



YOUTH SAY
NO!

DATING VIOLENCE

STOP LIVING THE NIGHTMARE



Dating violence is a form of family and domestic violence.

It is wrong and no one deserves to be abused.

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This booklet and accompanying resources contain helpful information about dating violence and family and domestic violence, and can be downloaded from www.youthsayno.wa.gov.au

Dating violence

WHAT IS IT?

If you are going out with someone and they are constantly trying to dominate or control what you do, such as:

- ▶ telling you who to have as friends
- ▶ telling you what you should be wearing
- ▶ telling you when to go out

... this is not healthy, it's controlling and abusive behaviour. It's never OK.

If you feel that you need to get permission from your boy/girlfriend to do anything or you spend your time worrying about things that will make them upset or angry, this is what is meant by controlling behaviour.

In abusive relationships the different forms of abuse are used as a form of control, including threats to harm if a boy/girlfriend doesn't do as they say. Many people stay in abusive relationships because they blame themselves for the abuse, or sometimes they don't even realise that the behaviour is abusive. Sometimes they think things will get better. Unfortunately in most cases, the abuse only gets worse.

Often things like alcohol, drugs, provocation, religion and even cultural beliefs are used as excuses for abusive behaviour. But the truth is there is NO excuse for being abusive and trying to excuse the behaviour is as wrong as the behaviour itself.

Dating violence is a form of family and domestic violence. It is wrong and no one deserves to be abused.

Sometimes the person who is experiencing physical violence may fight back as a means to stop further abuse from occurring. It is important to recognise that any person who uses physical harm or threats of violence to gain control over the other partner is a perpetrator of abuse. This can happen in both heterosexual and same sex relationships.

Men are most often the perpetrators and women are the victims in abusive relationships. However, young women can also be violent, and young men can be victims. Whether you are in a heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual or transsexual dating relationship, any type of violence is unacceptable and unjustifiable, regardless of the situation.

Forms of abuse

Verbal and emotional abuse includes:

- ▶ name calling and swearing/ abusing you to make you feel bad
- ▶ turning around every argument/ disagreement so that it's always your fault, never theirs
- ▶ stalking
- ▶ threatening to hurt or kill you or someone close to you, or threatening to hurt themselves if you don't do what they want you to
- ▶ cyberbullying/sexting- using mobile phones, social media and/or the internet to harass, intimidate and threaten you through things such as texts, emails, online videos, instant messages and website links.

Physical abuse can be:

- ▶ direct personal contact such as pushing and shoving, grabbing someone by the throat, hitting, slapping, punching, biting, pulling your hair, or kicking
- ▶ indirect contact such as deliberately placing dangerous objects in the way so that they hurt you or intentionally placing you in a situation to cause you harm
- ▶ damaging your property
- ▶ threatening to do any of these things.

It is important to identify acts of verbal and emotional abuse, as these can sometimes be 'warning signs' for more severe forms of violence down the track.

Sexual abuse includes:

- ▶ unwanted touching or kissing
- ▶ forcing or pressuring you to engage in sexual activity, including posing for sexually explicit photos
- ▶ sexting – sending sexually explicit or suggestive photos of you to others, or sending you this type of image of themselves or other people
- ▶ taking sexually explicit images or video of you without your knowledge or consent
- ▶ harassing you by constantly making comments of a sexual nature.

Controlling behaviour includes:

- ▶ being jealous of your friends and family and stopping (or limiting) you from spending time with them
- ▶ checking on you all the time to find out where you are, what you're doing and who you're with
- ▶ controlling finances/household income in defacto relationships
- ▶ pressuring or forcing you to do things against your will such use drugs, alcohol or cigarettes, or tell you how to dress or what to eat
- ▶ constant SMS, phone or online contact with your friends to find out where you are and/or who you are with
- ▶ invading your privacy eg. reading your diary, emails, phone messages.

