

## **DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE:**

### **WHAT IS FINANCIAL ABUSE? SPIRITUAL ABUSE? CULTURAL ABUSE?**

#### **VISA ABUSE?**

**Financial abuse** is a form of family violence. It can include taking someone's money, withdrawing access to household funds, controlling all the household spending or excluding someone from financial decisions that impact them. Financial abuse can happen to anyone.

*Financial abuse can include:*

- denying someone access to money, including their own
- stopping someone from earning their own money
- demanding that the family live on inadequate resources, or not contributing to household expenses
- incurring debts in someone's name
- making significant financial decisions without consultation
- selling someone's possessions
- stealing money or property
- dowry-related abuse.

**Spiritual abuse** is behaviour that denigrates someone's religious or spiritual beliefs, or prevents them from attending religious gatherings or practicing their faith.

*Spiritual abuse can include:*

- ridiculing or putting down someone's beliefs and culture
- preventing someone from belonging to or taking part in a group or ceremony that is important to their spiritual beliefs, or practising their religion
- forcing someone to practise a particular religion against their will
- manipulating religious teachings or cultural traditions to excuse violence.

**Cultural abuse** happens when abusers use aspects of someone's cultural identity to inflict suffering, or as a means of control.

*Cultural abuse can include:*

- using racial slurs
- mocking someone's accent or appearance
- not letting someone observe cultural days
- keeping someone from cultural practices and gatherings

**Visa abuse** is when someone in a family-like relationship exploits the fact that another person is without permanent residency or citizenship as a way to exert power and control over them.

*Examples of visa abuse:*

- Hiding your passport or visa documentation so that you cannot access or use it.
- Making false claims about your visa status, for example saying that your visa status is tied to staying in a relationship.
- Making threats over access to shared children because of your visa status, for example refusing to sign documents relating to paternity.
- Hiding information, or providing misinformation about your visa.
- Being brought to Australia based on incorrect visa information, for example arriving on a tourist visa then being forced into unregulated work by the perpetrator.
- Trafficking.

Further information [www.safeandequal.org.au](http://www.safeandequal.org.au) [www.safesteps.org.au](http://www.safesteps.org.au)

24-hour help is available: Ring police on 000 for emergency support or 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 723) for confidential counselling and support.