

Building the evidence stop violence before it starts

Dynamics of violence against women with disability



This fact sheet is part of a series on violence against women with disability in Australia. Data on prevalence and dynamics are sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Personal Safety Survey. The survey invites people to disclose impairments. Data are reported using this term acknowledging that disability stems from the interaction between impairments (a limitation in function) and societal barriers created by attitudes, structures and environments. For additional information about violence against women with disability, see [Evidence Synthesis](#)

VIOLENCE AND WOMEN WITH DISABILITY

Women with psychological and cognitive impairments experience very high rates of all types of violence

Young women with disability (18 – 29 years) experience high levels of violence

Since the age of 15

74% of women with psychological impairment and 72% of women with cognitive impairment report experiencing at least one incident of violence (inclusive of physical violence, sexual violence, intimate partner violence, emotional abuse and/or stalking)

Sexual violence

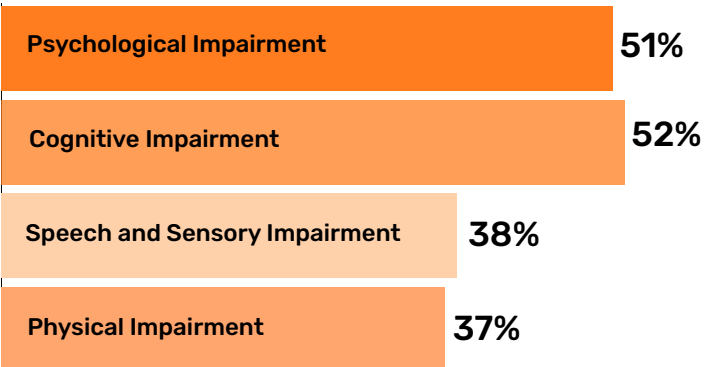
One in two women with psychological (50%) and/or cognitive impairment (47%) report experiencing sexual violence by any perpetrator

Women with psychological impairment are at three times the risk of sexual violence compared to men with psychological impairment



Intimate partner violence

One in two women with psychological (51%) and/or cognitive impairment (52%) report experiencing at least one incident of violence by an intimate partner, compared with 38% of women with speech and sensory impairment and 37% of women with physical impairment



YOUNG WOMEN

27% of young women with disability report experiencing at least one incident of violence (inclusive of physical violence, sexual violence, intimate partner violence, emotional abuse and/or stalking), compared to 13% of young women without disability

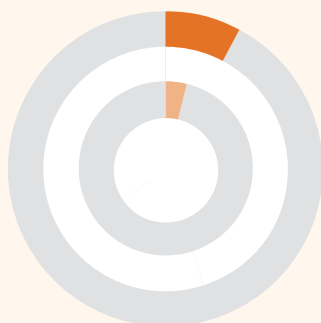
13%
young
women
without
disability



27%
young
women
with
disability

13% of young women with disability report experiencing physical violence, compared to 5% of young women without disability

4%
young
women
without
disability



8%
young
women
with
disability

10% of young women with disability report experiencing being stalked, compared to 5% of young women without disability

8% of young women with disability report experiencing violence by an intimate partner, compared to 4% of young women without disability

Young women with disability are at twice the risk of sexual violence by any perpetrator than young women without disability

4%
young
women
without
disability



9%
young
women
with
disability

Definitions used in the PSS

Violence refers to an occurrence or threat of physical violence, sexual violence, emotional abuse by a partner, intimate partner violence or stalking. It includes violence used by people who are strangers, and by people who know each other (current or former partner or family member).

Intimate partner violence comprises sexual assault, sexual threat, physical assault, and physical threat by a current or previous partner with whom the respondent lived, or current or former boyfriend, girlfriend, or date with whom the respondent did not live.

Emotional abuse from a partner includes behaviours or actions that are aimed at preventing or controlling behaviours, causing emotional harm or fear. Their intent is to manipulate, control, isolate or intimidate including psychological, social, economic and verbal abuse by a person the respondent lives with, or lived with at some point, in a married or de facto relationship.

Notes about the data

Violence against people with disability is a significant violation of human rights. The strength and resilience of women with disability who have survived violence and disclosed their experiences is acknowledged.

The data are limited to experiences of women with disability aged 18-64 years and therefore do not reflect the extent of violence experienced by women with disability aged 65 years and over. Women over 65 years of age may experience violence for decades without appropriate prevention or intervention.

The PSS collects information about a person's disability at the time of the survey but asks about violence over their lifetime (since the age of 15). It does not indicate that the respondent had a disability at the time they experience the violence. This fact sheet refers to men and women, and not to other gender identities. This is because of the way gender is labeled in the data source. The PSS does not currently collect demographic information for some population cohorts including transgender and gender diverse people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Further information and support

1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) is a national hotline available 24 hours a day to support people impacted by family violence.

WIRE on 1300 134 130, www.wire.org.au for live web chat, or support@wire.org.au. This service is for support, referrals and information on any issue for all women, non-binary and gender diverse people in Victoria.

Safe Steps on 1800 015 188, www.safesteps.org.au for web chat or safesteps@safesteps.org.au

Respect Victoria is an independent statutory authority dedicated to the prevention of family violence and violence against women in all its forms. Established as a result of Victoria's Royal Commission into Family Violence, our role is to prevent violence before it starts by changing the attitudes, behaviours and structures that allow it to happen. This service is available for any person experiencing family violence in Victoria.

This fact sheet was produced by the team at the [Disability and Health Unit](#) at The University of Melbourne.



Respect Victoria acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the land and acknowledges and pays respect to their Elders, past and present.

