

Domestic violence

The basics for
community workers



This resource has been developed by the Eastern Suburbs Domestic Violence Network. It has been updated and reprinted by the Lower North Shore Domestic Violence Network, supported by North Sydney Council. The resource is meant to be a quick access guide for workers new to the area of DV and also provide a quick reference tool for services offering DV support.

For further information on the Lower North Shore Domestic Violence Network, see www.northshoredomesticviolence.org.au



Domestic violence is a crime

What is domestic and family violence?

Domestic and family violence is a crime. It occurs when there is violent, abusive or bullying behaviour or actions towards a partner or former partner to scare and control them. It can happen at home or outside the home. It causes fear and harm to the body, mind and spirit. Domestic and family violence can happen to anyone, however the statistics tell us it is predominantly an issue of violence against women.

In Australia, violence against women is called many different things, including domestic violence, family violence, intimate partner violence, sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Put simply, and using an internationally recognised definition, violence against women is any act of gender based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of harm or coercion, in public or in private life.

As this definition makes clear, violence against women is not only or always physical. It includes psychological, economic, emotional and sexual violence and abuse, and a wide range of controlling, coercive and intimidating behaviours.

It is abusive behaviour by one person to control and dominate another person within a close relationship. It may include physical assault, psychological abuse, social abuse, economic abuse or emotional abuse.

The following are some examples of domestic and family violence:

- Punching, hitting, kicking, slapping or choking
- Using weapons such as knives to threaten you
- Forcing someone to have sex (rape)
- Forcing someone to look at pornography
- Constant humiliation, insults, name calling
- Threatening to hurt or kill
- Threatening children or other family members
- Threatening to destroy things that are important
- Controlling finances
- Preventing someone from seeing friends or family
- Monitoring emails, mail and phone calls
- Locking in the house
- Making frequent and unfounded accusations of being unfaithful
- Often making unreasonable demands
- Damaging property in order to frighten

Source: <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/Understanding-Violence/Facts-and-figures-2019> <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/domestic-violence/about/what-is-dv> 2018

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Some of the facts

The following basic statistics help demonstrate the prevalence and severity of violence against women:

- On average, one woman a week is murdered by her current or former partner.
- One in three Australian women have experienced physical violence since the age of 15.
- One in five Australian women have experienced sexual violence.
- One in six Australian women have experienced physical or sexual violence by current or former partner.
- One in four Australian women have experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner.
- Australian women are nearly three times more likely than men to experience violence from an intimate partner.
- Australian women are almost four times more likely than men to be hospitalised after being assaulted by their spouse or partner.
- Women are more than twice as likely as men to have experienced fear or anxiety due to violence from a former partner.
- More than two-thirds (68%) of mothers who had children in their care when they experienced violence from their previous partner, said their children had seen or heard the violence.
- Almost one in 10 women (9.4%) have experienced violence by a stranger since the age of 15.
- Young women (18 – 24 years) experience significantly higher rates of physical and sexual violence than women in older age groups.
- There is growing evidence that women with disabilities are more likely to experience violence.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women report experiencing violence in the previous 12 months at 3.1 times the rate of non-Indigenous women.
- In 2014–15, Indigenous women were 32 times as likely to be hospitalised due to family violence as non-Indigenous women.

Source: <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/understanding-violence/facts-and-figures> August 2019

Everyone has the right to feel safe

It is important how you respond to a victim of abuse.

Some common beliefs include victim blaming and normalising violence. If someone tells you they have been raped or assaulted:

- Listen – to what they have to say.
- Believe – people rarely lie about being assaulted.
- Respect – their feelings and decisions.

Source: ESDVN and RCC Bystander Brochure 2016

What to avoid

Avoid blaming the victim

The person may blame themselves for the violence. It's important not to agree as no-one deserves to be abused no matter what. Suggesting they did something to provoke the abuse is not supportive. Perpetrating violence is a choice and is a way to maintain power and control in the relationship.

Avoid blaming alcohol, other drugs, mental health issues for his domestic violence behaviour.

These do not cause domestic violence, the need for power and control do. Many people use alcohol and other drugs and are never abusive to their partners.

Avoid telling her what to do.

