



Meeting of

Attorneys-General



Our National Principles on coercive control

An Easy Read guide



How to use this guide



The Australian Government Attorney-General's Department (AGD) wrote this guide.

When you see the word 'we', it means AGD.



We wrote this information in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Bold

We wrote some important words in **bold**.

Not bold

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these bold words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 32.



This Easy Read guide is a summary of another document. This means it only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other document on our website.

<https://consultations.ag.gov.au/families-and-marriage/coercive-control>



You can ask for help to read this guide.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.



In this guide we talk about some things that might:

- upset you
- make you feel worried.



You can talk to someone about how you feel.

You can also get support if you experience coercive control.

We explain who you can talk to on page 28.



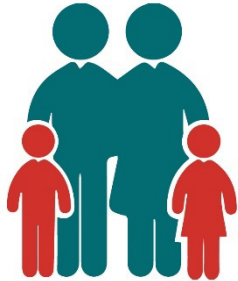


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What is domestic and family violence?

Domestic and family violence is when you are hurt by someone close to you, such as:



- your partner
- a member of your family
- someone who takes care of you
- someone you live with.



There are many types of domestic and family violence.

It can happen when someone:



- hurts your body
- treats you badly
- makes you do sexual things you don't want to
- controls your money.



Coercive control is often a big part of domestic and family violence.



It can include when someone controls:

- who you talk to
- where you go
- your money.



But not everyone understands what coercive control is.

That's why we need **principles**.



Principles are important ideas that tell us how to make things better.

What are our principles?



We wrote the draft National Principles to make sure we all understand what coercive control is.

In this guide we just call them our principles.



We have 8 principles.



They will help us know what everyone must do to respond to coercive control.

And they will help governments when they make their own plans to address coercive control.



We used up-to-date information from all around Australia to write our principles.



But before we start using them, we want to hear from the community.

We want to make sure they will work well for everyone.

On the following pages we explain:

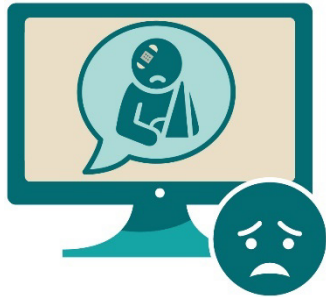


- our principles



- how to tell us what you think.





When someone uses coercive control, they might:

- hurt your body
- say they will hurt your body
- make you feel scared or bad about yourself.

They might also:



- take your phone away



- always want to know where you are



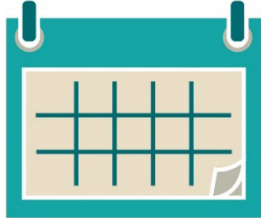
- not let you use your money



- tell you what to wear.



Coercive control can be a big part of someone's experience of domestic and family violence.



People who use coercive control treat another person badly over a period of time.



They do this to give themselves power.

And to control the other person.

Coercive control can include:



- physical violence



- other behaviour that is not physical.
For example, **emotional abuse**.



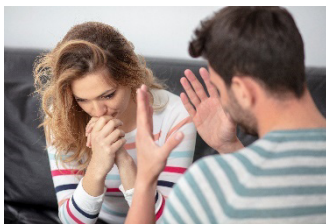
Emotional abuse is when someone:



- says mean things to you
- calls you names
- puts you down
- ignores you
- stops you from seeing your friends or family.



Every person's experience of coercive control can be different.



Most of the time coercive control happens:

- in a romantic relationship
- when a man controls a woman.



Coercive control can affect people of all **genders**.



Your gender is what you feel and understand about who you are as a person.

It isn't about whether your body looks male or female.





Coercive control can affect people of all **sexualities**.



Your sexuality is who you are attracted to.



Coercive control can affect people from all **cultures** and backgrounds.

Your culture is:



- your way of life
- how you think or act now because of how you grew up
- your beliefs
- what is important to you.



Coercive control can affect people of different ages, including children and young people.





It can also happen in different types of relationships, not just romantic ones.



For example:

- a family member
- someone you live with
- someone who looks after you.



