

Questionnaire

The following questionnaire explores abusive behaviour by males to females in heterosexual relationships because of the clear recognition that most domestic violence occurs by men to women. Abusive behaviour can occur in heterosexual or homosexual relationships and women can act abusively to men and other women in relationships.

Is a man acting abusively if...

Tick the appropriate space.

	Definitely abusive	Maybe abusive	Not abusive
He punches, pushes or scares his partner?	----- -----		
He insults his partner?	----- -----		
He ignores his partner?	----- -----		
He gets really angry over small things?	----- -----		
He refuses to share housework or childcare?	----- -----		
He is jealous or possessive of her?	----- -----		
He doesn't like his partner seeing her family and friends?	----- -----		
He doesn't pay his fair share?	----- -----		
He is disrespectful of her possessions i.e. phone, car etc?	----- -----		
He tells his partner what she can and can't wear?	----- -----		
He calls, messages or inboxes his partner all the time?	----- -----		
He pressures his partner to have sex?	----- -----		

Project definition

Abusive behaviour in relationships is any violence or abuse in a relationship where a person is hurt or treated in ways that they feel unsafe, restricted, put down, or kept under control emotionally, physically, sexually, socially, culturally, spiritually, legally or financially. 87% of reported relationship violence takes place in heterosexual relationships where the man is the perpetrator and the woman is the victim but abusive behaviour can occur in homosexual relationships (10% of reported incidents) and women can act abusively to men (3% of reported incidents) in relationships.

Myths and realities about relationship violence

Myth	Domestic violence doesn't happen very often.
Reality	As many as one in three women in Australia may experience domestic violence sometime in their lives.
Myth	Relationship violence only happens to older women who live with their partners.
Reality	One in eight young women will have been in an abusive relationship before they leave high school.
Myth	If there's no injury, there's no violence.
Reality	There may be no visible injury from physical abuse and abusive relationships may occur without physical assault. Abuse is about maintaining power and control and this may be done in many ways.
Myth	Alcohol and drugs cause domestic violence.
Reality	Violence occurs without alcohol or drugs. Many people use alcohol and drugs without becoming violent. Alcohol and drugs are an excuse and not a cause of domestic violence, but may be a contributing factor.
Myth	If he is sorry it means he has changed.
Reality	Many people feel sorry for hitting their partner after the abuse. These feelings, apologies and promises to change are part of the cycle of violence. This does not mean that he will not do it again.
Myth	People who are violent in relationships need to learn to manage their anger.
Reality	Anger is an emotion felt by everyone and very few people use it as an excuse for violence. People who are violent in relationships are often able to conduct themselves non-violently in public, in the workplace and with other friends.

Myth Violence is a part of culture.

Reality No cultural group is more or less violent than another. Violence is a behaviour which people learn from one another and is unacceptable in any situation or culture.

How it begins and why people stay

Often domestic violence starts with a bit of a shove or a putdown and you may not give it much thought. Things get worse and you don't know what to do because:

- > you think you are to blame for the abuse
- > you think it's to do with your partner being under stress (due to work, school pressure, family etc.)
- > you have dreams and hopes and you don't want the family to split up
- > he's so nice to everyone else, you believe it must be you
- > your friends or family keep saying you are crazy because you put up with it
- > your friends or family don't believe that it is as bad as it is
- > he apologises and says he will never do it again
- > you love your partner
- > you fear loneliness and believe you can't cope on your own
- > you don't think your partner can cope on their own
- > you don't want to separate your children from their father
- > he has good relationships with the children so you stay.

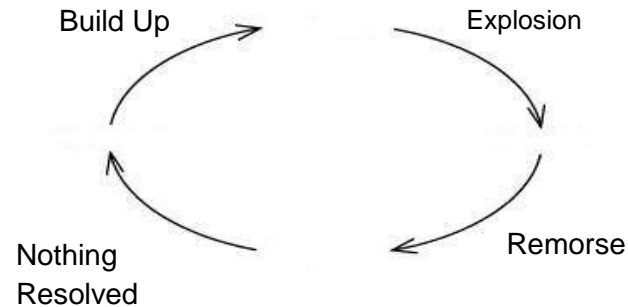
Women who leave domestic/ relationship violence situations may sometimes return to their partner time and time again. This may be because their partner pressures or tricks them into returning; they are not prepared for life away from their partner and do not have enough support; or they feel guilty.

It is important to be as prepared as possible when leaving a domestic violence situation by making sure you have support. This can mean getting help from friends, family and through services in the community.

(Adapted from the No-one Need Live in Fear Purple Booklet 2007 reprint)

Cycle of violence

Most victims of domestic violence experience the abuse as a part of a cycle with four phases.



Build Up

The perpetrator's behaviour gets worse- from controlling and abusive to threatening and more violent. This might happen over the course of days or minutes. The victim will often feel as though she is walking on eggshells and fear that an explosion could occur at any moment.

Explosion

This is the most dangerous time- it can involve physical or verbal violence, serious threats and destroying objects. The victim fears for their safety and might be shocked by the violence. Perpetrators often blame other things for their behaviour, for example alcohol or their partner.