NATALIE'S STORY

"I have been going out with Pete for about 3 months now and I really care about him. Things seemed OK at the beginning but lately he acts as if he owns me and I hate it. He tells me that I don't need to spend as much time with my friends now we are together and gets agro when I go out with them. He goes on about me having to make a choice... either my friends or him.... why can't I just have both?

Last night, we went for a drive so that we could be alone. We parked and started mucking around, kissing and feeling and stuff. He started to get too carried away so I told him to stop but he just ignored me. I yelled at him to stop and he got really agro. He said that I was playing games with him.

I tried to explain I just didn't feel like it but he wouldn't listen. He told me to stop leading him on by making him want to have sex with me. He said if I didn't loosen up, he would leave me and find someone else who wasn't so uptight. I let him have sex because I didn't want to break up with him but now I feel used and I'm beginning to feel too scared to question him in case he leaves me, or hurts me."

Unfortunately for lots of girls, they feel trapped in abusive relationships, even experiencing severe physical abuse at the hands of their boyfriends. This is not OK.

Date rape

Date rape happens when someone you are going out with forces you or tricks you into having sex when you don't want to. It doesn't have to involve sexual intercourse; it can include things like penetration using an object or finger or forcing you to have oral sex.

The person may use threats, get you very drunk, drug you, or trick you to get you to have sex when you don't want to. This is not acceptable behaviour.

Regardless of the relationship, sex without consent is RAPE. Any unwanted sexual contact or behaviour is against the law.

Sometimes it might be difficult to understand that what is happening

in your relationship is abusive. It can be easy to get confused between someone caring about you and someone controlling you.

If you are being abused remember it is not your fault. Nothing you say, wear, or do gives anyone else the right to treat you this way. You are a worthwhile person and deserve to be happy, safe and respected.

You have the power to change the situation.

Stalking

Dating violence can include stalking. This happens when someone constantly keeps tabs on you, even when you have broken up with that person. This includes cyber stalking which is when someone uses a mobile phone and/or the internet or social media to harass, intimidate or threaten you.

As the nature of cyberspace is faceless, cyber stalkers may impersonate victims online or encourage others to harass and intimidate victims by sending or posting inappropriate material.

If any of these things are happening to you, let someone know and call the police. Stalking is against the law and you have some legal options that could help your situation.

CHLOE'S STORY

"I am really scared of Brad. It wasn't always like this but now I feel so confused. Brad was always really jealous of other guys and I thought that meant he really loved me.

After we had been going out for about three months, we were at a party and I was having fun, dancing and talking. I could see Brad was becoming angry with me but I didn't know why. He told me we were leaving. I said I didn't want to go and he grabbed me by the arm and started to pull me away. One of my friends told him to leave me alone and then Brad started punching my friend.

It was just horrible and I ran outside to get away from it. I decided I didn't want to go out with Brad anymore, he was beginning to frighten me.

The next day he came around and said he was sorry for what had happened. He said he only did it because he loved me. He looked so sorry that I didn't end our relationship. I thought he did really love me.

Things were OK for a while but similar things started to happen and each time I tried to stop it he would say how sorry he was and that it wouldn't happen again. I believed him. I feel like I'm on a merry go round. I don't know what to do. Sometimes I think it's my fault and I think that's why I keep forgiving him. I just want him to love me and for the good times to stay."

Warning signs

You are in an abusive relationship when your partner:

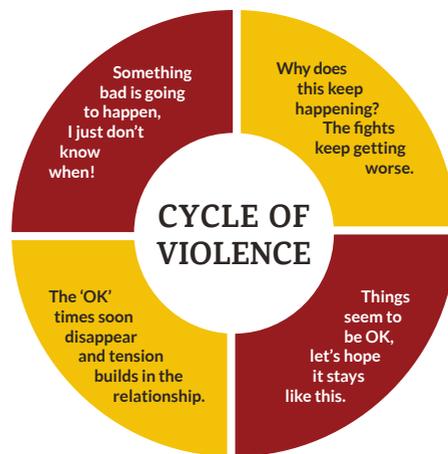
- tells you who you can have as friends and controls when you can see them
- wants to know where you have been and who you have been with all the time
- gets jealous when you talk to someone else including family members
- constantly puts you down and insults you so you feel worthless
- forces you to have sex or engage in sexual acts (e.g. pose for sexually explicit photos or video).
- physically and emotionally hurts you
- threatens and frightens you.
- tells you what you should and shouldn't wear
- pressures or forces you into using illegal drugs, alcohol and/or cigarettes.

