

# MYTH

“People who try to get clean from drugs or alcohol, but keep relapsing, are a lost cause.”

# BUSTED

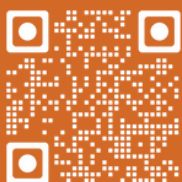
There is a difference between a “relapse” and a “lapse” back into alcohol or other drug use. A relapse happens when a person stops maintaining their goal of reducing or avoiding use of alcohol or other drugs and returns to previous levels of use.

A lapse on the other hand is a temporary departure from a persons alcohol and other drug goals, followed by a return to their original goals. For example, somebody who has stopped drinking may have a few beers following a triggering or difficult life event but will then return to their goal of not drinking a few days later. This is a lapse as their goal was maintained and return to old coping strategies was temporary.

Something that looks like a relapse can actually be a lapse. In either case, no one is a lost cause.

NEED SUPPORT?

**ADIS - 24/7 Alcohol and Drug Support**  
**1800 177 833**



If you would like to speak with a **HARNES** worker, please call or text us on 0493 259 917, Monday to Friday (9am to 4pm) or email [harness@menandcoservices.org.au](mailto:harness@menandcoservices.org.au)

# MYTH

“If you’re serious about quitting,  
you’ll stop using  
alcohol/drugs completely”

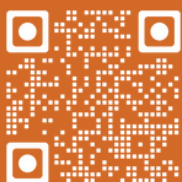
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It won’t always be safe for someone to completely and suddenly stop drinking or using drugs if they’ve been reliant on it. This sudden change can cause health risks from mild flu like symptoms to seizures and even death. Some people may need to slowly decrease their use of alcohol or other drugs to safely come off using them. This is done safest in consultation with a GP.

Sometimes the safest short-term goal for someone is to reduce their use, whilst also taking the time to strengthen the things that support them in not using or using less. Complete abstinence is not always the gold standard, and any reduction in use is an achievement.

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“If they really wanted to stop using, they would”

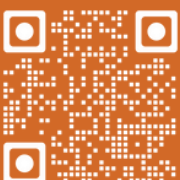
# BUSTED

Getting clean or someone decreasing their use of alcohol or other drugs is hard. A reliance on either alcohol or other drugs is frequently a person's way to cope with some thought, feeling, experience or circumstance. Replacing one coping strategy with another is a process that is naturally prone to setbacks, even when someone knows the old coping strategy doesn't help them long term. But that doesn't make their goal to stop or decrease their use any less worthwhile.

Just because somebody is motivated to stop using, doesn't mean they can do it on their own or know how. It's not always as simple as just stopping use. Stopping alcohol or drug use takes a combination of motivation, skills and support on a journey that people need to be ready, willing and able to take.

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# MYTH

“Domestic violence happens because people can’t control their anger.”

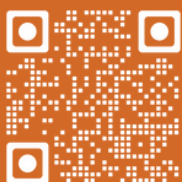
# BUSTED

Domestically violent behaviour is driven by persons beliefs or ideas about themselves and others which then permits their choice to use violent or controlling behaviours. Their choice to use domestically violent or controlling behaviours is also impacted by their view or expectations of partners based on that persons gender.

Whilst anger can make it more likely for people to act aggressively or violently, it is a person’s thoughts which allow their choice for feelings of anger to become behaviours of violence, power and or control. Anger is a healthy emotion and everybody has feelings of anger that they can struggle to control, but not everybody is domestically violent. It’s in a person’s power to choose.

## NEED SUPPORT?

1800 RESPECT - 24/7 Domestic, Family,  
and Sexual Violence Counselling.  
1800 737 732



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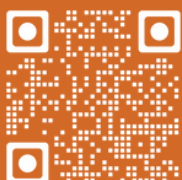
“He was violent because she pressed his buttons”

# BUSTED

Being violent is an active choice, and whilst you can't control other peoples thoughts, feelings or behaviours, it is in your power to both be aware of and control your own. It is never someone else's fault that they are victimised by violence.

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# MYTH

“If I am struggling with how I am feeling I am not like everyone else and a failure”

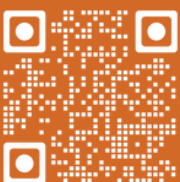
# BUSTED

Around 1 in 2 Australians will struggle with their mental health at some point in their life (Beyond Blue). A person's feelings or mental health can be affected by any number of things such as loss of a loved one, loss of a job, feeling a lack of direction or meaning, breakdown in friendships or relationships, feeling overwhelmed or isolated among many other factors.

Not all of the things that negatively impact your mental health are in your control, and it's normal to struggle when something that's important to you isn't going well. Emotional struggle is never a sign of failure or weakness, and instead it can be an opportunity for personal growth.

