-cat behaviour soar if there is violence between parents. Because children learn from their closest role models, it means this silent epidemic jumps from generation to generation almost as surely as a blood type or blue eyes.

National Stop Domestic Violence Day came and went near the end of April, virtually unremarked. It's much the same every year. Yet consider this: one in four women in a relationship or marriage has or will be physically attacked by a partner. That's conservative because many don't report it. If we also consider that more than 60 per cent of women who admit to having a violent partner have children in their care, the number of Australians living in fear and at risk of injury, even death, explodes.

No one talks about this one. It's a big, ugly secret. Men might confess to being problem gamblers or join Alcoholics Anonymous, but they risk revulsion if they admit that they beat up their wives and kids. Their victims stay silent, fearing judgement and shame. The pity of this is, as psychologist Terry Melvin, of the men's relationship help service Men's Line, observes: 'Secrecy breeds violence'.

Domestic violence crosses class, income groups and race. My parents, for example, were educated, Anglo-Saxon adults living in suburban Sydney. Our mother had been a country girl and a scholarship student of Sydney Girls' High. She was a dress cutter and pattern-maker but at times worked three jobs because, in a household of seven, money was tight. She made sure her children were immaculate and our obedience and good manners were the talk of the neighbourhood. We were good little girls. Our handsome father was a singer with a fine voice, and he was a great dancer too. He told terrific jokes, some of which I can still recite, and he loved us as babies, changing our nappies and soothing us at night.

A tool mechanic, he was popular locally and with workmates and superiors. One night, we kids watched as a delegation of them turned up on the doorstep of our semi-detached after our father had quit as head of a production line. They gave our mother gifts, imploring her to convince him to stay in the job. We were in awe. By that time we couldn't believe they were talking about the same man we faced in battle those many nights with the ironing board between us as a wretched defence.

Our mother's plight was and is widespread. It happens to tens of thousands of women every year, with about half suffering repeat attacks. Of women who have been married or in a de facto relationship, 23 per cent have experienced physical violence from a male partner, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Women's Safety Survey of 1996. National statistics are sparse but in a 1998 ABS survey 114,500 women admitted to being assaulted by a partner, ex-partner or family member in the previous 12 months—and almost a third were assaulted three or more times.

Men also suffer relationship violence and it's not uncommon among same-sex couples but this is a crime overwhelmingly committed by men upon women. In Victoria in 1998–99, there were 21,817 applications for intervention orders with 77 per cent of victims women and 89 per cent of men the perpetrators. Meanwhile, in NSW in 2001–02, 18,444 calls were made to the Domestic Violence line. In fact, most sufferers don't tell or don't act for a long time. The best guess says that less than 20 per cent of victims go to the police and less than 5 per cent contact a crisis centre.

The statistics mean that—at work today, on the train tonight, at the supermarket, a concert or at playgroup—you will be seeing women who are afraid to be in their own homes. They won't necessarily get a hiding tonight but they never know. And it won't necessarily be a hiding. It might be intimidation, emotional abuse, economic deprivation, sexual assault or stalking. It could be rages: throwing things and breaking furniture. It is often constant, belittling criticism of looks, domestic skills or intelligence, which is as corrosive to self-esteem as beating: tell a person they're stupid often enough and they can come to believe it.

It might be acts of spite. One of our father's favourites was to take the meal our mother left for him on the stove after all had gone to bed, then tip it into her favourite shopping basket, where she'd find it congealing in the morning. Typically, abuse escalates, beginning with threats and moving through to assault, which can—and in about 65 cases a year does—end in murder.

There is a simple answer to why abusers do it, and it isn't drink, or money worries, or uncontrollable anger. It is power. The reasons women tolerate it are more complex but start with their perceived responsibility to make relationships work, and range to inertia after self-esteem and resolve have been broken by years of abuse.

As a young policewoman, Christine Nixon—now chief commissioner of the Victoria Police—became interested in domestic violence after other female officers made it known they were being beaten by their husbands. Nixon was baffled because these women were professionally trained to defuse the very domestic blow-ups to which they were succumbing. And these women had guns. If they couldn't handle their plight, what hope was there for other women in similar situations?

Nixon estimates that more than 25 per cent of her force's resources are spent dealing with domestic violence, a problem that elsewhere in society is barely acknowledged to exist. 'If research we have which says 80 per cent of this is not reported, you can well imagine what we'd be doing if it was,' she observes. Nearly 22,000 reports of

relationship violence incidents in the Melbourne metropolitan area alone were submitted by police in the year to June 2001 and officers acknowledge it might have taken years for victims to get the courage to call.

Nixon despairs at the lack of knowledge of this crime and how to confront it. 'If you look at the research we put into cancer in this country, there'd be maybe thousands [of people] doing it. There'd be 10—if there were 10—researching domestic violence: the causes, solutions and what's best-practice. Yet it's so widespread and it has such an impact on so many people's lives.'

How can you tell if it's happening to someone you know? Most often you can't. If you were looking, you might expect bruises or a black eye but most perpetrators are calculating. 'Many of the injuries are not visible; batterers make sure of it,' Nixon says. 'They beat on the back of the head, for example—so you can't see the bruising—or where there'll be clothing'. (Batterers don't only punch. A friend of mine had her ribs broken in a calculated and vicious bear-hug—an injury she had dismissed to me and others, including her GP, as the result of a boating accident. When, in tears, she privately confided the truth, I told her what was happening to her was wrong. 'I provoke him,' she replied.)

The experts tell us to think about the friend who is frequently breaking appointments or the workmate who is late or off sick regularly; the one who's usually quite bubbly who seems withdrawn. Her work's fallen off suddenly. There may be odd clothing—a polo-neck on hot days. She might be always short of money. She's on the phone a lot. She almost never goes to functions outside work.

It may take her a long time to talk to someone about what is happening and if it happens to be you she tells then Rosemary Calder has some advice. Speaking earlier this year as first assistant secretary of the Office of the Status of Women (she has since stepped down), Calder told the Breaking Point conference on domestic violence: 'When women do speak about domestic violence—often at a point of crisis, when the situation has become unbearable—the response of the person they confide in is absolutely crucial. A supportive response will reassure women that their distress is real and their call for help justified. It will validate the woman's own perception of what has occurred, provide her with information on her options, and encourage her to take action when she is ready. A dismissive response, or one that suggests she is responsible for the abuse—or for reducing the abuse—may mean that she suffers in silence for many more years.'

So might the children. Child abuse is up to 15 times more likely in families where domestic violence is occurring, and children suffer terribly, even if they're not being hit. For children to witness violence between parents is considerably more traumatic than for them to experience the break-up of the parents.

