

Help Stop Family Violence

A guide for friends, families and communities to make a difference

TOGETHER
WE CAN STOP
DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE



To support families living with violence, and to speak out to prevent violence in the family, you need to **KNOW THE FACTS**.

Share the information you read in this book with your family, friends, neighbours and community. Together we can stop family violence.

Family violence affects us all

Anyone can be a victim of family violence. They can be rich or poor, young or old, married or unmarried, female or male, Christian or Muslim. Family violence also affects people living with disabilities and gay people.

Anyone can commit violence. For example, a violent person could be a teacher, a church leader, a business person or someone who is unemployed.

In Vanuatu, the most common type of family violence is when a man is violent towards his wife or girlfriend.



DEFINITION

Gay people are people who are attracted to other people of the same sex.

Know the facts

Three out of five women (60%) in Vanuatu who have ever been in a relationship have experienced physical or sexual violence or both by a husband or a boyfriend.¹

For most women who experience violence in Vanuatu, it happens often and it is very severe. Women are punched, dragged, kicked, beaten, burned, or hit with a weapon such as a piece of wood, iron bar, knife or axe. Some women are even killed. For many women, the physical violence is followed by rape.

¹ Vanuatu National Survey on Women's Lives and Family Relationships, Vanuatu Women's Centre in Partnership with the Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 2011

What is family violence?

There are different kinds of family violence. This booklet is about violence committed by men against their wife or girlfriend. This is the most common form of family violence in Vanuatu. Violence by men against their wife or girlfriend is also called family violence.

Different types of family violence

Physical violence is when a man hurts a woman's body or damages a woman's things.

Emotional violence is when a man uses words or actions to hurt a woman's feelings. It is also emotional abuse if he threatens to kill the woman or himself if she leaves him.

Sexual violence includes rape and making women do sexual things they do not want to do.

Economic violence is when a man tries to control a woman's money, or when he ignores the family's needs and uses (family) money only for his own benefit.



Myths about family violence

There are many made up stories and wrong ideas (or myths) about what causes family violence. It is important to know the truth.

X A man can do whatever he likes to his wife because he has paid a bride price. **This is not true.**

✓ Paying bride price does not give a man the right to beat his wife. It does not mean that the man owns her or that he can do whatever he likes to her.

X The bible says men can discipline women. **This is not true.**

✓ As theologian Matthew Henry says "Eve was not taken out of Adam's head to top him, neither out of his feet to be trampled on by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected by him, and near his heart to be loved by him."

X Women ask to be raped if they wear short skirts or refuse sex. **This is not true.**

✓ No one ever asks or deserves to be raped. A violent man must take responsibility for his actions.

X The abuse is not so bad, otherwise the woman would leave the man. **This is not true.**

✓ Many women stay because they are scared, or have no money or no place to go. Some women are told it is their duty to stay and make a marriage work. A violent man might even threaten to kill a woman who wants to leave.

X Married women must stay with their violent husbands out of respect for the church, and so they don't bring shame on their family. **This is not true.**

✓ Families and the church do not want women to be hurt. They may be able to help resolve family violence through referrals to qualified counselling services.

X Some women deserve to be beaten. It is their fault. They make their partner lose control. **This is not true.**

✓ Men can control their anger. A violent man chooses who he abuses. He does not abuse his boss or people at his work. He chooses to abuse his partner.

X Alcohol and drugs make men abuse women. **This is not true.**

✓ Many men are violent when they are sober. There is no excuse for violence.

Family violence is everyone's problem



Domestic violence hurts women

Psychological pain and mental damage

Women experiencing domestic violence may feel:

- ❖ sad, lonely and frightened.
- ❖ afraid to tell anyone in case the violence gets worse.
- ❖ confused because sometimes he is loving and kind.
- ❖ that it's their fault and ashamed of what others may think of them.

Women may lose confidence in themselves or start using alcohol and drugs. Some women may get depressed or even commit suicide.

Physical pain and damage

Women are hit, punched, kicked and stabbed. Their bones are broken. Many women are disabled or may even die from their injuries. Pregnant women may have a miscarriage.

Domestic violence hurts children

Children from violent homes can be hurt if they try to protect their mother. Their school work can suffer. They may run away from home and get into trouble, or start drinking and taking drugs.



Domestic violence hurts the men who commit it

Abusers lose the respect of their family and their communities. They lose the love of their family. They may go to jail.



Domestic violence hurts the community

Violence in the home teaches children that violence is a good way to solve problems. Children from violent homes are more likely to use violence or experience violence against them when they grow up.