Remorse

The perpetrator may say he is sorry or feel remorseful and guilty for his actions. He may believe and try to convince his partner that it will not happen again. The victim may believe their partner has changed and that it will not happen again. He may also make promises about how he will behave, as well as buying gifts for the victim and trying to make it up to her and/or the

Handout: 'Relationship Violence No Way' Program – Relationship violence prevention

children. Often, he will blame his partner, children or other external factors such as stress or alcohol for the abuse rather than take responsibility for his actions. This can cause the victim to feel responsible for violence.

Nothing Resolved

There may be some time where things are calm and seem to be better. In reality, nothing has changed and promises are not kept to make sure the violence is dealt with and doesn't happen again. The perpetrator may not accept responsibility and may say:

- > that it never happened
- > it didn't happen often
- > their partner wasn't hurt
- > it wasn't as serious as she made it out to be (e.g. it was only a push).

This cycle will continue as long as the person who is violent ignores their problem. Unfortunately, it is often up to the victim of domestic violence to set boundaries or leave the situation rather than waiting for her partner to change..

Stopping the cycle of violence

It is possible to stop the violence if the abusive and violent person (perpetrator) takes responsibility for his actions and decides to change. This is a big step and will most likely require professional help such as counselling or support groups. Sometimes it takes a crisis for the perpetrator to realise there is a problem and that they need to change. This may be:

- > a serious threat from their partner that they are going to leave if the violence doesn't stop
- > the partner leaving
- > a restraining order being issued or being charged with domestic violence offences
- > other people finding out about the violence (family, neighbours, etc.)
- > children being involved or injured
- > police visiting or being called.

(Adapted from the No-one Need Live in Fear Purple Booklet 2007 reprint)

Cycle of violence scenarios

Peter and Hannah

Peter and Hannah are both in Year 12 at different schools and have been dating for 7 months. Hannah feels like she is really lucky to have Peter, he is so sweet and really looks after her. But recently, Hannah has noticed that Peter gets really jealous and won't stop calling her when she goes out with a mixed group of guy and girl friends.

Hannah is doing a major PE assignment with two guys in her class, Joe and Cory, and has had to spend a few afternoons in the library with them to get it done. When Peter found out, he got really jealous and started messaging her saying things like "I don't understand why you have to hang out with them all the time, you never spend any time with me". A little frustrated, Hannah told Peter that that wasn't true, she'd see him soon and she turned her phone on silent so she could concentrate on getting the assignment done.

When Hannah checked her phone an hour later, she had 10 missed calls from Peter and 5 messages from him implying that the only reason Joe and Cory wanted to do an assignment with her was that they thought she was 'easy' and they wanted to 'get with' another guy's girlfriend. Hurt and shocked, Hannah drove over to Peter's house later to talk to him about it. Peter's mum let her in and Hannah found him in his bedroom.

Hannah tried to apologise for not having her phone on and said she felt really hurt by what Peter had said because there was nothing between her, Joe or Cory. Peter suddenly grabbed Hannah and pushed her up against the wall, saying, "How do you think it makes me feel to know that you're with them all the time, dressed like this! What would all your friends say if they knew? It's humiliating for me!" Hannah started to feel really afraid and began to cry. Peter calmed down, hugged her and said: "I'm so sorry if I hurt you, babe. I don't understand why you have to go and do things to make me angry."

Michael and Samantha

Michael and Samantha have been dating for 3 years and living together for 2 years. Yesterday, Michael had a bad day at work and was feeling really tired on his way home. When he got home, the first thing he said when he saw Samantha was “Why haven’t you started on dinner yet? I’m starving.”

Samantha tried to explain that she had “a million things to do today” and would start dinner soon. Suddenly, Michael started to get angry and yelled “I’ve been working hard all day, I’m tired and hungry and you’ve just been sitting on your ass and can’t even be bothered cooking a good dinner for me!” Without giving Samantha a chance to explain herself, Michael sat on the couch, grabbed the remote control and put the TV volume up on full blast, not wanting to hear what Samantha had to say.

Samantha, in shock, sat beside him, tried to get his attention and apologise for making him so angry. Without looking at her, Michael called Samantha a bitch, told her to shut up and pushed her off the couch. Samantha started to cry and went into the kitchen and tried to start cooking dinner. Soon after, Michael seemed calmer and felt guilty about how he had spoken to Samantha. He found her in the kitchen sitting next to his dinner, set out on the table. He gave her a hug and said “Sorry, baby, it won’t happen again, I just had a really stressful day at work. I don’t understand why you always have to push me like that...”

Sam and Kym

Sam is a chaplain at a local high school and has been living with his partner, Kym, for 2 years. To the school, Kym is just Sam's 'housemate'. Kym resents having to hide their relationship. Recently, Sam has been finding it harder and harder to juggle his work and home life. He often finds Kym jealous and demanding of all of his free time. Yesterday, Sam left to supervise a school camp. When he told Kym he was leaving for the night, Kym ignored him and dropped small comments throughout the day like "I hope you have a great time without me" and "Isn't the school trusting letting you take all of those boys away for the night?"

