



RED FLAGS

Recognising warning signs
of an unhealthy relationship

A close-up, high-resolution photograph of a woman's face, focusing on her right eye. The eye is brown and has a clear reflection of a small, brightly lit object, possibly a camera lens or a light source, on its surface. The skin around the eye is fair and shows some natural texture. The background is blurred, showing hints of other people and lights, suggesting a social or public setting.

**WITHOUT
RESPECT,
LOVE IS LOST.**

RELATIONSHIP RED FLAGS



This resource has been established to assist people recognise early warning signs of an abusive relationship.


The Huon Domestic Violence Service believes that ALL relationships should be free of abuse and violence regardless of gender, language, sexual orientation, culture, religion, health, disability, socio economic background or geographic location. Currently in Australia there is a distinct gendered pattern in the perpetration and impact of violence.

For example, both women and men are more likely to experience violence at the hands of men, with around 95% of all victims of violence in Australia reporting a male perpetrator. While men are more likely to experience violence by other men in public places, women are more likely to experience violence from men they know, often in the home.

The overwhelming majority of acts of domestic violence and sexual assault are perpetrated by men against women.

LGBTQI couples 'experience the same or even levels of family violence, domestic violence and intimate partner violence as heterosexual couples.' (*Chan 2005*)

**IN THIS DOCUMENT,
THE WORDS
HE/HIM/HIMSELF/MAN
SHE/HER/HERS/HERSELF/WOMAN
MAY BE SUBSTITUTED.**

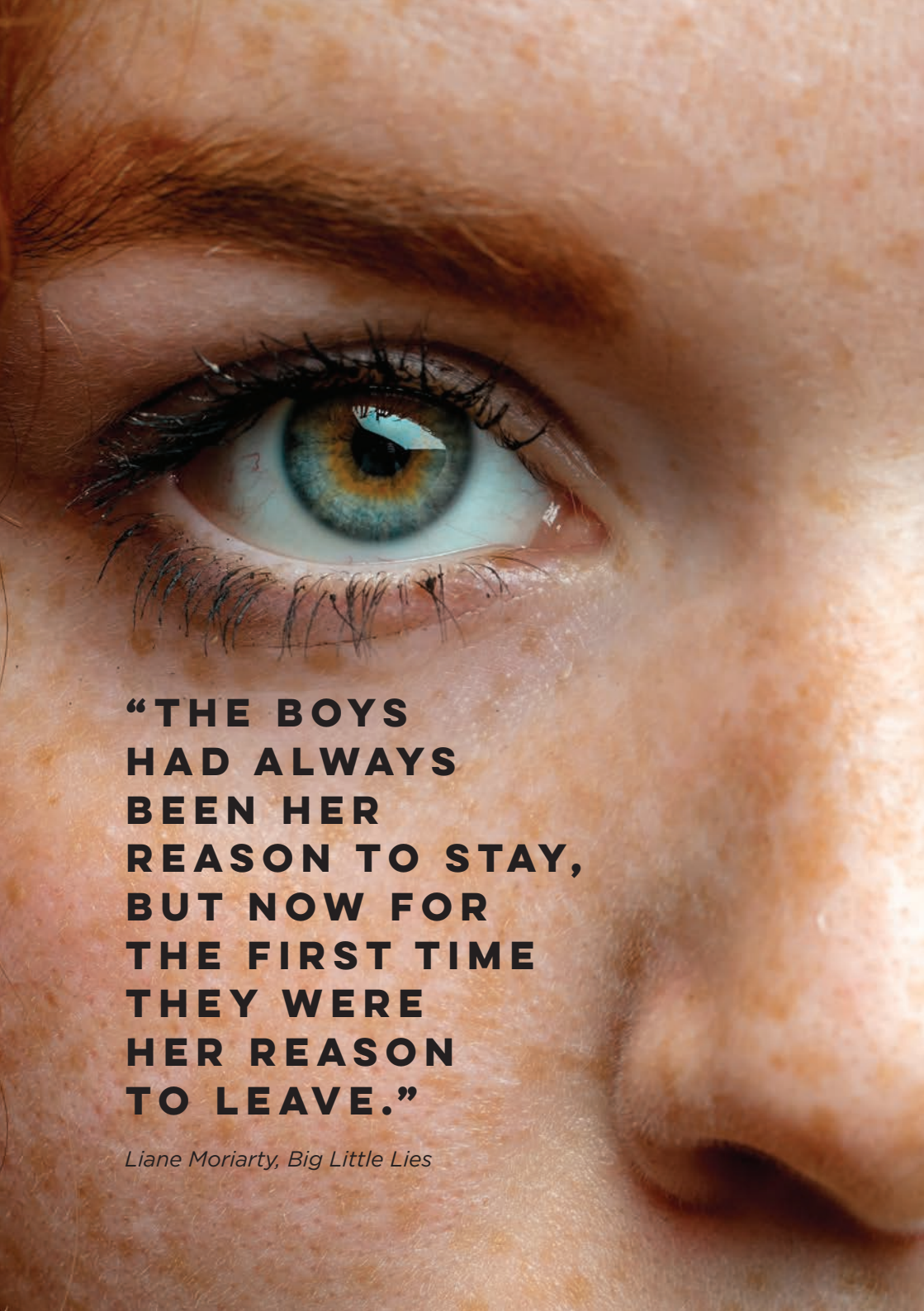
A close-up, high-resolution photograph of a person's eye, showing the iris, eyelashes, and surrounding skin texture. The eye is looking slightly to the right. The lighting is soft, highlighting the natural features of the face.

