



MY SAFETY PLAN

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What is family Violence?

Family violence is a set or pattern of behaviours in which someone seeks *power* and *control* over you, causing you to feel *threatened*, *worthless* or *fearful*.

Family violence can take many forms:

It can be *physical*, *psychological* and *emotional*, *economic*, *social*, *sexual* or *spiritual*.

It can include behaviour that is *violent*, *threatening*, *controlling*, *intimidating* and *isolating*.

It can affect people from all ages, social, cultural and religious backgrounds, and people with a disability.

It can occur between family members, parents and children, against elders, against pets, in marriages, de-facto relationships, same sex relationships, couples who are separated or divorced, and even within shared households or carer relationships.



FOREWORD

This safety plan guide contains suggestions and options that can be useful to increase your safety. Always remember that you are the expert of your life, and are in the best position to determine what may be effective for you in your circumstances.

Safety planning involves looking at your experiences and circumstances, and options to help you feel and be safer. It's really important that your safety plan connects to your individual circumstances and it needs to adapt to suit you if things change. Safety plans also recognise the many steps that you have already taken to support your own safety.

It is also important to acknowledge, the use of violence is a choice and people who are violent in their relationships always have a choice about their behaviour, therefore the responsibility to change their behaviour and stop using violence sits with them.

It's important to remember that family violence impacts emotional safety as well as physical safety. Think about what might support your emotional wellbeing, and how to look after yourself if you're feeling overwhelmed- there are services to help you at any time. If you are feeling like you might harm yourself or others seek medical/social support immediately via your doctor, 000, local hospital, mental health service, trusted friend or family member and/or telephone support line.

- 000 in an emergency
- Lifeline: 131 114
- 1800 RESPECT: 1800 737 732

Our website has other planning options and formats available for you to look at and consider: www.edvos.org.au

Remember, we are here to support you through this process. To speak to a Specialist Family Violence Advocate, call: 9259 4200 M-F 9am-8pm; Sat 9am-5pm

Email: edvos@edvos.org.au

E-contact: www.edvos.org.au/contact

SAFETY WHEN PREPARING TO LEAVE

TIPS

- Identify where you will go and where you will stay. Consider whether you have family or friends you can stay with or do you need to access crisis accommodation. Contact Safe Steps for crisis accommodation: www.safesteps.org.au - 1800 015 188
- Know the location of your closest 24hr police station in case you need a place to go.
- Pack an emergency bag for yourself (and your children). Leave this bag in a safe place or with someone you trust (See page 15 for checklist of things to take when leaving).
- Make copies of important documents/photographs and store them somewhere safe and easily accessible (See page 15 for examples of documents you may wish to copy).
- Keep your mobile phone charged and on your person at all times in case you need to call 000 (or alternatively for iPhone users, press lock button 5 times to activate emergency signal; for Android set up SOS Messages function under Privacy and Emergency in Settings).
- Keep your purse and keys in a safe place that you can access quickly.
- Hide an emergency spare house and car key in a safe place that only you know of.
- Park your car somewhere that enables an easy exit, where it can't be blocked in.
- Maintain sufficient fuel levels in your car so you are able to leave whenever you need to.
- If you do not drive or have access to a vehicle, hide some spare money or taxi vouchers to pay for transport.
- Identify one or two trusted people you can tell about your situation and the violence you have been experiencing. Also consider whether it is safe to tell your neighbour(s).
- Establish a code word or signal with a safe person so they know to call 000 if they receive this signal. This could be a specific word, a blank text message, or a phone call with one ring.
- Speak to an appropriate person at your work to clarify leave entitlements (Family Violence Leave) and discuss safety whilst at work and leaving work (See page 10 for Safety at Work).
- Redirect your mail to a safe address or set up a PO Box (Workplace, friend or family member's house).
- Open your own bank account, preferably a different bank to the person using violence.
- Contact a specialist family violence service for support (See page 17 for LGA list of Specialist Family Violence Services operating in Victoria).

SAFETY DURING AN INCIDENT

TIPS

- Call 000 if feeling unsafe
- Call Safe Steps 1800 015 188 if needing crisis accommodation
- If you are unable to contact 000, activate your code word or signal with your trusted person so they can call 000 on your behalf
- Consider leaving your property to go to a neighbour for help or to wait for police to arrive.
- Try to avoid higher risk spaces where items can be used as weapons. This includes kitchen, bathroom and garage.
- Try to avoid being cornered, where possible stay close to or make your way towards a safe exit (window or doors).
- Grab your emergency bag and important documents (if at the property).
- Seek medical attention immediately if you are injured.

