

# Our Culture, Our Pride

No excuse  
for abuse.

This booklet is about family violence and abuse.

Family violence  
and abuse is  
unacceptable,  
no matter who  
you are or where  
you come from.

Kia ora





**Family violence  
and abuse can affect  
anyone. It happens  
in every community,  
including yours.**

**This booklet can help  
you if you are worried  
about yourself, your family,  
someone you know, or your  
community.**

It is important we nurture our own cultural identities and preserve our cultural practices in Aotearoa New Zealand. However, it is not ok to use the culture that we are proud of as an excuse or justification for violence and abuse in our families and communities.

The booklet describes family violence and abuse. It gives ideas about things we can all do to stop abuse in our communities.

# What is family violence?

Family violence is when someone hurts a person who they have a close relationship with, like a partner or a family member.



Family violence is a form of gender-based violence which women are three times more likely to experience. People of all genders and from all backgrounds can be subjected to family violence. Everyone deserves dignified support that validates their experiences.

## Family violence in ethnic communities can include:

Intimate partner violence and abuse	Dowry-related abuse
Child abuse and neglect	So called 'honour-based' violence
Elder abuse and neglect	Female genital mutilation/cutting
Dating violence	Homophobic/transphobic abuse
Stalking	Harassment
Forced marriage	Immigration related abuse
Underage marriage	Post-conflict aftermath violence
Violence in other family relationships, including child/adolescent to parent/ grandparent violence, and in-law abuse	Transnational marriage abandonment and abuse

- Scaring her with angry looks
- Being cold and unresponsive
- Destroying or taking things she values
- Threatening to physically, sexually, or psychologically harm her
- Being abusive to her family and friends

- Threatening to take children away from her if she leaves
- Forcing children to arranged engagement or marriage in exchange of money, visa, property
- Forcing under aged children into marriage to others overseas
- Valuing male children over female children
- Using child access to send notes to her
- Alienating children from her
- Settling family debts by giving away a child in marriage

- Making her feel worthless and useless
- Calling her names, body-shaming
- Accusing her of cheating
- Making her feel guilty for his abusive behaviour
- Telling her she is acting like a 'Western' woman
- Treating her like a slave or domestic servant
- Telling her she is 'mental' and that nobody wants her
- Physical/sexual assault
- Forcing abortion on her
- In-law abuse
- Attempting strangulation
- Marital rape

- Threatening to withdraw visa sponsorship
- Threatening to deport her
- Making her do illegal things including pornography
- Threatening to leave or harm her
- Threatening to harm her family
- Threatening to kill her for damaging 'family honour'



- Saying the abuse did not happen or that is nothing serious
- Blaming her for causing him to get angry and be violent towards her
- Blaming the 'Western' system for her ability to seek help and or make decision to leave him
- Calling her crazy and irrational
- Telling others she is depressed and or suicidal

- Treating her like a servant and making her do all the household work
- Denying her food and clothing that she likes
- Using culture and tradition to abuse her and control her
- Establishing his rights as a male and therefore his entitlements over her
- Saying he knows what is best for her and family and implementing that without discussing with her
- Making all the decisions in the house and denying her rights and autonomy

- Controlling what she does, who she sees and talks to
- Denying her ability to express her individuality, opinions, and beliefs
- Not allowing her to talk to family or monitor the calls and meetings
- Reading her messages, emails or preventing such communication
- Installing cameras inside and outside the house to track her movements
- Not allowing her to have friends
- Not allowing her to drive or learn to drive so she cannot go anywhere without him

- Asking for dowry in exchange for marriage or visa sponsorship
- Not allowing her to work or keeping her work wages
- Not giving her access to family bank account
- Demanding that she works for money and that it is to be given to him
- Not being allowed to spend money without his permission
- Asking for every detail of how money was spent