Josie Jackson's five children weren't beaten by their father but she copped it regularly and, although she tried to hide it, they knew. She was being the best mother she knew how to be, but she was wrestling with a terrible role-model. An only child, Jackson had been belted regularly by her single mother. She thought her given name was 'bastard' right up until she went to school because it was all she'd ever answered to. As a young woman, she met a man at a dance. 'He was lively. He seemed to be kind and you could laugh with him,' she says, so she married him quickly to escape that home.

Instead, he moved in with Josie and her mother and six weeks later Jackson had her first black eye. He said it was because she'd spent too much money on necessities and from then on it was her fault every time. 'I always finished up apologising. It was funny; I

used to be frightened he would leave me and I would be on my own.’ She had nowhere to go, anyway.

Jackson used to lie in bed, thinking of ways to kill him but there were the children. ‘What would they do if I killed their father and I’m in jail?’ After decades of violence Jackson went to a solicitor [and] then threw her husband out but, by then, two of her children were lost to her. They never forgave Jackson for keeping them in the household and haven’t spoken with her for more than a decade. ‘I don’t feel it’s my problem any more,’ she says with sadness. ‘I thought I was being a good mother and if I wasn’t, well, bugger it, I can’t change it now.’

There are many myths about domestic violence and Jackson lived one of them.

*She asks for it.*

You’ll hear this from abusers seeking to justify beatings as ‘punishment’—the woman or child has brought it on themselves. Many believe this fallacy, including victims. If kids are involved, a common reason a woman might appear to submit is that she believes she is protecting them by taking the blows. Otherwise, blame-shifting is a common characteristic. ‘I warned you ...’ was a favourite of my father’s before he’d lay in, and this is the point: violence happens at the perpetrator’s whim and no one else’s. The victim is almost always doing everything they can to avoid another beating. Consulting psychologist Dr Judith Paphazy remembers a woman being ‘belted half to death’ by her husband because the creases in his underpants were not as he stipulated. ‘She can never know all the things she would have been warned about,’ says Paphazy. ‘It could be that she’d put the fork in the wrong position. It will be an infinite list no one could master.’

*It only happens when he’s drinking.*

Drink is also used by men as an excuse and this is widely accepted by society. It’s true that violence can escalate dramatically when alcohol is involved. A study of men with a predisposition to violence, released earlier this year by the University of Buffalo’s Research Institute on Addictions, showed the odds of aggression were eight times higher on days when the men drank than on days they didn’t, and the chances of severe physical aggression on drinking days were more than 11 times higher. Nixon observes: ‘It’s a trigger, in the sense that it allows men to behave without restraint on their behaviour and emotions.’ Let me suggest that some men want to pull that trigger. They don’t beat because they’ve been drinking—they drink in order to beat—but if drink is no excuse for causing a car accident, why should it be for a battering?

*He’s just got a problem controlling his temper.*

Another common belief, yet women report being in the middle of a beating when their abuser has answered the phone or the door and suddenly switched on the charm. Nixon for one scoffs at the excuse. ‘When I walked in the door [as a police officer] with a gun on my hip they seemed to be able to control themselves.’ Also, the calculated pattern of many beatings—neck to knee, for example—suggests the aggressor is well in control of himself. He will usually apologise, promise it will never happen again but he’s most often lying, even to himself. It is why experts counsel that women react immediately to that very first beating: call the police; break off the relationship, for example. If the first beating is forgiven, odds are that it will happen again. Remorse is no proof the perpetrator has managed to control his problem. Often he doesn’t want to; he fears surrendering power.

*It's only a problem in some communities.*

Experts universally disagree and research backs them up. It's across society. Ask actor Judy Davis, who, to the delight of the tabloid headline writers ('Punch and Judy!'), took out an apprehended violence order against her husband, actor Colin Friels, late last year. Or Greta Moran, who, on ABC television's Australian Story recently, described her multi-millionaire husband Doug as 'quite violent at times', a claim he denies. Last month former world champion cyclist Stephen Pate was jailed for multiple assault and threatening to kill his wife, once running a knife along her neck. Says Nixon: 'The people accused of family violence come from across the boundaries. They can be judges, and I've seen them, lawyers, and I've seen them, doctors and politicians and radio commentators.' The ABS Women's Safety Survey noted that of women who had experienced violence in the previous 12 months, 52 per cent had post-school qualifications and 61 per cent had jobs. There are frightening statistics, however, for Aboriginal women, who are 45 times more likely to be a victim of domestic violence than non-Aborigines.

*It's none of our business.*

Nixon acknowledges that the police were among those who used to treat domestic violence largely as a private, family matter. Many in society still do; they're reluctant to 'interfere'. The fact is that assault is against the law. If called to an [incident] of obvious domestic violence, police must treat it as the crime it is. In situations less obvious, but where there is evidence of crisis, police seek to have information available so that the woman knows her options. Where the vulnerable of society are concerned, surely domestic violence is everyone's business and if more did 'interfere' there would be less of it. 'People get away with domestic violence because they can,' Nixon says.

*She can walk out; why doesn't she?*

The most widely asked question of all. Nearly 80 per cent of the population doesn't understand why women don't just leave the abuser, according to an OSW [Office of the Status of Women] survey. First, sufferers are terrified the violence will get worse, and with reason. Women are at greatly increased risk when they try to break away. Nearly half the murders of women victims of domestic violence happen after the woman has left or is in the process of going. Also, as mentioned, typical sufferers have become incapacitated—with no confidence and usually no means—after years of abusive treatment. Often that's right where their partners want them.

Even then, they may be trying. The traditional view of victims is that they passively accept abuse and violence. Yet, according to a 1998 study for the OSW, 72 per cent of women experiencing physical assault eventually do speak about the violence to family, friends, neighbours, work colleagues and other non-professionals. A major drawback is that friends and relatives are frequently ill-equipped to advise or help.

The biggest deterrent to confession is fear for their safety and that of their children. In addition, many sufferers blame themselves for the violence and so fear a judgemental response, or that the person they tell might push them into leaving before they feel ready. They may still be emotionally attached. They fear for their jobs—job-loss rates for sufferers are high—and subsequent economic hardship.

For Philippa, an academic high-achiever and sales executive (she withholds her surname for fear of repercussions for her children), the only adult left in her life who made her feel valued was her boss. Keeping her job—despite being almost unable to work during

the long nadir of her abusive relationship—helped her to replenish self-esteem and survive financially as she worked to free herself of her partner.

Philippa was a forceful and articulate presenter at the Breaking Point conference, but her voice shook as she asked delegates to imagine her life of just three years ago: ‘Picture me being punched repeatedly in the head or hit across the mouth so that my teeth were chipped ... being cornered in a bathroom with a samurai sword held three centimetres from my bare stomach ... and in the front hallway being head-butted in the face, pushed into the wall and onto the floor with my sons crying and pleading “Please, don’t hurt mama”’.