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SAFETY WHEN SEPARATED OR LIVING SEPARATELY

TIPS

- Consider changing the locks if the person using violence has a set of keys (legally this can only be done if the person using violence is not on the lease or has been excluded from the property by a family violence intervention order).
- If the person using violence has previously broken into the property, consider how they gained access and what additional security measures can be put in place to stop it from happening again (locks, security doors, sensor lights, secure fences and gates).
- Consider if there are any aspects of your home that make you feel unsafe (Windows that don't latch, doors that are hollow, no security doors, the property is dark).
- Contact your local police station to inform them of any concerns or threats against yourself or your property.
- If you use social media be mindful of posting photographs that could identify where you are living.
- Before returning home from collecting children from handover, check children's technology in case person using violence has turned on 'find my iPhone' or other location identifying settings (See page 11 for safety with technology).
- Inform friends and family members that you do not want your address shared with other people, especially the person using violence.
- If separated and you have concerns regarding the person using violence attending your property, consider sharing their physical description with neighbours as well as a vehicle description of cars they may use.
- If updating your address with Centrelink, request that they do not share any of your information with the person using violence.
- Consider setting up a PO Box instead of having mail delivered directly to your address. You can set up a PO Box in another suburb so that your home suburb is kept hidden.
- Consider making contact with the Australian Electoral Commission on 13 23 26 and the Victorian Electoral Commission on 13 18 32 and request your name is excluded from the electoral roll for safety reasons.
- Consider changing your travel routes to frequent places you attend so you can't be followed (Grocery store, children's school, workplace, community centre).
- If you are not able to change your routine and common travel routes, keep your phone with you at all times and ensure that it is charged and able to make outgoing calls. It may be useful to let a trusted friend or family member know of your routines, so if you don't show up somewhere they are alerted to this.

SAFETY WITH CHILDREN

TIPS

- Reassure your children that what is happening is not their fault.
- Remind your children not to become involved, especially if physical violence is being used.
- Let your children know they can talk you about how they are feeling and any worries they may have.
- Together with your child/ren write a list of people your children trust and can talk to if they are not feeling safe (Close friends, family members, teachers).
- For those occasions where you are unable to listen to your child/ren, reassure them and direct them to speak to one of their safe people.
- Ensure you have spoken to the children's safe people to let them know your child may contact them to talk about things that are worrying them. Request that the safe person tells the child/ren that they may need to share this information if they are worried the child/ren are at risk.
- Consider rehearsing 'fire drills' with your child/ren, where you leave the house with them and their siblings and go to a neighbour to say "we're doing a fire drill". Ensure this neighbour is aware of what this means so they know to call 000 if required.
- Be sure to use age appropriate language and do not overwhelm your child with information about risks or other things that may frighten them.
- Establish a safe place for your children to go if they are feeling scared. Ask your children where their safe place would be. Avoid higher risk spaces like the bathroom, garage, or kitchen where items can be used as weapons. Consider bedroom, backyard or neighbours house as safe options.
- Develop a code word with your children so they know when they hear this they should go to their safe place.
- Teach your children how to call 000 and practice with them ("My address is..." "My name is... and my mum is being hurt").
- Be aware, that although children may not be in the room at the time of the violence, they may still be able to hear the violence, see and feel the aftermath.
- Consider the possibility of having soothing toys, water to drink, and even snacks to eat in an accessible area of your children's safe place. Placing a radio in the safe space may be used to distract from noises coming from other rooms.
- Review the children's safety plan with them regularly.

SAFETY AT CHILD HANDOVERS

TIPS

- If it feels unsafe, avoid having handovers at your home or at the home of the person using violence. Consider safe alternatives such as public places with surveillance cameras e.g. McDonalds or a shopping centre.
- If you feel unsafe facilitating child handovers alone, take a trusted support person with you.
- If unable to have a trusted person with you, organise to have someone on the phone during the handover so they can hear what is happening.

