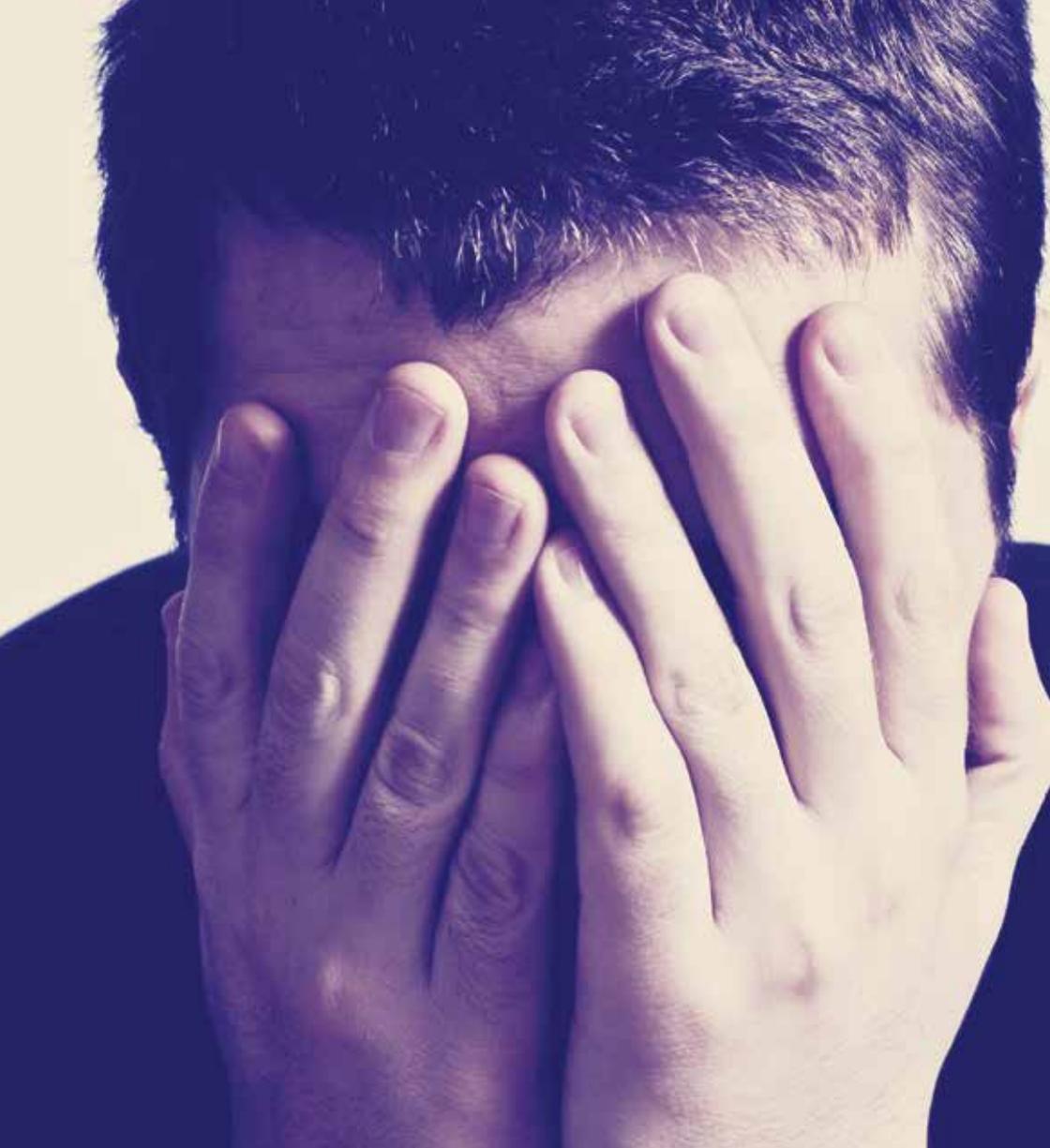


YOUTH SAY
NO!



TROUBLE AT HOME

YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING WITH
FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



Family and domestic violence is common in Australia – in fact, one in three Australian women experience family and domestic violence in their adult life perpetrated by an intimate partner or family member.

*Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006. Personal Safety Survey – Reissue.
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This booklet and accompanying resources contain helpful information about family and domestic violence, and can be downloaded from www.youthsayno.wa.gov.au

DANNY'S STORY

"We are getting heaps of information at school about bullying, cyber bullying, and understanding what harassment and threatening behaviour is among peers.