‘How did it happen to me? How does it happen to any woman? It does not happen because we are stupid and it does not happen because we are weak ... And please don’t think that violence occurs on the first date and we go back for more.’

Philippa had left her partner twice before, as she later told *The Bulletin*, but was coaxed back in the first instance because she was relying on him physically following an accident and, in the second, because he was remorseful and appeared to have changed. In a new suburb, away from her family, she had no support network and was emotionally frail. When she again gathered the courage to go, as she feared, there was ‘a particularly terrifying and violent episode that necessitated the help of the police and the beginning of many visits to police stations and the magistrates court to ensure my safety and that of my children’.

At this point, she was forced to confess her situation to her boss. ‘Thankfully, he did not judge me. He showed compassion and concern, allowing me to take time off to attend court or simply to have a break. For a working woman in a violent relationship, the workplace may be her only safe haven and therefore an understanding employer can play a big role in helping her and her children survive.’ It also offers a forum for discussion, she believes, so reducing the shame factor. ‘Silence is the perpetrator’s strongest ally,’ she adds.

Jim Toohey, CEO of Queensland-based private aged-care provider TriCare, which employs about 1,500 staff—of whom 90 per cent are women—was prodded five years ago to raise the subject at a staff forum. No one had much to say but immediately after, via mail and telephone, came a flood of woe as employees reported workmates regularly turning up ‘with bruises, black eyes, split lips or who lived under a regime of emotional or financial abuse’.

‘It was like a bombshell,’ he told the Breaking Point conference. ‘We were stirred quite honestly by the shame of our ignorance of a problem which had existed under our noses for so long ... If an illness in the workplace was as prevalent or as devastating as domestic abuse, few employers would have any compunction about paying for vaccinations or medical screenings.’

TriCare’s subsequent initiatives to make workplaces safer include access to telephones, medicos and counsellors during paid work time because the company discovered that victims cannot access these outside work due to fear of discovery by their attackers. Workplaces also have strategies to cover for victims because ‘the level of scrutiny on some of these people is phenomenal’, Toohey says.

A current initiative of welfare agencies, the OSW and police is to address domestic violence via employers. The federal government estimates that domestic violence costs employers \$1.5 bn a year in direct costs and lost productivity. There are also workplace

safety obligations involved where perpetrators seek out their victims at work, endangering co-workers.

Cost to business is one consideration. The economic waves spread through society via policing, the courts and jails. There are also considerable imposts on mental and physical health systems associated with domestic violence. It is a major cause of homelessness, particularly for youth, also drug abuse and the petty crime that underpins drug use. These issues aside, there is the moral obligation we bear to help protect our fellow citizens, particularly the vulnerable. None of us deserves to live with violence and cruelty. Not one of us deserves to live in fear.

The barefoot woman in the pale night-gown, our brave and gentle mother, did eventually achieve some peace, but it got worse for all in between and, as it escalated, a sibling ran away, only to be delivered back into that violent home by police. She copped a truly terrible beating. Seeking to fight back and help to protect us, I took judo lessons at the YWCA as a young teenager. They were useless in the face of a raging 75 kg man.

In retrospect, it probably didn't help that he wasn't wearing the uniform and wouldn't adopt the stance. Later, I accompanied our mother to court but not even the eventual intervention order stopped him. Finally, a visiting aunt spotted the dangerous deterioration in our mother and the household and took her out of the country for a period, giving her breathing space to recoup and regain her perspective.

By then we daughters—those little girls behind the ironing board who once plotted to kill their father with crushed-up aspirin—had grown too big, too sullen to keep subdued.

Eventually, our father quit the silent, angry house and we never saw him again. When news of his death reached us long ago there was no grief—only incomprehension. He left us legacies that can't be seen. Echoes of inadequacy and regret still reverberate in jobs, relationships and lives.

There was an unexpected consequence. Writing, my childhood sanctuary, became a vocation and it's fitting irony that I use it to report the predicament of the tens of thousands of women and children who live lives like we did. They, like we, are not to blame for their predicament. Their abusers are.

Yet shame among victims is so profound that—despite the many women *The Bulletin* spoke with for this article—almost none would talk for attribution. If their plight moves you, stick this article up at work or playschool. Send a donation to services such as Relationships Australia or Men's Line. Circle the statistics and send it off to your local federal member and to Amanda Vanstone, the then federal Minister for Family and Community Services, so it climbs higher in the political conscience. Above all, talk about it.

Because if the silence is allowed to continue, then the big ugly secret endures.

*The Bulletin*, 4 June 2003

### Exploring your views on domestic violence

#### Activity

- Each member of the group should go through the following questions on their own, indicating whether they agree, disagree or are not sure and

think it depends on the situation. Then discuss your responses as a group. Did people have common views or were there significant differences? Compare the group’s responses with those in the *Additional Resources* section at the end of the module. Were there any surprises?

statement	Agree / reasonable	Disagree / nonsense	Not sure / depends on circumstances
Domestic violence isn't very common.			
Domestic violence is more of a problem in lower class or lower income families.			
Domestic violence occurs more in some ethnic groups than others.			
Most people who commit domestic violence are poorly educated with limited social skills.			
Alcohol is the main cause of domestic violence.			
She must have done something to provoke the violence.			
She must enjoy it or be weak or stupid if she doesn't leave.			
Some men have a volatile temper and can't control their violence.			
He can't be involved with domestic violence. He's such a respectable person at work and with friends.			
He is such a loving partner—he couldn't be a perpetrator.			
He's shown he regrets his actions			

and is very sorry. He's obviously changed.			
It's better to keep a family together when domestic violence is being addressed.			

**Domestic violence: Who does it?**

Not all but most perpetrators of domestic violence are male. This figure is the same in Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom. Because almost all domestic violence is perpetrated by men, this kit refers to the perpetrator as a man and the victim/survivor as a woman. It is true that in some cases the perpetrator is female. But to refer to perpetrators and victim/survivors as being either male or female hides the fact that almost all perpetrators are men and almost all victim/survivors are women.

**How big is the problem?**

The *Women's Safety Australia* survey, published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 1996, found that in the previous 12 months:


- 7.1 per cent (490,400) of all women in Australia aged 18 and over reported that they had experienced violence.<sup>26</sup>
- Women were nearly four times more likely to experience violence by a man than by a woman.<sup>27</sup>
- 8 per cent (345,400) of women who were married or in a de facto relationship reported an incident of violence at some time during their current relationship; 2.6 per cent (111,000) experienced an incident of violence by their partner in the previous 12-month period.<sup>28</sup>
- Of those women who experienced violence from a previous partner (having been pregnant at some time during the relationship), 42 per cent (292,100) reported that violence occurred during pregnancy; 20 per cent said they experienced violence for the first time during pregnancy.<sup>29</sup>
- 68 per cent (682,200) of women who experienced violence from a previous partner had children in their care at some time during the relationship. 46 per cent (461,200) said the children had witnessed the violence.<sup>30</sup>

**Discussion starter**

- Conflict and argument are part of many relationships. But for most partners this doesn't result in violence. Why do you think violence occurs in some relationships?