It is important to remember things are unlikely to change for the better just because you want them to.

Attempting to ignore or avoid the situation will not make it go away. Even if your boy/girlfriend says they care about you and you care about them, it is not OK for them to treat you like this.

If any of these signs are like something you are experiencing, you probably feel sad, hurt and alone.

You may feel like it's your fault; like you can't talk to anyone about it or afraid that you will get hurt if you tell anyone what's been happening. You need to understand that it's not OK to be treated like this and there is help available.



Safety plan... what can you do?

Know you're not alone and you're not causing this to happen. Other people are going through very similar things. There are people out there who understand what you're going through.

If you are being abused or you are fearful of your partner, it is very important to plan for your safety. This is a process of looking at your situation and assessing what you might need to help you feel safe and better. It can be as simple as talking to someone you trust, having a list of important phone numbers kept in a safe place, or learning more about what can happen to people who are being abused. All these things are proactive steps to take care of yourself.

A SAFETY PLAN CAN INCLUDE:

- Telling someone you trust about what is happening.
- Making a list of important telephone numbers or saving them in your mobile phone contacts in case you need to ring someone in an emergency (e.g. police, trusted person, taxi).
- Not going out alone - always have someone you trust with you.
- Keep credit on your mobile phone and ensure it's always charged.
- Changing your email address and telephone numbers (home and mobile) if you think this will help avoid contact.
- Deleting messages on your phone that may be used by the abusive person to find or contact you (e.g. details of plans for going out).
- Deleting the person from your Facebook friends list (or other social media) so that the abusive person cannot track your movements. In some cases, it may be better to remove yourself from social media all together, until things settle down.
- Covering your tracks online if you've been visiting websites for help - to find out how, visit www.youthsayno.wa.gov.au
- Writing down or keeping an electronic record of dates and times of different incidents - this is a hassle but will come in handy if you have to make a police statement.
- Try working out a code word you can use with a trusted friend or relative to let them know you may need some help - perhaps this code could be sent via SMS.

Try not to keep this a secret because things may only get worse. If someone else becomes involved, like a family friend or relative or even the police, things have a better chance of changing. Your safety and the safety of your family are the most important things to consider.

Everyone has the right to live free from fear so you don't have to live like this. It might take time but things can change for the better.

How to stay safe online

Violence and abuse don't always come in the form of physical acts and emotional torment. The way we communicate with one another is changing every day, and while technology advancements are great to keep up with, there are ways to keep safe if someone is using these mediums to make you feel scared, unsafe or threatened.

Abusive online behaviour includes:

- ▶ checking your email or tracking your internet use
- ▶ harassing you or stalking you on social media
- ▶ sending constant and abusive emails, texts or messages in a way that makes you feel scared or threatened
- ▶ posting embarrassing, fake or intimate photographs of you on social media (without your consent), or threatening to do so if you do not do what they want
- ▶ spreading rumours about you on social media, or writing abusive comments on your, their, or other social media accounts.

ONLINE SAFETY TIPS

- Turn GPS and location settings off your phone.
- Keep a passcode on your phone that only you know.
- Should you use a second, prepaid mobile that only you know about?
- Clear your search history after you have finished browsing, then before logging off, make some random website searches (movies, shopping, news) so that a safe recent browser history is left.
- Log off your computer.
- Change passwords regularly and use different passwords for different accounts. Be sure that your browser doesn't remember your passwords.
- Create a private email that only you can access.
- Consider your privacy settings on social media accounts.
- Consider your location settings and cues on social media i.e. do you 'check in' to places, or do your friends 'check you in'. Do the photos you're tagged in indicate your whereabouts? Ask your friends not to do this, if it is unsafe for your location to be known.
- Use another phone or computer if necessary, to browse the internet. For example, a friend's phone or the school, university or local library computer.

