



Artwork by: Nabahed Alheesa



Artwork by: Ghassan Fatoohi

## Fact Sheet 2: The Drivers of Family Violence

Family violence is part of a pattern of behaviour that controls or dominates a person and causes them to fear for their own or others' safety and wellbeing [1]. People who perpetrate family violence think that they are in a position of privilege or entitlement and that this position permits them to control people close to them.

There are different forms and dynamics of family violence, across ages and communities. To better address family violence, we need to understand the drivers. There are four gendered drivers that have predicted and contributed to family violence:

- condoning violence against women,
- men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public and private life,
- rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity, and
- male peer relations and cultures of masculinity that emphasis aggression, dominance, control and disrespect towards women.

To prevent family violence, we must understand how gendered drivers, in context to social norms and culture, influence a perpetrator's choice to target the victim survivor's identity [2].

Gender inequality influences personal relationships and results in community values that support the belief that men have a right to use power and control over their partner and children. When this is embedded in values and social norms, both women and men are more likely to excuse, condone and accept violence against women, and they do not believe women and men are equal.

Research in the last decade has found that at the population level the two most significant determinants are:

- the unequal distribution of power and resources between men and women
- an adherence to rigidly defined gender roles, or what it means to be (and live as) masculine or feminine [3].

Statistic from a 2017 study [4]:

- 1 in 5 Australians think men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household
- 1 in 4 Australians think women prefer a man to be in charge.

### COMMUNITY'S ATTITUDES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO GENDERED DRIVERS:

- Don't cry like a girl.
- Boys can do whatever they want.
- She must have done something.
- You provoked him.
- Why are you complaining, he's the bread winner?
- When I saw the mother, I understood why she is like that.
- He's like that because he is a macho man.
- Wife needs to follow her husband.
- He apologised and brought you a present
- Of course, it happened look how she dresses and talks.
- The guy has the world, but the woman only has her home.
- Husband has the right to talk and control the finances.
- Good on you, show her who's boss.
- Women = Wife
- He's my father, I cannot go against his will.
- He was tired, he was working all day.
- He has responsibilities and it weighs on him.
- He hits her...he doesn't know better his dad used to hit his mum.
- It's okay, your father used to hit me, and I am fine, that's just how men are.
- Women need to keep the peace in the family, best you don't say anything.
- Her fault the family broke down, she should have protected the children.
- Women should earn less than men.

#### References:

- [1] WRISC Family Violence Support: [1] Victorian Government: What is family violence. <https://www.vic.gov.au/what-family-violence>  
 [2] Safe9Egaul <https://safeandequal.org.au/> and <https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-foundation-knowledge-guide/gendered-drivers-family-violence-context>  
 [3] Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, 2017  
 [4] White Ribbon Australia Understanding the issue: Understanding the issue - White Ribbon Australia and VicHealth. Violence against women in Australia An overview of research and approaches to primary prevention: Violence-Against-Women-Research-Overview.pdf ([vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://vichealth.vic.gov.au))

#### CONTACT US

- ☎ (03) 9380 9536
- ✉ [info@arabicwelfare.org.au](mailto:info@arabicwelfare.org.au)
- 📍 Level 2, 61 Riggall Street, Broadmeadows VIC 3047