**The cycle of violence**

Researchers and domestic violence workers have found that there is a cycle or pattern of violence in many abusive relationships. That said, the cycle may vary and, for some, abuse can come without warning. The cycle also says nothing about the dynamics of the relationship, the woman's reactions to abuse or the social context in which violence occurs.

 Cycle of violence**Discussion starters**

- What's your response to the material in this section? Have you seen evidence of such a cycle of violence?
- Break into smaller groups and talk about why you think some women stay in an abusive relationship.
- How can we help reduce violence against women? Brainstorm some ideas, starting with what you as an individual could do, within your family, school, workplace, sports club, among your friends, etc. Note down the main points so everyone can see them, then rank them in order of importance, urgency and feasibility.
- What would it take for people to act on the priorities you identified?

**Effects of domestic violence on children**

Family and social pressures or a woman's beliefs or concerns about not upsetting the children may tell her that it is better to keep the family together and try to address the problems of domestic violence. But what impact does violence within a family have on children?

Up to 90 per cent of children in violent homes witness the abuse. Those who don't witness the abuse directly usually know it is occurring. Children can be severely traumatised by witnessing family violence, and many children suffer direct physical abuse themselves. Also, exposure to violence in childhood can influence adult attitudes.

**Messages**

Children who live in violent situations can learn that:

- Violence is the best way to gain control over someone.
- You don't have to respect females.
- It's okay to use physical force to get what you want.
- The world is an unsafe place.
- Adults do not protect children.

- It's acceptable to hurt someone you love.
- It's okay to be hurt or controlled by your partner.

#### Discussion starter

- Do you think any of these are valuable messages for kids?  
Which ones, and why?

#### Other impacts

Parental violence can have a range of physical and emotional effects on children:

physical injury	withdrawn and quiet	attention seeking behaviour
low self-esteem	poor health	wanting to please
bedwetting	eating disorders	running away from home
nightmares, restlessness	alcohol/drug abuse	aggression and acting out violent behaviour and language
depression	stealing/lying	
anger	lack of trust	
fear and anxiety	poor school results or non- attendance	

A recent US study indicated that pre-school children who were exposed to parental violence had many more behavioural problems, responded less appropriately to situations, were more aggressive with peers, and had more uncertain relationships with their caregivers than those from non-violent families. Emotional abuse of the mother, and the mother's self-esteem, were the most significant predictors of the child's adjustment and social behaviour. There is also evidence that children who witness violence are more likely to use or experience violence in their own relationships.

#### Discussion starters

How should we deal with domestic violence? The questions explore some issues and controversies. You might split into small groups so it's easier for people to have a say.

- If you believed, or suspected, that a friend or close colleague was experiencing violence in his or her family, what would you do? Go round the group with everyone having an opportunity to express their view. Allow time to discuss responses.
- Governments and community organisations have to set priorities. What do you think they should focus their action on and why:  
helping survivors?  
punishing/charging offenders?  
educating young people?  
addressing social inequalities?  
or something else altogether?
- Do you think abusive behaviour is ever excusable?

#### Partnerships Against Domestic Violence

A range of programs and campaigns have sought to address domestic violence over the past 20 years. While there have been some successes, and violence against women is now recognised as a

major social issue, domestic violence remains high and the home is still an unsafe place for many Australians. This section looks at one current approach.

Partnerships Against Domestic Violence is a program that involves the Australian Government and the states and territories working together to tackle domestic violence. Funding of more than \$50 million will be provided over four years, in addition to expenditure of more than \$226 million each year dealing directly with domestic violence.

### **Statement of principles agreed by Heads of Government**

At the National Domestic Violence Summit in 1997, heads of government issued a statement of principles on which the Partnerships program would be based. The principles reflect ...

‘... the combined policy and practice experience of governments, services, police, judiciary, researchers and community ... over the last two decades: ...

- All individuals have the right to be free from violence.
- All forms of domestic violence are unacceptable in any group, culture and creed.
- Many forms of domestic violence are against the law. Acts of domestic violence that constitute a criminal offence must be dealt with as such.
- The safety and wellbeing of those subjected to domestic violence must be the first priority of any response.
- Those who commit domestic violence must be held accountable for their behaviour.
- The community has a responsibility to work toward the prevention of domestic violence and to demonstrate the unacceptability of all forms of domestic violence.’

### **Discussion starters**

- What’s the group’s view of the position taken by the Australian Government, state and territory leaders on domestic violence?
- Do you think government leadership matters on an issue like this? What role do you think governments play in encouraging changes in attitude and behaviour?
- Do you think public education campaigns work for an issue like domestic violence?
- If you took the statement of principles by government leaders and talked about its main ideas with people you mix with, how do you think they would react?

### **Child abuse**

Reminder: all states and territories have legislation that requires certain professionals and service providers to report disclosures or reasonable suspicions of child abuse. Those covered include doctors, nurses, teachers, police and social workers.

Every year in Australia, thousands of children suffer physically, psychologically and sexually from acts of violence against them in the home. Growing awareness of the extent and impact of child abuse has increased understanding of the importance of prevention. It has also increased reporting rates.

Child abuse is a significant problem. In 2002–2003, 198,355 child protection notifications were issued and 40,416 cases were substantiated. In 2002–2003, New South Wales recorded 16,765 substantiated reports of child abuse or neglect. Emotional and physical abuse comprised the most substantiated matters 33 per cent and 32 per cent respectively, then neglect (19 per cent) and sexual

abuse (14 per cent).<sup>39</sup>

Only some abuse and neglect comes to the attention of the criminal justice system, as the following points explain.

- While the most common crimes against children are physical abuse and neglect, what gets reported and ultimately reaches court is most likely to involve child sexual abuse.
- There are often no witnesses and no obvious physical evidence.
- Mortal or life-threatening physical assaults on children commonly involve babies that are not yet talking, or murder-suicide. In such circumstances, it can be hard to identify the offender, or there is no-one to charge.
- It can be difficult to draw a line between less severe physical assaults and 'reasonable' discipline.
- The perpetrators of crimes against children or young people are usually well known to them, often members of the immediate family or within a circle of family friends and acquaintances.
- Over two-thirds of disclosures of crime against children and young people relate to offences against females.
- Commissions of inquiry over the past 10 years have shown that the impact of abuse may be increased by inadequate responses from child protection authorities or by a criminal justice system that is intimidating and confusing.

