



ARE YOU OK?

**FAMILY
VIOLENCE
—IT'S NOT OK**

Family violence – it's not OK

Family violence affects all New Zealanders. It happens everywhere. This booklet has information for you if you are worried about:

- yourself and your relationship
- someone you know
- what's happening in your community.

New Zealand has high rates of family violence with 14 women, 7 men and 8 children killed on average each year by a family member. Half of New Zealand's murders each year are family violence. Police respond to a family violence incident every six minutes.

Family violence comes in many forms, not just physical abuse.





**IT IS OK
TO ASK
FOR HELP**



Healthy and unhealthy relationships

All relationships go through times of conflict and unhappiness. Sometimes it's hard to know what is OK and what isn't.

If one person uses power and fear to control the other, the relationship is not healthy and may be unsafe.

People living with someone who is violent often feel frightened. They feel as if they cannot be themselves because their actions, thoughts and choices are determined by the person who is controlling them.

It is OK to ask for help if:

- you are worried about your own relationship
- you are scared or frightened
- you don't like your own behaviour
- you are worried about someone else and want to help them
- you don't like the violence in your community.

For more information:

- talk to someone you trust – a friend, family member, neighbour, work mate, doctor
- visit www.areyouok.org.nz
- phone the It's not OK information line on 0800 456 450. It operates every day of the year from 9am to 11pm
- go to the 'help' section on [page 22](#).

Love, trust, respect

In a healthy relationship people feel:

- loved
- trusted
- respected
- safe.

They may say:

“We work things out together”

“I can be myself with my partner”

“I feel appreciated and loved”

“I can say what I think”





A photograph of two men sitting at a wooden table on a balcony, engaged in a conversation. The man on the left is seen from the back, wearing a light pink shirt. The man on the right is facing him, wearing a maroon t-shirt, with his hands clasped. In the background, there is a white balcony railing, some potted plants, and laundry hanging on a line. A house with a green roof is visible in the distance.

**IF YOU WANT TO CHANGE
YOUR BEHAVIOUR, HELP
IS AVAILABLE**



What is not OK

No matter what your age or gender, **it's never OK** if your partner or any member of your family:

- scares or intimidates you with words or actions
- makes you feel like everything you do is wrong
- insists you have to agree with what they say
- constantly criticises you or your friends
- humiliates you in front of your friends
- makes you isolated and alone
- forces you to have sex or do other sexual acts you don't want to do
- makes you drink or take drugs when you don't want to
- drives unsafely to frighten you
- hits, pushes, bites or pulls your hair
- blames everything on you
- threatens the safety of family members
- frequently accuses you of sleeping with other people
- threatens to take the children away if you say anything
- damages property/walls/possessions to scare you
- keeps your money from you.

Angry feelings are OK. But hurting others because you are angry is not OK.

We all get angry at times. We get upset and frustrated with our friends, family members, partners and workmates.

Anger is an emotion, not a behaviour. Everyone can learn to manage their feelings without hurting other people.

