

# UNDERSTANDING FAMILY VIOLENCE

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF  
AUCKLAND**  
Te Whare Wānanga o Tāmaki Makaurau  
NEW ZEALAND

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# Defining family violence

For the purposes of the University Family and Relationship Violence and Abuse Policy, Guidelines and materials, the term “Family Violence” will be used when describing domestic and relationship violence and abuse in domestic relationships.

The University is committed to being safe, inclusive and equitable. We affirm that family violence is unacceptable and that every person is entitled to respect, and to live free from fear and abuse.

In demonstrating its commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of students and staff, the University has developed the [Family Violence Policy](#) and the [Family Violence Prevention Staff and Management Guidelines](#) to assist students and

- have experienced or are experiencing family violence
- are concerned about a student, friend or colleague or about safety on campus because they are aware of a family violence situation or
- are managing an employee experiencing family violence.

## DEFINITION

The University recognises that family violence occurs in every sector of the community. It affects people of all ages, religions, ethnicity, socio-economic backgrounds. The occurrence of family violence is not dependent on gender, sexual orientation or gender identity.

While most victims of family violence are women being abused by an intimate partner, the NZ Family Violence Act (2018) covers violence occurring in a range of intimate, family and other close domestic relationships.

Domestic relationships include: married couples, unmarried couples, gay and lesbian couples, children, family, anyone in a close relationship, and flatmates and others who may share a household<sup>1</sup>, which can include University accommodation.

Family violence is the abuse of power and has many forms. It includes<sup>2</sup>:

- **physical abuse** – hitting, punching, slapping, pushing, choking, punching, kicking, burning, stabbing, shooting, and threats to do harm
- **psychological abuse** – threats (to harm, to commit suicide, to report to authorities), harassment, stalking, jealous possessiveness, put-downs, isolation from friends and family, intimidation, verbal abuse, mind-games, humiliation, manipulation of children, malicious complaints
- **sexual abuse** – rape, coerced sex, unwanted sexual activity, forced pregnancy or abortions, forced involvement in prostitution or pornography
- **financial abuse** – abuser makes all the financial decisions, does not allow victims to buy basic needs, makes victims account for every cent, steals their money, runs up debts in their name, forces them to work, or does not allow them to work when they want to<sup>3</sup>
- **spiritual abuse** – abuser does not allow victim the freedom to follow their own faith or beliefs

<sup>1</sup> Domestic Violence Act (1995)

<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1995/0086/latest/DLM371926.html>

<sup>2</sup> Good for Staff Good for Business Family Violence How Employers Can Help. It's Not OK Campaign. Ministry of Social Development

<sup>3</sup> Kahui S, Ku B, Snively S. Productivity gains from workplace protection of victims of domestic violence. Wellington: Public Service Association; 2014.

# Our context

Family violence becomes a University issue when it impacts on the performance, effectiveness, health, safety or wellbeing of students, staff and other members of the University community.

- 94,300 cases of family violence were reported to New Zealand Police in 2014. This is estimated to be only 13-20% of actual cases<sup>4</sup>.
- New Zealand has the highest reported rate of intimate partner violence in the developed world<sup>5</sup>.
- Lost productivity associated with family violence was estimated to cost New Zealand employers at least \$368 million in 2013/2014<sup>6</sup>.
- According to Fanslow and Robinson<sup>7</sup>, between 33% to 39% of New Zealand women experience physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime.
- A study of 31 universities in 16 countries, including NZ, found at the median university, 29% of students physically assaulted a dating partner in the previous 12 months<sup>8</sup>.
- A 2011 NZ University Students Association Campus Safety Audit found 87% of students surveyed had experienced some form of unhealthy relationship within their social circle<sup>9</sup>.

- A recent UK study reported 1 in 3 female students experience sexual assault at university<sup>10</sup>.
- A 2013 University of Auckland study<sup>11</sup> found small numbers of cases of violence were reported by students, but each case had a large impact in terms of time and resources.
- A study at Victoria University<sup>12</sup> found the women who experienced sexual violence in the Halls of Residence were likely to disclose to informal support channels rather than formal ones.
- Nearly 53% of the LGBTIQI community surveyed in NSW said they had previously been in an emotionally abusive relationship, and the figures were higher for transgender and intersex survey participants<sup>13</sup>.
- People in violent relationships can, for a time, be at higher risk of violence when they separate (or are thinking about separating) from the violent partner.
- There is little statistical data recording men as victims of domestic violence. An Australian report<sup>14</sup> found that men reported a range of physical abuse including direct assaults, and threatened with a knife. They did not report sexual assaults from their partner, but rather, verbal and emotional abuse.
- More than half of the participants in a large Canadian survey who had experienced family violence said it happened either at or near their place of work<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Data released to Insight Radio NZ including interview with Police National Manager Superintendent Tush Penny. 22 February 2015

