FINANCIAL ABUSE

FINANCIAL ABUSE: SUMMARY

Key messages about financial abuse:
- It is a form of family violence
- It is often used to trap a person in an abusive relationship
- It is common, and can happen to anyone

- Financial abuse can include many things, like controlling and preventing a person's access to money, stopping them from getting a job or forcing them to get loans they don't want.
- If someone is experiencing financial abuse, it is not their fault – it is a choice made by the person perpetrating financial abuse to exert power and control.
- While financial abuse can be different for different people, there are similarities in the impact that those who have experienced it describe, for example:
  - Feeling trapped
  - Being made to feel incompetent
  - Feeling dependent and powerless

Community Support Services

There are supports available for people who are experiencing financial abuse: (split into Local/National)

NATIONAL DEBT HELPLINE 1800 007 007 ndh.org.au	1800 007 007 Chat Online	Financial counselling 9:30 – 4:30 M-F
cultura.	1800 512 341 fcintake@cultura.org.au	Specialised family violence financial counselling

Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand Financial Independence Hub	1300 050 150 Online form	Financial coaching for those who have experienced family violence + financial abuse
better place AUSTRALIA	1800 214 117 respectingelders@betterplace.com.au	A service that supports older people in addressing conflict relating to family or carers in their lives and preventing elder abuse

General Family Violence

There are supports available for people who are experiencing family violence:

1800 RESPECT NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT, DOMESTIC FAMILY VIOLENCE COUNSELLING SERVICE	1800 737 732 Chat Online	Information + counselling 24 hours
WATHAURONG	03 5277 0044 admin@wathaurong.org.au	Women's business including family violence support
the orange door	1800 312 820 barwon@orangedoor.vic.gov.au	A free service for adults, children and young people who are experiencing or have experienced family violence
The Sexual Assault & Family Violence Centre	For Barwon support: Call 03 5222 4318 or Email reception@safvcentre.org.au For Wimmera support Call 03 5381 1211 or Email wimmera@safvcentre.org.au	Sexual assault and family violence services across the Barwon, Wimmera and Western Melbourne areas of Victoria

USEFUL RESOURCES

1800RESPECT
NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT, DOMESTIC FAMILY VIOLENCE COUNSELLING SERVICE

Financial Abuse Toolkit



EMH Aboriginal Women's Services Financial Abuse Factsheet



Good Shepherd Financial Abuse Information Hub



Signs of Financial Abuse Factsheet

FINANCIAL ABUSE: DEEP DIVE

Key messages about financial abuse:
• Financial abuse is a form of family violence and it is against the law
• It is often used to trap a person in an abusive relationship
• It can happen to anyone – 1 in 4 women and 1 in 13 men experience violence by an intimate partner, and up to 90% of those who seek support are also affected by financial abuse

Financial abuse has been described as a hidden epidemic as it is much less reported on and documented than physical or psychological abuse.
Financial abuse can occur throughout a relationship, or may begin after you and your partner have split up through things like property settlement and child support processes.
Some examples of financial abuse include:

- Financial Control – controlling day-to-day household finances such as
  - Closely monitoring a person's spending
  - Giving them a small allowance
  - Limiting access to money such as bank accounts or benefits
  - Being excluded from making financial decisions
- Financial Exploitation – manipulation of the household finances including:
  - Forcing a person to take on debt, sign documents or claim welfare
  - Forcing a person to work in a family business without getting paid
- Financial Sabotage – sabotaging a person's capacity to be financially independent, such as:
  - Stopping a person from attending work or study
  - Destroying a person's work product
- Institutional or Systemic Abuse – use of the system to disadvantage a person, such as:
  - Refusing to pay child support
  - Drawing out legal proceedings

There can be warning signs

Your partner might be abusive if they:

• Want to join finances early in your relationship
• Are pressuring you to get a joint bank account or second credit card
• React badly when you try to talk to them about money, making you scared to bring it up
For more information on potential warning signs click on the information icon

There are ways to help protect yourself against financial abuse and its impact

- Open your own mail
- Regularly check your bank/credit card statements for unauthorised transactions
- Keep your passwords and login information secure
- Don't sign documents you don't understand
- Seek independent advice if you are unsure something is in your best interests

There is support available

If you think you or someone you know is experiencing financial abuse:

- You can contact 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732 for information and support.
- You can contact National Debit Helpline on 1800 007 007 for financial counselling.

If you have experienced family violence including financial abuse and are not currently in a crisis situation, you can contact the Financial Independence Hub to access financial coaching and support