Weird thing is it sounds a lot like what my dad does to mum. He works fly-in, fly-out on the mines and when he's away, our family is calm and happy. But just before he's due to get home, and then when he gets back, Mum is jumpy and always on edge. They fight about money and dad tells her that he earns it and he decides how to spend it.

When he first gets home, he's happy and relaxed but within a day or two he starts getting agro at the smallest things. He takes it out mainly on mum, telling her she's useless and doesn't keep the house the way she should and criticizes the friends she hangs out with.

I hate to say it because I know he's my dad, but it's kinda' better when he's away at work. Mum works hard to be there for us kids, she doesn't deserve to be treated like that."

What is family and domestic violence?

Family and domestic violence is different to family fights or arguments. In every family it is natural to have disagreements with one another. However, when this happens all the time and one person abuses others by hitting, throwing things or threatening to harm them, it becomes family and domestic violence. This can be your parents doing it to each other, or doing it to you.

Witnessing abuse

When abuse is happening between your parents or adults who are caring for you it can be hard to deal with. This is called witnessing abuse. You might be afraid something bad will happen to your mum or dad** and not know what to do.

It is important to know you can talk to someone about what is happening at home, someone who will understand what you are going through.

***Every time you read the words 'mum and dad' this also means 'any other adult that is caring for you'.*

YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO THROUGH THIS ALONE!

What is abuse?

The types of abuse that could be happening in your family:

Emotional abuse:

- name calling
- yelling/screaming
- saying hurtful things
- being jealous all the time
- threatening to harm
- threatening to spread verbal abuse or photographs over social media.

Physical abuse:

- hitting/slapping
- punching
- pushing
- shoving
- choking
- kicking
- pinching
- throwing, wrecking or breaking stuff
- using weapons
- hurting/killing pets
- threatening to do any of these things.

Social abuse:

- one parent not allowing the other to have friends
- making people feel uncomfortable when they visit
- one parent not allowing the other to go out when they want
- one parent not letting the other use the car or the phone.

Financial/economic abuse:

- one parent controlling the family income and not allowing the other money for personal use
- one parent blaming the other for financial losses.

Sexual abuse:

- being forced to do sexual things
- unwanted touching or kissing.
- Being forced to watch sexual acts or pornography.

Being forced or tricked into having sex is called rape and this can happen even when people are in a relationship or are married.

RYAN'S STORY

I get so angry with my dad for the way he treats mum. He is always calling her names and tries to get me and my sisters to take his side. When I try and tell him not to do this he just starts yelling at me and I'm frightened that one day he'll actually hit me.

Mum gets all stressed out and tells me not to interfere. I think she wants to protect me but it makes me feel really useless. I try so hard to do the right thing but it just doesn't get any better. Sometimes I lock myself away in my room but I can still hear what's going on, sometimes I just want to run away.

It can be a difficult time for young people who are living with family and domestic violence. Ryan wants to do what he thinks is right but he feels threatened. No one deserves to be abused or to feel frightened and what's happening to Ryan is

wrong. Ryan has the right to feel safe and loved. He could reach out to someone he trusts, or call one of the services listed at the back of this booklet and tell his story - then he may not feel so alone.

When living with family and domestic violence you can feel:

- uncomfortable and embarrassed about bringing friends back to your house – so you avoid inviting them over
- scared to be away from home because you're worried something bad may happen to your mum or other family members
- afraid to go home therefore you avoid it as much as possible
- lonely when you compare your family with other families that seem so happy
- distracted and find it hard to concentrate on your school work – you may also avoid getting involved in school activities
- that your sense of belonging is lost
- angry toward the abusive parent or family member, or sometimes you may feel angry toward the person who is being abused and blame them for what is happening
- that it is your fault and that it must be something you're doing to cause this to happen – sometimes your parents may say you are to blame and you believe them
- scared, worried or anxious not knowing how bad the next fight will be, or when it will happen
- like you want intervene and try to stop the fights from happening
- like you want to call the police or your neighbours for help but you fear the consequences of doing that
- frustrated and alone because you don't know how to fix the problem
- angry at yourself for not being able to fix the problem.

It may be confusing to know if your parents are being abusive or putting rules in place to protect you. If you are unsure, you can contact one of the services listed in the back of this resource. They will be able to help you. Remember – abuse is never acceptable. You can do something about it.

Why is this happening in my family?

Family and domestic violence can be very hard to understand because there is no one single reason why it happens - it is a combination of lots of things.