<sup>5</sup> *Strengthening NZ's legislative response to family violence*. Ministry of Justice 2015

<sup>6</sup> Kahui S, Ku B, Snively S. op cit

<sup>7</sup> Fanslow, J & Elizabeth Robinson, *Violence against Women in New Zealand: Prevalence and health consequences* New Zealand Medical Journal 117 (2004)

<sup>8</sup> Straus MA. Prevalence of violence against dating partners by male and female university students worldwide. *Violence Against Women* July 2004 vol. 10 no. 7 790-811

<sup>9</sup> Campus Safety Audit Are You OK? New Zealand Union of Student's Association 2011

<sup>10</sup> YouthSight omnibus survey UK 2015 [Student Sexual Activities Survey](#)

<sup>11</sup> **Prevention, response and referral pathways for cases of intimate partner violence at a New Zealand University**. Isaac Smith Dissertation, University of Auckland 2013

<sup>12</sup> **Risky Residences: An exploratory study of sexual violence in University Halls of Residence**. Samantha Maree Keene. Thesis for Victoria University of Wellington 2015.

<sup>13</sup> Calling it What it Really is. *LGBTIQ Domestic and Family Violence Interagency Steering Committee*. Domestic Violence NSW. Oct 2015

<sup>14</sup> **Men as Victims of Domestic Violence** Jane Mulrone and Carrie Chan, *Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse*. 2005

<sup>15</sup> C N Wathen, J MacGregor, B MacQuarrie. The Impact of Domestic Violence in the Workplace: Results From a Pan-Canadian Survey. *Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine: July 2015 - Volume 57 - Issue 7*

- Appropriate support, including from the person's employer, can help those experiencing violence to become safer.

Without intervention, family violence can become more severe over time.

## Impacts on study and work

Multiple studies have shown that the abusive behaviours perpetrators engage in can negatively impact their victims' ability to function effectively at work and maintain employment<sup>16</sup>. Perpetrators may undertake a range of disruptive behaviours designed to harm their victim or their ability to work. In the following table, the tactics that perpetrators may use have been grouped into three categories: sabotage, stalking and on-the-job harassment.

### Abusive tactics used by perpetrators as it impacts on the workplace

<b>Sabotage</b> Actions to either stop the victim going to work or causing them to be late, for example:	<b>Stalking</b> Behaving in threatening ways towards the victim, for example:	<b>On-the-Job Harassment</b> Behaviours that directly interfere with the victim working, for example:
Disabling the victim's vehicle	Watching victim while they work	Making a scene at the victim's workplace
Failing to arrive for or interfering with childcare	Lurking outside of the workplace	Not allowing the victim to finish their work
Hiding or destroying work uniforms or clothing	Waiting for the victim to finish work	Threatening the victim or their co-workers
Hiding car keys or taking transport money	Meeting the victim on their route home	Repeatedly calling or texting the victim
Physically restraining, harming	Following the victim to or from work	Physically assaulting the victim or co-workers

Adapted from Swanberg J, Logan T, Macke C. *Intimate partner violence, employment and the workplace consequences and future direction. Trauma, Violence and Abuse 2005;6(4): 286-312*

<sup>16</sup> Rayner-Thomas M, Fanslow J, Dixon R. Intimate partner violence and the workplace. New Zealand Family Violence Clearing House Issues Paper 7, November 2014.

# Outcomes

## Staff or students experiencing family violence may:

- Be distressed, depressed, anxious, distracted and fearful at work/study
- Need to take time off work/classes to attend court, or to seek medical attention, counselling or other support
- Leave their job/course because they are hiding from their abuser
- Have a protection order which could have implications for the University (eg, the violent person cannot contact or come to the University)
- Have their ability to work/learn sabotaged by the violent person (eg, through damage to their car so that they are late for work/classes or work taken home may be destroyed)
- Be unable to meet course assessment deadlines or requirements

## Colleagues and friends of the staff member/student being abused may:

- Be distressed or fearful on witnessing their colleague's/friend's experience of abuse
- Have an increased workload by taking on some of the victims workload, potentially decreasing their overall effectiveness
- Provide emotional support and advice to victims

- Alternatively, be unaware of abuse and think the person who is experiencing family violence is lazy, unfriendly or self-absorbed
- Occasionally intervene if the abuser is harassing their colleague/friend at the University<sup>17</sup>.