**“A HEALTHY
RELATIONSHIP WILL
NEVER REQUIRE YOU TO
SACRIFICE YOUR DREAMS
OR YOUR DIGNITY.”**

Mandy Hale

RED FLAGS CHECKLIST

- BLAMES OTHERS FOR PROBLEMS
- BLAMES OTHERS FOR FEELINGS
- HYPERSENSITIVITY
- EXPLOSIVE TEMPER (QUICKLY CHANGING MOODS)
- JEALOUSY
- CONTROLLING BEHAVIOUR
- QUICK INVOLVEMENT
- UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS
- TECHNOLOGY ASSISTED ABUSE
- ISOLATION
- RIGID GENDER ROLES
- 'PLAYFUL' USE OF FORCE IN SEX
- CRUELTY TO ANIMALS AND CHILDREN
- LACK OF REMORSE
- BREAKING OR THROWING/PUNCHING OBJECTS
- VERBAL ABUSE
- FORCE AND THREATS OF VIOLENCE DURING AN ARGUMENT
- PHYSICAL VIOLENCE
- FINANCIAL ABUSE



**“THE BOYS
HAD ALWAYS
BEEN HER
REASON TO STAY,
BUT NOW FOR
THE FIRST TIME
THEY WERE
HER REASON
TO LEAVE.”**

Liane Moriarty, Big Little Lies

EXPLORE FURTHER

BLAMES OTHERS FOR PROBLEMS

This is one of the first tell tale signs to look out for in a new relationship. An abuser tends to blame every mistake, failure or mishap on others or the world at large. This could be blame on parents for terrible childhood, ex partner, boss, neighbours, the system or even fate for their situation.

Someone is always doing them wrong, out to get them or provoke them. This person will also make mistakes and may blame their partner for upsetting them and keeping them from concentrating. The partner may feel like its always their fault for almost anything that goes wrong. The person that blames problems on others often does not take personal responsibility, nor do they admit their faults and mistakes.

BLAMES OTHER FOR FEELINGS

An abusive partners may use feelings to manipulate and will often play the victim. This person blames others for their own sense of inadequacy and unwillingness to take charge of their life. Eventually they may blame their partner.

Often this person's catch cry is 'you made/make me feel,' or 'I can't help feeling/mad/angry/unhappy/powerless/bad/violent etc.'

HYPERSENSITIVITY

An abuser may:

- appear to be easily insulted
- feel constantly hurt and take setbacks as personal attacks
- seem very self centred to their own needs
- fly into a rage when they experience hurt, fear or loss of control of their partner.

EXPLOSIVE TEMPER (QUICKLY CHANGING MOODS)

Many partners become confused with their abusers 'sudden change in mood.' They may think the abuser has a mental health issue because one minute they are nice and the next minute they are exploding. They may rage out of control but can maintain composure around others.