Call the police if you are being or have been threatened or stalked by your current or ex-partner.

Abusive behaviour and stalking are criminal offences.

You might be confused and unsure whether what you are going through is dating violence. It might help to talk to an adult you trust like a relative, youth worker, school counsellor/chaplain, or teacher.



Respectful relationships

A healthy relationship is built on a foundation of trust, respect, compromise, and understanding for one another, and being comfortable in each other's company. An abusive relationship occurs when one person dominates, bullies and controls the other on almost everything.

Obsessive jealousy can often be mistaken for love, but it is an underlying form of control and possessiveness. If you respect and trust each other it shouldn't matter who you talk to or hang out with.

A healthy relationship includes:

- ▶ respecting each others feelings, opinions, and friendships
- ▶ having fun together
- ▶ feeling comfortable and at ease with one another
- ▶ being free to be yourself
- ▶ being able to disagree without feeling intimidated
- ▶ being able to spend time away from your relationship without negative consequences
- ▶ being able to say no when you don't want to do things, including sex.

LESLEY'S STORY

"Jamie is so understanding and sweet. I really enjoy spending time with him and we always have fun together. Sometimes we have disagreements on things like what movie we want to see at the cinema. He always wants to see the action or comedies and I just can't get enough of the scary movies.

It's OK though because we have worked out a system where we take turns at choosing a movie, so it's equally fair. We haven't had sex yet, though we have talked about it, but I'm not ready yet and he accepts that. He says he is prepared to wait. He's so different from my last boyfriend who got jealous when I went out with my friends and got paranoid about what I was doing and who I was with.

I used to feel bad about going out with my friends because of his controlling and manipulative behaviour. I thought it was just because he liked me so much and wanted to spend time with me, and I really liked him which made it hard to break it off. I didn't even realise that what he was doing was abuse.

But Jamie is so different. He gives me freedom and loves me for me, treats me as an equal which is what I want. I like being able to have a say and I now know what it's like to be in a happy relationship."

Am I being abusive?

See below to find out if you behave this way toward your girl/boy friend.

DO YOU:

- Restrict his/her contact with other people?
- Restrict his/her time away from you?
- Get agro if he/she doesn't agree with you and do as you say?
- Physically harm your girl/boyfriend? (e.g. Hit, slap, push)
- Damage your girl/boyfriend's personal belongings?
- Deliberately hurt your girl/boyfriend's pets?
- Tell her/him what to wear?
- Belittle and say nasty, derogatory things including put downs about her/him in front of others?
- Write nasty or hurtful things about him/her on social media?

If you answered 'yes' to any of these questions, there are options to turn your relationship into a healthier and happier one.

Help and support is available. Take the first step and pick up the phone and call one of the useful contact numbers at the back of this booklet.

TOM'S STORY

"When Karen and I got together I was so freaked out because she is so hot and the other guys always look at her. It made me feel kinda special she picked me and I noticed I was more popular around the other guys and this made me feel great.

The trouble with Karen is that she is always around other people, always laughing and just wants heaps of people around her all the time. You'd think if we were going out together she would want to spend more time with me and less with them. I told her not to see so much of them and she just laughed at me.

I was so angry she did that. She doesn't listen and just ignores me.

Well there's no way I was gonna take this so I told her she can't see her friends when it suited her and she needed to pay more attention to us than them. She just said she wasn't gonna do as I said, that she would see her friends when she wanted to – that it was none of my business. You can understand why I had to get tough with her can't you?

I'm her boyfriend, she's got no right to ignore me.. Anyway I needed to show her who's boss and came down a bit heavy with her - y'know nothin' bad, just some pushing and slapping to teach her a lesson. And guess what? She left me, didn't she? I couldn't believe it! She had me to take care of her; she didn't need all those other losers. Well, I hope she gets what she deserves one day."

