

# FACT SHEET: COMMON MYTHS ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

## MYTH 1

**MEN SHOULD MAKE THE DECISIONS AND TAKE CONTROL IN RELATIONSHIPS.**

**FACT: Violence is more common in families and relationships in which men control decision making, and less so in those relationships where women have a greater degree of independence.**

The belief that men and women have different roles or characteristics (whether in relationships or society in general) is known as gender stereotyping. International studies have shown time and again that belief in such stereotypes is one of the most significant predictors of violence. That is, individuals who hold such beliefs are more likely to perpetrate violence against women and countries where gender stereotyping is more accepted have higher levels of violence against women.

We know that in societies where men and women are more equal in their relationships, and where they are not expected to play different roles based on their sex, violence is less common. Greater equality and more flexible gender roles give everyone more opportunities to develop to their full capacity.

## MYTH 2

**FAMILY VIOLENCE IS ACCEPTABLE IF SOMEONE GETS SO ANGRY THEY LOSE CONTROL.**

**FACT: Violence against women is about something more than just losing your temper.**

There are no excuses for violent behaviour. Ever. Violence is caused by an individual's attitudes towards women and the social attitudes that say men's violence against women is OK.

## MYTH 3

**WOMEN COULD LEAVE A VIOLENT RELATIONSHIP IF THEY WANTED TO.**

**FACT: Women are at risk of extreme violence including murder when trying to leave or after leaving a violent relationship. Women find it extremely difficult to leave a violent relationship because of fear for safety and the safety of children.**

We must not place the blame for the violence on women if they do not leave.

This resource has been developed as part of the CHALLENGE Family Violence project, a partnership between City of Casey, Cardinia Shire Council, City of Greater Dandenong and Monash Health. This project has been funded under the Reducing Violence against Women and their Children grants program, part of the Victorian Government's Community Crime Prevention Program - local solutions for local crime prevention issues.



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## MYTH 4

### WOMEN ARE MOST LIKELY TO BE RAPED BY A STRANGER IN A PUBLIC PLACE.

**FACT: Both men and women are more likely to be sexually assaulted by someone they know than by a stranger.**

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics 15 per cent of all women and 3 per cent of all men aged 18 years and over have been sexually assaulted by a known person. This is in comparison to the 3.8 per cent of all women and 1.6 per cent of all men who had been

sexually assaulted by a stranger.

The stranger danger myth is one of the reasons that women are less likely to report a sexual assault perpetrated by someone they know. They may fear no one will believe them or that they encouraged the perpetrator in some way. Once this myth is busted, women may be more willing to come forward and report a known attacker.

## MYTH 5

### MANY WOMEN MAKE FALSE CLAIMS ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OR SEXUAL ASSAULT.

**FACT: False claims of domestic violence or sexual assault are extremely rare.**

80 per cent of women who experience current partner violence don't contact the police about the violence.

The same is true with sexual assault; 80 per cent of women do not report sexual assault to police.

It can be so difficult for women to tell someone about the violence so it is important that we believe them.

#### Source:

Our Watch. (2015). Myths about violence. Retrieved from [www.ourwatch.org.au/Understanding-Violence/Myths-about-violence](http://www.ourwatch.org.au/Understanding-Violence/Myths-about-violence)

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