## NEED SUPPORT?

**Suicide Call Back Service - 24/7 Counselling  
for anxiety, stress, suicide, grief, & more.  
1300 659 467.**



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“If I talk about how I am feeling, people will treat me differently”

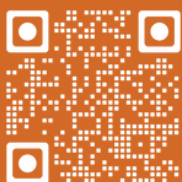
# BUSTED

How you feel is important, and how people treat you after you have chosen to be open with them is a reflection of their attitudes and beliefs.

Experiencing problems in your life whether it be in a relationship, mental health, a reliance on drugs or alcohol or anything else doesn't make you different and it's your right to be treated with respect and support should you be struggling in any area of life. It's important that you choose to be open with people you think will support you, but how they react to your openness is a complete reflection of them and not of you.

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# MYTH

“Any argument in a relationship could be defined as domestic violence these days”

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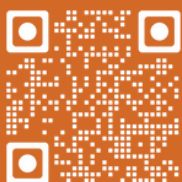
Arguments and disagreements are common and can be healthy and helpful to build shared understanding of needs and increase closeness between partners. This starts with non-judgement, perspective taking and listening. You might not like or agree what the other person is saying, but that doesn't mean it's wrong or that what they are saying isn't important to them. For example, it may make logical sense for partners to share one bank account, but if one partner would prefer to have their own finances in order to feel independence, this is something that matters to them and so is real, valid and worthy of respect.

Where they can become unhealthy is where people become disrespectful, purposely hurtful, dismissive or if there needs to be a winner and loser. Where unhealthy arguments can become domestically violent is where one person is trying to have power over their partner, suppress their wants, thoughts, or attitudes and/or control them, creating a power imbalance in the relationship.

Keeping disagreements or arguments healthy can be hard, can require open, vulnerable communication with loved ones. It takes two people to make the relationship healthy, but only one to make it unsafe and violent.

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# MYTH

“If I bring up something I am unhappy about with my partner, I’ll just create more dramas. Better to stay quiet and keep the peace”

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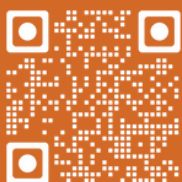
Pushing down or ignoring problems doesn’t make them go away and whilst not every dislike you feel may need to be spoken about, it’s important to share and be open with the things that matter, good or bad, with the people that matter to you.

A helpful strategy can be to use “I statements”. These are statements that might start with “I feel” or “I think” instead of “you did” or “you are”. The key to “I statements” is for them to be reflective of your thoughts, concerns, like or dislikes and give an opportunity for the conversation to progress. If a statement starts with an “I” but then a few words after becomes a “you” your statement might be becoming more about the other person than what your thoughts or feelings are. That’s okay, just try bringing it back so your being as clear as possible about what your thoughts, feelings and intentions are.

What’s in your head and your heart is just as important as what’s in your partners, and both of you deserve the space to feel heard.

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# MYTH

“Yeah but it wasn’t like he slapped her or anything”

## BUSTED

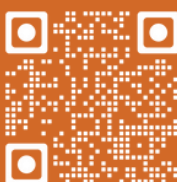
There are lots of different kinds of domestic violence that aren’t physical violence. Domestic violence is when one person behaves in a way that controls or dominates another person and causes fear for their safety and wellbeing. This behaviour can include:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Damage to property
- Making threats of violence to them or others
- Name calling, stalking, blackmailing, preventing contact with family or friends, controlling someone’s appearance, threatening to expose their sexual orientation.
- Threatening behaviours (i.e. saying things or acting in a way that makes someone feel afraid)
- Using suicide or self-harm as a threat
- Denying, withholding or controlling money or property
- Coercive behaviour (i.e. forcing, intimidating or manipulating a person to do things they don’t want to do)
- Exposing children to any of the above forms of violence whether doing any of these things in front of them, being abusive to their parent or being doing these forms of violence directly to them.

Domestic violence can be any of these behaviours but is not limited to them. If these examples are confusing, the important thing to remember is that any behaviour or pattern of behaviour that dominates or controls another person and causes them fear for their safety and wellbeing, whether during or after a relationship, is domestic violence and is not acceptable behaviour.

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“She’s just saying he did all that to get back at him”

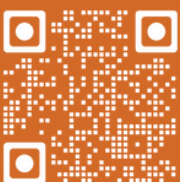
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Women are actually more likely to minimise their experiences of violence than make exaggerated or false allegations of abuse.

There are various barriers that lead women to down-play their experiences of violence and abuse. These include fear of consequences, fear they won’t be believed, not recognising the behaviours as abusive, isolation and control from the person choosing violence which can affect access to support networks, shame and fear of being judged.

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