

# HELP IS AVAILABLE FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Violence in a close relationship means violence against anyone who is close to the aggressor. It means behaviours and actions that force another person to change their normal way of thinking, acting or speaking, against their will. Violence may materialise in the form of threats, words or gestures, or through hitting, strangling or shoving, or preventing another person from doing something. Violence may also be sexual, financial or digital, harassment, or related to honour or, in the case of children, older people and people with disabilities, neglected care or other mistreatment. One of the characteristics of violence is the fear of another person or one's own reactions.

Domestic violence often begins almost unnoticed: through belittling, negating and disrespect. Violence may become physical and even life-threatening. Parties to violence may start to regard the situation as "normal", but violence can never be normal, and it should not be accepted under any circumstances. Violence is not the same as an argument, in which both parties can safely express their differing opinions. The responsibility for violence lies solely with the offender.

Violence in close relationships hurts the parties involved in various ways. Children can see, hear and sense much more than we adults believe. Even if a child does not personally witness a violent act, a frightening and aggressive atmosphere at home may have far-reaching consequences. Violence tends to pass on from one generation to the next as a problem solving strategy. This is why it is important to stop the cycle of violence. The elderly and people with disabilities also have the right to dignity and a safe life.

Violence or the fear of violence often reduces the capacity to act. Asking for help may be difficult, and the existence of violence may be denied. However, this prevents everyone involved from having access to help. Seeking help is an important first step in getting away from violence. You are not alone – domestic violence may concern anyone, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, culture or financial position. Violence rarely stops by itself; instead, it tends to continue and escalate.

Violence is not something that happens inside a family – it is a criminal offence. It is the duty of the police to investigate and prevent crime. In the criminal process, the police acts impartially and aims to help the parties involved to stop the cycle of violence. The common goal and duty of the authorities and support organisations is to provide help to overcome difficult situations.

## Don't remain alone!

National support services that provide personal help for parties to violence are listed below. Help is also available for couples and families together. Services are confidential and free of charge. Services are also available anonymously. Information about support services in your region is provided at the end. **In an acute emergency, call 112.** The police's contact information, instructions and information for parties to crime, and tools for reporting crime online are available on the Police of Finland's website at [www.poliisi.fi](http://www.poliisi.fi).

- The Nollalinja service provides help for victims of domestic violence and violence against women in Finnish, Swedish and English, and interpreted in Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Somali, Sorani and Russian, round the clock by dialling 080 005 005. The Nollalinja chat service is available at [www.nollalinja.fi](http://www.nollalinja.fi). Nollalinja also provides help for people close to victims of violence.
- MIELI Mental Health Finland's crisis helpline is available round the clock in Finnish (09 2525 0111). Services are also provided in Swedish, English and Arabic. Further information: [www.mieli.fi](http://www.mieli.fi)
- The Online Shelter provides help, and you can always call it if anyone in your close relationship is violent or threatening. The Online Shelter is available round the clock. In addition, the Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters provides non-institutional services not only for victims of violence or the threat of violence, but also for aggressors, and anyone who is afraid of violence, couples and children who have been witnesses or victims of violence. Further information: <https://nettiturvakoti.fi>
- Victim Support Finland (RIKU) provides telephone help and practical advice for victims of crime, their close ones and witnesses in criminal cases in questions related to the criminal process. Victims may also request a personal support person for different criminal process phases. In addition to the helpline (116 006), RIKU provides legal advice, a chat service and a special support service for victims of human trafficking. Further information: [www.riku.fi](http://www.riku.fi)
- Women's Line services are intended for women and girls who have experienced violence and for those close to them. The Turv@verkko helpline and chat service provide help in questions related to digital violence and cyberbullying. Further information: [www.naistenlinja.fi](http://www.naistenlinja.fi)
- The Miessakit association provides help for men who have been victims of violence or used violence. The association also provides help for divorce problems. Services are available by telephone or online at [www.miessakit.fi](http://www.miessakit.fi).
- Miehen Linja services are intended for immigrant men who have used violence or fear using violence within a family or in an intimate relationship ([www.lyomatonlinja.fi/fi/toiminta/palvelut/miehen-linja](http://www.lyomatonlinja.fi/fi/toiminta/palvelut/miehen-linja))
- Maria Akatemia supports women in issues related to their inner violence or the fear of it ([www.mariaakatemia.fi](http://www.mariaakatemia.fi)).
- The Varjo support centre provides help for parties to post-divorce harassment ([www.varjosta.fi](http://www.varjosta.fi)).
- The Suvanto association provides support services for the elderly ([www.suvantory.fi](http://www.suvantory.fi), tel. 050 577 0218).
- MONIKA – Multicultural Women's Association Finland provides multilingual support services for immigrant women at the Crisis Centre Monika and Shelter Mona ([www.monikanaiset.fi](http://www.monikanaiset.fi))
- The Loisto settlementti association's SOPU service provides help in issues of violence and the threat of violence related to honour ([www.soputila.fi](http://www.soputila.fi))
- Municipalities are obligated to provide social services for citizens in challenging situations, such as for people needing support due to domestic violence. In issues related to substance abuse and addictions, contact your municipality's A-Clinic. A-Clinic also provides help for people close to victims of substance abuse and addiction. More information available at AddictionLink ([www.paihdelinkki.fi](http://www.paihdelinkki.fi)). In issues related to mental health, contact your municipal health centre. Further information: <https://www.mielenterveystalo.fi/>

You can send an emergency text message from a registered telephone number. Further information: <https://112.fi/hatatekstiviesti>

With a safety plan, you can prepare for threatening situations (<https://nettiturvakoti.fi/nain-haeta-pua/turvasuunnitelmat/>).

The police can issue a temporary restraining order (<https://poliisi.fi/en/restraining-order>).

To help victims of serious intimate partner violence, dozens of municipalities are already using the multi-vocational MARAK method, which brings together the authorities and associations that help victims in the region and coordinates support provided for victims. Further information: [www.thl.fi/marak](http://www.thl.fi/marak)

Sometimes, domestic violence cases can be mediated (<https://poliisi.fi/en/mediation>)