Tom's behaviour is not ok - he is being abusive. No one has the right to bully anyone else into doing things they don't want to do. This is not a healthy relationship and Karen did the right thing by leaving. Karen wasn't prepared to be bullied or controlled and was lucky enough to pick up on the signs that something was wrong and did something about it.

Unfortunately, for lots of girls this doesn't happen and they feel trapped in abusive relationships, even experiencing severe physical abuse at the hands of their boyfriends.

THIS IS NOT OK.

Contacts

The following phone numbers and websites can help you if you feel unsafe, or if you just want to talk to someone or access more information. These places are there to make sure you are not hurt, so when you call they will be able to help protect you.

Many of these are free and available 24/7.

Police 131 444
Emergency Only 000
From mobiles 112

Crisis Care 9223 1111
Country callers 1800 199 008

Free 24-hour telephone information and referral service for people in crisis needing urgent help.

Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800

Free, confidential 24-hour telephone and online counselling service for 5 to 25 year olds in Australia.

1800 MYLINE 1800 695 463

Free, confidential 24-hour respectful relationships advice line.

1800 RESPECT 1800 737 732

Free, confidential 24-hour counselling for people affected by family or domestic violence or sexual assault.

Lifeine 13 11 14

Free, confidential 24-hour counselling for people in crisis.

Sexual Assault Resource Centre 9340 1828
Country callers 1800 199 888

24-hour crisis line for people over the age of 13 years. Provides medical, forensic and counselling services to the Perth metropolitan area. Offers referral to a service near you.

Women's Domestic Violence Helpline 9223 1188
Country callers 1800 007 339

Free 24-hour support and counselling for women experiencing family and domestic violence.

Men's Domestic Violence Helpline 9223 1199
Country callers 1800 000 599

Free 24-hour telephone information, referral and counselling service for men to help them change their violent behaviour towards their partner.

LANGUAGE SERVICES

Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS) 13 14 50

24-hour national service for people who do not speak English or for English speakers communicating with them. Available to any person or organisation in Australia, offering access to 1750 contractors who speak over 170 languages and dialects.

National Relay Service 13 36 77

24-hour national service for people with a hearing impairment or are deaf.

Websites

www.youthsayno.wa.gov.au

A Western Australian website that provides information and support for young people experiencing family and domestic violence or supporting a friend or relative who is experiencing some form of abuse.

www.theline.org.au

www.facebook.com/theline

The Line is an initiative under the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children and encourages healthy and respectful relationships by challenging and changing attitudes and behaviours that support violence.

www.dvrcv.org.au/knowledge-centre/our-publications/booklets/sex-love-and-other-stuff

Sex, Love and Other Stuff - Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria. Information for young men on respectful relationships.

www.burstingthebubble.com

Provides information and assistance for teenagers living in homes where there is violence or abuse.

lovegoodbadugly.com

Advice and stories about dating and relationships for young people to help them work out where their relationship is at, from the personal experience of other young people who have been in a similar position.

au.reachout.com

Initiative of the Inspire Foundation and sponsored by state government and corporate business. An interactive site that inspires people to help themselves through tough times, with fact sheets and stories on safety in a relationship and in families.

www.itstimewetalked.com.au/young-people

Seeing porn might seem normal. But porn is not reality and it can impact in a range of ways that aren't all good.

www.kidshelpline.com.au

Kids Helpline national web based counselling and information service aimed at young people aged 5 to 25 years.