SAFETY AT CHILD CARE OR SCHOOLS

TIPS

- If your child/ren are listed as protected persons on a Family Violence Intervention Order (IVO), ensure the school/child care has a copy of the IVO and a photograph of the person using violence.
- In writing, inform the school/child care who has consent to be picking up your children
- Contact the school to discuss your safety concerns and establish a protocol with staff/teachers if the person using violence is in breach of the IVO conditions.
- Establish a set place where you can pick up the children from school/child care. Consider safe places that are staffed once school is finished eg. classroom door, reception area.
- If there are concerns about the person using violence confronting you at the school, consider varying drop off and pick up times and entrances. This should be done in collaboration with the school.
- If the person using violence does not know where you live but knows where the children attend school, take different routes home and be aware of your surroundings. Drive to the nearest police station if you feel you are being followed. Call 000 if feeling unsafe

SAFETY WITH A FAMILY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION ORDER (IVO)

TIPS

- Ensure you have a copy of the Family Violence Intervention Order (IVO) and understand what type of Order it is (e.g. do you have an *interim* order or a *final* order?).
- If you have an Interim Order, you may need to return to court for the order to be finalised. Check with police if you have to attend court on the return date. If so, confirm which court you have to attend and pre-plan how you will get there safely (See page 9 for [safety whilst at court](#)).
- Ensure you understand the clauses/conditions of the Family Violence Intervention Order and what the person using violence can and can't do. Contact your local police station or local family violence service if you need clarification.
- If you don't have an intervention order but feel this would increase your safety, speak to your local police station about applying for a Family Violence Intervention Order. This can include an exclusion order to keep the person using violence away from you and your home. Alternatively, you can apply for an intervention order online via the familyviolence.courts.vic.gov.au website.
- If you wish to extend an existing Family Violence Intervention Order ensure you contact the Court a month prior to the expiry and do not let the order lapse.
- Consider keeping copies of the Family Violence Intervention Order in your handbag or in digital form on your mobile phone. This is to enable you to provide copies to the police when you are in public if required.
- If you lose a copy of your Family Violence Intervention Order contact the issuing court to get another copy.
- All breaches of the Family Violence Intervention Order should be reported to police by attending or calling a police station. This holds the person using violence accountable for their choice to use violence. If you are in immediate danger, call 000.
- Consider keeping a diary of any contact you have with the person using violence, including the date, time, who was there, and what happened. Alternatively, download the free Arc app by the Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria (DVRCV). The app can be used as an electronic diary where you record details of family violence incidents or breaches. For more information visit www.arc-app.org.au
- Try to keep all communication with the person using violence to email or text so it can be kept as a record.
- If your children are included as protected persons on the Family Violence Intervention Order, ensure anyone responsible for caring for your children has a copy of the order and understands the conditions. Confirm they understand what constitutes a breach and they know to report any breaches to police by calling 000.

SAFETY AT COURT OR WHEN GOING TO COURT

TIPS

- Consider arriving at Court early to avoid seeing the person using violence at the counter, in line or in the car park.
- If you are travelling to Court via public transport think about the route you will take and if the person using violence will be going to Court the same way. Consider taking an alternative route that will ensure you are not waiting at the same train station/bus stop or riding the same train/bus line.
- If you are travelling to Court via car, consider taking an unpredictable route home and be aware of your surroundings. Drive to the nearest police station if you feel you are being followed.
- Contact the Court in advance to learn about the supports you can access while you are there. Speak with the Court Support Network or Applicant Support Worker if you require support on the day.
- Find out if there is a protected persons space or a secure room you can book so you do not have to sit in the main waiting area.
- If you are concerned for your safety at Court talk to the Protective Service Officers (PSOs). Ask whether a Security Officer or other worker can walk you back to your car when leaving.
- If you do not feel safe waiting at Court until a Final Order has been made, you can leave Court after the hearing and the Order will be sent to your address.
- Consider taking a trusted friend/family member as a support person on the day.
- Pre-plan where your children will be whilst you're at court. Consider organising a safe person to collect them from school/kindergarten/childcare.

