



Royal Commission
into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation
of People with Disability

Issues Paper

Violence and abuse at home

Easy Read version



2 December 2020

How to use this issues paper



The Disability Royal Commission
(the Royal Commission) wrote this issues paper.

When you see the word 'we', it means
the Royal Commission.



We wrote this issues paper in an easy to
read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Not bold
Bold

We have written some words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 40.



This Easy Read issues paper is a summary
of another issues paper.



You can find the other issues paper on
our website.



You can ask for help to read this issues paper.
A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.



An **issue** is a subject or problem that people are thinking and talking about.



We have written this issues paper to find out what you and the community think about some issues.



There are some questions in this issues paper.



You don't need to answer all our questions.
Our questions are just a guide.



In this issues paper, we talk about things that might upset some people.



If you get upset and need support, we have support services you can contact.



Their contact details are on page 39.

What is in this issues paper?

What is the Royal Commission about?	6
What is this issues paper about?	8
What types of violence and abuse do people with disability experience?	13
Who does violence and abuse affect?	18
Who does these things to people with disability?	23
What we want to know more about	25
What stops people with disability from getting help?	28
How do people with disability stay safe?	32
Emergencies	34
Other questions to think about	35
How to tell us your answers	36
How will we use your answers?	38
Support for you	39
Word list	40

What is the Royal Commission about?



This Royal Commission is called the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

We call it the Royal Commission.

We need the Royal Commission because we know that people with disability experience:



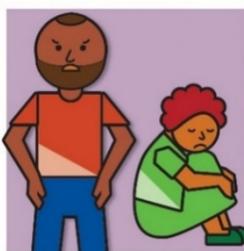
- **violence** – when someone hurts you physically



- **abuse** – when someone treats you badly



- **neglect** – when someone is not helping you the way they are supposed to help you



- **exploitation** – when someone takes advantage of you.



When we talk about 'violence and abuse' in this issues paper, we mean all these things.

What is this issues paper about?



This issues paper is about how people with disability experience violence and abuse in the place where they live.



Many people with disability are not safe in the places they live or stay.

Some people with disability live in:



- their own home



- their family home



- group homes.



Group homes are places where people with disability:

- live together
- get support.



Some people with disability live in **specialist disability accommodation (SDA)**.



SDA is **accessible** housing for some people with disability who take part in the **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)**.



When something is accessible, everyone can use it.



The NDIS is a way to support people with disability.



Some people with disability live in **boarding houses**.



Boarding houses are buildings with bedrooms people can rent.



They can also be called:

- rooming houses
- hostels.



Some people with disability have no choice about where they live.



Some people with disability live in different places but only live there for a short time.



Some people with disability are **homeless**.



People who are homeless do not have a home.

They must find a place to sleep each night.

You might sleep:



- at someone's home
- in a **shelter**
- on the streets
- in another place you find.



A shelter is a place you can stay for a short time when you do not feel safe.

It might also be called a refuge.



You might stay at a shelter for people who:

- are homeless
- experience **domestic and family violence**.



Domestic and family violence is when you are hurt by someone close to you, such as:

- your boyfriend or girlfriend
- your husband or wife
- a member of your family
- someone who takes care of you
- someone you live with.

Questions to think about



What types of violence and abuse happen to people with disability in their home?



Why does this violence and abuse happen?

What types of violence and abuse do people with disability experience?

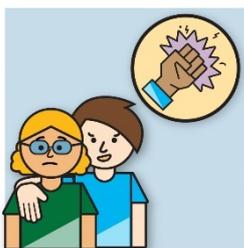


People with disability can experience **emotional abuse**.



Emotional abuse is when someone:

- says mean things to you
- calls you names
- puts you down
- ignores you
- stops you from seeing your friends or family.



People with disability can experience **sexual abuse**.

Sexual abuse is when someone makes you do sexual things you:

- do not want to do
- are too young to do.





People with disability can experience **financial abuse**.

Financial abuse is when someone:



- takes your money
- stops you having a say in how your money is spent
- makes you pay for other people's things.



Sometimes people with disability are not:

- given their freedom
- allowed to do what they want.