# Healthy, unhealthy and abusive behaviours in a relationship

	Healthy behaviours	Unhealthy behaviours	Abusive behaviours
<b>Psychological</b>	Open communication, negotiation and fairness, trust and support, honesty and accountability, respecting and honouring gender and sexual identity and wellbeing etc.	Not seeing the other person's point of view as valuable, not listening to the other person or being unwilling to talk about problems without a fight etc.	Threats, name calling, jealousy, put downs, smashing things, stalking, controlling what someone does, says, sees and wears, insulting/ disrespecting sexual orientation or gender identity, threatening to 'out' them, forced conversion therapy etc.
<b>Physical</b>	Non-threatening behaviour, feeling safe to express oneself, seeking enthusiastic and informed consent etc.	Not considering the other person in the relationship, not seeking enthusiastic consent, using guilt to pressure the other person into doing things they don't want to do etc.	Hitting, kicking, biting, pushing, strangulation, using weapons, throwing acid, restraining someone etc.
<b>Sexual</b>			Rape or any forced sexual activity, marital rape, unwanted touching, any sexual activity with someone under 16 years old etc.

	Healthy behaviours	Unhealthy behaviours	Abusive behaviours
<b>Economic</b>	Economic partnership, making money-related decisions together, both partners benefitting from financial arrangements etc.	Not discussing the finances or assuming that only one person is in charge of the money etc.	Taking someone's money, running up debts in their name, checking all receipts, pressuring someone to sign official papers, threatening to withdraw visa support etc.
<b>Spiritual</b>	Able to express religious freedom, feeling comfortable and confident in cultural, spiritual, and religious identities etc.	Cultural and spiritual disrespect, belittling spiritual beliefs or practices, being judgemental or using stereotypes or scriptures to pressure the other person into doing things they don't want to etc.	Stopping someone from expressing their spiritual or religious beliefs, forcing someone to go to church/ temple/mosque etc.
<b>Neglect</b>	Health and wellbeing needs are addressed, cared for, and met, shared responsibility, responsible parenting etc.	Feeling entitled to be treated in a particular way, having expectations of the partner that they cannot achieve, not being considerate of the health and wellbeing needs of the other person, not supporting family, children, elders in and around the home etc.	Not providing food, medicine, shelter, heating, or clothing, especially for older or disabled people, leaving children home alone, not getting medical attention or social services etc.

## Family violence is a crime in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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The Family Violence Act 2018 recognises that family violence is not always physical and includes coercive and controlling behaviours. It also includes patterns of abusive behaviours a person experience over a period of time as well as separate incidents of abuse.

Other forms of abuse and violence that are recognised by Aotearoa New Zealand law include:

### Child abuse

- It is considered psychological abuse to allow a child to see or hear family violence as this can have a harmful impact on their development and wellbeing. It is not the fault of the parent experiencing violence if the child witnesses it.
- Smacking or hitting children is against the law, as is emotional abuse, neglect, and any sexual contact with someone under 16 years.

### Underage and forced marriage

- It is illegal to marry if you are under 16 years old. It is also illegal to force someone to marry, including in a religious or cultural marriage.
- Under current legislation, a marriage or civil union ceremony cannot occur virtually. This means that any marriages occurring digitally or over the telephone will not be legally recognised in Aotearoa New Zealand.



**Children are also victims of family violence and abuse, whether the violence is directly aimed at them or not.**



### **Dowry-related abuse**

- Violence related to dowry is illegal and unacceptable in Aotearoa New Zealand under the Family Violence Act 2018.

### **Female genital mutilation/cutting**

- It is a crime to perform female genital mutilation in Aotearoa New Zealand or make any arrangements for a girl to leave the country for female genital mutilation to be carried out.

### **Conversion therapy**

It is illegal to perform conversion therapy:

- on anyone who is younger than 18, or who has reduced decision-making ability.
- on anyone, whatever their age, where this causes them serious harm.

The law protects people in relationships across every culture and community, including married couples, couples in civil unions, gay and lesbian couples, ex-partners, boyfriends and girlfriends, children and young people, flatmates and other people who share accommodation.

Police and other agencies take family violence seriously. They have people who can help, regardless of your cultural background or language. They can arrange for interpreters who speak your language. You do not have to leave your family to get help.

**We need to value each other, no matter which country we come from.**



**Our culture is our pride and a source of our identity but there is no excuse for abuse.**



Here are some things people say to excuse or justify violence, which can further trap people in abusive situations:

- You have brought shame on our family.
- You have breached the honour of our family.
- Young people should obey their elders.
- You are too much like a New Zealander. You must respect the old ways.
- This is just the way we do things.
- All women/men/children in our culture must do this.

Wherever family violence happens, people have found ways to excuse it culturally. But family violence is not ok in any community or culture.