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SAFETY IN PUBLIC & AT WORK

TIPS

- If you see the person using violence while you are in public, go to the nearest open building, shop or house (if it is safe to do so) and ask for assistance or call someone. Think of public spaces with many people, somewhere with CCTV or security personnel.
- Consider where you sit on public transport. When on trains, sit in the carriage closest to the driver's carriage and near to the emergency button. When on buses and trams, sit as close to the driver as possible or in line with CCTV. Ask for assistance if you feel threatened or if the respondent is on the same transport as you.
- Avoid wearing headphones in both ears when you are walking in public so you are aware of your surroundings.
- Avoid parking in underground car parks wherever possible. If you cannot avoid this, ask someone to walk you to your car such as a security guard or a Protective Service Officer (PSO).
- When you are out in the evening, think about where the street lights are around you for extra visibility.
- Consider changing your daily routines and travel routes so they are less predictable. Think about using different types of transport and changing between trams/buses/trains; leaving and returning home at different times.
- Speak to Human Resources (HR) or another appropriate person at your work to clarify your leave entitlements (including access to family violence leave) and discuss safety whilst at work and leaving work.
- Consider identifying two other trusted people at your workplace you can tell about your situation and what is happening.
- If you have a Family Violence Intervention Order, give a copy to your work and ask them to call police immediately if the person using violence attends your workplace. The person using violence may not disclose their identify or provide a false name. Consider providing your workplace a photograph to assist them in recognising the person using violence.
- If there is security at your workplace, consider informing them of the situation and provide them with a photograph of the person using violence.
- Ask your work to screen your phone calls and ensure any calls from the person using violence are not put through to you.
- Pre-plan for circumstances where you might need to leave the workplace during day (eg. appointments, meetings, breaks, deliveries) Consider how you can get to and from the destination safely.
- If you have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or similar at your work, consider accessing this service for additional emotional support.

SAFETY WITH TECHNOLOGY

TIPS

- Change the pin numbers and passwords for all of your accounts (including access to your phone, banking, email, social media platforms, Centrelink, buy now-pay later accounts such as Zippay/ Afterpay).
- Check that you don't have accounts that are automatically logged in on your phone or computer.
- Check the security settings on all of your accounts. Make sure there are no linked accounts or devices.
- Place two-factor authentication on accounts to protect your privacy and ensure you receive notifications of any account access attempts.
- Consider creating a new email address and/or social media accounts if you suspect someone has been accessing them. Keep a record of these occasions, including dates and details.
- Consider whether your children have technology and/or social media platforms that the person using violence may have access to or can tamper with.
- Support your children to update their privacy and security settings and discuss the importance of safety and privacy when posting their details online (eg. 'checking in' or disclosing their location on social media or posting photos that give away location).
- Before returning home from collecting children from handover, check children's technology in case person using violence has turned on location settings or apps that track your movements or give away your location (eg. Find My Phone, Snap Chat Maps, GPS when using certain apps).

COMPUTERS

- If the person using violence has access to your computer:
 - Do not allow the computer to save your passwords.
 - Clear history and computer cache/cookies.
 - Permanently delete any sensitive emails you send/receive from the Inbox/Sent Folder and the Deleted Folder.
 - Ensure you log out of your emails and social media accounts after using the device.
- If you do not feel safe on the internet at home consider visiting your local library to use their facilities or contact your local family violence service to see if you can use a computer onsite (eg. EDVOS has a shared computer on site for clients to use).

MOBILE PHONES

- Keep your location sharing settings turned off.
- Consider setting your outgoing calls to 'private number'.
- Open all of the apps and badges on your phone to check they are what they say they are. If you find something suspicious, use anti-virus and anti-spyware software on your phone.
- Try not to store important information on your phone device only. Take screenshots of messages, call logs or photographs and send them to your personal email or to a trusted friend or family member in case they are deleted or your phone is broken/lost.
- If possible, get an unlisted phone number and only give your mobile number out to people you trust. Inform friends and family members that you do not want your contact details shared with other people, especially the person using violence.
- If your mobile phone is under the name of the person using violence, be aware they can check the bills to see what numbers you are calling and the content of your text messages. Consider getting a pre-paid phone that you can hide for use in case of emergencies.
- Ensure you turn off Bluetooth when you are not using it.
- Consider downloading the free Arc app by the Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria (DVRCV). The app can be used as an electronic diary where you record details of family violence incidents or breaches. For more information [visit www.arc-app.org.au](http://www.arc-app.org.au)
- For more information and tips about tech safety visit www.techsafety.org.au/resources/resources-women

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SAFETY OF PETS & ANIMALS

TIPS

- Consider whether your pets or animals have experienced physical or verbal abuse from the person using violence or if they have ever made threats to harm them (including threats to take or withhold the animal). If so, develop a safety plan for your pets/animals.
- Identify who is the legal owner of the pets and animals. Check you have a copy of their registration and or whether their veterinary records and microchip are in your name.
- Think about whether you could easily leave with your pets and animals in an emergency. If not, consider what arrangements you could make in advance to keep them safe.
- Think about where your pets and animals could stay. Consider friends, family, kennel or cattery. Contact RSPCA or a local service for short-term support or accommodation.
- Identify what additional items you would need to take with you to care for your pets and animals (food, water, vet documents, medication, bedding, bowls).
- Consider whether additional pet items will fit in your emergency bag or can they be left somewhere else you can access them easily (a friend or family members house).
- If you must leave your pet behind, remember to leave enough food, bedding, litter for the animal and ensure they have access to shelter.

