

Understanding Family Violence

neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca



Families can be big or small and include all kinds of people (parents/stepparents, grandparents, foster parents, caregivers, siblings, nieces, cousins, distant relatives, close friends or chosen family members).

Families care for each other while growing up. It can be normal for family members to have disagreements or arguments, but if someone in your family is afraid of another person, **that's not okay**.



WHAT IS FAMILY VIOLENCE?

Family violence isn't just physical abuse. Family violence includes a person being physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically, or economically threatening, controlling or abusive towards another person in their family.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE FAMILY VIOLENCE

Physical Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Threatening someone physically• Hitting, slapping, kicking, pinching, pushing• Smashing or throwing things
Emotional Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Insulting, calling names, or constantly putting someone down• Yelling, swearing, and spitting at someone• Making someone scared to talk to other family members or friends• Forcing someone to do things by making them afraid• Hurting family pets
Controlling/ Financial/ Social Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not allowing access to money needed for the family• Checking someone's phone, email, and social media accounts• Following someone and spying on them, locking them in a room/house• Telling others that they are crazy, stupid, or a terrible person
Sexual Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forcing someone to have sex when they don't want to.• Forcing someone to expose parts of their body when they don't want to• Forcing someone to look at pornographic images• Unwanted touching (being touched in uncomfortable ways or places)• Unwanted sexual comments or jokes• Exposing parts of their body or flashing

KEEPING SAFE

If you think someone is being hurt, talk to a trusted adult like a grown-up friend, a family friend, a teacher, a neighbour, or the police.

If someone in your family is being hurt or is afraid, it's natural to want to protect them. Lots of kids try to take care of their families but this is not your job. No matter how old or strong you are, you are not responsible for keeping someone safe.

If there is a fight, don't try to stop it yourself. It can be dangerous to get in the middle of a fight and you need to take care of you. The best way you can get help is by calling an adult.



If you don't feel safe at home, you can make a Safety Plan to help you be prepared and know what to do if there is danger. See how [\[HERE\]](#).



UNDERSTANDING YOUR FEELINGS

Violence at home can cause confusing and painful emotions. You are not alone in feeling this way and it's okay to talk about it.



YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Reach out for help from adults you trust, like friends, relatives, neighbours, teachers, or the police. There are support services that can help you.



FINDING HELP

Click [\[HERE\]](#) to access “Where can I go for help” for a list of services that understand family violence or access Kids Help Phone by phone 24/7 at **1-800-668-6868** or text **CONNECT** to **686868**.