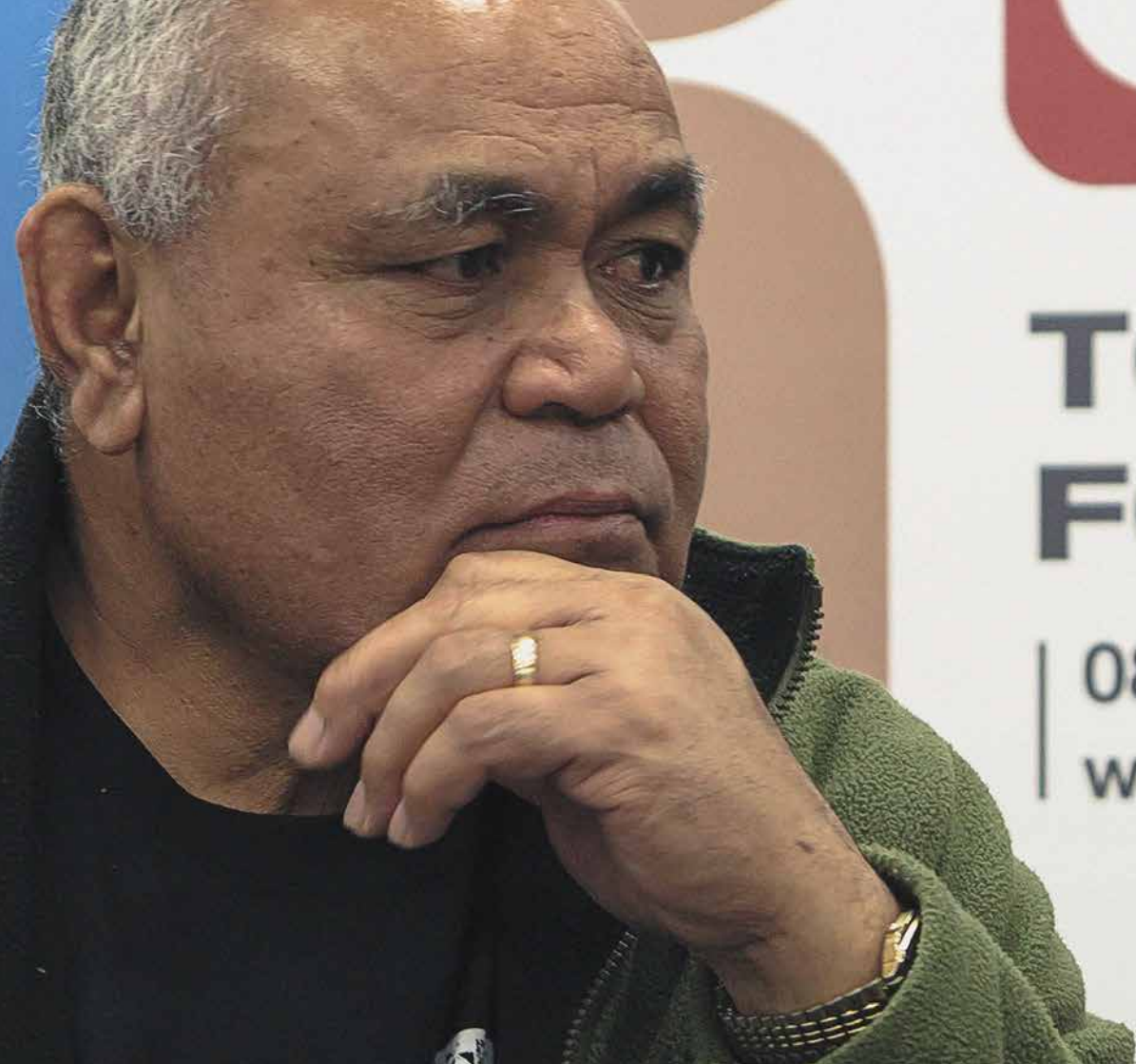
It is OK to take time out.

Time out is a useful tool whether you are a partner or a parent. It helps to stop you or the situation getting out of hand.

It means you leave the situation, go to another room in the house or leave the house altogether and stay away until you are calm.

Doing something physical like walking, running, gardening or house cleaning can help.

If your family is scared of you, or if people are telling you that your behaviour needs to change please listen carefully to them and get help.



**TO ASK
FOR HELP**

| 0800 456 456
| www.areyou.org

**IT IS OK
TO TAKE
TIME OUT**





There is no excuse for violence

Often people who are violent use excuses. They say things like: “But it only happens when... he’s drinking, she’s stoned, he’s tired, she says no...”

It’s common for someone to be sorry after they’ve hit or abused their partner. It’s common for someone who hits you once to hit you again.

But no one has the right to frighten or control another person. It takes more than being sorry to change the behaviours and attitudes that lead to violence.

Sorry isn’t enough. Help is available.

Are you at risk?

It can be hard to know how serious your situation is. If you are frightened about being hurt, it is already serious.

You are at risk of serious harm if your partner:

- threatens to hurt you, your children or themselves
- uses weapons
- has strangled or attempted to strangle/choke you
- is hitting you
- follows you everywhere and tries to control what you do
- has abused animals, especially pets
- uses lots of drugs and alcohol

- has a history of violence
- is unpredictable and frightens you
- says things like “I can’t live without you” or “If I can’t have the kids no one can.”

After you leave a relationship can be the most dangerous time. Most family violence murders in New Zealand happen following separation.

If your partner is very jealous or angry about you leaving, you may be at risk of being hurt.