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CHECKLIST OF THINGS TO TAKE WHEN LEAVING

IDENTIFYING DOCUMENTS

- Drivers licence
- Passport (or a copy/ picture on your phone)
- Birth Certificate
- Centrelink Card
- Medicare Card
- Immigration documents

FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS

- Cash
- Credit cards
- Bank account details
- Loans documentation
- Cheque book

LEGAL DOCUMENTS

- Rental documents/title papers
- Intervention order
- Family Court orders/Child protection orders
- Marriage and/or divorce papers
- Work permits (if applicable)
- Insurance papers

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

- Mobile phone & charger
- Address book (incl. essential numbers)
- House keys (spare)
- Car keys (spare)
- Medication & prescriptions
- Pets (where possible)
- Jewellery
- Laptop/Ipad
- Pictures/photo albums
- Clothes
- Sentimental items
- Any personal items that could be destroyed by the person using violence

CHILDREN'S ITEMS

- Clothes
- Toys
- Pacifiers
- Bottles
- Birth Certificates
- Passports
- Vaccination records
- School records
- Medical records
- Medication & prescriptions

It may not be possible to take everything you plan. If not, contact your local Specialist Family Violence Service for support with accessing what you need.

If it is unsafe to remove the original document, take a photo on your mobile phone or camera to ensure you have a copy



IMPORTANT NUMBERS

IN AN EMERGENCY

Victoria Police

000

Safe Steps Crisis Support - 24/7

1800 015 188

**Sexual Assault Crisis Line
(5PM - 9AM)**

1800 806 292

FAMILY VIOLENCE INFORMATION & SUPPORT

EDVOS

(03) 9259 4200

WIRE

1300 134 130

WithRespect (LGBTIQ+)