Excuses are often used as a reason why one person abuses another like 'it's your fault, you shouldn't have done that' or 'you know I'm under a lot of pressure from work and you just keep putting more onto me until I snap'.

don't get some help, the cycle of violence just keeps going around and around – from good times to walking on eggshells, fighting again, then back to the good times again. There is also a strong chance the fights will get worse over time.

CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

This is how it works

Some people have described living in a family and domestic violence situation as though they are walking on eggshells, never knowing when the next fight will happen or how bad it will be. They say that during the good times after the fight, mum and dad would say they were sorry and promise it wouldn't happen again, that things would change this time.

Unfortunately, in most families that



There are NO excuses for being abusive - it is wrong.

How can I change my situation?

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.

Whether you are being abused, or you fear for the safety of a friend or relative, 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.

SAFETY PLANNING

- Make a list of important telephone numbers or save them in your mobile phone contacts in case you need to ring someone in an emergency.
- Keep credit on your mobile phone in case you need to ring someone in an emergency.
- Always try and keep some money aside in case you need to buy a bus or train ticket, or even catch a taxi.
- 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.

THINGS YOU SHOULD TRY TO AVOID

Try not to stop your parents fighting. Run to a neighbour's house and get help or call the police. Don't put yourself in danger.

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.

How to stay safe online

Abuse and violence don't always come in the form of physical acts and emotional torment. The way we communicate with one another is changing everyday, 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.

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.

ONLINE SAFETY TIPS

- 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.



So what happens next?

You might think that if you call the police or another service that it will make things worse – you may think your family will be split up. The police have been specially trained to deal with family and domestic violence situations and they will make sure you and your family are safe.

This might mean you and your mum and/or other members of your family will have to go to a refuge or stay somewhere else until you are safe, or that the person who is abusing you will go away for a while and get some help to deal with the problem.

Maybe you are afraid you won't see your parents again, or that mum and dad might separate permanently. This could happen but what could also happen is that your parents get some help to manage the problem.

Change is not always bad – it can be scary but it can also be a good thing. Remember – you don't have to deal with this stuff by yourself. Your safety, and the safety of the rest of your family is the most important thing.

Talk to an adult you trust like a relative, youth worker, school counsellor/chaplain, or teacher about what you are going through.

You could also contact one of the services in the **Get Help** section of www.youthsayno.wa.gov.au for further support and information.

Change is not always bad
– it can be scary but it can
also be a good thing.



DEBBIE'S STORY

"Mum and dad had a fight last night. Dad hit mum so hard that she couldn't get up off the floor. I was so scared I ran next door and told them what had happened. Dad has hit mum lots of times before and he always used to tell us to go to our bedroom and not to tell anyone, but this time was different, it was worse than ever.

Our neighbour came back to our house and saw mum lying on the floor. He called the ambulance and the police. I can't remember what happened next, I just know it was bad and I couldn't stop crying. The police woman came and put her arms around me and it made me feel a bit better.

Mum went to the hospital overnight. They took dad away in a police car and I was so scared that I would never see him again. We went to stay in a place called a refuge for a while. The people there were really nice and understood what had happened. I soon knew we were not the only family that this stuff happened to. There were lots of other kids in the refuge who were going through the same thing.

Dad is getting help now and we see each other once a week. It's hard not to be together as a family but it's also a good feeling not to have to worry when the next big fight will happen and if mum would get really hurt again. I don't know if we will ever all live together as a family again, it might happen if dad gets better, but we do see each other and I'm not so scared anymore."

What does a healthy family look like?

Healthy families trust, support and show respect for one another. Family members communicate with each other, and most importantly, and listen to one another.

Non-threatening behaviour:

- ▶ talking and acting so that family members feel safe and comfortable doing and saying things.

Respect:

- ▶ listening to members of your family in a non-judgemental way
- ▶ being supportive of your family
- ▶ respecting your family's rights to their own feelings, friends, activities and opinions.

Honesty and shared responsibility:

- ▶ accepting responsibility for the things you do as a member of the family
- ▶ admitting being wrong when you are
- ▶ everyone agreeing to share the household jobs
- ▶ making family decisions together.

Family members listen to one another.

NICKI'S STORY

"Sometimes I don't think my family understands me, especially my mum. We often argue about who I can go out with and how much makeup I can wear. I think I am old enough to look after myself and make these sorts of decisions on my own, but mum is always on my case.

Then there's dad, who gets angry when I get bad marks at school – but it's not my fault I don't understand algebra! And my annoying little brother is always coming into my room and taking my things.