#### **Who is at risk?**

If a child has a parent who is:

- drug or alcohol addicted
- suffering a mental illness
- intellectually disabled
- a victim of childhood abuse him/herself,

that child is at high risk of being the subject of a notification of abuse or neglect before the age of eight. It is usually a combination of factors that creates risk. Other risk factors include:

- a young mother
- lack of parenting knowledge
- economic disadvantage
- lack of social support
- insecure attachment of the child to its mother
- previous record of child abuse in the family.

Research also links domestic violence and child abuse, through children witnessing their parents' violence, or by children being more vulnerable to direct violence from parents, siblings or other relatives in a family weakened by parental violence.

#### **Links between violence or neglect and later offending**

There is a growing body of evidence that suggests that different types of violence may occur simultaneously in the same family, and that the presence of one form of violence may be a strong predictor of the other... to adequately prevent family violence requires a shift in policy and practice to ensure that the 'totality of violence' present in families is addressed. Specifically recommended are greater cross-sectoral acknowledgment of the various forms of family violence, and the development of an overarching National Framework and a National Roundtable of Violence Prevention, encompassing the prevention of all violence.

Adam M Tomison Exploring family violence: links between child maltreatment and domestic violence *Issues in Child Abuse Prevention Number 13 Winter 2000*

### **Discussion starters**

- Some people believe that access to both parents is important for children and young people and should be maintained, even when there has been domestic violence. Some women experiencing violence stay because they think it is important to keep the family together. Some cultures and religions also believe this. What's the view of the group?
- Do you think child abuse should mainly be dealt with as a criminal or a welfare issue?
- What is the group's view of mandatory reporting of child abuse?
- Children dressed up to look sexy are increasingly used in advertising. What are your views about this? Should or can anything be done?
- How can we get the balance right between protecting children and respecting different approaches to parenting?

### **Parental abuse**

A large number of adolescents abuse or are violent towards their parents, particularly their mothers. The problem is not talked about as often as other kinds of violence in families, perhaps because parents feel embarrassed, think they will be seen as bad parents, or blame themselves for failing to bring their children up properly.

Stories range from a 17-year-old who kept his mother hostage with a speargun because he wanted the rent money, to a 14-year-old who burnt the kitchen because her mother wouldn't let her out. Dealing with such violence can be difficult. Many women find it hard to leave violent partners. It can be just as hard to 'leave' a violent child in a society where parents have the primary responsibility for care of children.

### **Discussion starters**

- Do you know of situations where children have been violent or verbally abusive towards their parents or other adults responsible for their care?
- Where do you think young people learn that violence and intimidation are accepted ways to get what they want: films, TV, sport, business people, politicians, school or elsewhere?

### **Elder abuse**

Our population is ageing. As it does, elder abuse is growing. Elder abuse involves actions or omissions (like neglect) that result in physical or emotional injury of an older person (usually defined as 60 or over) or their financial exploitation, including misusing assets.

For more and more families, caring for older family members is a part of life. Availability of services and their cost can mean that families bear much of the load of caring for an elderly person. Full-time care can be stressful, particularly when the elder is physically or mentally impaired or the care-giver doesn't have enough support.

Most elder abuse victims are women. This is not surprising given that women live longer than men and that they are the main victims of violence in families. Abusers are more varied. They may be spouses, adult children or close friends. In families where there is a pattern of violence, that behavior will often continue through the generations. Sometimes elder abuse continues years of domestic

violence. Sometimes roles are reversed: a woman who has been abused finds the perpetrator dependent on her and retaliates.

#### What is elder abuse?

Elder abuse is any act occurring within a relationship where there is an implication of trust, which results in harm to an older person. Abuse can include physical, sexual, financial, psychological, social and/or neglect. Harmful actions by strangers are usually not considered elder abuse.

#### Who are the victims of elder abuse?

Although elders who have mental or physical disabilities are at the greatest risk, elder abuse can happen to anyone. More women than men live to be elders, but both sexes are equally at risk. Some older adults are abused by their spouses or by their children, others by caregivers in institutions. As with other types of abuse, those who abuse elders usually keep the victim socially isolated.

#### What types of elder abuse occur?

There are two categories of elder abuse:

- Domestic Elder Abuse: maltreatment of an older person by someone who has a special relationship with the elder (spouse, sibling, child, friend, caregiver)
- Institutional Elder Abuse: maltreatment of an older person that occurs in residential facilities for older persons (nursing homes, group homes, board and care facilities)

There are six types of elder abuse:

- **Financial or Material Exploitation:** the illegal or improper use of an elderly person's funds, property or assets
  - withholding money from the elder. The unauthorised cashing of an elderly person's cheque
  - forcing an elderly person to sell personal property
  - stealing an older person's money or possessions
  - misusing Power of Attorney
- **Emotional/Psychological:** the infliction of anguish, pain or distress through verbal or non-verbal acts
  - humiliating, insulting, name calling or threatening
  - treating an elderly person like a child
- **Neglect:** the refusal or failure to fulfill any part of a person's obligations or duties to an elderly person; failure to provide necessary care
  - withholding food, medical attention and other necessities of life
  - leaving an older person in an unsafe or isolated place
- **Physical:** use of physical force that may result in bodily injury, physical pain or impairment
  - physically assault an older person by punching, slapping, shoving etc
  - forced confinement in a room, bed or chair
  - overmedication
  - isolation
- **Sexual:** non-consensual sexual contact of any kind with an elderly person
  - unwanted sexual discussion
  - sexual molestation
  - unwanted touching
  - rape
- **Self-Neglect:** behaviour of an elderly person that threatens their own safety or health
  - refusal to provide themselves with adequate food, water, clothing, shelter
  - refusing medication

**Discussion starters**

- Has anyone in the group had any experience of elder abuse? If you feel comfortable, you might talk generally about the circumstances.
- Do you think reducing domestic violence might help reduce some kinds of elder abuse?
- Many families find themselves playing a greater role in the care of older relatives, often while caring for children and doing paid work as well. Do you think access to support services in your area is sufficient?

**Wind-up**

The last part of each learning circle session is an opportunity to reflect on what has been learned, evaluate how the session has gone, and allocate any tasks the group agrees need to be done before the next session. You could sum up your discussion under these headings:

**Difficult points**

- Are there any areas where you need more information? You might like to invite a guest speaker or find more information from an expert group or government department. Don't forget local libraries, community groups and the Internet.
- Summarise those areas where you have agreed to disagree. Minority views are valid.

**Decisions**

- Is there anything that the whole group has decided about your discussion?
- Is there anything you would like to do differently next time?
- Did you achieve what you had hoped?
- Is there any other action you want to take? This might include contacting your local council or politicians, sharing a meal or watching a video.