Domestic and family violence happens when people have bad **attitudes** towards women.

This includes coercive control.



Attitudes are what you think, feel and believe.



For example, when people think men and boys should be treated differently to women and girls.

Or when people think men are better at doing things than women.





Coercive control affects people when they experience it.

But it can also affect them for a long time afterwards.



It can affect a person's whole life, including:

- how safe they feel
- their wellbeing.



And it can take away their confidence in themselves.



Coercive control can get worse over time.

It can even lead to someone being killed by their partner.



It can also be harder for someone to leave a relationship when their partner is using coercive control.



Coercive control can keep going after a relationship ends.

It doesn't always stop when the relationship does.



And coercive control can get worse:

- while someone is leaving their partner
- after they leave the relationship.



3. What the community knows about coercive control



As a community, we haven't always understood coercive control.



In the past, the community has focused on:

- physical violence
- one act of violence at a time.



But sometimes coercive control is not physical violence.

And sometimes it is many small acts over time.



This means coercive control hasn't always been treated the right way in the **justice system**.



The justice system includes the police, courts and the law.



People who use coercive control often:

- control a person
- stop them from seeing other people.



This can make it hard for people who experience coercive control to:

- recognise that it is coercive control
- get support.



Community attitudes can also make it harder for people to speak up about coercive control.



It's important to make sure these things don't stop people from getting the support they need.



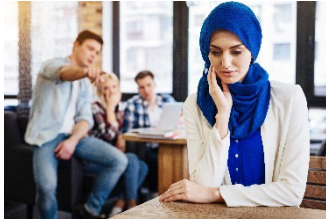
And it's important for the community to:

- recognise coercive control
- understand how to stop it.

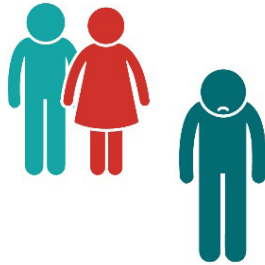


4.

The effects of treating people differently



Some people are treated differently because of something about them that they can't change.



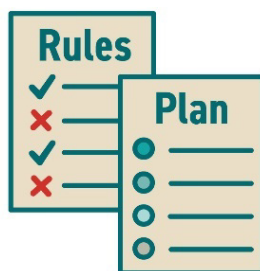
And some people are treated badly because of these things.

We call this **discrimination**.

For example, people might experience this because of their:



- gender
- sexuality
- culture.



This might happen in rules or plans.



Or it might happen in:

- the community
- an organisation
- a service.



When this happens, it can affect how someone experiences coercive control.



It can make the coercive control worse.



It can stop them from getting support, including:

- speaking up
- asking for help.

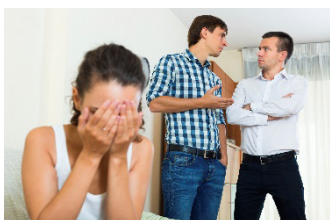




Or it can affect the type of support they get.



When someone does the wrong thing, discrimination can make them feel like they have a lot of power.



This behaviour can also lead to people making a mistake.

For example, they might think that a person experiencing coercive control is actually the person using domestic and family violence.



Governments must think about these things when they make any plans to address coercive control.



5.

Respecting lived experience

When someone has **lived experience** of coercive control, they:



- have experienced coercive control



- know what life can be like for people who experience coercive control



- can share what happened to them to help others.



Lived experience is important because it helps us make sure we support people well.



This includes working with children and young people who have lived experience.



It's important to listen to people with lived experience when we make plans to address coercive control.





All governments must work together to:

- stop coercive control before it happens
- respond to coercive control
- support people who experience it.



To do this, we must all understand coercive control in the same way.



People from different areas and services must work together to support people who experience coercive control.

This includes:



- government services
- the community
- businesses
- families.



There isn't one way to address coercive control.

But everyone should work together to make sure services work well.



What we do should:

- be based on research
- think about what people need
- not just focus on one small area.



And it should focus on:

- education
- training.





Each state and territory government can decide if coercive control should be a crime.



When they do this, they should think about:

- how the law would work
- how it works with our principles.



