



# Tip SHEET

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

### Key Points

- What is Domestic Violence?
- Prevalence of Domestic Violence
- Seeking Support

#### What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence refers to acts of violence that occur within intimate relationships and take place in domestic settings. It includes physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse. Family violence is a broader term that refers to violence between family members, as well as violence between intimate partners.

Findings from victimisation surveys suggest that women are more likely than men to become victims of domestic violence, but that domestic violence can occur in a range of different relationship types, circumstances and settings. Research suggests that some women may be more vulnerable to becoming victims and less capable of exiting violent relationships, depending on their age, living arrangements and English language abilities.

Domestic violence is traditionally associated with cases of physical violence occurring within intimate relationships and in a domestic setting. It is most commonly perpetrated by a male against a female partner, but it also includes violence against men. Domestic violence occurs in both heterosexual and homosexual relationships and includes married, de facto and separated adolescents and adults.

Domestic violence is not limited to physical violence and involves a range of different forms of abuse. These are physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, social abuse, economic abuse and spiritual abuse.

#### Prevalence of Domestic Violence

According to the ABS (2006) Personal Safety Survey, approximately one in three Australian women have experienced physical violence during their lifetime, nearly one in five women have experienced some form of sexual violence and nearly one in five have experienced violence by a current or previous partner.

Debate regarding the rates of violence against men committed by women in intimate relationships still exists. There has been a growing body of research into the nature and prevalence of male victimisation and domestic violence in homosexual relationships. However the under-reporting of victimisation limits efforts to understand and prevent violence against men as well as those victims living in gay, lesbian and transgender relationships. Overall, the consensus finding is that women comprise the majority of victims of domestic violence and they continue to be the focus of most research in the area.

#### Impact of Domestic Violence

In 2002–03 in Australia, the total cost of domestic violence to victims, perpetrators, friends and families, communities, government and the private sector was estimated to be in excess of \$8billion.

Domestic violence is associated with a range of health problems and is the single biggest health risk to Australian women aged 15 to 44 years. In 2006–07, one in five homicides involved intimate partners and more than half of all female victims were killed by their intimate partner.

Domestic violence is also the most common factor contributing to homelessness among women and their children. Women who have lived with a violent partner are also more likely to experience financial difficulties or hardship as a result of the relationship.

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INFORMATION

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