## Employees or students who are perpetrators of family violence may:

- Pose a risk to the victim
- Pose a risk to the victim's colleagues and friends on campus
- Pose a risk to other workers, students and visitors at the university
- Use University time and resources to harass, stalk and monitor their victim (eg, calling the victim many times a day to control what they are doing)
- Have a protection order against them, which means that they are not allowed access to certain areas or buildings
- Need to take time off to attend court or stopping violence programmes<sup>18</sup>.

People who are subject to family violence tend to have a more disrupted work history, are on lower incomes and have had to change jobs frequently. Stable employment gives them the economic resources and social support to escape and recover from family violence.

<sup>17</sup> Rayner-Thomas M, Fanslow J, Dixon R. Intimate partner violence and the workplace. New Zealand Family Violence Clearing House Issues Paper 7, November 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Good for Staff Good for Business Family Violence How Employers Can Help. It's Not OK Campaign, Ministry of Social Development.

## Health impacts

Adverse health outcomes consistently linked to family violence are well documented and include: physical trauma, (eg, musculoskeletal, soft tissue, genital trauma); psychological trauma, (eg, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse); non-communicable diseases (eg, cardiovascular disease, hypertension), plus chronic back pain, chronic pelvic pain, irritable bowel syndrome, and suicide.<sup>19</sup>

Many people who free themselves from violent family situations continue to experience emotional, physical and psychological symptoms long after they achieve physical and emotional safety.

The World Health Organisation has stated that violence against women is a significant global public health problem. Women who have been physically or sexually abused by their partners report higher rates of a number of important health problems. For example, they are 16% more likely to have a low-birth-weight baby. They are more than twice as likely to have an abortion, almost twice as likely to experience depression and, in some regions, are 1.5 times more likely to acquire HIV, as compared to women who have not experienced partner violence<sup>20</sup>.

Family violence is also prevalent in the LGBTI community occurring at similar frequency as in the heterosexual community but it is less reported and health issues are less recognised or dealt with<sup>21</sup>.

A 2003 study reported that family violence was the third largest health problem facing gay men.<sup>22</sup>

By supporting people who are subject to family violence to remain in paid employment, the University can assist people find their pathway out of violence and keep the whole workplace safer.

<sup>19</sup> World Health Organisation *Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence*. 2013

<sup>20</sup> Op. cit.

<sup>21</sup> K L Ard, HJ Makadon. *Addressing intimate partner violence in lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender patients* J Gen Inter Med. 2011 aug; 26 (8)

<sup>22</sup> L. Peterman, C Dixon. *Domestic Violence between Same-Sex Partners: Implications for Counselling*. Journal of Counselling and Development, 81 2003

# Power and control

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Family violence is characterised by the pattern of actions that an individual uses to intentionally control or dominate their intimate partner. This has been described in the “Power and Control Wheels”, originally developed with abused women and children in Duluth Minnesota in 1984. In the wheel, the words "power and control" are in the centre of the wheel. An abuser often systematically uses threats, intimidation, and coercion to instil fear in their partner. These behaviours are the spokes of the wheel. Physical and sexual violence holds it all together—this violence is the rim of the wheel.

The original [Power and Control Wheel](#) describes the tactics of abuse of women by male partners.

[LGBTQ relationship violence](#) using the Power and Control Wheel is described here.

Power and Control in [dating relationships](#) can be found on the Sophie Elliot website.

[Post Separation Power and Control Wheel](#) explains how children can be used post break-up

See also [Positive Relationships](#) and [I want to stop using violence](#) on [www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/itsnotok](http://www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/itsnotok) for more information.



# Online harassment and cyber abuse

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Hopkins and Ostini report digitised domestic violence or technological tactics, increasingly being used by perpetrators to control and terrorise current or former intimate partners<sup>23</sup>. For example, circulating and publicizing (real or false) intimate information or photographs, posting derogatory statements on public blogs, slander and threats on social media sites, computer monitoring and cyber-stalking.

