

CARANICHE
AT WORK

Recognising Family Violence

An information sheet

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Family violence comes from the perpetrator's desire to exert power and control over family members. Family violence distorts the trust in the belief that everyone should be safe at home and in their relationships.

Unique to family violence, is the notion that perpetrators have unrestricted access to the victim and know the most effective ways to inflict harm. As such, family violence can be subtle or overt.

Violence is defined as any act which makes another person feel fearful, unsafe and not in control of their own destiny. Family violence can include:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological and emotional abuse
- Financial abuse
- Spiritual abuse
- Social abuse
- Legal abuse
- Reproductive abuse
- Neglect
- Stalking

The following list is not exhaustive but is designed to start thinking about the behaviours that can be considered family violence, if perpetrated by a family member.

- Continuous criticism
- Attacks on their intelligence, body or parenting
- Physical restraint such as pinning against the wall or bed
- Making them question their thoughts or intuition
- Spying on or following, including through the use of electronic means
- Restricting where they can go and who they can talk to
- Intentionally isolating from friends and family
- Unwanted exposure to pornography
- Forbidding them from work or preventing them getting to work
- Restricting access to bank accounts
- Controlling how money can be spent or using their credit card without permission
- Sleep or food deprivation
- Building trust and then using this as a means of control
- Misusing spiritual or religious beliefs and practices to justify other types of abuse and violence
- Acting differently in public in a way that does not appear controlling or violent
- Denying abuse or promising it will never happen again

When employees experience family violence, it can come to work with them, therefore impacting their work and the workplace. It can enter the workplace through texts, emails, abusive phone calls and in some cases, the perpetrator may physically enter the workplace or be employed there. Often, both the perpetrator and the victim are in paid work whilst the violence is occurring, and this makes it a workplace issue.

There are behaviours and signs that are common to people who are experiencing violence. For example, employees experiencing family violence may:

- Appear excessively tired or distracted
- Be unproductive or make mistakes
- Arrive at work early or stay late
- Socially isolate themselves, with no obvious reason or, when asked, say they are not allowed to
- Have numerous absences from work
- Have to use up leave allocated for other purposes
- Have to lie about their whereabouts or justify their movements
- Appear scared, jumpy or nervous
- Appear evasive or disengaged
- Attempt to hide injuries
- Threaten suicide, self-harm, or harm to others

Learn more about how your workplace can respond to family violence.

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This Resource accompanies the Caraniche at Work Report, Family Violence: a workplace issue.