**Finally**

- Remember to collect articles for your media file.

**Additional Resources**

**1: Quiz - What are my chances of becoming a victim of violence?**

How likely am I to be the victim of an assault?	The 2003 ABS Recorded Crime—Victims publication found about 798 in 100,000 people were victims of assault in 2003. Men were 57 per cent of assault victims in 2003.
Is the offender likely to be a stranger or someone I know?	Most victims were assaulted by someone they knew, (58 per cent). Almost half of these victims (26 per cent) were assaulted by a partner, ex-partner or other family member.
How much assault and sexual assault is actually reported?	Only 31 per cent of assault victims and 20* per cent of sexual assault victims told the police about the most recent incident they had experienced. Common reasons for not telling the police about an assault were that the incident was too trivial and that it was a personal matter. <sup>38</sup>

	*estimate has a relative standard error of between 25% and 50% and should be used with caution.
How likely are women to be the victims of sexual assault?	In 2003, about seven in 1,000 females had been victims of sexual assault.
Is my risk of being a victim of physical violence greater than the risk of property crime?	No. In 2003, offences against the person (murder, attempted murder, manslaughter, driving causing death, assault, sexual assault and kidnapping/abduction) were <i>far less common</i> than offences against property (unlawful entry with intent, motor vehicle theft and other theft). <sup>40</sup>

## 2: What is domestic violence?

### Physical abuse

Physical abuse                      Holding, restraining, pushing, shoving, shaking, punching, slapping, twisting limbs, using weapons, ill-treating or killing the family pets, physical torture and murder. Includes any use of physical force whether it leaves evidence of injury or not.

Sexual abuse                        Forcing or coercing a woman to perform sexual acts against her will, physically attacking the sexual parts of her body, demanding sex, rape, bondage, using objects, treating her as a sexual object.

Object damage                      Throwing crockery, breaking furniture or household goods, damaging doors or walls, destroying treasured possessions.

### Emotional abuse

Threats and intimidation        Making threats, using looks or actions, or speaking in ways that are frightening or threatening.

Put downs                            Using put downs about a woman’s body shape, grooming, intelligence, mothering ability, the way her house looks etc. to erode her self-esteem. Telling her, or making her feel, that she is crazy, useless, worthless etc.

### Social abuse

Isolation                             Constantly criticising and being suspicious of her family and friends, being moody when her friends visit and making them feel uncomfortable about being there. Not allowing her to have or visit her own friends. Particularly for women in rural or remote areas, denying use of the car or telephone.

Smothering                         Controlling what she does, who she talks to, where she goes, keeping in contact to see ‘how she is going’ (when it’s really to check up on what she is doing), insisting on doing everything together so she has no life of her own.

Put downs                            Making hurtful remarks about her in company, or making blatant verbal attacks on her in public.

### Economic abuse

Keeping her financially dependent, preventing her from getting or keeping a job, controlling the money, refusing to involve her in financial decisions, making her ask for money, making her account for money spent, telling her she is a ‘freeloader’, having unrealistic expectations of what she can do with a limited amount of money.

**Male power abuse**

Making all the big decisions. Acting like the master of the house. Treating her like a servant. Intruding on her as a person, ignoring her rights. Expecting her to share all thoughts, feelings, plans, regardless of whether she wants to or not.

Source: *No-one need live in fear*, the Southern Domestic Violence Action Group’s information and resource booklet on domestic violence, 1993.

**3: Domestic violence: some myths and facts**

Myth	Fact
Domestic violence isn’t very common.	Domestic violence is seriously under-reported. It is often identified simply as assault. Research suggests up to one third of the population may be involved at some time in domestic violence situations.
Domestic violence is more of a problem in low income and working class families.	Details of perpetrators’ backgrounds are not routinely collected but studies by the Australian Government’s Office of the Status of Women indicate domestic violence occurs among all income groups, classes, ages and cultures. Women in families on lower incomes are more likely to come in contact with helping agencies for other reasons (for example financial assistance) while middle class women may fear embarrassment and damage to their husband’s career if they seek help. Changing attitudes and awareness have helped more women to come forward.
Domestic violence occurs more in some cultures than others.	Domestic violence occurs in all cultures. Some women may find it more difficult to report violence and seek help, particularly if domestic violence isn’t a crime in their culture of origin. Indigenous women may fear a racist or inadequate response from mainstream services, or fear for their partner’s safety in custody. To be effective, services need to recognise and take account of the circumstances of different groups.
People who commit domestic violence are poorly educated with limited social skills.	Many perpetrators have educational, professional and work-related resources and skills that they use outside the home. They can be doctors, lawyers, politicians or in professions that require people skills.
Alcohol is the main cause of domestic violence.	There is no evidence that alcohol causes violence. Violence occurs without alcohol. But alcohol can reduce control. Many Indigenous communities see alcohol as a significant factor in the rate of domestic violence and have established programs to manage and deal with drinking and violence.
She must have done something to provoke the violence.	People often say nagging or unreasonable behaviour pushed a partner to violence and perpetrators often use this argument to defend their violence. This says the victim/survivor rather than the perpetrator is responsible. There is never an excuse

	for domestic violence.
She must enjoy it or be weak or stupid if she doesn't leave.	Studies of battered women do not support this. But any actors may make it hard for a woman to leave. She may believe fulfilment comes from being a good wife and mother. Her religion may stress keeping the family together. Family/ counsellors may encourage her to stay. She may not believe she has the resources to support her children. Her partner may threaten her or her children if she leaves. Many women are pursued and further abused when they leave.
Some men have a volatile temper and can't control their violence.	The perpetrators of domestic violence often believe this and it enables them to avoid taking responsibility for their violence. Many men are able to control violent tempers once taught appropriate strategies.
He wouldn't commit domestic violence. He's a respectable person at work and with friends.	Only about 20 per cent of perpetrators are violent in other relationships. Most appear reasonable and respectable outside the family, making it hard for partners to disclose the violence and be believed.
He's a loving partner—he couldn't be violent.	Perpetrators may at times be loving, sensitive and playful. It is often this side of them that induces a partner to stay.
He's shown he regrets his actions and is very sorry. He's obviously changed.	Regret and remorse, while they may be genuine, are part of the cycle of domestic violence. They don't mean change. Perpetrators generally have little insight into why they act as they do and believe that by promising to change, they will change. Change takes much more than this.
It's better to keep a family together when domestic violence is being addressed.	Domestic violence can affect family relationships in a range of ways. Sometimes being apart for a while may be the only way to break patterns of violence.