If you are worried about your safety, help is available. If you want to change your behaviour, help is available.



**IF YOU ARE UNSURE
ABOUT WHAT TO DO
GET SOME ADVICE**



**A LIFE WITHOUT
VIOLENCE IS
POSSIBLE**



If you are scared

There are things you can do now to keep you and your children safe:

- tell people you trust about what is happening and ask for their help
- keep in touch with people – don't get isolated
- have a code word you can use to let friends and family know you need help
- stay somewhere else when you think your partner might hurt you
- leave the house as soon as the situation feels unsafe. If you need an excuse to leave the house, think of one now so you have it ready
- remember the number for Police (**111** in New Zealand)
- save and hide some cash for a taxi so you can get away

- ask your neighbours to call the police if they see or hear that something is wrong.

If you are in immediate danger call the Police on **111**, or ask neighbours or friends to ring for you.

Or:

- go outside to where there are other people
- scream for help – let the neighbours hear you
- take the children with you
- don't stop to get anything else.



Violence affects children

It's not OK for children and young people to experience violence whether they are victims or witnesses.

Research shows that violence in the home affects children whether they see it, hear it or just know about it. Child abuse is most often linked to partner abuse.

Child abuse includes:

- verbal abuse such as name calling and putdowns
- sexual abuse
- neglect such as not enough food, warm clothing, shelter or health care
- physical abuse such as hitting, burning and pulling hair.

Children need adults to keep them safe.

To thrive, children need to grow up in safe homes where they are listened to and protected. If you are worried about a child don't ignore it. Speak to the parents or alert social services.

Don't be afraid to offend an adult in order to protect a child.





Supporting others

If you know someone who is being hurt or is hurting other people, don't ignore it. Often people feel isolated and ashamed – your support could be vital.

If someone tells you they feel unsafe, believe them. If someone tells you that they are worried about their own behaviour, listen to them.

What can you do:

- start the conversation. However hard it is for you, it will be harder for them.
'I'm worried about what I'm seeing and hearing. Do you want to talk?'
- listen without judging. Talking about what you've seen and heard is better than giving your opinion.
'I heard loud voices the other night' rather than 'you were having a screaming match the other night'
- offer help as a statement not a question:
'I'd like to help' rather than 'Can I help?'
- talk about the behaviour not the person
- use this booklet to start a conversation or for them to read
- talk to other people such as family and friends, they may also be able to help

- offer practical help:
'I'm happy to look after the kids'
'I'm here if you need somewhere to go'
'You can ring me anytime – I really mean that'
- if you are worried about someone you don't really know such as a neighbour, start by introducing yourself or inviting them over.

If you see someone being hurt or threatened:

- ask if they are OK
- say 'stop, leave them alone'
- shout out for help
- call the Police on **111**.

If you are unsure about what to do or how to support someone, get some advice.

It is our problem

Family violence happens everywhere and affects all New Zealanders. It is everyone's business. You don't have to know someone affected by family violence to make a difference.

You can be part of changing the way New Zealanders think and act about family violence:

- take action in your neighbourhood
- make your own family safe and violence free
- speak out when you hear and see things you are concerned about
- know who can help
- use your community networks. Think about what your church, school, club or workplace could do.

For ideas on how to get involved go to www.areyouok.org.nz and facebook.com/ItsNotOK



Help is available

Ask for help from someone you trust – friend, family member, doctor, employer or colleague.

Phone the It's not OK information line on **0800 456 450**.

For concerns about child abuse and neglect contact Child, Youth and Family on **0508 326 459**.

Ask for help from a family service.

Find out what's available at www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory

If you have experienced abuse or violence you can get legal protection. Go to a family violence service, a lawyer or the Family Court for information about protection orders www.justice.govt.nz

In many communities there are organisations that work specifically with Maori, Pacific, refugee and migrant communities.

Before you decide where to go for help find out:

- what family violence experience the service or person has
- what will it cost
- what type of service is offered – will you be part of a group or seen individually, as a couple or as a family.

In an emergency phone Police on **111**.

For more information phone the
It's not OK information line on
0800 456 450

For concerns about child abuse
and neglect contact **Child, Youth
and Family** on **0508 326 459**



www.areyouok.org.nz

New Zealand Government