Through controlling and abusive behaviour she may have lost some of her self-esteem, confidence, and decision making skills. To support her it is important to allow her to explore options and make her own choices. Give her information to make an informed choice.

Avoid talking to the abuser about his behaviour.

Unless you specifically work with perpetrators, this may place yourself and others in danger. Whilst it can be helpful to unpack the dynamics of abuse, it is important for the survivor to remain the focus of the work.

Avoid making negative comments about her partner.

It is not helpful to make comments as she may feel the need to defend him. Focus on her and her safety.

Don't expect them to leave the relationship quickly or ever.

Ending a domestic violence relationship can be difficult. There may be threats of harm, she may hope the partner will change their behaviour. There could be family pressure and personal beliefs about marriage, as well as fears about where to live and how will she cope, etc.

Tips to help

Believe what the victim tells you.

You might think their boyfriend/partner/husband was a really nice person, what they appear to be does not always mean they are that way behind closed doors. Take the issue seriously.

Let her know it's not her fault.

No-one deserves to be abused. No matter what the situation everyone has a choice in how they respond. Anger is not an excuse for domestic violence.

Focus on her safety and her children's safety.

Let her know you are worried. Read through the information later in this document on Safety Planning and Risk Assessment.

Let her know about the range of services that can support her (listed on the back).

In an emergency contact the Police 000.

Source: <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/domestic-violence/my-situation/i-want-to-help-someone> 2018

Domestic violence and LGBTIQ relationships

The Police, domestic violence services, gay and lesbian organisations, the courts and other services all report that they are working with LGBTIQ individuals who have experienced or are experiencing same sex domestic violence.

To date, there is little accurate Australian research that records the level of domestic violence in gay and lesbian relationships. However, a number of overseas studies suggest that the general patterns and levels of domestic violence in same sex relationships are about the same as in heterosexual relationships. These studies also show that once the violence starts it is likely to get worse.

In addition to the ways domestic violence manifests in non-LGBTIQ relationships, survivors are exposed to types of abuse unique to LGBTIQ relationships. These include the use of threats to 'out' them to their social networks; efforts to isolate them from the LGBTIQ community; and the exertion of pressure to stop them expressing their identity or lived body experience as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse, intersex and/or queer. LGBTIQ survivors also face additional risks of not having their experience of abuse fully understood or acknowledged by service providers.

Source: www.ssdv.acon.org; Calling It What It Really Is report, UNSW 2014

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Impacts on children

Children are affected by domestic and family violence even if they have not seen the abuse or violence. Children develop the basic brain structures for managing emotional states (self-regulation) in early childhood (0-3). The child's relationship with their primary carer, usually their mother, is fundamental to this brain development.

When the mother is in a state of chronic fear due to domestic violence, these brain structures do not develop, causing problems controlling emotions and behaviour. These problems manifest as conduct disorders, learning difficulties, ADHD, and self-harm in older children, and as mental illness, substance abuse and violence in adults.

Children also need someone to talk to about what is happening in their home. Domestic and family violence services listed in the back of this booklet can help.

Source: <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/domestic-violence/about/effects-of-dv-on-children> 2018



RSPCA NSW – Community Domestic Violence Program

A recent Australian study revealed that approximately 50 per cent of women in violent relationships reported that their violent partner had hurt or killed one of their pets. The study also revealed that 33 per cent of these female pet owners, who were now living in crisis accommodation, had delayed leaving their violent relationship because of concerns for their pet's welfare.

Through their Domestic Violence program, RSPCA NSW aims to offer practical solutions for pet owners leaving situations of domestic violence. They safely house and care for their pets, allowing them time to find safe refuge for themselves, with the aim of reuniting them with their beloved pet as soon as possible.

Services of our Domestic Violence program include:

- temporary foster accommodation and/or emergency pet boarding
- financial assistance for veterinary treatment
- financial assistance with impound fees
- financial assistance with transport fees

For more information please contact the RSPCA Community Programs helpline (02) 9782 4408, operating Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm. During weekends and public holidays contact the RSPCA Contact Centre on (02) 9770 7555.

Police response

The Police will respond at any time to provide protection if someone feels threatened or are worried about their safety.

Police can arrest the person who is threatening and make an application on behalf of the victim for an Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO) to protect the woman and children from future threats and/or violence.

