

## Do you need assistance?

If you or someone you know is experiencing family and domestic violence, call the Safe Steps FREE 24/7 crisis support service on **1800 015 188** to speak to a Family Violence Crisis Specialist.

**If you have trouble talking or hearing, use the National Relay Service (NRS):**

Phone **1800 555 690** and ask for **1800 015 188**

If you need a language interpreter call: **131 450**

For more information about Safe Steps and the Disability Family Violence Crisis Response Initiative (DFVCR) visit our website at [safesteps.org.au](https://safesteps.org.au)

At Safe Steps we talk about family and domestic violence which also includes violence in intimate partner relationships and queerplatonic relationships. This is to acknowledge that people who need support may have experienced violence in a domestic relationship, or from family of origin, or while dating. Anyone who has experienced these and other sorts of relationship violence can contact us.

Safe Steps is proudly Rainbow Tick accredited, reflecting our commitment to providing a safe and inclusive environment for the LGBTIQ+ community. Safe Steps recognise and respect people of all genders, sexes, and sexualities. We are committed to improving access and inclusion for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual people seeking our support and are dedicated to ongoing improvement in being a safe and inclusive service and workplace for the LGBTIQ+ community.

## How Safe Steps can support you

When you contact the Safe Steps 24/7 crisis support service on **1800 015 188** or via live chat at [safesteps.org.au/live-chat](https://safesteps.org.au/live-chat), you will speak to one of our Family Violence Crisis Specialists.

### Our Family Violence Crisis Specialists can:

- Assess your risks, and explore options to increase your safety, whether you want to stay in the relationship, with your family/carer or leave
- Refer you to LGBTIQ+ services that can provide specialist supports
- Create a personal safety plan designed to keep you and your children safe
- Assess eligibility for, and organise access to safe crisis accommodation for you, your children and any pets, following risk assessment findings and accommodation availability
- Support you with how you may be able to stay in your home with your children:
  - if it is safe to do so
  - when the abuser is required by law to leave
- Explain your legal rights and entitlements including connecting you with Victoria Police or helping you to apply for an intervention order

Call Safe Steps 24 hours a day,  
7 days a week on

**1800 015 188**

Email: [safesteps@safesteps.org.au](mailto:safesteps@safesteps.org.au)

Livechat: [safesteps.org.au/live-chat](https://safesteps.org.au/live-chat)

Visit our website: [safesteps.org.au](https://safesteps.org.au)



# Who is Safe Steps?

**Safe Steps is Victoria's statewide 24/7 family and domestic violence crisis response service.**

We offer support to anyone who needs to escape family and domestic violence and live free from abuse. We handle around 130,000 contacts a year (phone, email, live chat) and provide around 33,000 nights of crisis accommodation.

## **If you or someone you know needs help:**

Call Safe Steps for confidential support and information on **1800 015 188**.

## **Interpreter and Disability services are available**

Safe Steps is an LGBTIQ+ friendly and culturally respectful service. We are committed to helping any person experiencing family and domestic violence.



This brochure is available in alternate formats. For an accessible version, email [disability@safesteps.org.au](mailto:disability@safesteps.org.au) and for other language options go to [safesteps.org.au](http://safesteps.org.au).

# What is family and domestic violence?

Family and domestic violence is any threatening or abusive behaviour that makes you feel scared or unsafe and occurs between people in a family or intimate relationship.

This behaviour doesn't have to be violent, but, if the behaviour causes you to fear for your safety or the safety of another person, it is time to call Safe Steps.

Family and domestic violence can affect anyone in any type of relationship including:

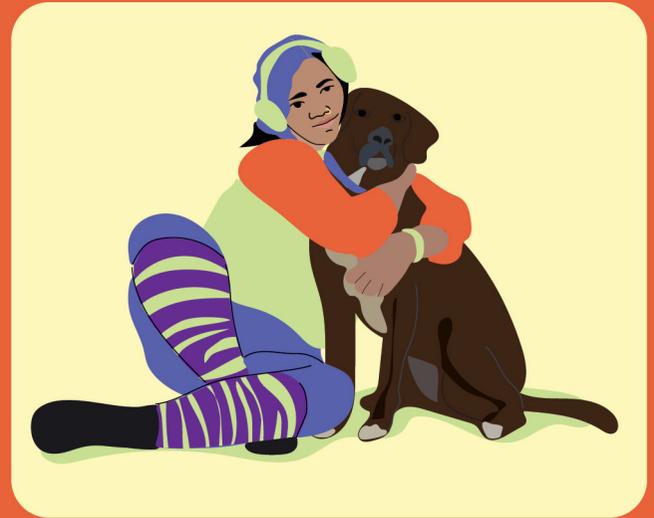
- Past or current intimate relationships, including relationships where you are dating or living together
- Queerplatonic relationships
- Relationships involving carers of people with a disability, a medical condition, or elders
- Relationships that include relatives and guardians
- Culturally recognised family groups

# Family and domestic violence in the LGBTIQ+ community

Safe Steps recognises that individuals within the LGBTIQ+ community may experience increased risk and additional obstacles when seeking support.

It's important to recognise that intersecting systems of inequality and discrimination can influence the experiences of family and domestic violence within the LGBTIQ+ community.

For LGBTIQ+ people, family and domestic violence is likely to be both similar and different to that experienced by heterosexual and cisgendered people.



Family and domestic violence experienced by the LGBTIQ+ community can include:

- Physical and sexual abuse
- Emotional and psychological abuse
- Homo/bi/intersex/trans/aphobia
- Rejection by family of origin
- Being denied access to gender affirming care or hormone treatment (including withholding medication)
- Financial abuse, such as withholding money or not allowing you to work
- Controlling what you can and can't do
- Threatening to "out" someone
- Threatening to share someone's HIV status without consent
- Threatening you or your loved ones including children, pets or other family members
- Isolating you from family, friends and community
- Spiritual or religious-motivated abuse or isolation
- Refusing to use someone's pronouns or accept their gender identity/expression
- Forcing concealment of sexuality and/or gender identity
- Destroying your personal belongings