Explosiveness and moodiness can be common traits for people who physically injure their partners.

JEALOUSY

At the beginning of a relationship, an abuser may say that jealousy is a sign of love.

Jealousy has nothing to do with love; It's a sign of possessiveness and lack of trust.

Some signs to watch out for are:

- being jealous in front of friends, family or co workers
- checking on their partner to make sure they are where they said they would be by texting or phoning frequently, driving by, dropping in unexpectedly or getting someone else to check
- insisting on accompanying their partner to keep an 'eye' on them

- wrongly and frequently accusing their partner of flirting, being unfaithful or seeing someone else.

CONTROLLING BEHAVIOUR

At first, your partner will say this behaviour is due to their concern for your safety, your need to use your time well or your need to make good decisions.

Your partner may get angry if you're 'late' coming back from the store or an appointment; they will question you closely about where you went and with whom you talked to.

As their behaviour progresses, they might not allow the person to make personal decisions about the house, children, their clothing, or attending social groups. They might keep all the money or even make you ask for permission to leave the house or room.

QUICK INVOLVEMENT

Many abused partners dated or knew their abuser for less than six months before they were married, engaged or living together. The abuser typically seems too eager, comes on like a whirlwind and casts their partner as the love of

their life; 'you're the only person I can talk to', 'I have never felt loved like this by anyone.'

Pressure may be felt to commit to the relationship in such a way the person is made to feel very guilty about letting the other person down; if they want things to slow down, lessen the intensity or break up.

UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

An abusive person may demand their partner meet all their needs. This includes; being the perfect partner, parent, lover and friend.

The partner will be expected to take care of everything and feel responsible for their emotional state. The abusive person will often have highly exaggerated, self centred and often unrealistic expectations and dreams of the future with their partner.

Any threat to these dreams or expectations is a personal threat to the abuser. They will often feel betrayed and can become dangerous.

TECHNOLOGY ASSISTED ABUSE

Technology-facilitated domestic violence or techno abuse provides abusers a pervasive way to control, coerce, stalk and harass their victims.

It includes a range of behaviours:

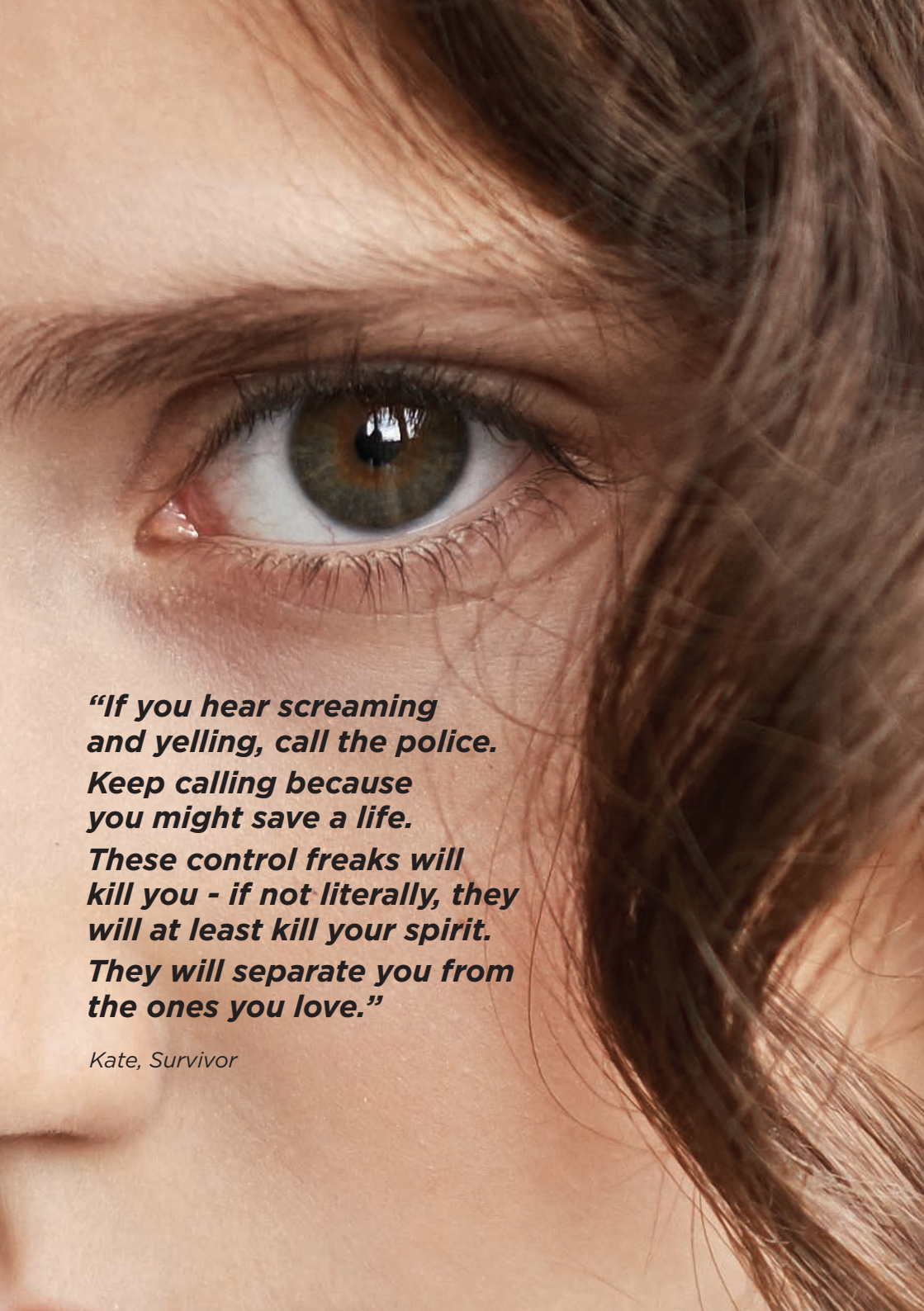
- sending abusive text messages or emails
- making continuous threatening phone calls
- spying on and monitoring victims through the use of tracking systems
- abusing victims on social media sites
- sharing intimate photos of the victim without their consent ('revenge porn').