An ADVO is an order made by the court to protect the victim from violence, threats and harassment from a spouse, de facto partner, ex-partner, family member, carer or person living in the same household. This order can include an Exclusion Order which prohibits the abusive person from returning to the home. Police MUST apply for an ADVO if they suspect or believe that a domestic violence offence or child abuse offence has been or is

likely to be committed. Senior police officers have power to determine applications for provisional ADVOs.

If the police suspect or believe that domestic violence has happened or is likely to happen, the police will apply for a provisional ADVO. Police can take this action even if the victim is not willing to make a complaint. This is to control the offender's movements while applying for an ADVO and making sure the victim/s and others in need of police protection are safe and remain safe.

The ADVO restricts behaviour by placing conditions including not to assault, not to enter premises, not to contact etc. If the defendant breaches the ADVO the Police should be called to investigate and charge the perpetrator if there is sufficient evidence. Police also conduct AVO compliance checks, DV Suspect Target Management Plans and DV High Risk Offender teams to further manage domestic violence perpetrators.

Source: NSW Police Service

Victims services support package

'Victims support' describes the package of counselling services, financial support and recognition payment available to victims of violent crime in New South Wales through the Victims Rights and Support Act 2013 ('the Act').

The complete victims support package consists of:

Counselling

- 22 hours of free counselling and more if needed.

Financial Support

- Financial assistance for immediate needs (up to \$5000) for expenses incurred urgently to secure the victim's safety, health and well-being.
- Financial assistance for economic losses, including out-of-pocket expenses, loss of actual earnings, medical and dental expenses, justice-related expenses, and assistance relating to the loss of or damage to personal effects such as clothing.

Recognition payment

- Fixed payments of \$1,500 to \$15,000 to recognise the trauma caused to the victim and the offence or offences committed against them.

Further information about Victims Services and Victims Support Package can be found at https://www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au/Pages/vss/vs_financial_support/vs_financial_support.aspx

Safety planning and risk assessment

For someone living with violence or abuse, having a support person can be one of the best ways to increase safety. If you are a support person, start by listening. The other person knows their own situation best and will be able to tell you about things they are already doing to keep safe. Remember not to judge or make decisions for them. 'Just leaving' is not always a safe option. In fact immediately after a separation is the time of greatest risk of violence. Work with the person you are supporting to make a plan that meets their needs. Assistance with safety planning can be found at <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/domestic-violence/stay-safe/safety-planning>

Risk Assessment is another important aspect of safety planning. The Domestic Violence Safety Assessment Tool (DVSAT) is commonly used to assess risk in domestic violence situations. This tool and the guide for its use can be found at <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/providers/domestic-violence/safer-pathway/chapters/tools>

Tech safety tips

Domestic and family violence can include a partner or ex partner checking the websites visited or using technology in other ways to control or harass their victim. Any behaviour online that makes survivors feel scared or unsafe is wrong. It could include:

- sending multiple emails or text messages a day
- monitoring computer activity through Spyware
- tracking location using GPS
- watching through hidden cameras
- intercepting phone calls and messages
- impersonating them online or in text messages to others.

Survivors should be encouraged to trust their instincts. If they think an abusive person could be harassing, stalking, or monitoring them by using technology, support them to follow tips for staying safe online and on their devices.

For more specific Tech Safety advice go to: www.techsafety.org.au; www.safety.gov.au/women; <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/domestic-violence/stay-safe/online-and-technology>

Domestic violence and renting, know your rights

If a survivor is renting and experiencing domestic violence, they can now leave and have their name removed from the lease immediately and without penalty, by giving their landlord and all other tenants a 'Domestic Violence Termination Notice'.

The Domestic Violence Termination Notice **must** attach one of the following;

- a certificate of conviction; or
- a provisional interim or final Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO), including one from a state other than NSW or from New Zealand; or
- a family law injunction; or
- a declaration by a doctor. (Their doctor needs to complete the form which does not include details of the violence or require the perpetrator to be charged or ADVO be issued).

The landlord or real estate agent cannot blacklist them by putting their name on a bad tenant database if they have ended their tenancy by giving a Domestic Violence Termination Notice.