I just get sick of my family sometimes! But then the other day my best friend Kelly told me that her dad hits her mum and that he often threatens Kelly and her little sister.

I couldn't believe it when she told me... I always thought her dad was nice enough. But when Kelly told me what had been happening she was shaking and obviously really scared. I want to help her get through this. Hearing about Kelly's life, I've realised that my family can be annoying, but that's mostly because mum and dad are just trying to look after me and help me make the right decisions. I'm pretty lucky really..."

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.

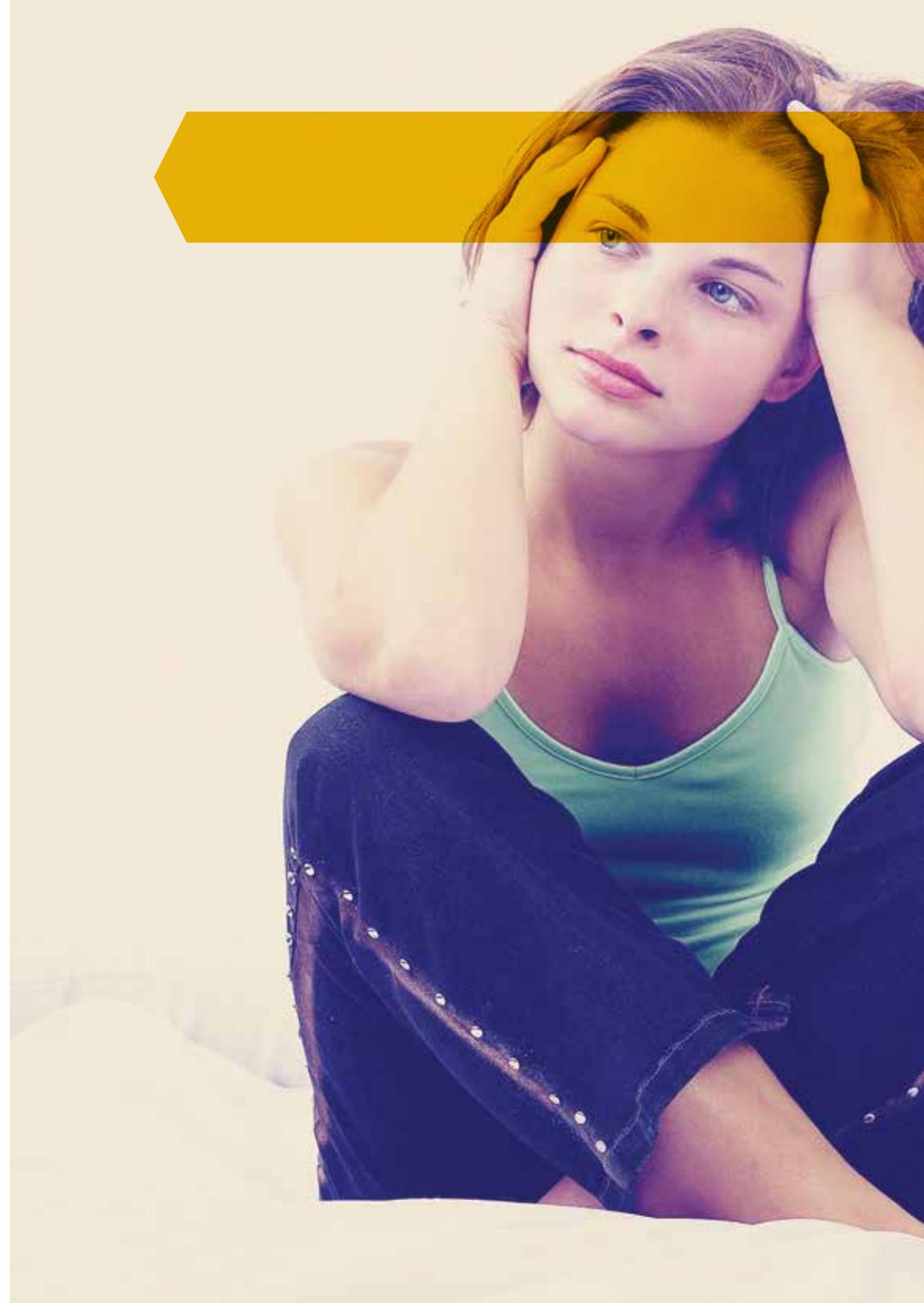
www.esafety.gov.au

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