Restraints are used in some places where people with disability live.



Restraints are ways to stop someone from doing what they are doing.



Some people tell people with disability:

- they will hurt them
- bad things will happen to them.



Some people stop people with disability:

- having choice and control over their own lives



- doing what they want



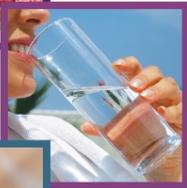
- having contact with their family or friends



- having relationships with people they choose.



People with disability can experience neglect.



They might not get things they need from other people, such as:

- food
- water
- medicine.



They might not get support with their daily personal care needs, such as:

- getting dressed
- using the toilet
- using the shower.

Questions to think about



How does violence and abuse at home affect people with disability?



Why are some people with disability more at risk of violence and abuse?

Who does violence and abuse affect?



Violence and abuse at home can affect anyone with disability.

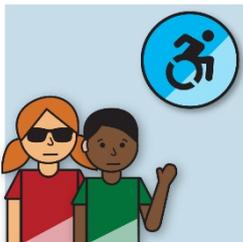


But violence and abuse at home can affect some groups of people more than others.

Violence and abuse at home can affect:



- women and girls with disability



- children with disability



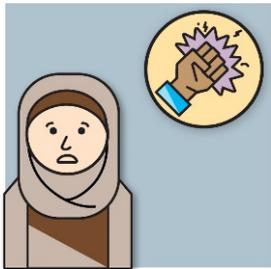
- older people with disability



- **First Nations people with disability.**



First Nations people are also known as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



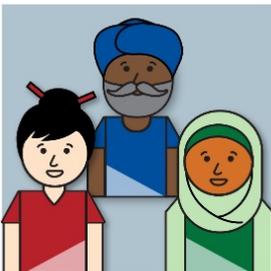
Violence and abuse at home can affect people with disability who are **culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)**.



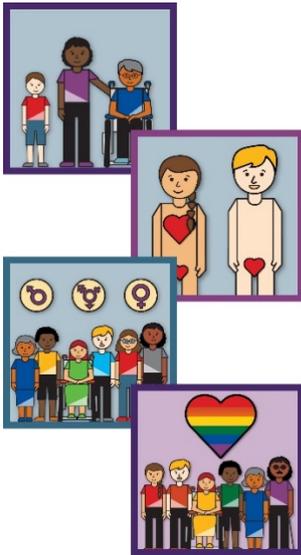
CALD people:

- come from different **cultures** and backgrounds
- speak languages other than English.

Your culture is:



- your way of life
- how you think or act now because of how you grew up
- your beliefs
- what is important to you.



People with disability can also have different experiences based on their:

- age
- sex – whether their body is male or female
- **gender identity**
- sexual orientation – who they love or are attracted to.



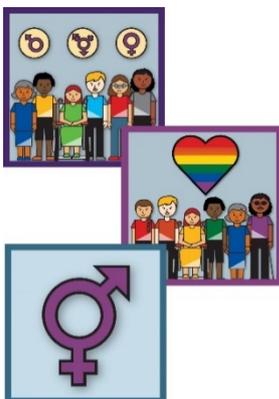
Your gender identity is not about your body being male or female.

It is about who you feel you are as a person.

Your gender identity can be:



- male
- female
- a combination of these
- none of these.



We often say LGBTIQ when we talk about people:

- with different gender identities
- with different sexual orientations
- who don't have typical male or female bodies.

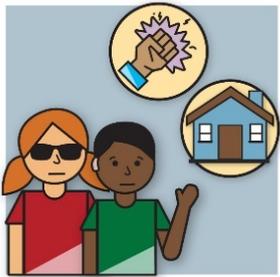


The letters stand for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and questioning.

Questions to think about



What types of violence and abuse do women and girls with disability experience at home?



What types of violence and abuse do children with disability experience at home?



What types of violence and abuse do older people with disability experience at home?



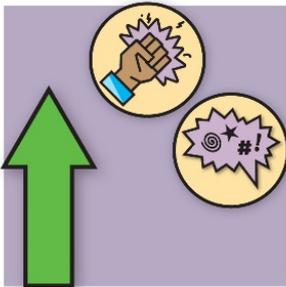
What types of violence and abuse do First Nations people with disability experience at home?



