

Against Violence #9

Under the Domestic Violence [Family Protection] Act 2012, you can apply for a protection order to protect you, if your partner has hurt, harassed or intimidated you.

If you choose, you can still reside with your partner.

Facilitators of the Men's behaviour change program report that despite the damage done to the female partner, most of the women partners of the men in the group are hopeful that the man can change.

Some say they still love their partner, but can't live with his abuse any longer. Others say that so much damage has been done and so much trust lost, that the relationship is irreparable.

You can **choose** to have an equal and respectful relationship. You may have to consider whether a positive relationship is possible with your current partner.

The decision is yours.

Do you want to continue in your current relationship?

Can you see the violence stopping? How?

Will you be able to be yourself in this relationship and will your opinion be valued?

What help is available?

DVConnect: 1800 811 811
(24 hrs, 7 days, free call)

Women's Centre: 4775 7555

Men's Info Line: 1800 600 636
(Monday to Friday, 9-5, Free Call)

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

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"I still love him but I wish he would stop hurting me"



"Many of the women had no experience that would alert them to the dangers of their partner's effort to control them, especially when those efforts were disguised as a loving protection."

Ginny NiCarthy, 1987

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So, what is love?

Our view on love is formed through our experiences and what we have observed and learnt over time. We are all shaped by films, novels, songs, law and religion to believe that love has a "happy ever after" ending. We are brought up to believe that true, romantic love is everlasting. That we are powerless to stop the 'magic', and that the beast/frog will turn into a prince. Images like this can make us feel a failure when our relationship does not work out.

Women are also brought up to nurture and care for their family members. These attributes are important to help families grow and develop. However, at times the nurturing and caring feelings can make it difficult for women to hold their partner responsible for their partner's use of violence. Women who are abused may still care for him; worry about him; feel sad; mourn for the relationships and have many other confusing feelings.

A woman's love can get her to mistakenly take on responsibility for his behaviour. So she stays; to keep the family together, or because she can't imagine living alone or because he needs her or because he is the father of her kids or for many other

"Some women had little or no warning that they would be battered until they were married or otherwise entrenched in the relationship"

Ginny NiCarthy 1987

When a woman enters into a relationship, she would make that decision on the basis that she will find a loving relationship not an abusive one. A partnership requires love and care. In a positive relationship both partners would take equal responsibilities that include; honesty and accountability, respect, negotiation and fairness, trust and support, responsible parenting, non-threatening behaviour, economic partnership and shared responsibility.

Most women in abusive relationships are persuaded by their partners that the violent episodes against her are her fault, and she can then blame herself for being too selfish and thoughtless.

This is not true!-violence against you is not your responsibility.

Many women say that they want the relationship to last, but that they want the abuse to stop. When the violence doesn't stop, the woman faces the task of leaving the relationship, healing herself and the children and starting again. This can seem too difficult.

Loving an abusive man will make it hard to leave, but not impossible. Loving him may make you want to stay with him, but in the long run the most loving thing you may be able to do is separate, even if only temporarily. Who would want their loved ones to continue on a cycle of violence and remorse. Separation will interrupt that pattern.

The only person who can change a person's violent behaviour is that person himself. He needs to take responsibility for his behaviour. Is his love for you true enough for him to take that step or

"It is hard to imagine a man involved in a sharing, mutually supportive relationship with his family, who beats his wife, or abuses his children."

Christine Forsey