

Building the
evidence
stop violence
before it
starts

Prevalence of violence against women with disability

Respect
Victoria

Preventing
Family
Violence

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. We recognise that not all women with disability are represented in this survey and that experiences of violence are under-reported. For additional information about violence against women with disability see the [Evidence Synthesis](#)

Since the age of 15

Two in three women with disability (65%) report experiencing **at least one incident of violence** (inclusive of physical violence, sexual violence, intimate partner violence, emotional abuse and/or stalking, by a known or unknown perpetrator)

45%
women
without
disability



65%
women
with
disability

Women with disability are nearly twice as likely to report experiencing violence compared to women without disability

Women with disability report all types of violence at higher rates than women without disability

TYPES OF VIOLENCE

Since the age of 15

One in two women with disability (52%) report experiencing **physical violence by any perpetrator**

16%
women
without
disability



33%
women
with
disability

33% of women with disability report experiencing **sexual violence by any perpetrator**, compared to 16% of women without disability

One in four women with disability (27%) report an **episode of stalking** (unwanted contact or attention on more than one occasion, or multiple types experienced on one occasion) **compared to 16% of women without disability**

One in three women with disability (36%) report **at least one incident of physical and/or sexual violence** by an intimate partner compared to 21% of women without disability

21%
women
without
disability



36%
women
with
disability

20%
women
without
disability



37%
women
with
disability

37% of women with disability report experiencing **emotional abuse by a partner** (a current or former partner with whom the respondent has lived with) compared to 20% of women without disability

What is the Personal Safety Survey?

The data presented here is from the *2016 Personal Safety Survey* – the PSS. The PSS is a survey administered by the Australian Bureau of Statistics every four years. It collects information about experiences for violence for women and men living in Australia. In the survey people report on experience since the age of 15 and in the last 12 months. While it is the currently the best available source of data about violence against women with disability, not all people with disability are included. There is no support available for people who need assistance to complete the survey and it only includes people with disability living in private homes not those living in group home settings. The survey only collects information about some types of violence that are commonly experienced by women in Australia (for example, physical, sexual and intimate partner violence), but it doesn't ask about violence that may be specific to women with disability, such as breaking assistive devices or withholding medication.

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.