What types of violence and abuse do CALD people with disability experience at home?



What types of violence and abuse do LGBTIQ people with disability experience at home?



Why do these groups of people with disability experience more violence and abuse?

Who does these things to people with disability?



People with disability can experience violence and abuse at home from their:

- husband or wife
- boyfriend or girlfriend.



People with disability can also experience violence and abuse at home from members of their family such as their:

- parents
- brothers or sisters
- grandparents.



Some parents with disability experience violence and abuse from their children.



Some people with disability who live in their own home experience violence and abuse when people come to their home, such as their:

- family
- friends
- support workers.

People with disability who live away from their family home might experience violence and abuse from:



- the people who own or run their home
- support workers
- other people who live in their home.



In some states and territories, the law sees this as domestic and family violence.



But in other states and territories, the law does not see this as domestic and family violence.

Question to think about

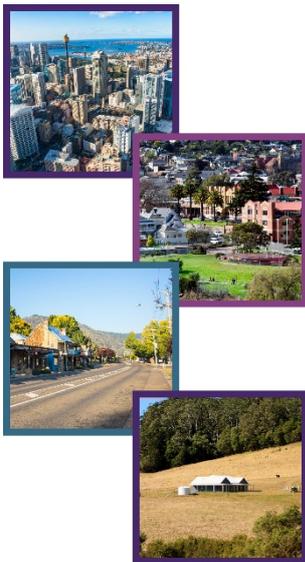


Should the law see any violence or abuse that happens in someone's home as part of domestic and family violence?

What we want to know more about

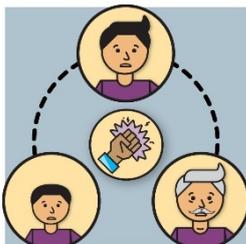


We want to know what puts people with disability at risk of violence and abuse at home.



We want to know if people with disability are more at risk if they live in:

- a large city
- a large town
- a small town
- an area far away from a town or city.



We want to understand how people with disability have experienced violence and abuse at home during different times in their life.



This includes when they were:

- a child
- a teenager
- an adult.

We want to know if people's experience of violence and abuse changed when they:



- moved to a new home
- changed how they live.

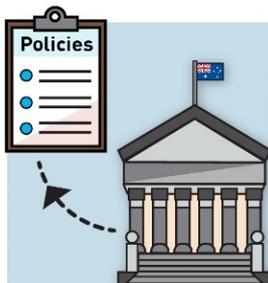


For example, when they met a new boyfriend or girlfriend.

We want to understand if we need new ways to keep people with disability safe, such as:

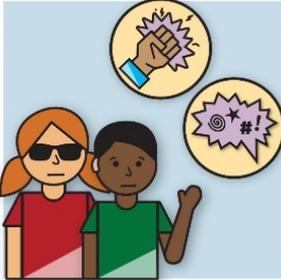


- laws
- **policies**
- ways of working.



Policies are government plans for how to do things.

We want to understand how:



- children with disability experience violence and abuse



- people with disability have been affected if they experienced violence and abuse as children.

What stops people with disability from getting help?



People with disability may not get the support they need when they have experienced violence and abuse in the home.

People with disability might not be able to get support because:



- the places they need to go to get support are not accessible



- information about the support they need is not easy for them to understand



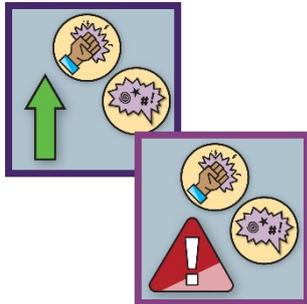
- people who give support do not understand how to work with people with disability.

People with disability might worry that:



- nobody will believe them
- they will lose other support they get.

People with disability might be scared they will experience:



- more violence or abuse
- worse violence or abuse.



People with disability face barriers when they use the **justice system**.

The justice system includes:



- police
- the courts
- the law
- prisons.



We want to know how we could make it easier for people with disability who experience violence and abuse at home to use the justice system.

Questions to think about



Where can people with disability go if they experience violence and abuse at home?



