

What is Domestic and Family Violence ...

Domestic and family violence (D&FV) as outlined in the D&FV Protection Bill 2011 is behaviour by one person towards another in a relevant relationship that is physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically, and/or economically abusive, threatening or coercive, or in any other way controls or dominates, causing fear for their own or someone else's safety or wellbeing.

The legislation also importantly acknowledges that "living free from violence is a human right and fundamental social value" and that "domestic violence is a violation of human rights that is not acceptable in any community or culture..."

We believe that the term Domestic Violence may be better represented as Intimate Partner Violence (IPV):

Intimate Partner Violence is a fundamental violation of human rights and involves an exploitation of power imbalances. It is predominantly perpetrated by men against women, and their children, and is where one person uses a pattern of abusive and/or coercive behaviour and/or pursuit in order to control and dominate the other both in a relationship and after separation. This behaviour often repeats, may escalate, and can result in death. The most commonly acknowledged forms of IPV are physical and sexual violence, threats and intimidation, emotional and social abuse and economic deprivation. The consequence of this behaviour instils fear for personal safety and/or wellbeing, and traumatises women and children.

Spousal Violence:

Spousal relationships and IPV often has a different dynamic to family violence due to the intimate nature of the connection between partners.

Family Violence:

Family violence is equally impactful and can detrimentally affect all family members involved (related by blood or marriage), across generations.

Why DFV can be difficult to detect ...

Domestic violence affects women from all cultures, age groups, class structures, and educational backgrounds. In short it does not discriminate. It is insidious and can be difficult to detect due to its gradual nature in the beginning of the relationship, almost like a grooming process until a relationship/love is established.

The patriarchal structures within our society enable the continuance of sexist attitudes and behaviours and allow a sense of male entitlement to take hold, giving men the false belief that they have a right to 'rule their roosts' and to take charge of women and children. This unequal relationship structure and self-created authority is a misrepresentation of what it is to be a 'man'.

