

# Addressing financial abuse.



## What is financial abuse?

Financial abuse occurs when money is used as a means to gain power and control over another person. Financial abuse can trap people in abusive relationships and may also impact their ability to stay safe if they decide to leave.

## How common is it?

In Australia, up to 16% of women will experience financial abuse in their lifetime<sup>1</sup>, and people of all genders can be affected.

Financial abuse can affect people from all socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, and of all sexual orientations. People with disability may be at greater risk of economic and financial abuse due to factors such as reliance on others, reduced access to financial resources, barriers to accessing social security entitlements, and limited experience in managing finances.<sup>2</sup>

It's common to feel embarrassed or overwhelmed when talking about financial abuse.

It's important to learn the signs of financial abuse, where to go for help, and how to support a family member or friend who may be at risk. This can help victim-survivors recover and regain their financial independence.

## Recognising financial abuse

Despite its prevalence, financial abuse can be difficult to recognise:



Many find it difficult to see that they are in a financially abusive relationship.



Financial abuse may begin subtly and progress over time.



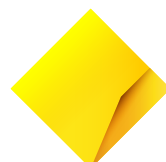
In some cultures, it may be considered acceptable for one person to control all household finances.



Sometimes, money is seen as family business and not openly discussed.

<sup>1</sup> Kutin, Russell, Reid (2017), Economic Abuse between intimate partners in Australia: prevalence, health status, disability and financial stress, Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health

<sup>2</sup> [www.commbank.com.au/content/dam/commbank-assets/support/2021-09/unsw-disability-report-4.pdf](http://www.commbank.com.au/content/dam/commbank-assets/support/2021-09/unsw-disability-report-4.pdf)



## Some signs of financial abuse:

Not sure whether you are experiencing financial abuse?



Have you ever been prevented from getting a job or going to work?



Have you ever been pressured to stop earning or spending your own money?



Does your partner refuse to pay child support or help with childcare?



Have you ever been made a director of a company without explicit consent?



Does your partner monitor your spending or ask to see the shopping receipts?



Are you ever denied access to money, or do you have to ask for money for basic expenses for yourself or children?



Have you ever been prevented from contributing to the household income?



Have you been asked to perform tasks or sexual favours in exchange for money?



Have you been forced to take out a loan or credit card in your name?



Does your partner keep their finances or the family finances secret?



Has your partner ever withheld money for medication, hormones, or other forms of gender affirmation?



Are you pressured to work in a family business without pay?

## How to get help

**If you or someone you know is experiencing financial abuse, or remain unsure, there are free services you can access. If it's an emergency or if you're not feeling safe, always call 000.**

- As a first point of call we recommend contacting **1800RESPECT** on **1800 737 732**, chat online via [1800RESPECT.org.au](https://www.1800respect.org.au) or text **0458 737 732**. This is a free and confidential service that isn't part of Commonwealth Bank.
- If you need an interpreter or translator, you can use the telephone Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on **131 450**. Specify your required language and ask them to contact **1800RESPECT** on **1800 737 732**. TIS National is available free of charge.
- Alternately, you can call **1800RESPECT** on **1800 737 732** and ask for an interpreter. The counsellor will make the arrangements.
- If you're worried about your own behaviour, there is free and confidential support available. Call No to Violence on **1300 766 491** or chat online [ntv.org.au](https://www.ntv.org.au).

For more support options, go to <https://www.commbank.com.au/support/next-chapter.html>

For more detailed guidance, read the Recognise and Recover Guide on the [CommBank website](https://www.commbank.com.au/support/next-chapter.html).