What support is there for people with disability who experience violence and abuse at home?



What happens when people with disability who experience violence and abuse ask police for help?



What has it been like when people with disability who experience violence and abuse use the justice system?



What do disability service providers do when they find out about a person with disability's experience of violence and abuse at home?

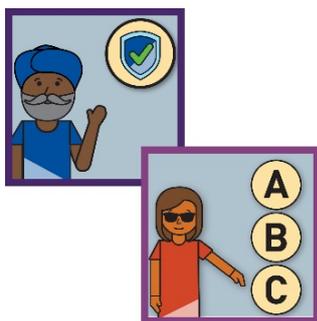


What do domestic and family violence services do when they find out about a person with disability's experience of violence and abuse at home?



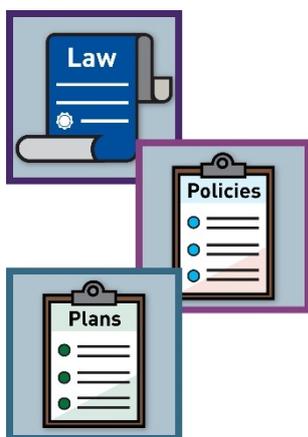
Are there laws, policies and ways of working that help keep children safe?

How do people with disability stay safe?



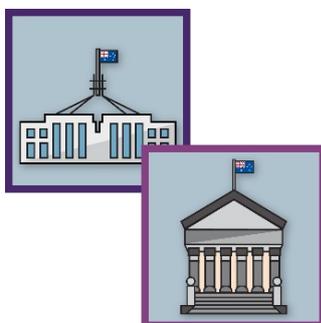
Safeguards are things we can do to:

- keep someone safe
- make sure they still have choice and control.



Governments make safeguards through:

- laws
- policies
- plans.



This includes:

- the Australian Government
- state and territory governments.



Supports and services people with disability use need to have their own safeguards.

Questions to think about



How does the Australian Government help people with disability stay safe from violence and abuse at home through any of its:

- policies?
- plans?



How do state and territory governments help keep people with disability safe from violence and abuse at home through any of their:

- policies?
- plans?

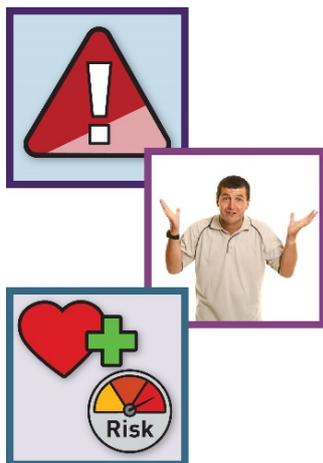


What could we do to make government policies and plans better for people with disability?



What safeguards do disability services use?

Emergencies



Emergencies:

- are dangerous situations
- are things we don't expect to happen
- can put our health and safety at risk.



People with disability can be badly affected by emergencies.



During emergencies, people with disability are also more at risk of violence and abuse.

Questions to think about



How have emergencies in Australia affected how people with disability experience violence and abuse at home?



What would help people with disability who experience violence and abuse at home during emergencies?

Other questions to think about



Have we missed anything?



What else do we need to know about how people with disability experience violence and abuse at home?

How to tell us your answers

You can send us your answers to our questions:



- by email
DRCEnquiries@royalcommission.gov.au



- in the mail
GPO Box 1422
Brisbane
QLD 4001.

Or you can speak to us on the phone:



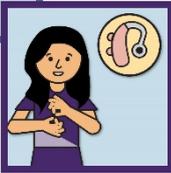
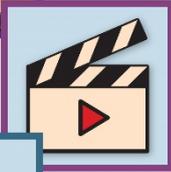
1800 517 199
(07) 3734 1900



We are available to talk from Monday to Friday
between 9 am and 5 pm.



We can make a time with you to take your response
over the phone.



You can tell us:

- in writing
- in a video
- as an audio recording.

You can use:

- English
- another language you speak
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages
- Auslan.



We would like to have everyone's answers by 26 February 2021.



But we will still accept answers after this date if you need more time.

How will we use your answers?



