

Coercive control

How to help someone



Coercive control is when someone uses a pattern of abusive behaviours to make someone feel afraid and take away their freedom and independence. **It could look like:**



It doesn't have to be physical. Coercive control is family and domestic violence.



Signs someone is experiencing coercive control

No two experiences look the same. The signs, if any at all, can be incredibly subtle.

Some things you might notice in a victim-survivor's behaviour are:

- They seem anxious around their partner and change their behaviour
- They need to be back home by a certain time
- Their partner puts them down in front of you
- Their partner does most of the talking and is always with them
- They describe a partner as controlling
- They distance themselves from you, friends or family

It's important to remember that sometimes there are no signs at all. This doesn't mean the abuse is not happening.



What to do if you think someone is experiencing coercive control?

When someone close to you is experiencing family and domestic violence, how you talk and listen to them is very important. There are simple things you can do to make a big difference:

✓ How you can help

Express your concerns in a safe and private place. Try "You haven't seemed yourself lately. Is everything ok at home? Is there anything you want to talk about?"

Believe the person and take their worries seriously.

Listen without interrupting or judging.

Help explore options. Helplines and services are available to get advice, no matter what the person's individual situation or experience is.

Respect the knowledge and understanding that the victim-survivor has about their own situation and safety.

✗ Try to avoid

Judgement or criticism. This may make them feel isolated and too ashamed to talk about the abuse.

Blaming the person experiencing the violence. Violence is never ok.

Making excuses for the perpetrator.

Pressuring them to leave the relationship and avoid telling them what to do.

Making negative comments about the partner. This can make them feel judged, and discourage them from sharing more information.

Victim-survivors are often the experts in their own safety, and their situation.

Offering your support and encouraging them to connect with professional services can be helpful; but people must decide if and when they're ready.

In an emergency call 000

Services and supports

Use a friend's phone if you think yours is being monitored

**Women's Domestic
Violence Helpline**

1800 007 339

**Men's Domestic
Violence Helpline**

1800 000 599

1800RESPECT

1800 737 732

Kids Helpline

1800 55 1800



For more information visit:
[WA.gov.au/familydomesticviolence](https://www.wa.gov.au/familydomesticviolence)