The survivor will not be responsible for damage to the rental property if they can show it was caused by a perpetrator of violence during a domestic violence offence.

They should write down when and how the damage was caused and take a photo of the damage. They might need this information if their landlord asks for money to pay for the damage.

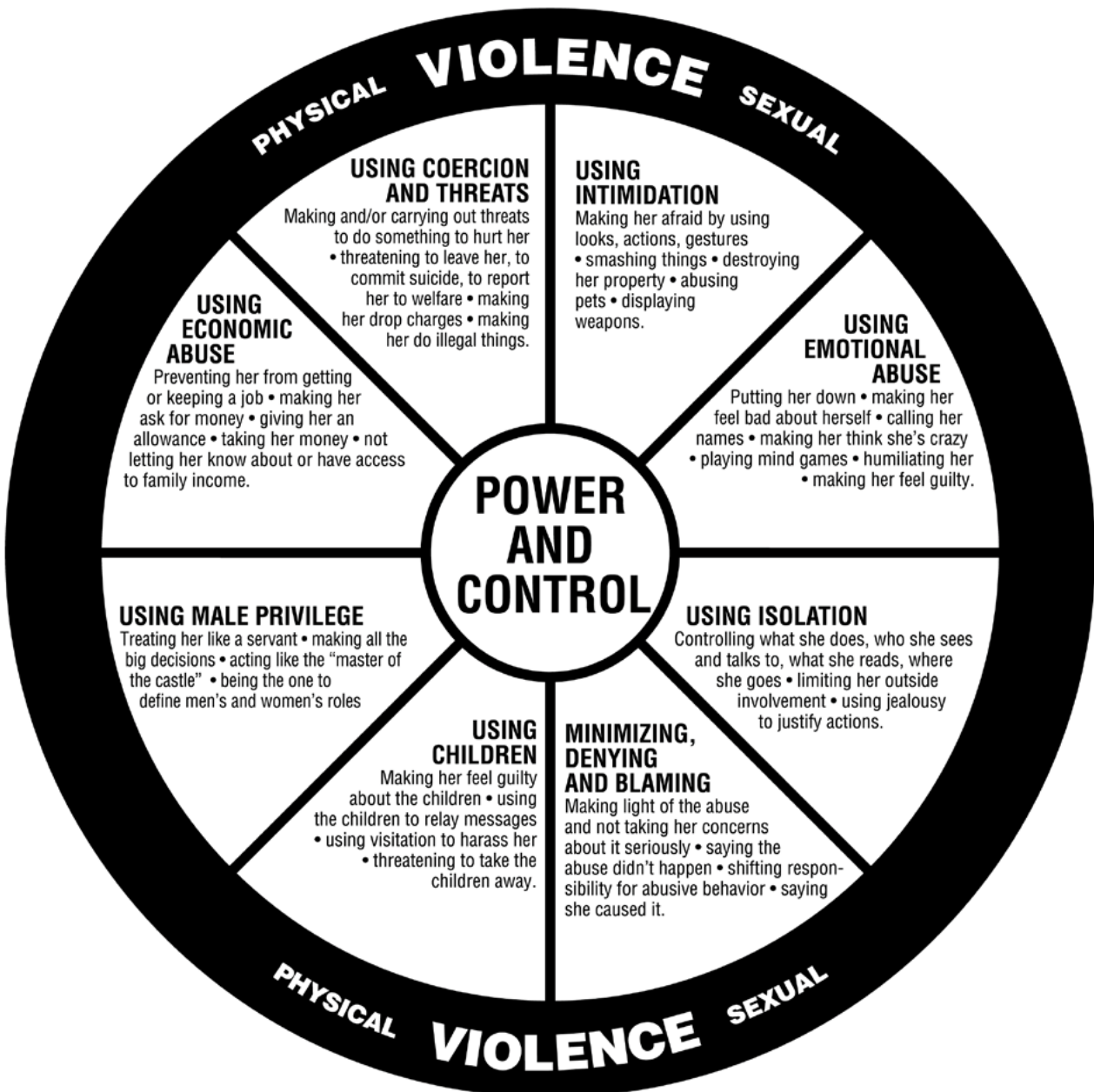
Sourced from Women's Legal Service NSW 2019