#### 4. Domestic violence crisis lines

**ACT Domestic Violence Crisis Service**

Ph: (02) 6280 0900  
 TTY\*: (02) 6228 1852

**NSW Domestic Violence Line**

Ph: 1800 656 463  
 TTY: 1800 671 442

**Northern Territory Darwin Crisis Line**

Ph: 1800 019 116 (within the NT)  
 Ph: (08) 8981 9227 (outside the NT)  
 No TTY system available

**Kids Chat Line**  
 1800 332 333

**Victoria Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service**

Ph: 1800 015 188 (within VIC)  
 Ph: (03) 9373 0123  
 No TTY system available

**Tasmania Family Violence Response and Referral line**

Ph: 1800 633 937  
 No TTY system available

**South Australia Domestic Violence Help Line**

Ph: 1800 800 098 (within SA)  
 Ph: (08) 8202 5111 (outside SA)  
 TTY: 03 9224 0609

**Western Australia Crisis Care Unit**  
 Ph: 1800 199 008 (within WA)

Ph: (08) 9223 1111 (outside WA)

TTY: (08) 9325 1232

**Queensland Domestic Violence  
Telephone Service**

dvconnect womensline

Ph: 1800 811 811

TTY: 1800 812 225

**Women's Domestic Violence line**

Ph: (08) 9223 1188 or

Ph: 1800 007 339

\* Teletypewriter service available.

Centrelink has produced a booklet about the assistance available for customers in domestic and family violence situations, *Centrelink: Working to assist people experiencing violence*. You can get a copy at any Centrelink office or through the Internet: [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au).

## **5. Centrelink: assistance for older people**

Centrelink will come to the homes of those frail elderly and disabled customers who are unable to access Centrelink offices or Call Centres. Home visits allow for more accurate identification of people who are particularly vulnerable to violence, maltreatment or exploitation.

Centrelink area and customer service officers are in contact with large institutions where significant numbers of Centrelink customers live, such as nursing homes and hospitals. Staff will visit the institutions, giving customers direct access to Centrelink staff in cases where they otherwise may not have been able to contact Centrelink.

Financial information service officers provide information to customers of Centrelink about their financial affairs. In carrying out their responsibilities, financial information service officers are well placed to identify situations of financial exploitation. In such situations, they will refer the customer to a Centrelink social worker.

### **More information**

#### **Domestic violence**

There is a wide range of resource kits dealing with domestic violence. A few are listed here. Your state/territory women's information and referral service will have relevant material or will be able to tell you where you can find what you want.

Australian Government *Young People's Attitudes to Domestic Violence Canberra 2001*  
<http://www.crimeprevention.gov.au>

*Family and Domestic Violence Training Package—Participants Kit*. Developed by the Health Department of Western Australia and available via the Internet:

<http://www.health.wa.gov.au/publications/documents/fdvtrainingparticipantskit.doc>

Comprehensive, covering definitions of family and domestic violence, prevalence, national crime statistics, myths, effects on children and adult survivors, how to identify family and domestic violence, support tools, responding to a disclosure, referral and safety planning and working with an interpreter.

*It's not love—it's violence: an information and resource kit about domestic violence*. Produced by the NSW Women's Refuge Referral & Resource Centre in 1997 for service workers assisting women and children experiencing domestic violence. Comprehensive with a focus on rural areas and includes information about dealing with domestic violence with women from non-English speaking

backgrounds, in lesbian relationships, with Indigenous women and with women with disabilities.  
<http://www.dvas.org.au/public/pubs/publications/notlove.pdf>

*Women with Disabilities and Violence: Information Kit*. Produced by Carolyn Frohmader for Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA), January 1998. Contains a range of articles and contact details. Available from WWDA, PO Box 229, Dickson ACT 2602. Ph (02) 6242 1310, Fax (02) 6242 1314, TTY (02) 6242 1313. <http://www.wwda.org.au>

#### Other domestic violence resources

ACT Community Law Reform Committee, *Domestic violence report*. Part I deals with reform of the criminal justice system and the agencies dealing with domestic violence in that system. Part II is a review of the civil system for securing protection from violence or harassment.  
<http://www.jcs.act.gov.au/eLibrary/lrc/r09/dovind.html>

Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse  
<http://www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au/>

Australian Law Reform Commission 1994, *Equality before the law: justice for women and Equality before the law: women's equality*  
<http://www.alrc.gov.au/inquiries>

Busch, R and Robertson, N 1991, *What's love got to do with it?: an analysis of an intervention approach to domestic violence*

An analysis of one of the earliest and best known perpetrator intervention programs, the Hamilton Abuse Intervention Pilot Project (HAIPP), launched in New Zealand in 1991. [Crime Prevention Unit is now part of the NZ Ministry of Justice <http://www.justice.govt.nz/cpu/index.html>]  
Analysis available at <http://www.waikato.ac.nz/law/wlr/1993/article5-busch.html>

Cashmore, J, Gilmore, L, Goodnow, J, Hayes, A, Homel, R, Lawrence, J, Leech, M, Najman, J, O'Connor, I, Vinson, T and Western, J 2001, *Ending domestic violence?—Programs for perpetrators—full report*

Crime Prevention Division, NSW Attorney General's Department, *Violence Against Women Specialist Unit*, [http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/cpd.nsf/pages/vawsu\\_index](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/cpd.nsf/pages/vawsu_index)

Indermaur, D 2001, *Young Australians and domestic violence*  
<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi195.html>

Indermaur, D, Atkinson, L and Blagg, H 2001, *Working with adolescents to prevent domestic violence: rural town model* Available at <http://www.crimeprevention.gov.au/>

The Australian Government's Office for Women, *Partnerships against domestic violence*  
[http://ofw.facsia.gov.au/womens\\_safety\\_agenda/previous\\_initiatives/padv/](http://ofw.facsia.gov.au/womens_safety_agenda/previous_initiatives/padv/)

Poelina, A and Perdrisat, I 2004, *A report of the Derby/West Kimberley Project: working with adolescents to prevent domestic violence* Available at <http://www.crimeprevention.gov.au/>

Tasmania Department of Health and Human Services, *Youth abuse in relationships*  
<http://www.youthabuse.dhhs.tas.gov.au/index.html>

Western Australian Government, *Freedom from fear: campaign against domestic violence*  
<http://www.freedomfromfear.wa.gov.au/>

**Sexual assault**

Australasian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/index.html>

Cook, B, David, F and Grant, A 2001, *Sexual violence in Australia*

<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/rpp/36/>

Lievore, D 2003, *Non-reporting and hidden recording of sexual assault: an international literature review*

<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/reports/2003-06-review.html>

*Practice and prevention: contemporary issues in adult sexual assault* (2003)

Papers from the New South Wales conference

<http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/cpd.nsf/pages/conferencepapers>

Russo, L 2000, *Date rape: a hidden crime*

<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi157.html>

South Australia Attorney-General's Department, Crime Prevention Unit, *Young people's rape prevention project*

[http://www.cpu.sa.gov.au/sa\\_yprpp.htm](http://www.cpu.sa.gov.au/sa_yprpp.htm)

NSW Council for Intellectual Disability, *Talk About it: a video about sexual assault for people with an intellectual disability*. See <http://www.nswcid.org.au/publications/ltai/> for more information.