And they should also recognise that this is only one part of addressing coercive control.

8. Making sure this works well



If state and territory governments decide to make coercive control a crime, they should make sure they protect people who experience it.



Making coercive control a crime should not:

- make things harder for people who experience coercive control
- make them worry more
- put them at risk.



Governments should also think about how to stop the law affecting the wrong people.

For example, making sure people who experience coercive control don't get in trouble.



And they should think about protecting people who are more at risk.



This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

How to tell us what you think



We want to know what you think about our principles.



This includes:

- how we could tell people about our principles
- what you think we should change.

We also want to know if you think our principles will help people to:



- recognise coercive control
- understand how to stop it
- support people who have experienced it.

You can tell us what you think by filling out a survey on our website.



<https://consultations.ag.gov.au/families-and-marriage/coercive-control>



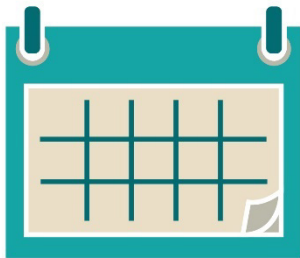
You can also send us an email.

coercivecontrol@ag.gov.au



If you need support to have your say, you can call us.

02 6141 5201



Please tell us what you think by 11 November 2022.



Help and support



There are people and services who can support you.



You can talk to someone you trust, such as a:

- family member
- friend.



There are also organisations who can help.

We have included some free services below.



If you're in an emergency now, call Triple Zero.

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1800 RESPECT



1800 RESPECT can support you if you are experiencing domestic and family violence.



You can call them any time.

1800 737 732



You can visit their website.

www.1800respect.org.au

Lifeline



If anything in this guide has upset you, Lifeline can support you.



You can call them any time.

13 11 14



You can also visit their website.

www.lifeline.org.au

13YARN



13YARN is a support service run by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



You can call them any time.

13 92 76



You can also visit their website.

www.13yarn.org.au



National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline



You can use this hotline to report:

- violence against people with disability
- someone treating a person with disability badly.



You can call them.

1800 880 052

They are open:

- 9 am to 9 pm, Monday to Friday
- 10 am to 4 pm on weekends and public holidays.

MensLine Australia



MensLine Australia supports men with their behaviour and wellbeing.



You can call them any time.

1300 78 99 78



You can visit their website.

www.mensline.org.au



National Relay Service



If you need support to speak or listen, you can use the National Relay Service.



You can call them any time.

1800 555 660



Then you can give them the phone number you want them to call.



You can also visit their website.

www.relayservice.com.au

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)



If you speak a language other than English,

TIS can help you:

- talk to someone
- understand what they are saying.



You can call TIS any time.

131 450



You can visit their website.

www.tisnational.gov.au



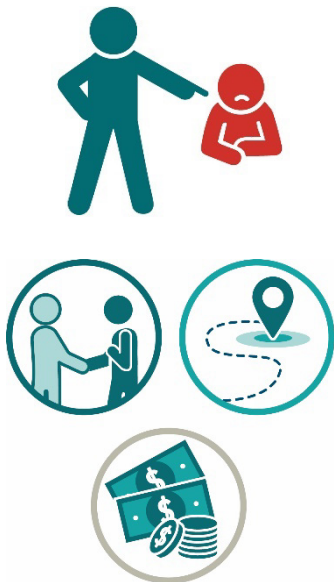
Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.



Attitude

Attitudes are what you think, feel and believe.



Coercive control

Coercive control is often a big part of domestic and family violence.

It can include when someone controls:

- who you talk to
- where you go
- your money.

Culture

Your culture is:

- your way of life
- how you think or act now because of how you grew up
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Discrimination

Some people are treated badly because of things about them that they can't change.

We call this discrimination.

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Justice system

The justice system includes the police, courts and the law.

Lived experience

When someone has lived experience of coercive control, they:



- have experienced coercive control



- know what life can be like for people who experience coercive control



- can share what happened to them to help others.





Principles

Principles are important ideas that tell us how to make things better.



Sexualities

Your sexuality is who you are attracted to.





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