Duluth Power Wheel

Characteristics of violent behaviour

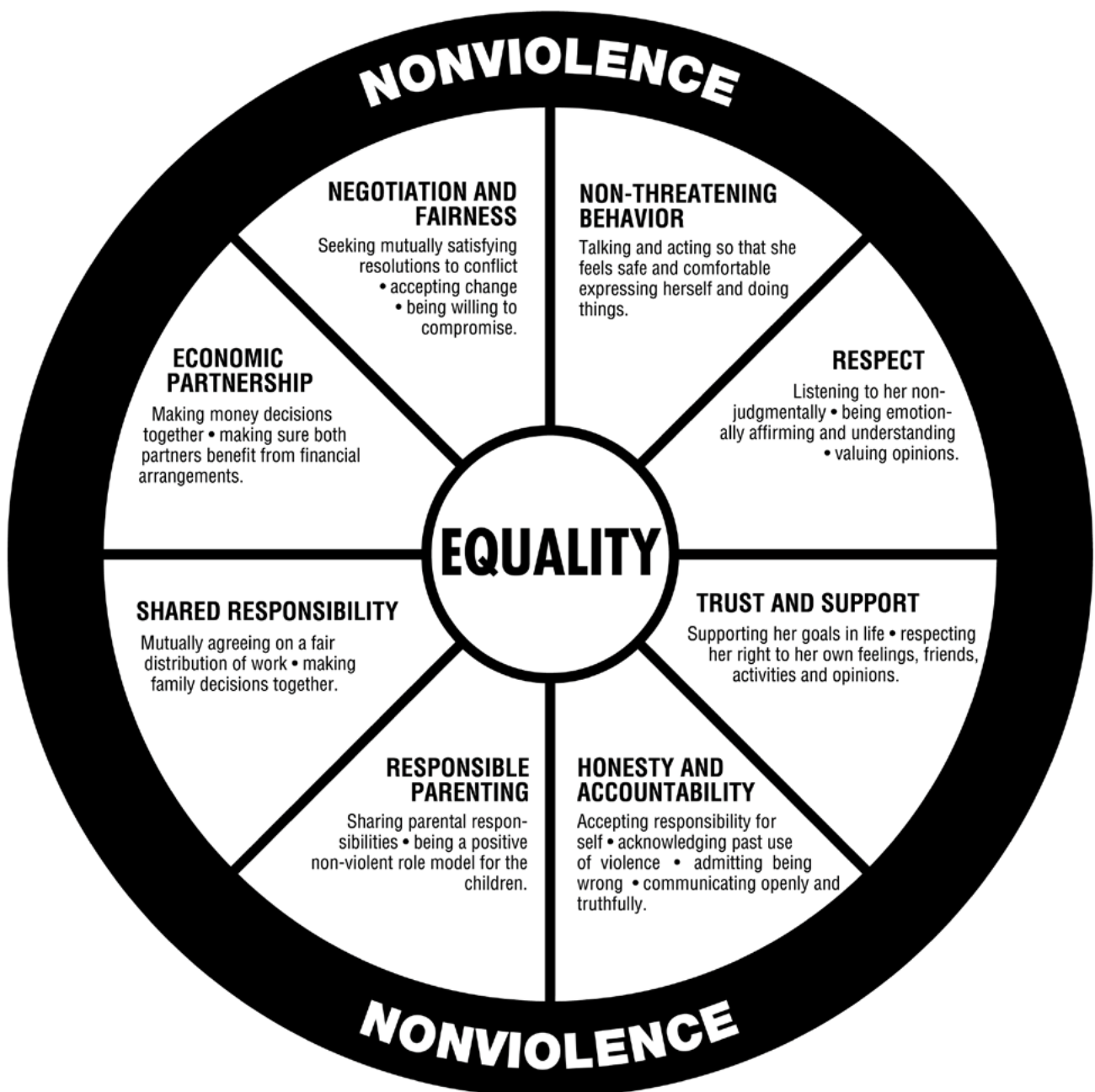
This wheel details primary tactics and behaviours individual abusers use to establish and maintain control in their relationships. The Wheel symbolises the relationship of violence to other forms of abuse and coercion. Each spoke represents a tactic used to exert control or gain power, which is the hub of the wheel. The rim which surrounds and supports the spokes is physical and sexual violence. Violence holds the system together and gives it strength. Physical abuse and sexual violence are a part of a system of abusive behaviour.

