Research Report

Experiences of domestic violence among women with disability

Hayley Boxall, Anthony Morgan and Rick Brown

Easy Read version

April 2021
How to use this report

3 people wrote this report for the Disability Royal Commission (the Royal Commission).

These people were:

• Hayley Boxall
• Anthony Morgan
• Rick Brown.

When you see the word ‘we’, it means the Royal Commission.

We wrote this report in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

We have written some words in bold.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.

We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 19.
This Easy Read report is a summary of a report called *Experiences of domestic violence among women with restrictive long-term health conditions*.

A summary only includes the most important ideas.

You can find the other report on our website.

You can ask for help to read this report. A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

In this report, we talk about some things that might upset some people.

If you get upset and need support, we have support services you can contact.

Their contact details are on page 18.
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What’s this report about?

This report is about women with restrictive long-term health conditions.

In this document we say women with disability.

We did some research about domestic violence.
Domestic violence is when you are hurt by someone close to you, such as:

- your boyfriend or girlfriend

- your husband or wife

- a member of your family

- someone who takes care of you

- someone you live with.
In May 2020, we asked some women to fill out a survey.

We asked them about their experiences of domestic violence during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 is a virus that has affected many people around the world.

A virus is called a pandemic when it spreads quickly to lots of countries around the world.
15,000 women aged 18 and over answered our survey.

1,705 women with disability took part in our survey.

This report is about what we found out from women with disability who answered our survey.

In this report, we talk about how women with disability experienced domestic violence from their:

- husbands or wives

- boyfriends or girlfriends.

This includes a partner they:

- live with

- don’t live with.
What types of domestic violence do women with disability experience?

Women with disability can experience different types of domestic violence.

Some women with disability experience **physical violence**.

Physical violence is when someone hurts your body.

Some women with disability experience **sexual violence**.
Sexual violence is when someone:

- makes you do sexual things you don’t want to do
- does something sexual to you that you don’t want them to do.

Some women with disability experience emotional abuse.

Emotional abuse is when someone:

- says mean things to you
- swears at you
- calls you names
- puts you down
- ignores you
- stops you from seeing your friends or family.
Some women with disability experience harassment.

Harassment is when someone treats you in a way that:

- you don’t like
- upsets you.

The partners of some women with disability try to control:

- them
- what they do.

Some women with disability experience different types of domestic violence over time.
Some women with disability experience coercive control.

Coercive control is when women with disability experience different types of domestic violence at the same time.
Coercive control includes:

- emotional abuse
- harassment
- being controlled.
How many women with disability experience domestic violence?

Our survey was about the first 3 months of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020:

- February
- March
- April.

All the answers women with disability gave us were about their experience during those 3 months.

We learned a lot about the experience of women with disability who answered our survey.
1 out of 8 women with disability experienced physical violence.

1 out of 10 women with disability experienced sexual violence.

1 out of 5 women with disability experienced:

- emotional abuse
- harassment
- being controlled.

1 out of 7 women with disability experienced coercive control.
What affects the experience of women with disability?

Some women with disability were more at risk of domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes women with disability who:

- speak a language other than English
- live far away from cities or towns
- don’t have or earn much money
- are **First Nations people**.

First Nations people are also known as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
What did we learn from our survey?

We learned that women with disability experienced different types of domestic violence during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many of these women had experienced domestic violence before the COVID-19 pandemic started.

Many of these women experienced more domestic violence during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many of these women experienced domestic violence for the first time during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We learned that women with disability are more likely to experience domestic violence than women without disability.
Support for you

Blue Knot Foundation offers free **counselling support** to anyone who needs it.

Counselling support is when you:

- talk to someone about how you think and feel
- talk about ways to help you feel better.

You can contact Blue Knot Foundation by phone. **1800 421 468**

They are open every day.

You can send Blue Knot Foundation an email **helpline@blueknot.org.au**
Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this report mean.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.

**Coercive control**

Coercive control is when women with disability experience different types of domestic violence at the same time.

Coercive control includes:

- emotional abuse
- harassment
- being controlled.

**COVID-19**

COVID-19 is a virus that has affected many people around the world.
Domestic violence

Domestic violence is when you are hurt by someone close to you, such as:

- your boyfriend or girlfriend
- your husband or wife
- a member of your family
- someone who takes care of you
- someone you live with.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is when someone:

- says mean things to you
- swears at you
- calls you names
- puts you down
- ignores you
- stops you from seeing your friends or family.

First Nations people

First Nations people are also known as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
Harassment
Harassment is when someone treats you in a way that:

- you don't like
- upsets you.

Pandemic
A virus is called a pandemic when it spreads quickly to lots of countries around the world.

Physical violence
Physical violence is when someone hurts your body.

Sexual violence
Sexual violence is when someone:

- makes you do sexual things you don’t want to do
- does something sexual to you that you don’t want them to do.

Summary
A summary only includes the most important ideas.
Contact us

You can email us at
DRCenquiries@royalcommission.gov.au

If you have a question, you can call us on
1800 517 199.

We are available on Monday to Friday
between 9am and 5pm.

We are not available on public holidays.

You can also call the National Relay Service
on 133 677.
You can write to us at:
GPO Box 1422
Brisbane
QLD 4001

You can follow us on:

Facebook
www.facebook.com/disability.royalcommission.gov.au

Twitter
@DRC_AU

You can also subscribe to our newsletter Connect by sending an email to:
DRCmailinglist@royalcommission.gov.au