

Children and young people impacted by Family Violence

What you can do...

Caregivers can help children cope with the overwhelming emotions they experience after witnessing family violence. caregivers should attempt to:

- ✓ Create an environment that is safe and predictable.
- ✓ Make an extra effort to establish and maintain structure and routine.
- ✓ Be consistent: Ensure that rules are appropriate to age and development of the child. Be clear about limits and expectations.
- ✓ Be nurturing and comforting; express verbal and physical affection.
- ✓ Acknowledge a child's right to have their own feelings, friends, activities and opinions.
- ✓ Participate in your child's life; in their activities, school, sports, special events, etc.
- ✓ Provide independence; allow for privacy.
- ✓ Teach children appropriate ways to respond when they feel overwhelmed, sad, angry, worried or anxious.
- ✓ Talk and act in a way that enables children to feel safe and comfortable expressing themselves. Be gentle, be dependable.
- ✓ Encourage physical play every day.
- ✓ Provide healthy food.
- ✓ Reduce exposure to violent or scary TV, movies and video games.
- ✓ Limits a child's intake of caffeine; encourage children to drink water.
- ✓ Establish distinct boundaries within the family.
- ✓ Let children know when you are running late/will be home late.
- ✓ Give children choices.
- ✓ Be patient with difficulties in concentration, completing school work and other tasks.
- ✓ Avoid physical punishment and responding to children in anger or ways that result in them feeling fearful.
- ✓ Provide safe ways for children to discharge their anger.
- ✓ Provide soothing activities before bed time.
- ✓ Contact a DV hotline (numbers below)

It is important for children to know that:

- ✓ ***The violence is never their fault.***
- ✓ Violence by one parent against the other is never okay.
- ✓ You want them to be safe and not attempt to intervene.
- ✓ They are not alone.

Teach your children that they can learn to be safe by:

- ✓ Keeping away from the fighting.
- ✓ Having a plan for getting out of the home safely if they need to, and where they can go.
- ✓ Finding a trusted adult to talk to.
- ✓ Go to a neighbour's home or other safe place.
- ✓ Know their name, address and phone number.

Important contacts:

- ✓ Calling 000 when there is danger of someone being hurt.
- ✓ Raising Children Network: <http://raisingchildren.net.au/>
- ✓ 1800 Respect: <https://www.1800respect.org.au/> 1800 737 732
- ✓ Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria: <http://www.dvrcv.org.au/1800-respect> 1800 737 732
- ✓ The Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Victoria (FVPLS Victoria) 1800 105 303 or <https://djirra.org.au/>
- ✓ Kids Helpline: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/> 1800 551 800
- ✓ For adolescents: <http://lovegoodbadugly.com/>
- ✓ The Line (Youth violence): <https://www.theline.org.au/>
- ✓ Safe Steps (Crisis support) <https://www.safesteps.org.au/> 1800 015 188
- ✓ Carer Gateway: <www.carergateway.gov.au> 1800 422 737
- ✓ Mensline: <https://mensline.org.au/>
- ✓ InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence 1800 755 988, www.intouch.asn.au
- ✓ Relationships Australia (Victoria), 1300 364 277, www.relationshipsvictoria.com.au
- ✓ Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASA) 9635 3610 (Counselling and support line), www.thewomens.org.au/SexualAssault

Location specific supports:

- **Morwell:** Quantum Support Services: <http://www.dvrcv.org.au/quantum-support-services> (Baw Baw, Latrobe and Wellington Shires)
- **Dandenong:** <http://www.greaterdandenong.com/document/29264/family-violence-support-services-and-organisations>
- **Ballarat:** Centacare: <https://www.centacareballarat.org.au/services/counselling-family-relationship/specialist-family-violence/> (03) 5051 0000
- **Horsham:** Grampians Community Health: <http://grampianscommunityhealth.org.au/service/family-violence/men/>
- **Wangaratta:** Centre against Violence: <https://centreagainstviolence.org.au/> 1800 806 292
- **Footscray:** Women's Health West: <http://whwest.org.au/>