*Understanding Sexual Assault*, Women's Health Centre Inc., Brisbane. An audio cassette to inform, support and strengthen women seeking to understand sexual violence.

**Men and violence**

Alles, N 2002, 'Against the grain: young men and anti-violence peer-education programs in schools', paper presented at *The role of schools in crime prevention conference*

<http://www.aic.gov.au/conferences/schools/alles.html>

Cameron, M 2000, *Young men and violence prevention*

<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi154.html>

**Anti-violence teaching materials**

*Bullying. No way! Australian school communities getting to the heart of the matter*

Nationwide project for minimising bullying, harassment and violence in schools. The website has a comprehensive listing of teaching materials and other resources.

<http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/>

Edwards, G, Carr, L, Hudson, M, Harris, R, O'Connell, M and Mathews, C 2001,

*Crime prevention curriculum in South Australian schools: a study of programs, materials and initiatives* <http://www.cpu.sa.gov.au/curriculum/Curriculum%20Report.pdf>

South Australia Attorney-General's Department, Crime Prevention Unit, *School based crime prevention* [http://www.cpu.sa.gov.au/sa\\_sbcpc.htm](http://www.cpu.sa.gov.au/sa_sbcpc.htm)

*The role of schools in crime prevention* (2002)

Papers from the conference organised by the Australian Institute of Criminology in conjunction with

the Department of Education, Employment and Training, Victoria and Crime Prevention Victoria  
<http://www.aic.gov.au/conferences/schools/>

### **Bullying [in schools]**

*Bullying. No way! Australian school communities getting to the heart of the matter*  
<http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/>

Rigby, K 2002, *A meta-evaluation of methods and approaches to reduce bullying in pre-schools and early primary school in Australia*  
Available from <http://www.crimeprevention.gov.au/>

Rigby, K 2003, *Addressing bullying in schools*  
<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi2/tandi259.html>

*Sticks and Stones: Report on Violence in Australian Schools*,  
Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, AGPS, Canberra, 1994.

Student Learning and Support Services Taskforce 2003, *National Safer Schools Framework*  
<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/mctyapdf/natsafeschools.pdf>

Victorian Department of Education and Training, *Addressing bullying behaviour*  
<http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/bullying/>

### **Violence against gays and lesbians**

ACT Government, Department of Justice and Community Safety 2002, *Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in the ACT: an issues paper*  
[http://www.jcs.act.gov.au/eLibrary/papers/same\\_sex\\_%20issues\\_paper.pdf](http://www.jcs.act.gov.au/eLibrary/papers/same_sex_%20issues_paper.pdf)

*Acts of passion: lesbians, gays and the law*  
<http://www.actsofpassion.nsw.gov.au/>

*Lesbian and gay anti-violence project*  
<http://avp.acon.org.au/>

Network of Government Agencies: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Issues 2003,  
*'You shouldn't have to hide to be safe': a report on homophobic hostilities and violence against gay men and lesbians in New South Wales*  
<http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/cpd.nsf/pages/hide2bsafe>

New South Wales Attorney-General's Department, Crime Prevention Division, *Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities*  
[http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/cpd.nsf/pages/glt\\_policy\\_officer](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/cpd.nsf/pages/glt_policy_officer)

New South Wales Attorney-General's Department, Crime Prevention Division and Anti-Discrimination Board 2002, *Skool's out: a report from the Skool's Out forum on homophobic bullying and harassment in and around schools*  
<http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/cpd.nsf/pages/skoolsout>

Tomsen, S 2002, *Hatred, murder and male honour: anti-homosexual homicides in New South Wales, 1980-2000* <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/rpp/43/>

### **Young people**

*Lawstuff* (<http://www.lawstuff.org.au/>) is the National Children's and Youth Law Centre's Internet site. Volunteer lawyers staff the site and give children advice about their legal rights and responsibilities. The service is free and confidential.

*Youth portal: law and justice programmes and services*  
[http://www.youth.gov.au/programmes/law\\_justice.htm](http://www.youth.gov.au/programmes/law_justice.htm)

#### **Child abuse**

*Child sexual abuse: justice response or alternative resolution?* (2003)  
Papers from the conference organised by the Australian Institute of Criminology  
<http://www.aic.gov.au/conferences/2003-abuse/>

James, M 2000, *Child abuse and neglect part II: practical intervention and prevention strategies*  
<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi173.html>

James, M 2000, *Child abuse and neglect part I: redefining the issues*  
<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi146.html>

*National Child Protection Clearinghouse*  
<http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/>

Queensland Crime and Misconduct Commission 2004. Protecting children: an inquiry into the abuse of children in foster care. Brisbane : CMC  
<http://www.cmc.qld.gov.au/library/CMCWEBSITE/ProtectingChildren.pdf>  
summary report is at  
[http://www.cmc.qld.gov.au/library/CMCWEBSITE/ProtectingChildren\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.cmc.qld.gov.au/library/CMCWEBSITE/ProtectingChildren_Summary.pdf)  
[The National Child Protection Clearinghouse links to or lists most of these publications]

#### **Elder abuse**

ACT Office for Ageing, *Elder abuse prevention and assistance*  
<http://www.ageing.act.gov.au/elderabuse/>

Carcach, C, Graycar, A, Muscat, G 2001, *The victimisation of older Australians*  
<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi212.html>

James, M and Graycar, A 2000, *Preventing crime against older Australians*  
<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/rpp/32/>

James, M, Graycar, A and Mayhew, P 2003, *A safe and secure environment for older Australians*  
<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/rpp/51/>

Kinnear, Pamela and Graycar, Adam 1999, 'Abuse of Older People: Crime of Family Dynamics', *Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice*, Australian Institute of Criminology.  
<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi113.html>

*Preventing abuse of older people*  
<http://www.sa.agedrights.asn.au/prevent/>

#### **NOTES**

1 *ABS survey: is your community safe?*, October 1998, released 26 May 1999.

2 Further details on the three-year research project by four US universities are available from the Centre for Communication and Social Policy (University of California, Santa Barbara) Internet site: [www.ccsps.ucsb.edu/ntvs.htm](http://www.ccsps.ucsb.edu/ntvs.htm).

3 A 30-page executive summary of *Computer Games and Australians Today* is available via the Internet in the 'Classification Information' section: [www.oflc.gov.au](http://www.oflc.gov.au). The full study can be purchased from the Office of Film and Literature Classification.

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