ISOLATION

The abusive person will try to cut their partner off from all resources. They will accuse people close to them of 'causing trouble.' The abuser might move their partner or family away from support such as family and friends.

Access to transport such as a reliable car may be denied.

Family and friendship ties are often cut and access to employment or education may be denied.

A close-up, high-resolution photograph of a woman's face, focusing on her right eye. The eye is a striking green color with a dark pupil and a visible reflection. Her brown hair is slightly out of focus, framing the eye. The skin is fair and has a natural texture. The overall mood is intense and personal.

***“If you hear screaming
and yelling, call the police.
Keep calling because
you might save a life.
These control freaks will
kill you - if not literally, they
will at least kill your spirit.
They will separate you from
the ones you love.”***

Kate, Survivor

RIGID GENDER ROLES

The abuser expects their partner to serve them. They may say that the woman's role is to stay at home or the man's role is to go to work. Often in this situation the abuser will demand that their partner shows obedience and must not question decisions.

Women are seen as inferior to men and are responsible for menial tasks. They may be told they are 'stupid' and are unable to be a 'whole person' without a relationship.

'PLAYFUL' USE OF FORCE IN SEX

The abuser might throw their partner down and hold them down during sex. They may want to act out fantasies during sex where their partner is helpless or that they find the idea of rape exciting. They may show little concern when their partner doesn't want to have sex and uses sulking or manipulation to attain compliance. Sometimes the abuser will start having sex with their partner whilst they are asleep or demand sex when they are ill or tired.

CRUELTY TO CHILDREN AND ANIMALS

The abuser may have very little patience with children and might expect them to be capable of things beyond their ability. (60% of men that physically assault women also physically hurt their children). They may punish animals brutally or be insensitive to their pain or suffering. They may threaten to hurt or kill the animal if their partner is trying to leave the relationship.

LACK OF REMORSE

The abuser may minimise their hurtful / abusive/ violent behaviour. There is often a lack of concern shown for the other persons physical or emotional well being.

BREAKING OR THROWING/PUNCHING OBJECTS

This behaviour may be used to punish perceived resistance or disobedience and to terrorise their partner into submission. The abusive partner may beat on the table with their fists, throw or break prized possessions around or near their partner. They may punch holes in walls or doors.

