

Preventing domestic and family violence (DFV) in families:

What can parents and caregivers do?



Preventing domestic and family violence means stopping the violence before it starts. How can we do this? By addressing the underlying reasons that violence exists in the community including negative attitudes and beliefs.

Responsibility for preventing family violence sits with everyone. This tip sheet outlines some key actions that parents and caregivers can do to help prevent DFV in families.

1. Promote inclusion, respect and equality

Be inclusive of people and relationships of all shapes and sizes.

Break down gendered stereotypes in your home. Encourage your children of any gender to do the same activities regardless of their gender (e.g. cook, play ball games or express their emotions respectfully).

Encourage the leadership of girls and gender diverse children and young people.

2. Challenge discrimination including: racism, sexism and homophobia

Be aware of the language used in your home and be inclusive.

If anyone accidentally says racist, sexist or homophobic things, model bringing it up respectfully and encourage them to bring it up with you.

Challenge yourself to learn more about others so that you can overcome any incorrect assumptions, stereotypes or beliefs you hold about others, and share your learnings with family and friends.

3. Celebrate and educate about people from a diverse range of backgrounds

Celebrate histories, people and events from different backgrounds, such as by participating in Chinese New Year or Ramadan Festivities, supporting LGBTIQ+ community leaders, enjoying the Paralympics, celebrating grandparents day and sharing your favourite traditional or cultural recipes.

Read books and watch shows that educate and include a diversity of groups.

Acknowledge that everyone is different and that's something to celebrate!

Hearing or seeing violence towards parents can have a similar impact on children as being harmed themselves.

Children exposed to family, domestic and sexual violence can experience long-term effects on their development and have increased risk of mental health issues, and behavioural and learning difficulties (Campo, 2015).

4. Normalise respectful relationships

Model consent and respect between yourself and others.

Read books that educate children about personal safety and respectful relationships.

Be aware of, and try to minimise how much violent or inappropriate content children are exposed to on screens.

Teach your children about consent. Let your children know it's okay to say no to people if they're making you feel uncomfortable, even if they're someone important like a doctor or a teacher.

More than two-thirds (68%) of mothers who had children in their care when they experienced violence said their children had seen or heard the violence (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

People who, as children, witnessed partner violence against their parents were 2-4 times as likely to experience partner violence themselves (as adults) as people who had not (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

5. Create a family culture which says no to violence

Download the resources available at strongsafefamilies.online to teach children and young people protective skills.

Hold a family meeting and set aside intentional time to discuss safety strategies.

Learn how to respond if you do hear a disclosure of abuse.

If your family needs support

In crisis situations, call the police on 000.

Contact [Kids helpline](https://www.kidshelpline.com.au) for information on sexual, domestic and family violence, 24/7 on 1800 55 1800.

Contact [Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia](https://www.rdv.org.au), telephone and online crisis counselling for people of all genders, 24/7 on 1800 424 017.