

# Physical Abuse

## What is physical abuse?

Physical abuse is when the abuser makes contact with another person's body. This could be by punching, kicking, slapping, grabbing, choking or throwing things at the other person.

## Is it illegal?

Physical abuse is dealt with in the Family Violence Act, the Police Offences Act, and the Criminal Code Act in Tasmania.

The Criminal Code Act defines what is seen in law as physical abuse – an act of intentionally applying force to another person either directly or indirectly.

There are serious penalties for physical abuse, including having to go to jail.

## What can it look like?

- Your partner slapping you when you get home from a party because they said that you disrespected them in front of their friends.
- Punching you when you say that you don't want to have sex that night.
- Your partner holding you by the throat because you were late home from work and they want to know why.
- Having the dinner plate thrown at you because the dinner was served 'late'.
- Being pinched by your partner to try and silence you in a conversation.

## Case Study: Lynette and Jim

Lynette and Jim have been married for five years. Lynette cares for the home, and Jim works at an office nearby.

Jim expects Lynette to have his dinner ready when he gets home from work. One day, Lynette is home later than she planned, as her doctor was running late for her appointment. Lynette cooks dinner as soon as she gets in, but Jim is furious about his dinner not being ready on time. When Jim sees Lynette has served him spaghetti, he throws the plate at her, hitting her in the back.

Later that night, watching TV, Jim asks Lynette to get him a drink. "Get it yourself!", Lynette said. Jim got up and kicked Lynette until she fell to the floor, then headed to the kitchen.

Lynette got up off the floor and headed to the bedroom. Jim followed her and grabbed her by the arm. He held her up against the wall, with his hands on her throat. He yelled in her face that she was never to speak to him like that again. Lynette feels like she cannot breathe, and starts to feel dizzy. Jim took his hands away, stormed out the front door, and drove off in his car.

## Contacts

- **In an emergency situation or if you are in immediate danger, call 000.**
- Family Violence Counselling and Support Service, phone 1800 608 122.
- 1800Respect, phone 1800 737 732.
- Women's Legal Service Tasmania can be contacted on **1800 682 468**.

*This publication is intended to give general information. Whilst we have made every effort to ensure the contents of this publication are accurate at the time of writing, the law and services can change. Legal and service exactness is not possible in a publication of this nature, and this publication should not be used as a substitute for legal advice.*

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