VERBAL ABUSE

This can be seen when the abuser puts down their partner, uses crude language, swears and runs down any of their accomplishments. They make jokes or act in a way that will shame, humiliate, degrade or embarrass their partner, either privately or around family and friends.

The abuser may shout and tell their partner that they are 'stupid', 'ugly', 'fat' or 'crazy', and that 'no one else would ever want them'.

They may pick fights for no apparent reason, show impatience and express negative, hostile and aggressive emotions towards their partner.

FORCE AND THREATS OF VIOLENCE DURING ARGUMENTS

During an argument an abuser may hold the other person down, physically trying to stop them from leaving the room, or hold them against the wall and say something like 'you are going to listen to me!' They may push or shove their partner and use threats of physical force meant to control like 'I'll shut your mouth', 'I'll break your neck'.

Most people do not threaten their partners but an abuser will try to excuse threats by saying 'everyone talks like that.'

After the abuse they can change to being very loving, apologising profusely saying 'it will never happen again'.

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

Physical abuse is any intentional and unwanted contact with you or something close to your body. Sometimes abusive behaviour does not cause pain or even leave a bruise, but it's still unhealthy.

Examples of physical abuse include:

- scratching, punching, biting, strangling or kicking
- pulling your hair
- throwing something at you such as a phone, book, shoe or plate
- pushing or pulling you
- grabbing your clothing
- using a gun, knife, box cutter, bat, or other weapon.


FINANCIAL ABUSE

Financial abuse can be very subtle. At no point does someone you are dating have the right to use your money or decide how you spend it, to control you.

Examples of financial abusive include:

- giving you an allowance and closely watching what you buy
- placing your pay in their account and denying you access to it
- keeping you from seeing shared bank accounts or records
- forbidding you to work or limiting the hours of work you do
- preventing you from going to work by taking your car or keys
- getting you fired by harassing you, your employer or co-workers on the job
- taking your money or spending excessively on your credit card without your permission
- refusing to give you money for food, rent, medicine or clothing.

**DOMESTIC AND FAMILY
VIOLENCE IS A CRIME**

A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a person's right eye. The eye is brown with a dark, well-defined iris and a bright reflection on the cornea. The eyelids are slightly shadowed, and the skin around the eye is fair. The background is dark and out of focus.

***“being a survivor
of emotional abuse
is fighting battles in
your head with a person
you no longer have
contact with.”***

Survivor, Huon Valley

GET HELP FOR YOURSELF OR A FRIEND

Further red flag early warning signs:

- Has a history of abusing others.
- Does not honour your/their boundaries.
- Takes no responsibility for his or her behaviour and blames others.

In some cases the abuser will have only a couple of red flags or they may have more, and often these behaviours are exaggerated.

An abuser will often try to explain away the behaviour as a sign of love and concern. Often the other person will be flattered at first but as time goes on the behaviour may become more severe and serve to dominate and control.

Often the abused partner will hear themselves saying 'I don't like this or that about them but they have so much potential,' or may find themselves thinking or saying 'it will be different after we are married.' They may find themselves covering up the abusers behaviour from friends, family and relatives or believing that their love will make them change.

Abuse is never your/their fault and it can be hard to end the relationship for many reasons including safety.

If you or a friend are experiencing any of the red flags, confide in a friend or reach out for support from services that specifically deal with family and domestic violence.

If you believe a friend or relative is being abused offer your non judgemental support and help.

ABUSE IS NEVER YOUR FAULT



**“I FEEL UTTERLY
POWERLESS,
AND THAT FEELING
IS MY PRISON”.**

Haruki Murakami

WHAT TO DO AND HOW TO HELP

First and foremost know that you are not alone and that the abuse is not your fault.

If you are in an abusive relationship or think someone close to you is, accessing safety and support is critical.

Someone who is abusive is usually very good at isolating their partner from family and friends.

As a result, someone being abused often begins to feel ashamed and alone, thinking that no one would understand.


Many survivors have even described feeling as if they didn't know who they are any more.

This makes it even more difficult to survive the abuse and to sort through the feelings and make decisions that will be the best for you and your children.