Family violence hurts us all

How you can help someone who is experiencing domestic violence

If you think or know someone is experiencing domestic violence, how you respond is really important. You don't need to wait for her to ask, offer your support straight away.

Some things you can do when you first offer support:

- ❖ **Invite her to a safe place to TALK.**
- ❖ **Have a conversation when you're ALONE.** Sometimes it can be easier if there is another focus of activity such as going for a walk together, making a meal or doing the dishes.
- ❖ **Listen to what she has to say WITHOUT JUDGING her.** If she is in a violent relationship, she may already feel very down about herself. Don't make her feel worse. Don't blame her for what is happening to her.
- ❖ **BELIEVE her when she tells you she has been abused or raped.** Remember, any man can be a perpetrator. How a man is outside the house is not always the same as how he is inside the house.

Do not be afraid to offer an abused woman help. You might save her life.



What you can ask and say

❖ Try to get her to do most of the talking. These are examples of questions you could ask:

- How do you feel?
- What can I do to help you?
- How do you think his behaviour is affecting you?
- What are you afraid of if you leave the relationship?
- What are you afraid of if you stay in the relationship?
- What do you want to do now and in the future?


❖ Tell her that she is strong to talk about the violence against her.

❖ She may have already tried to stop the violence. **Give her credit** for everything she has already tried. Remind her that only he can stop his own behaviour.

❖ **Help her to understand that the violence is not her fault.** She is not to blame for his violence. Tell her she has a right to be safe.

❖ **Explain that family violence is against the law.** Talk to her about how the Police and the Courts can help her. See pages 9-10 in this book for more information about this.

❖ **Do not tell her what to do.** Help her to find out about her choices. Then she must decide. Listen to her and give her information, not advice.



I am so afraid.
I am afraid to leave
him and I am afraid
to stay. He says he
will kill me if I leave.

The way he treats
you is against the
law. Did you know
you can get a
Family Protection
Order to help make
you safe?

Help her to get help

- ❖ **Make clear that she has your support.** Don't stop being her friend or helping her if she doesn't do what you say.
- ❖ Discuss with her about having a **signal she can send from her house to let you know she needs help or she needs you to call the Police.** It could be that she bangs on her cooking pots; or turns the lights on and off; or any other signal.
- ❖ Help her to think about **ways she can stay safe** until the Police arrive.
- ❖ **Don't send her back to a violent home** if she asks for shelter. This may be very dangerous.
- ❖ **Go with her to get help.** Take her to the clinic or hospital, the Court, the police station or a women's organisation. There is a list of places that can help at the back of this book.

It is my own fault. I stayed talking too long with my friends and came home late. This makes him very angry.

You are not to blame for his violence. Your partner has no right to beat you.



What not to say

- ❖ **Don't tell her what she should have done differently** - concentrate on how she can change things now.
- ❖ **Don't tell her what to do** - encourage her to think about her options. She has to find her own way through the situation, but talking to you can help her decide what she needs to do.
- ❖ **Don't blame her for the abuse.**
- ❖ **Don't keep on trying to find out the 'reasons' for the abuse.** For example, if she was sexually abused, don't ask her about her behaviour or what she was wearing. Women never ask to be beaten or raped.
- ❖ **Don't be critical of her or her husband or partner.**
- ❖ **Don't pressure her to leave.**

Family violence and the law

The Vanuatu Family Protection Act (2008) makes it a crime to commit domestic violence. If the Court finds someone guilty of domestic violence, they can go to jail for up to two years or be fined up to 50,000 Vatu.

The Family Protection Act makes it a crime to:

- ❖ Physically abuse or hit a family member (your wife, husband or relative)
- ❖ Emotionally abuse a family member
- ❖ Sexually abuse a family member
- ❖ Intimidate or stalk (follow or watch) a family member, to make them afraid
- ❖ Damage a family member's property
- ❖ Threaten to do any of these things to a family member

The law is there to protect victims of family violence. It gives power to the Courts and the Police.



Family Protection Order

A Protection Order is a rule made by a judge of a Magistrates' Court or an Island Court telling the abuser that they must not be violent towards the victim. A court can give a Protection Order if the abuser has committed domestic violence, or is likely to commit domestic violence.

If the abuser does not follow the Court's order, they can go to jail or be fined.

The Family Protection Order can:

- ❖ Stop the abuser sexually assaulting the victim.
- ❖ Stop the abuser destroying the victim's property.
- ❖ Stop the abuser from going anywhere near the victim, her house, her place of work or anywhere she goes for leisure.
- ❖ Stop the abuser from contacting or communicating with the victim.
- ❖ Stop the abuser from carrying any weapons.
- ❖ Grant police assistance to the victim so she can collect her things from home if she is scared.
- ❖ Make the abuser help the victim with money to survive if she decides to leave the abuser.
- ❖ Give the victim the right to live in the family house without the abuser.