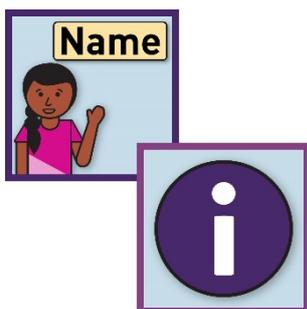
All the answers people give us will help the Royal Commission with our work.

We might share your answers:



- on our website
- in reports we write.

If you let us share your answers, you can ask us not to include:



- your name
- any information about you.



You must tell us if you don't want us to share your answers.

Support for you



Blue Knot Foundation offers free **counselling support** to anyone who needs it.



Counselling support is when you:

- talk to someone about how you think and feel
- talk about ways to help you feel better.



You can contact Blue Knot Foundation by phone.
1800 421 468



They are open every day.



You can send Blue Knot Foundation an email
helpline@blueknot.org.au

Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this issues paper mean.



Abuse

Abuse is when someone treats you badly.



Accessible

When something is accessible, everyone can use it.



Boarding houses

Boarding houses are buildings with bedrooms people can rent.

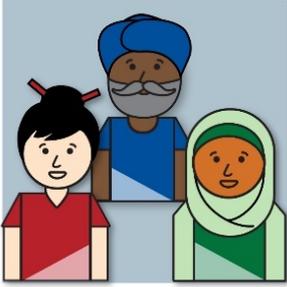
They can also be called:

- rooming houses
- hostels.



Culture

Your culture is:



- your way of life
- how you think or act now because of how you grew up
- your beliefs
- what is important to you.

Domestic and family violence

Domestic and family violence is when you are hurt by someone close to you, such as:



- your boyfriend or girlfriend
- your husband or wife
- a member of your family
- someone who takes care of you
- someone you live with.

Emergencies:

- are dangerous situations
- are things we don't expect to happen
- can put our health and safety at risk.

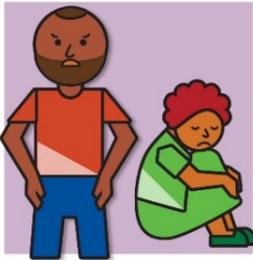




Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is when someone:

- says mean things to you
- calls you names
- puts you down
- ignores you
- stops you from seeing your friends or family.



Exploitation

Exploitation is when someone takes advantage of you.



Financial abuse

Financial abuse is when someone:

- takes your money
- stops you having a say in how your money is spent
- makes you pay for other people's things.



First Nations people

First Nations people are also known as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Gender identity



Your gender identity is not about your body being male or female.

It is about who you feel you are as a person.

Your gender identity can be:

- male
- female
- a combination of these
- none of these.



Group homes

Group homes are places where people with disability:

- live together
- get support.



Homeless

People who are homeless do not have a home.

They must find a place to sleep each night.

Independent

When you are independent, you are in control of your own:

- life
- choices.





Issue

An issue is a subject or problem that people are thinking and talking about.

Justice system

The justice system includes:

- police
- the courts
- the law
- prisons.



The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a way to support people with disability.



Neglect

Neglect is when someone is not helping you the way they are supposed to help you.



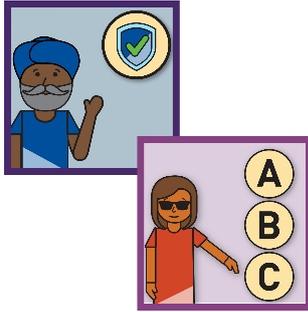
Policies

Policies are government plans for how to do things.



Restraints

Restraints are ways to stop someone from doing what they are doing.



Safeguards

Safeguards are things we can do to:

- keep someone safe
- make sure they still have choice and control.



Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is when someone makes you do sexual things you:

- do not want to do
- are too young to do.



Shelter

A shelter is a place you can stay when you don't feel safe.

It might also be called a refuge.



Specialist disability accommodation (SDA)

Specialist disability accommodation (SDA) is accessible housing for people with disability.



Violence

Violence is when someone hurts you physically.

The images in this Easy Read document may not be reused without permission.



Royal Commission
into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and
Exploitation of People with Disability