Duluth Power and Control Model Minnesota



Duluth Equality Wheel

The Equality Wheel was developed to describe the changes needed for men who abuse to move from being abusive to non-violent partnership. For example, the “emotional abuse” segment on the Power and Control Wheel is contrasted with the “respect” segment on the Equality Wheel. So the wheels can be used together as a way to identify and explore abuse, then encourage non-violent change. This can also help survivors identify if they are in a healthy relationship.



NSW DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CRISIS LINE
24 hours 1800 65 64 63

EMERGENCY

Police/Ambulance	000
Child Protection	132 111
Telephone Interpreter Service	131 450

POLICE

Chatswood	9414 8499
Dee Why	9971 3399
Eastwood	9858 9299
Frenchs Forest	9452 9511
Gladesville	9879 9699
Gordon	9418 5399
Hornsby	9476 9799
Manly	9976 8011
Mona Vale	9998 0699
Mosman	9969 1933
Ryde	9808 7401

ACCOMODATION ASSISTANCE

Link2Home	1800 152 152
CatholicCare Specialist Housing & Homelessness Service	9488 2400
The Northern Centre	9334 0111
Mission Australia - NS Area	9480 2500
Aboriginal Corp. for Homeless and Rehab.	9564 2064

TENANCY ADVICE & ADVOCACY SERVICES

Northern Sydney Area Tenants Service	9559 2899
Aboriginal Tenants Advisory Service	9833 3314

FINANCIAL SERVICES

National Debt Line	1800 007 007
Mob Strong Debt Help	1800 808 488

LEGAL SERVICES

Domestic Violence Legal Advice Line	8745 6999
Women's DV Court Advocacy Service	1800 938 227
Northern Sydney	8425 8707
Parramatta	8833 0922
Women's Legal Advice Line	8745 6988
Indigenous Women's Legal Contact Line	8745 6977
Macquarie Legal Centre	8833 0911
Horizons Community Legal Centre	9890 1203
Legal Aid NSW - Law Access	1800 888 529
Legal Aid – Youth Hotline	1800 101 810
Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre	1800 686 587
Safe Relationships – LGBTIQ Court Support & Legal Advice	1800 244 481

1800RESPECT
NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSULT, FAMILY AND
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COUNSELLING LINE
24 hours 1800 737 732

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

Family Connect & Support	1800 066 757
CatholicCare Family Services	
Waitara	9488 2400
Naremburn	8425 8700
Brookvale	8968 5100
Women & Children First	9971 4499
Community Northern Beaches	9977 1066
The Northern Centre	9334 0111
Relationships Australia NS Region	1300 364 277

CULTURALLY & LINGUISTICALLY
DIVERSE SERVICES

Immigration Advice and Rights Centre	8234 0700
Immigrants Women's Speakout	9635 8022
NSW Police Force – Multicultural Community Liaison Officer (MCLO)	
Chatswood	9414 8499
Hornsby	9476 9799
Ryde	9879 9699

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COUNSELLING/
CASEWORK SERVICES**

1800 Respect	1800 737 732
Family Connect & Support	1800 066 757
CatholicCare Family Services Waitara	
Waitara	9488 2400
Naremburn	8425 8700
Brookvale	8968 5100
Women & Children First	9971 4499
Community Northern Beaches	9977 1066
Mary's House Services	8937 2094
	1800 002 111
NS Sexual Assault Service	9462 9477

DRUG, ALCOHOL & GAMBLING SERVICE

Hornsby Drug, Alcohol & Gambling Service	9477 9567
Northern Beaches Drug & Alcohol Services	9388 5333
Northern Sydney Drug & Alcohol Service	9462 9199
Ryde Drug & Alcohol Service	9858 7776

HELPLINES

Elder Abuse Helpline	1800 628 221
Kids Helpline	1800 551 800
Men's Referral Service	1300 766 491
NSW Domestic Violence Line	1800 65 64 63

Lower North Shore Domestic Violence Network

lnsdvnetwork@gmail.com

www.northshoredomesticviolence.org.au

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