Who can apply for a Family Protection Order?

The victim can apply for a Protection Order. A friend or family member of the victim, a lawyer or a police officer can also apply for a Protection Order if the victim gives her permission.

All you need to apply for a Protection Order is your statement.

DEFINITION

An **abuser** is someone who abuses, assaults or is violent towards another person, especially a woman or child.

A **perpetrator** is someone who has done something wrong, or who has committed a crime.

How to apply for a Family Protection Order?

Contact the Court. You can go to the Court in person or you can telephone, use the short wave radio, fax or email.

What are the duties of the Police?

If a police officer suspects that someone has committed domestic violence or broken a family protection order, they **MUST** investigate. The police officer cannot ignore the report.

If, after investigating, the police officer finds that a crime has been committed, they **MUST** charge the perpetrator.

The Police also have the power to take the perpetrator into jail if he poses a physical threat to the victim.

Reach out for support

If you are experiencing family violence, try to reach out to family members, friends, church leaders or community members for support. Many of them have experienced family violence themselves and talking to them may help. There are a list of places on the back page of this booklet where you can get help.



Men can stop family violence

This page is specifically for men

Men can... **ACT. TALK. TEACH. LEAD.**

Men can ACT.

- ❖ Learn more about family violence and what causes it.
- ❖ Take care of your female relatives if they need support or help.
- ❖ Support women who have suffered violence.

Men can TALK.

- ❖ Speak to your friends who use violence and encourage different behaviour. For example:
 - Tell him that what he is doing is wrong and is against the law.
 - Let him know that if he does not stop, he can lose his family.
 - Let him know that people don't respect men who abuse women. It is a sign of a weak man.

Men can TEACH.

- ❖ Show how our culture has respect for women and does not accept violence against women.
- ❖ Teach your children. Help them learn that strong men don't hurt women and that there is honour in taking a stand to stop violence against women.

Men can LEAD.

- ❖ The best way to lead is by example.
- ❖ With your friends and in the community, challenge the belief that family violence is a private matter.
- ❖ Use your power in the family and the community to stand up against violence against women and children.
- ❖ Listen to women, in the family and community.
- ❖ Support community, church, government or NGO programmes that work to stop violence against women.
- ❖ Raise your sons and daughters to be equal.

What happens in another man's house is not my business.

But it is our business. Violence against women won't stop unless people start to say it is wrong. We need to speak out.



Where to get help

Call the 24-hour hotline

T: 1800 200 526

Vanuatu Women's Centre

Port Vila

T: 25764

Luganville

T: 36157

Tafea

T: 88660

Malampa

T: 7799165

Torba

T: 5920880

E: vwnc@vanuatu.com.vu

Vanuatu Family Health Association

Port Vila

Emile Mercet Street
(behind Police Station)

T: 22140

Luganville, Santo

T: 36129

E: vfha@vanuatu.com.vu

Facebook: Vanuatu Family
Health Association

Family Protection Unit Vanuatu Police Department

Port Vila, Efate

T: 5552948, 22222 or 111
(ext. 2806/2834)

Luganville, Santo

T: 36723 or 111 (ext. 6236)

Isangel, Tanna

T: 111 (ext. 8281)

Lakatoro, Malekula

T: 111 (ext. 7466)

Saratamata, Ambae

T: 111 (ext. 9520)

Northern Care Youth Clinic

Luganville, Santo

T: 37361

Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association

Port Vila

T: 37997, 7796946 or 5421040

E: dpavanuatu@dpaav.org

www.dpaav.org

Disability Desk Officers

Torba Officer

Mr Judah Isaac (5652095)

Malampa Officer

Mr Lapi Kalmet (5442292)

Sanma Officer

Mrs Doriane Naluipis
(5623088)

Shefa Officer

Mr Sam Kaiapam (33615)

Ministry of Health

Port Vila

T: 22545

Island Court

Port Vila

T: 22420

Child Protection Focal Point

T: +678 22794

E: cpmvila@vanuatu.com.vu

Provincial Child Protection Working Group

Poli Teviri

Village Health Worker

Northern Coordinator

T: +678 5550007

E: policap.teviri@sca.org.vu

Save the Children (Australia)

Port Vila

T: 22794

Ministry of Justice and Community Services

T: 33615

Department of Women's Affairs

Port Vila

T: 5333120 / 25099

E: eemele@vanuatu.gov.vu



Family Protection Unit



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