



What is family violence?

In Victoria, family violence covers a range of behaviours committed by a person against a family member. All the behaviours aim to control a family member through fear, and include the following:

- Physical abuse, for example pushing or hitting;
- Sexual abuse, including forcing a person to have sex or engage in sexual activity;
- Emotional or psychological abuse, including calling the person by names and controlling their behaviour;
- Intentionally damaging a family member's property;
- Economic abuse. This includes controlling a family member's bank accounts and money without their consent;
- Any other behaviour that causes the family member to feel fear for their safety, the safety of another person or an animal;
- Threatening to do any of the above.

An act of family violence also occurs if a child hears, sees or is around family violence. The law then protects that child as well as the family member who was the victim of the violence.

Who is a family member?

Under family violence law, a family member of the person who commits the act of violence includes the following:

- A spouse or domestic partner;
- A person, and their children, who is or was in an intimate relationship (whether or not it is sexual) with the person who committed the violence;
- A relative;
- A child who lives with the person, or has previously lived with the person on a regular basis;
- Any other person who the person who committed the family violence regards as being like a family member, e.g. a person with a disability and their carer.

If you believe you are the victim of family violence and are a family member, you are protected by the laws of family violence in Victoria. See the *What Can I Do About Family Violence* information sheet to find out what assistance is available to you.

If you are the victim of similar behaviour but are not a family member see the *Personal Safety Intervention Orders* information sheet to find out how a Personal Safety Intervention Order may be able to protect you.

