



## More on power and control within a relationship

Power in relationships can be unequal, with one person having more of a say or getting what they want more often. This can also change at different times, or in relation to different issues. Sometimes people use unhealthy means to try to gain power or control their relationships. These can be unintentional and unconscious, and learned from your own past family life. Some people are aware of their unhealthy use of power, but it suits them to operate this way.

Our culture has in the past supported male authority and power; however this has shifted to be more equal now. The way people handle feelings of irritability and anger also relates to their use of power. Feelings of anger need to be understood and listened to, and we can learn good ways to handle it so it doesn't hurt others or ourselves. Violent behaviour (physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, financial, etc.) is a different thing, and is never ok. The following is a list of the sorts of behaviours that are classified as family violence;

- » Physical – hitting, punching, kicking, slapping, choking, etc. and/or using any type of weapons. All threats of physical violence are unacceptable and should be taken seriously every time.
- » Sexual – any non-consenting sexual act or behaviour; any unwanted or disrespectful sexual touch act (with or without threats of other violence) including forced viewing of pornography.
- » Using coercion and threats – telling the person/ children/pets and/or property will be hurt or damaged.
- » Emotional/ Psychological /Verbal Abuse – using words and other strategies to insult, threaten, degrade, and abuse the victim.
- » Using intimidation – making a person afraid by using intimidating looks, actions or gestures.
- » Using children, for example, by making the other parent feel guilty about the children; threatening to take the children away, or to report the partner to Child Protection authorities unnecessarily.
- » Economic abuse – controlling and withholding access to family resources such as money and property.
- » Using isolation – controlling what the partner does, who the partner sees and talks to, what she or he reads and where they go.

Sourced from: <http://www.relationships.org.au/relationship-advice/relationship-advice-topics/relationship-difficulties/misuse-of-power-and-control-in-relationships>

If you think that you are being abused or are a the victim of family violence there is help available.

Please call 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732): 24 hour, National Sexual Assault, Family & Domestic Violence Counselling Line for any Australian who has experienced, or is at risk of, family and domestic violence and/or sexual assault.

If you feel that your relationship could be at risk of family violence seek help through counselling either via phone, online or face to face, see our support section.