

# **Violence and domestic abuse Information for disabled people**



## **Easy Read information**

## Are you scared of someone close to you?



Do you think someone treats you badly because of your disability?

Many disabled people have problems with:

- being scared at home
- being scared of someone close.



Violence and domestic abuse can be:

- someone not listening to you when you are speaking up
- someone not helping you when they know you need it





- someone saying bad things to you
- sexual abuse
- someone physically hurting you.



Abuse can be from strangers but also from:

- family/ whanau
- support people
- men
- women.



Both men and women are victims of domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse is when a family member or someone in your home hurts you.



Women are abused a lot more than men.



**This booklet is written to help disabled people.**

It will give you information to help keep yourself safe.



**There are emergency phone numbers at the end of the book if you need help right now.**

This information is also helpful for:

- support people and caregivers
- staff working in domestic violence.



This information will:



- help people understand more about disabled people and domestic violence and abuse



- help people know what to do when someone says they have been abused or hurt.

Keep in mind:



- you cannot always see someone's disability
- people can have more than one disability



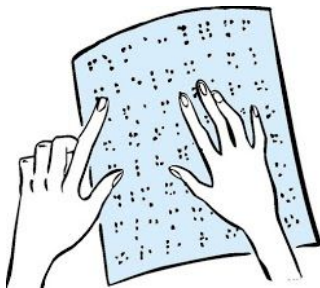
- some disabilities get worse as people get older
- some disabilities come and go.

Disability can be from:



- an accident
- having an illness
- birth
- genetics
- having a very bad or frightening experience
- getting older.

Disability can change how someone:



- moves around
- sees, hears or feels the world
- thinks.



## Are you being treated badly?



Disabled people are often treated badly or differently by other groups of people just because of their disability.



This can make it very hard for disabled people to be:

- listened to
- believed
- helped.

**If you talk to someone about getting abused or hurt and they do not believe you  
- keep talking to people until someone  
does believe you.**

## Some of the wrong ideas others have about disabled people are:



- people are making up their disabilities
- because you have a disability you cannot do anything



- people are their disability - you are “a wheelchair”
- if a disabled person does something for themselves or to help someone else they make a big deal of it like they have done something amazing



- disabled people always need help.

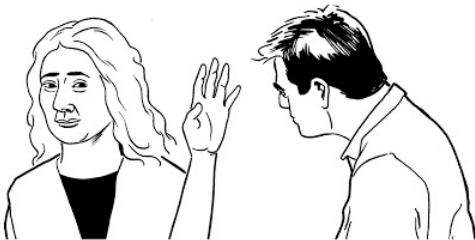


## What is domestic violence?



Domestic violence can be:

- punching
- slapping
- pushing
- pulling hair.



Domestic violence can also be:

- mental
- emotional
- sexual
- with your money
- about religious or spiritual beliefs.

## Who is abusing or hurting you?



Disabled people often have people in their lives helping and supporting them.



These people are usually:

- family members
- friends
- paid caregivers
- support staff.



New Zealand law says that domestic violence is when one person hurts someone they live with.



This means that the abuse could be done by:

- a husband or wife or partner
- another family member
- someone else you live with
- someone you have a close personal relationship with (it does not have to be a sexual relationship).

Your family could include:



- husband or wife
- mum or dad
- brother or sister
- aunties or uncles
- grandparents
- people from your wife, husband or partners family
- girlfriend or boyfriend
- a flatmate
- someone living in the same place as you.



There are other kinds of abuse but they are not called domestic violence.

**Whoever does it - it is all abuse.**



The abusers often have power or control over the person they hurt.

This could be because:

- they are in charge of some parts of that person's life
- they are the main caregiver
- they are stronger
- they can talk
- they are over-protective.



None of these things make it OK to abuse or hurt someone.

## Are you being treated badly?



Disabled people said some of these things have been said or done to them:

- been threatened to have their children taken off them



- been put down and made to feel bad



- not given food and medicine
- given too much medicine



- had money stolen off them
- made to do sexual things that they do not want to do



- not been allowed to have a doctor's visit on their own
- been forced to get rid of a pregnancy



- been given an operation without permission so they cannot ever have a baby
- made to feel horrible in front of other people



- always being checked up on
- others having control over who they can spend time with and who can be their friends .



Abuse can be when someone does:



- something to hurt, frighten or upset you
- not look after you properly, like not giving you your medicine or meals.

Some of the excuses people say when they get caught abusing someone is:



- it was an accident
- it was not my fault- the disabled person made me do it
- the disabled person is telling lies.



People who have been abusing you can also be really nice to you afterwards.



There is help for you if you are scared of your:

- husband, wife or partner
- family member
- caregiver
- support person
- flatmate.