The Pew Research Centre<sup>24</sup> surveyed internet users and found harassment, ie, name calling to more threatening behavior, was a common part of online life. 73% of adult internet users had seen someone being harassed in some way online and 40% had personally experienced it, according to the survey.

For more information see [Online harassment and cyber abuse](#)

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<sup>23</sup> S Hopkins, J Ostini. Digitized Domestic Violence: Technological Abuse is a Feminist Issue. University of Southern Queensland. Paper presented at Trans/forming feminisms: media, technology, identity. University of Otago, November 2015. [http://eprints.usq.edu.au/28147/3/Hopkins\\_Ostini\\_AV.pdf](http://eprints.usq.edu.au/28147/3/Hopkins_Ostini_AV.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> M.Duggan. Online Harassment. Pew Research Center. <http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/10/22/online-harassment/>

# Case studies

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## **Case Study 1: Ngaire, Staff**

Ngaire is a staff member. She is often late for work, takes many little breaks during the day, seems distracted and doesn't always complete tasks. Her line manager has discussed her poor performance with her on a number of occasions and at the most recent discussion she disclosed that her partner regularly physically assaults her.

## **Case Study 2: Noor, Student**

Noor is a Pakistani student. She was brought to New Zealand by her father in her last years of high school. The father is strict and controlling. Noor is only allowed to attend University and study and the only social life permitted is with some relatives and family friends. She has been requesting more freedom and this has been met by verbal aggression including threats that Noor will never see her mother again if she doesn't do as he says. He has also been stalking Noor around the University, making sure she doesn't talk to any men and that she goes straight home after class. Noor is distressed by this and wants to leave her father and live by herself but is fearful of the consequences.

## **Case Study 3: John, Staff**

John is a staff member who recently ended a relationship with a woman. She was very unhappy with this and now constantly phones, texts and emails him (at work) sometimes 30 times a day. She is now threatening to harm herself if John doesn't see her again.

## **Case Study 4: Alan, Student**

Alan is a student who has previously disclosed to some staff and classmates that he is gay. He hasn't disclosed this to his family. He has been in a relationship with someone for about four months but now wants to end it. When Alan told his partner he was ending the relationship, the partner became physically violent and is now threatening to "out" Alan to his family. Alan recently missed an assignment deadline and is not attending all his classes.

## **Case Study 5: Kim, Student**

Kim is a student who lives in a University apartment. At a recent party she got very drunk and reports she had sex with one of the male students also living in the apartments. They had been part of a group of friends but she had never had sex with him before. He now tries to follow her into her room and wherever possible gropes her and talks as if he expects her to have sex again. She feels she has encouraged this situation and doesn't have a right to say no.

## **Case Study 6: Louise, Staff**

Louise is a staff member whose husband intermittently sexually and physically abuses her. She has used all her sick leave and annual leave in doctor and hospital appointments, and in moving house after she left him earlier in the year and went into hiding. She recently went back to live with him. Now her daughter Jane has been injured (by Louise's husband) and she has asked for time off work to care for her so that Jane is not left at home alone with him.

## Resources

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- [Are You OK](#) has a wide range of useful information and resources about family violence.
- [Child, Youth and Family Services](#) provides services to families and children. 0508 FAMILY or 0508 326 459
- [Domestic violence and disabled people](#) is a booklet with information about the risk of violence and what you can do to keep yourself safe if you have a disability.
- [Family Justice video](#) is a free resource from the Ministry of Justice which features the true stories of four women and their experiences and interviews with men who have been perpetrators of family violence.
- [Family Services Directory](#) lists information about social service organisations that provide support, services and programmes across New Zealand
- [Glenn Foundation Stories of Change: Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner Dr Jackie Blue](#) shares her personal experiences with domestic violence.
- [Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura - Outing Violence](#) focuses on building Rainbow communities in Aotearoa New Zealand free of partner and sexual violence.
- [A Jasmine and the Nightshade](#) is a short film by University of Auckland students which aims to create awareness about family violence.
- [New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse](#) is a national online centre for collating and disseminating information about family violence in Aotearoa/New Zealand.
- [Sophie Elliot Foundation](#) aims to shift attitudes to relationship violence.
- [White Ribbon Campaign](#) focuses on men speaking up against violence against women.
- [You Me Us](#) is a resource for LGBTI about healthy relationships and where to go for support if things go wrong.