

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MYTHS AND FACTS



MYTHS

FACTS

Men experience family and domestic violence (FDV) as often as women.

Women experience FDV at a disproportionately higher rate than men. 1 in 6 women and 1 in 16 men have experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or previous partner since the age of 15. In the last 12 months (of 2016), an estimated 212,000 women and 114,000 men experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence.

FDV is not very common and is a private matter between a husband and wife.

FDV can affect any relationship, not just between husband and wife. This can include other family members, same-sex relationships, a past partner, violence in supported accommodation or violence to children.

Women with disability experience family and domestic violence at a lower rate than people without.

Women with disability are three times as likely to experience violence than people without disability.

Women with disability should be grateful that someone is in a relationship with them.

Having a disability does not mean someone should be exposed to experiences of violence. All people are deserving of respectful and safe relationships.



MYTHS

FACTS

FDV only happens to poor, uneducated or minority families.

FDV occurs in all cultures and communities. People of any age, gender, class, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation and marital status can be victims or perpetrators of violence.

If it was that bad, she would just leave.

It is not always easy to leave a violence relationship. On average, a woman will attempt to leave an abusive relationship at least eight times before being successful. Statistics also indicate that women are at the highest risk of extreme violence (including murder) when she leaves the perpetrator.

Reasons women stay in abusive relationships may include being fearful for themselves or their children if they do leave; shame, guilt and low self-esteem, lack of financial independence or a lack of support due to social and family isolation.

If a woman stays in an abusive relationship, it does not mean she is not - it means she is worried that leaving may make it even worse.

Children aren't affected by witnessing and/or experiencing family and domestic violence.

FDV can impact a child or young person's physical, emotional and neurological development. It may influence their schooling experiences and they may struggle to make and maintain friendships. It can also impact their mental health and ability to cope in different situations and context. Studies show that children exposed to FDV have a higher risk of developing depression and behavioural concerns.

Women exaggerate FDV or make false claims for attention.

FDV is often underreported, with only 32% of incidents being reported to police in the last 10 years. This is 584,300 cases of domestic violence not being reported to police over that period. Reasons for not reporting violence include feelings of embarrassment and shame, playing down the seriousness of an incident of violence and fear of retribution.