1800 542 847

**InTouch Multicultural Centre
Against Family Violence Support**

(03) 9413 6500
1800 755 988

**Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal
Healing Service**

(03) 9212 0200

**Eastern Victims Assistance
Program (EVAP)**

1300 884 284

LEGAL SUPPORT & COURTS

Victoria Legal Aid

1300 792 387

Seniors Rights Victoria

1300 368 821

**Eastern Community Legal
Service**

1300 325 200

Ringwood Magistrates Court

(03) 9871 4444

Melbourne Magistrates Court

(03) 9628 7777

Moorabbin Magistrates Court

(03) 7024 2900

PHONE COUNSELLING SUPPORT

Lifeline - 24/7

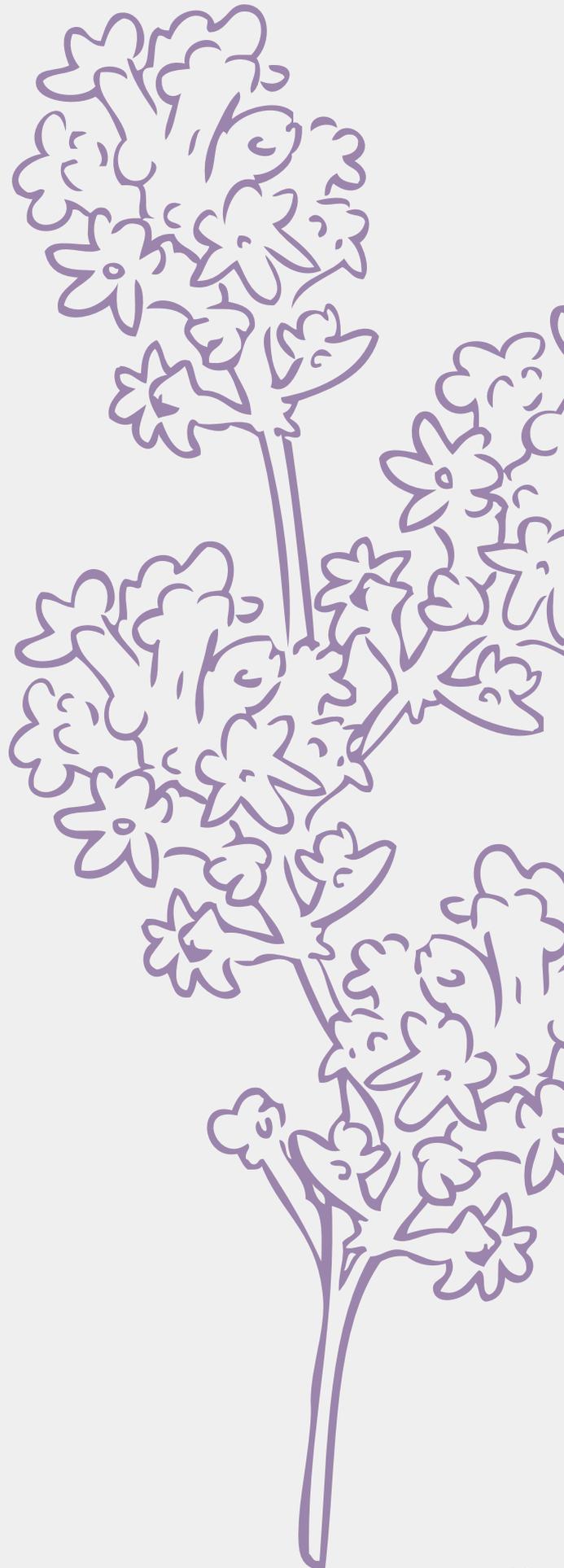
131 114

1800 RESPECT - 24/7

1800 737 732

Kids Help Line - 24/7

1800 551 800



SPECIALIST FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICES IN VICTORIA

Melbourne Metropolitan Specialist Family Violence Services

Region	Location of Office	Contact
Northern	The Orange Door (Heidelberg) Eaglemont (Berry Street)	1800 319 355 (03) 9450 4700
Western	Footscray (Womens Health West)	(03) 9689 9588
Eastern	Ringwood (EDVOS)	(03) 9259 4200
Southern	Frankston (WAYSS) Dandenong (WAYSS) Pakenham (WAYSS) Narre Warren - Berwick - Cranbourne (WAYSS)	(03) 9791 6111
Inner Southern	St Kilda (The Salvation Army)	(03) 9536 7797
Mornington Peninsula	The Orange Door (Frankston) Mornington Peninsula (Good Shepherd)	1800 319 353 (03) 5971 9454

Rural Specialist Family Violence Services

Region	Location of Office	Contact
Barwon South West	The Orange Door (Geelong) Geelong (The Sexual Assault and FV Centre) Warrnambool (Emma House) Hamilton (Emma House) Portland (Emma House)	1800 312 820 (03) 5222 4318 (03) 5561 1934 (03) 5561 1934 (03) 5561 1934
Gippsland	The Orange Door (Morwell) Warragul (Quantum Support Service) Morwell (Quantum Support Service) Leongatha (SalvoCare Eastern) Leongatha (Uniting) Bairnsdale (Gippsland Lakes CH) Lakes Entrance (Gippsland Lakes CH)	1800 319 354 (03) 5622 7000 (03) 5120 2000 (03) 5662 6400 (03) 5662 5150 (03) 5152 0052 (03) 5155 8300
Grampians	Horsham (Grampians CH) Ballarat (WRISC FV Support Services) Ballarat (Berry Street FV Crisis Support 24/7) Stawell (Grampians CH) Ararat (Grampians CH)	(03) 5362 1200 (03) 5333 3666 (03) 5331 3558 (03) 5358 7400 (03) 5352 6200
Hume	Wodonga (Gateway Health) Shepparton (VincentCare-Marian Community) Broadford/Seymour/Wallan (Nexus Primary Health) Wangaratta (The Centre against Violence)	(02) 6022 8888 (03) 5821 9458 1300 773 352 (03) 5722 2203
Loddon Mallee	Mildura (Mallee DV Service) Bendigo (Centre for Non-Violence) Swan Hill (Mallee DV Service)	(03) 5021 2130 - 24/7 1800 884 038 (03) 5033 1899 - 24/7



Eastern Domestic Violence Service Inc.

EDVOS is a child-focused and child safe organisation.

PO BOX 698, Ringwood VIC 3135

  **9259 4200**  edvos@edvos.org.au  edvos.org.au



If you are in immediate danger
please call  **000**