**See the back page of this book for phone numbers to ring to get help.**

**Here are some questions about domestic violence and abuse for you to answer.**

	<b>Does/ Did someone in your family or home:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>1.</b>	Hurt you		
<b>2.</b>	Leave bruises on you		
<b>3.</b>	Control what you say or do		
<b>4.</b>	Put you down and make you feel bad		
<b>5.</b>	Check up on you all the time: need to always know where you are and what you are doing		
<b>6.</b>	Stop you from seeing your family and friends		
<b>7.</b>	Hurt your pets or working animals if you do not do as they say		
<b>8.</b>	Tell you other people will not believe you if you speak up about the abuse or being hurt		
<b>9.</b>	Control your money		
<b>10.</b>	Not give you the personal care support that you need when you need and ask for it		
<b>11.</b>	Make you feel scared to say <b>NO</b> to them or disagree with them		
<b>12.</b>	Tell other people that you get confused and make up stories		
<b>13.</b>	Scare you with the way they act - like breaking things, locking you in or driving dangerously		
<b>14.</b>	Make you do sexual things that you do not want to		
<b>15.</b>	Say they have to be with you in your doctor's appointment		
<b>16.</b>	Say they will hurt your children		
<b>17.</b>	Say they will take your children away from you		
<b>18.</b>	Tell you that there will be no one to help you if you leave the relationship		

<b>19.</b>	Tell you that you will have to live in a residential service if you complain or do not do as you are told		
<b>20.</b>	Say they will hurt you if you want to end the relationship		
<b>21.</b>	Say they will take away your food and belongings		

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Have your children ever seen this happening to you or been hurt by someone in your family home?</b>		

**If you have answered yes to any of these questions you may need to get help for domestic violence**

## Who can you talk to?

You need to talk to someone:

- you trust
- who will listen
- who will believe you
- who will be careful with your information
- who will respect your choices and decisions.



It can feel hard to ask for help.

It can be scary talking about abuse.



People find it hard to talk about abuse because they:

- are scared it will get worse
- are scared their children will get hurt
- worry the family might fall apart





- are scared of being poor
- do not know where to go to get help
- do not feel good about themselves.



For disabled people there are extra fears about reporting abuse.

Disabled people:

- are scared their caregiver will leave
- are scared they will be made to live somewhere they do not want to
- may not be able to communicate well and might not have the technology they need to speak up







- do not get the same kind of support from regular domestic abuse support services that help people who are abused
- do not always have a lot of people in their lives
- find it hard to get transport.



The biggest problem for disabled people is others not being aware.



People often do not believe abuse happens to disabled people.

## Could this really be happening to me?

It can be hard to believe that you are being abused because:



- the person hurting you is also really nice and loving to you
- you love or depend on the person who is abusing you and you are scared of what life would be like without them.



It is a sign of abuse if:

- you are afraid of upsetting the person
- you change what you do to make sure they do not get angry with you.



**Remember:** if you are being abused, it is not your fault.

Just because someone has treated you badly it is not because of you.



The person who abused you is the person in the wrong.

You are not to blame for the abuse.



It is your right to feel safe to live your life and not be scared of the people in it.

## Getting help



Talk to someone you trust about how you are feeling.

Write down:



- when the abuse has been happening
- what has been happening.



It is important to speak up if you are being abused.

Telling someone is the first step to getting help and making it stop.

## What can I do to keep myself safe?



When the abuse is happening:

- call 111 and ask for the police
- leave if you can
- if you cannot leave try and get someone's attention outside the house
- move to a part of the house where you can get out easily
- do not go to the kitchen or workshop because there are sharp knives and tools there





- make a plan of where you are going to go if you leave the house - neighbour, family, friend



- it might be safer to just try and calm the abuser down and leave at a later time.



## Planning ahead for safety?



Trust yourself and know you have the right to be respected and feel safe.



Make a safety plan that you can use when violence or abuse is happening:

- know what transport you can use to get away
- have important paperwork together (birth certificate, bank account numbers, passports etc) and leave it at a trusted person's house





- have together spare car keys, clothes, food for your working animal, medicine and any other important things and leave it with your trusted person



- keep a phone with you at all times and have 111 on speed dial
- have a special code to say/ text/ message to friends to tell them you need the police straight away



- delete your messages on the TTY message service, emails, and computer history (look on any domestic violence site for information on how to do it).

## Staying safe



When you get yourself to a safe place there are some things you can do.

If the abuser is a caregiver or support person you can report the abuse to the:

- the person's boss
- the police.



If the abuser is a family member or flatmate you can get a Protection Order which means by law they have to stay away from you.



Keep a list of contact numbers in a safe place.



Try to do things at different times each day so that it is harder for the person who hurt you to know where you will be.



Have caller identification on your phone.

Contact your local domestic violence agency.

## Are you safe right now?



No  Ring the police  
on 111.

Yes

You can contact these places for  
help and advice:



**It's Not OK Family Violence**

Information Line: 0800 456 450

Website: [www.areyouok.org.nz](http://www.areyouok.org.nz)



**2SHINE National Helpline**

Phone: 0508 744 633



The local **Age Concern** (phone  
number in phone book)



The local **Needs Assessment and Service Coordination/ NASC** has a 24 hour emergency phone number.



**Enable New Zealand** can help you find your local Needs Assessment and Service Coordination/ NASC

- phone: 0800 171 981
- website [www.enable.co.nz](http://www.enable.co.nz)



Your local **Community Law Centre:**

[www.communitylaw.org.nz](http://www.communitylaw.org.nz)

**Auckland Disability Law**

- email: [info@adl.org.nz](mailto:info@adl.org.nz)
- phone: 09 257 5140
- cell phone 027 457 5140
- [www.aucklanddisabilitylaw.org.nz](http://www.aucklanddisabilitylaw.org.nz)





## **New Zealand Relay Service**

To help with communication if you are deaf or hard of hearing:

- non emergency calls 0800 4 711 711
- [www.nzrelay.co.nz](http://www.nzrelay.co.nz)



## **Family Services Directory**

- [www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory](http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory)

**You should be able to use the internet for free  
at your local library to look at any of these  
websites**



This information has been translated into Easy Read  
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