

# How to recognise and respond to family violence safely



**On average in Australia, each week a woman is killed by her current or former partner. Across Australia, the biggest driver of women and children experiencing homelessness is family violence.**

**Family violence** is any violent, threatening, coercive or controlling behaviour that occurs in current or past family, domestic or intimate relationships.

Family violence is a whole-of-community issue that requires the combined and coordinated efforts of local, state, and federal governments, communities, and corporate sectors to respond in ways that can both support victim-survivors' recovery, keep perpetrators of family violence in view and accountable, and to prevent further abuses wherever possible.

Family violence can take the following forms:

- Psychological and emotional abuse
- Coercive control
- Physical violence
- Financial and economic abuse
- Sexual violence

## **Quick reference guide of the Residential tenancies regulation requirements 2021 on matters related to family violence:**

If a rental agreement is affected by family violence, renters, rental providers, and property managers have specific rights and obligations under the Residential Tenancies Act 1997.

- A renter who is a 'protected person' under a family violence safety notice, family violence intervention order or personal safety intervention order can change the locks without the landlord's or property manager's consent.
- As a property manager, if the locks have been changed, you must not give keys to a renter who you know has been excluded from the rental property under a family violence safety notice, family violence intervention order or personal safety intervention order.
- If a person is experiencing family violence, they can apply to VCAT to end the rental agreement early or start a new agreement in the same property that does not include the person being violent [the respondent]. This can also be done without a safety notice or intervention. Evidence such as letters, recordings, photos or statements from others can be used to show they are experiencing family violence. [Residential Tenancies Act 1997]