## What can you do?

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We want all families  
to be safe and happy.




### If you are living with abuse, know that:

- It is not your fault. You do not need to feel ashamed or embarrassed.
- You have options available to help you and your family feel safe.
- You can talk to people you trust, including a friend, family member, colleague, teacher, carer, employer, health worker or a family violence-helping service.
- Help is free and confidential. You can call a helpline or service without giving your name. You can ask to speak to a woman doctor or Police officer.
- It is ok to ask for help.



If you, or someone you know, is in danger,  
**call 111** for the Police, even if you are not sure  
it's an emergency.



**Don't let anyone take away your sense of dignity and freedom to express who you want to be.**

## **If you are using violence**

Abusive behaviour is hurtful to others, but it can be hurtful to you too.

Violence is a choice, and everyone can learn to express and manage their feelings without hurting others.

Remember that you are not your behaviour and change is possible for anyone wanting to stop using violence or abuse.

## If you want to help someone else

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If you know someone who is experiencing family violence or abuse, you can support them to get help.




### You can:

- Believe them and respond with empathy.
- Honour their actions and support their decision-making.
- Tell them violence in the family is not ok, but it is ok to ask for help.
- Look out for children if they display signs of abuse.
- Talk about the services available and support them to find help.
- Leave the door open for ongoing conversations and stay connected.



Find out what support services are available on **page 16**.



Things can  
get better.

People living with violence need support to make decisions in their own time, when they are ready. It is important to go at their pace. Change can take a long time. **Don't give up.**

What you do and say can  
make a difference. Together  
we can stay strong and safe  
as a community.

## If you want change in your community

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If we want to stop family violence and abuse, we'll need to take action together as a community – including making it ok to talk about it.



### For change in your community, you can:

- Have a zero-tolerance position on family violence and abuse.
- Provide education on healthy relationships and behaviour change.
- Create safe spaces for survivors.
- Promote accountability for those using violence and support them with getting help to change their behaviour.
- Support and promote local family violence-prevention organisations.
- Challenge harmful gender norms and stereotypes in your everyday interactions.
- Support men to take a stand against family violence and abuse.
- Consider and respond to the support needs of our most marginalised or vulnerable groups, including women, children, young people, members of the rainbow community, disabled or older people, non-English speakers, and those in rural and isolated regions.





**We need to respect  
each other, especially  
within our families.**

We need community  
and faith leaders of all  
cultures to lead the way.

Each community  
knows what works  
best for them.

Towns, neighbourhoods,  
workplaces, schools,  
and faith and sports  
clubs all over Aotearoa  
New Zealand are taking  
action to prevent family  
violence and to promote  
safe and healthy families.

## Contacts and more information

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If you need support, advice or to talk to someone, contact:



### Police

- Dial 111 in an emergency
- Calls are free

If you are unable to speak, you will be asked to press 55 if you need emergency assistance.



### Shakti

- 0800 742 584
- 0800 SHAKTI
- Free 24-hour crisis line

Services for women, children, youth, and families of Asian, African, and Middle Eastern origin.



### Women's Refuge

- 0800 733 843
- 0800 REFUGE
- Free 24-hour crisis line

Information, advice, and support about domestic violence as well as help in a crisis. Can connect you to a local women's refuge.

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## Other services where you can find support and advice:



### Are You OK?

- 0800 456 450
- Free Family Violence Information Line
- [areyouok.org.nz](https://areyouok.org.nz)

Information about unsafe relationships, support available for you and how you can support others. Search online for services supporting youth, the rainbow community, disabled and older people.

### Hey Bro

- 0800 439 276
- 0800 HEY BRO
- Free 24-hour helpline

Supporting men to be free from violence.

### Bright Sky app

Scan the QR Code to download the Bright Sky app.





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This booklet was first developed by Shakti and the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) to look at the specific issues facing ethnic communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. Shakti is a family violence service working with Asian, African, and Middle Eastern communities across Aotearoa New Zealand. Established in 1995, Shakti provides culturally competent domestic violence services and promotes the rights of ethnic women and children.

The booklet has been updated by MSD, Shakti, and Te Puna Aonui Ethnic Community network members, which includes a range of organisations supporting Aotearoa's ethnic communities.