If you find you don't have anyone to talk to or would like to speak to someone confidentially, there are many services that can assist.

IN A CRISIS OR AN EMERGENCY CALL 000

IF YOU OR A FRIEND IS EXPERIENCING AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP, CONTACT A SPECIALIST FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICE FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND ACCESS TO RESOURCES.

A close-up, high-resolution photograph of a person's face, focusing primarily on the right eye. The eye is light-colored and shows a clear reflection of a prison cell, with metal bars and a window visible. The skin is fair and has a natural texture. The nose is partially visible on the right side of the frame, and the overall lighting is soft and natural.

**FAMILY
IS SUPPOSED
TO BE OUR
SAFE HAVEN.**

SAFETY PLANNING

There are many different ways to make a safety plan. A plan needs to be made to suit individual circumstances that promote safety. The plan will also change as circumstances change.


A plan can help to explore and map out options and ideas to increase safety when domestic and family violence is happening. It can also help those experiencing sexual assault when the perpetrator is someone known.

A SAFETY PLAN FOR YOU

If you are making a safety plan for yourself, you will already have good ideas about what has and hasn't worked. This is a strength.

Here are a few important things to remember when making a safety plan for yourself:

- The perpetrator is responsible for the violence. Trying to prevent the violence can leave you feeling like you are 'walking on eggshells' because people who are abusive often choose to find new triggers to justify and excuse their angry, controlling outbursts. Working out how to increase your safety is not the same thing as taking responsibility for the violence or 'blow-ups'.
- Safety plans need to be updated regularly, especially when things change for example; pregnancy, a new baby, or a change in living situation.
- Domestic and family violence services can support you and provide options to add to those you may already have.

A close-up, high-resolution photograph of a person's face, focusing on the right eye and the bridge of the nose. The skin is fair with visible freckles and some minor blemishes. The eye is brown and looking slightly upwards and to the left. The nose is partially visible on the right side of the frame.

***“The calming effect of having
a qualified and skilled worker
with real knowledge of this area
made an immense difference
to my recovery.”***

Victim survivor

WHO TO TALK TO

STATEWIDE SUPPORT SERVICES

Family Violence Counselling and Support Service	1800 608 122
9am-midnight weekdays, 4pm-midnight weekends	
Safe Choices	1800 806 189
Catholic care	
Engender Equality	6278 9090
Statewide contact number	
Legal Aid	1300 366 611
Safe at Home Lawyer	
Women’s Legal Service	1800 682 468
SASS (Sexual Assault Support Service)	1800MYSUPPORT
24 hr support	(1800 697 877)
Housing Connect	1800 800 588
Emergency accommodation	
Family Advocacy and Support Services	1800 431 157

SOUTH

The Huon Domestic Violence Service	6264 2222
Counselling and support. Monday–Friday 9.00am–4.30pm	
Hobart Women’s Shelter	6273 8455
Jireh House	6232 3850
McCombe House	6228 1099

NORTH

Yemeya	6334 0305
Laurel House	6334 2740
(Sexual Assault)	
Launceston Women’s Shelter	6344 5322
Karinya Young Women’s Shelter	6331 0774

NORTH WEST

Relationship Abuse of an Intimate Nature	6421 3100
(RAIN)	
Warrawee Women’s Shelter	6425 1382
Oakleigh Accommodation Services	6431 9015

IN AN EMERGENCY CALL THE POLICE ON 000

AFTER HOURS SUPPORT

Family Violence Counselling and Support Service1800 608 122
9am-midnight weekdays, 4pm-midnight weekends

SASS (Sexual Assault Support Service)1800MYSUPPORT
24 hr support (1800 697 877)

1800 Respect1800RESPECT
24/7 National Helpline (1800 737 732)

Housing Connect1800 800 588
Emergency accommodation

Lifeline13 11 14

ASSISTANCE FOR PETS

It is common practice for the perpetrator of domestic violence to lure family members back home, or prevent them from leaving, by threatening to harm the pet. Sometimes it is also the lack of pet-friendly accommodation options that stop people from leaving a dangerous situation.

If you or anyone you know requires assistance with a pet(s) please contact your local specialist Domestic and Family Violence Service to find out about local help and support.

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