

Maintaining and restoring your dignity and respect

information sheet

www.womenscouncil.com.au

We all resist abuse and violence. DIGNITY is a vital part of everyone's life. All violence is an affront to our dignity. Every day as a victim of Domestic and Family violence you have experienced small and large attacks your dignity. Every day you and your children have found ways to reassert your basic human right to be treated with dignity and respect.

Resistance

Whenever people are abused, they do many things to oppose the abuse and to keep their dignity and their self-respect. This is called resistance.

Your resistance might have included:

- not doing what the perpetrator wanted you to do,
- standing up against the perpetrator.
- trying to stop or prevent his violence and disrespect.
- imagining a better life for you and your children is a form of resistance.
- children may resist by avoiding eye contact/looking away from the abusive person.
- children may move away from/ not answer questions or ignore greetings from the abusive person.
- it may only be safe to resist the violence in your mind/spirit.
- the smallest and most subtle actions can be resistance and help to maintain safety and dignity.



Usually open defiance is not a safe expression of resistance

Stereotypical and negative view of victims. Many people believe victims of domestic violence share some common "effects" of abuse by their intimate partners. They make an assumption that you passively accepted the violence, and now you lack "self-esteem, assertiveness, or boundaries". They are blind to all the ways you resisted the violence and abuse. Violence and abuse are the actions of one person against the wishes, well-being and dignity of another person.

- the smallest and most subtle actions can threaten and humiliate a woman or child.
- violence and abuse is deliberate perpetrators who commit violence anticipate, and take deliberate steps to suppress, victims' resistance.
- so-called "explosive" or "out of control" acts of violence involve control and choice.

The responses you get from family, friends and community matters

Social responses come from family members, friends, services, government departments (police, courts, child welfare). You and your children are affected physically, emotionally, mentally, socially, spiritually by the positive or negative responses you receive.

If you have received **POSITIVE** social responses:

- this tends to help you recover more quickly and fully
- you are more likely to work with authorities
- you are more likely to report any further violence in future

If you have received **NEGATIVE** social responses:

- you may be less likely to cooperate with authorities
- you may be less likely to disclose violence again
- you may be more likely to receive diagnosis of mental disorder

Refuge Service Model

Refuge and Domestic Violence Specialists are there to support you with restoring and maintaining the dignity of you and your children. They are there to listen to you and provide both emotional and practical support.

Honoring Resistance is part of challenging the notion that victims of a violent partner, ex-partner or family member/s are seen as passive victims and not responding agents to the violence that has occurred. Living free from violence and abuse is the aim of the Refuge Service model; and the staff are there to support you and your children to live a safe, peaceful and productive life.



Useful contacts

Crisis Care

Metro (08) 9223 1110
Country 1800 199 008

Women's DV Helpline

Metro (08) 9223 1188
County 1800 007 339

1800RESPECT

1800 737 732

Kids Helpline

1800 551 800

DV Legal Unit – Legal Aid

(08) 9261 6254 / 1300 650 570

Women's Law Centre

(08) 9272 8800 / 1800 625 122

Reference Dr Allan Wade. Response Based Practice, Honouring Resistance
<http://www.faaas.org/assets/cwesresistancebookletfinalweb.pdf>