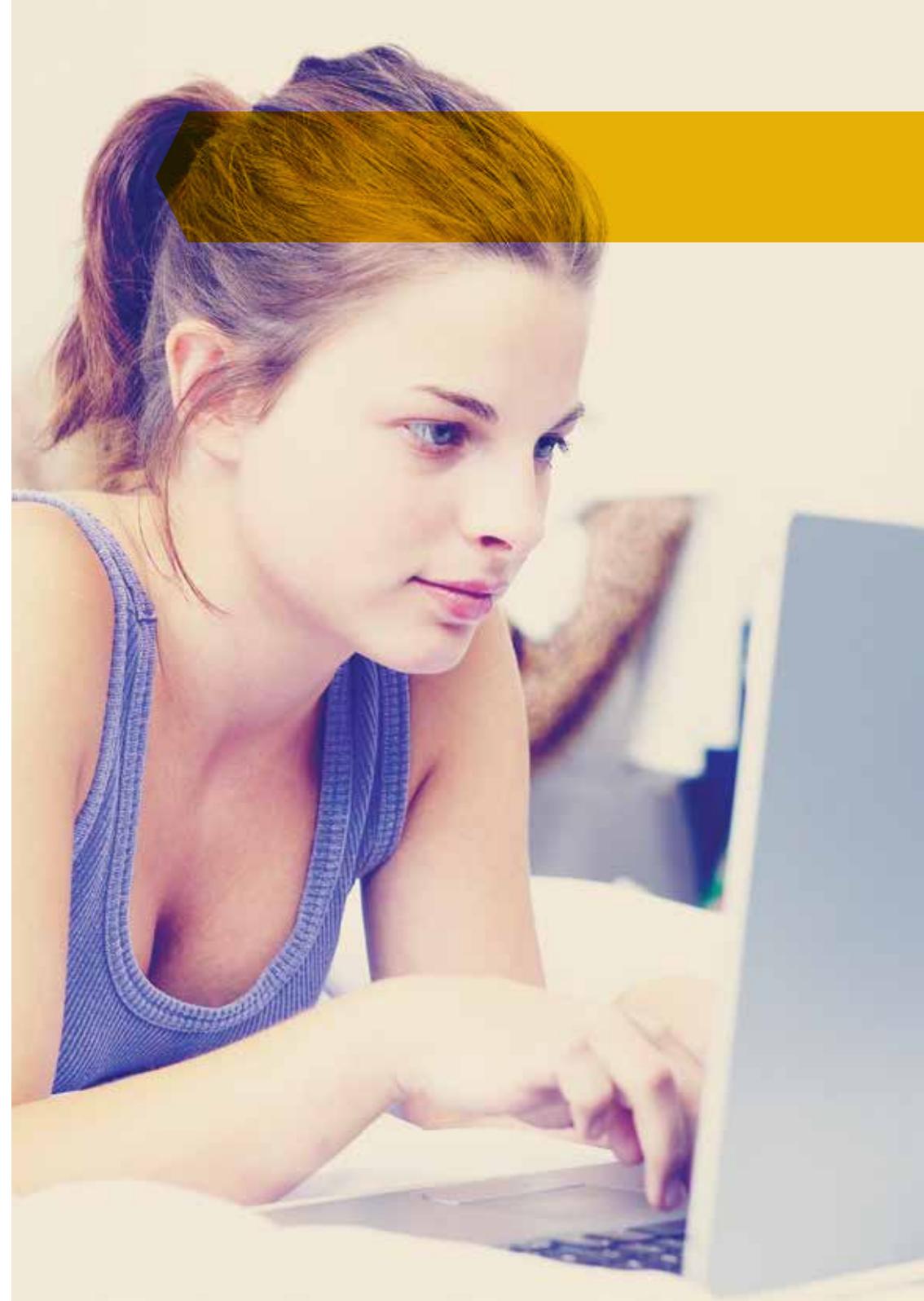
www.esafety.gov.au

Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner

The Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner is a one-stop-shop for online safety. The Office provides Australians a range of up-to-date information and resources, coupled with a comprehensive complaints system to assist children who experience serious cyberbullying.

www.thehideout.org.uk

Help, information, stories and support for children and young people experiencing violence in their family or relationship.





Government of **Western Australia**
Department for **Child Protection**
and **Family Support**

www.youthsayno.wa.gov.au