Later that night, Sam received a text message from Kym saying that he had taken some pills and "just can't take Sam's shit anymore". Panicked, Sam quickly organized another teacher to look after the students and rushed home. When he got there, Kym was drunk and in a rage. He threw a glass at the wall, screaming "You fucking slut, you think you can just come and go as you please, you don't know how good I am to you!" and "You only care about those kids, I'm sure the school would love to know how much of a fag you are, you're disgusting!" Kym then stormed into the bedroom and locked the door until morning, leaving Sam to clean up the mess and sleep on the couch.

Next morning, Sam awoke to find Kym making him scrambled eggs. Kym said, "I'm sorry about last night, I was drunk... I wouldn't have done it if I didn't love you so much... I don't know what I'd do if you weren't around..."

Relationship violence myth busting bingo

See workshop outline for instructions.

'But he's such a nice guy'

'She'd leave if it were that bad'

'I've never seen her with any bruises'

'She said that to get custody of the kids'

'But they seem so happy together'

'He does it because he loves her'

'So what if she won't let him see his friends?
It's not like she hits him'

'He wouldn't do it to hurt her'

'It's because of the booze'

'Maybe she needs to lighten up a bit'

'Well she shouldn't be with him if she doesn't
want to convert to his religion'

'That wouldn't happen in a gay relationship'

'I've never seen them fight'

'But it's not like he hits her'

'She's just saying that to get attention'

'She's just too sensitive'

'It's for her own good'

'He was brought up that way so you can't
blame him'

'You're a wuss if you let your girlfriend hit
you'

'Maybe he used to but he's changed now'

'It's because of the drugs'

'But they're so good together '

'Nobody's perfect'

'Just because they're controlling doesn't
mean they are abusive'

<p>'It's for her own good'</p>	<p>'But it's not like he hits her'</p>	<p>'But they seem so happy together'</p>
<p>'It's because of the booze'</p>	<p>Relationship Violence Myth Busting Bingo!</p>	<p>'That wouldn't happen in a gay relationship'</p>
<p>'She's just saying that to get attention'</p>	<p>'She's just too sensitive'</p>	<p>'Just because they're controlling, doesn't mean they're abusive'</p>

<p>'I've never seen her with any bruises'</p>	<p>'Maybe she just needs to lighten up a bit'</p>	<p>'Just because they're controlling doesn't mean they're abusive'</p>
<p>'Well she shouldn't want to be with him if she doesn't want to convert to his religion'</p>	<p>Relationship Violence Myth Busting Bingo!</p>	<p>'She'd leave if it were that bad'</p>
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<p>'I've never seen her with any bruises'</p>	<p>'Well she shouldn't want to be with him if she doesn't want to convert to his religion'</p>	<p>'It's for her own good'</p>
<p>'You're a wuss if you let your girlfriend hit you'</p>	<p>Relationship Violence Myth Busting Bingo!</p>	<p>'Just because they're controlling doesn't mean they're abusive'</p>
<p>'It's because of the booze'</p>	<p>'But he's such a nice guy'</p>	<p>'I've never seen them fight'</p>

<p>'But it's not like he hits her'</p>	<p>'She's just saying that to get attention'</p>	<p>'That wouldn't happen in a gay relationship'</p>
<p>'So what if she won't let him see his friends? It's not like she hits him'</p>	<p>Relationship Violence Myth Busting Bingo!</p>	<p>'He does it because he loves her'</p>
<p>'But they're so good together'</p>	<p>'She's just too sensitive'</p>	<p>'Maybe he used to before but now he's changed'</p>

<p>'But they're so good together'</p>	<p>'Nobody's perfect'</p>	<p>'She said that to get custody of the kids'</p>
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<p>'But they seem so happy together'</p>	<p>'It's because of the drugs'</p>	<p>'He was bought up that way so you can't blame him'</p>

<p>'But he's such a nice guy'</p>	<p>'He was brought up that way so you can't blame him'</p>	<p>'It's just because of the booze'</p>
<p>'Maybe he used to but he's changed now'</p>	<p>Relationship Violence Myth Busting Bingo!</p>	<p>'She's just too sensitive'</p>
<p>'That wouldn't happen in a gay relationship'</p>	<p>'But it's not like he hits her'</p>	<p>'You're a wuss if you let your girlfriend hit you'</p>

Doing it Right!

Split the class up into small groups and give each group several cutouts of lips (see below) and one of the following areas to focus on. Ask the participants to record the advice/tips they would give their peers in this area on the back of the lips.

- > What's good about relationships/Why do people get into relationships?
- > Why do people stay in relationships?
- > How can you break up respectfully?
- > Surviving a break up

Use these pieces of advice to talk about important elements of respectful relationships i.e. safety, trust, respect, communication, independence and what they look like for young people in practice.

NB. You can also have the participants come up and stick their lips on the whiteboard (with blue tack)

