

If you believe your partner has a mental illness that is affecting their behaviour listed below are services that may be able to provide assistance, however it is not the responsibility of the victim to get them help.

If your partner treats you differently to others or you feel unsafe around your partner help is available from a variety of community and government organisations. Victims and perpetrators of violence may also be able to get assistance through their work places. Listed below are services that may be available to assist :

North Queensland Domestic Violence Resource Service
4721 2888

Womensline/DV Connect 24 hours
1800 811 811

Mensline/DV Connect
9am-Midnight
1800 600 636

1800 RESPECT 24hrs
1800 737 732

Women's Centre
4775 7555

Veterans & Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS)
4723 9155

NQDVRs

- ◆ **Information and referral**
- ◆ **AARDVARC program for children**
- ◆ **Resources**
- ◆ **Court Support**
- ◆ **Choosing Safety Upgrades program**
- ◆ **Men's Behaviour Change Program**
- ◆ **SAFE Dads Program**
- ◆ **Community education & Training**

TOWNSVILLE OFFICE

PO Box 6061, Townsville QLD 4810
Phone: 07 4721 2888 Fax: 07 4721 1794
nqdvrs @nqdvrs.org.au
1st Floor, Metway Arcade, 390 Flinders Street, Townsville

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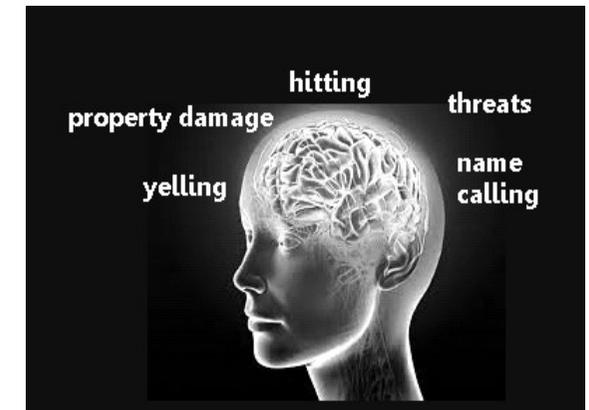
Po Box 502, Mt Isa QLD 4825
Phone: 07 4743 0946 Fax: 07 4743 7999
minqdvrs@nqdvrs.org.au
The Old Court House Building, Isa Street

<http://www.nqdvrs.org.au>

Against Violence #29



MENTAL ILLNESS & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



It's Complicated

NQDVRs
Funded by



Perpetrators of domestic violence use different tactics/excuses to minimise their abusive behaviours, such as mental illness.

Having a mental illness does not mean that they have no control over their behaviour. In 2007, one in five Australians aged 16–85 years had a mental disorder (Australian Bureau of Statistics /ABS 2008).

Many people with mental illness live productive and respectful lives without committing domestic violence and many mental illness symptoms do not include aggression and controlling behaviours.

It is important to note that certain mental illnesses can affect ones' thought/cognitive process causing individuals to become violent, however the individual's behaviour towards others tends to be non discriminatory, meaning that the person with a mental illness may be aggressive towards colleagues, friends, partners and family members and it is visible to others.

Perpetrators of domestic violence tend to be aggressive towards partners and family members with their abuse being covert/hidden, such as in the house where no one can witness the abuse. This behaviour indicates that the abuse can be controlled and is a behaviour they chose to perpetrate.

Victims of domestic violence cannot understand how someone they care for can choose to harm them in such aggressive and controlling ways. Due to this victims question their responsibility in the abuse and can blame themselves for the violence.

If you have concerns about your partner's behaviour towards you, ask yourself how does your partner treat other people, such as their friends, family and colleagues? Is it the same way they treat you? Often when in public or in front of others the perpetrator is charming to their partner and to others, however once no one is around their mood changes to another phase in the 'cycle of abuse'.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK.

- ◆ Have your partner's behaviours been diagnosed as a mental illness by their GP or by a psychologist? (self/web based diagnoses cannot be taken as a fact.
- ◆ Is your partner taking prescription medication for their mental illness?
- ◆ Has your partner stopped taking their medication?
- ◆ If your partner has spoken to their doctor and been diagnosed, has a safety plan been made?
- ◆ Was your partner abusive/aggressive before the traumatic event that may have resulted in their mental illness? Some victims say there was a history of violence towards them long before any trauma occurred to their partner.
- ◆ Does your partner's behaviour change depending on whom they are interacting with?

If someone is using violence, assistance is available, however it is not the responsibility of the victim to find the perpetrator help when the perpetrator is **choosing** to use violence.

Many victims of domestic violence can become confused and believe they can help stop the perpetrators violence and take the blame for when the violence continues. However victims are welcome to discuss available support through the difficult times.

EXAMPLES OF EXCUSES FOR BEING ABUSIVE

- ◆ I just lost it
- ◆ I am stressed/work has been really stressful
- ◆ You pushed my buttons
- ◆ I don't remember hitting you or calling you those names, I must have blacked out.
- ◆ I have been diagnosed with... (a mental illness)
- ◆ I am just not thinking right since the break up because I miss you so much
- ◆ I am depressed
- ◆ The thought of you being with someone else makes me angry