

Three times more likely:

ANROWS

Findings from the Personal Safety Survey and the National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey

The 2021–22 Personal Safety Survey (PSS) examines *prevalence of violence* based on a representative sample of the population who are asked about their experiences of violence.

The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) examines *attitudes towards and understanding of violence* based on a representative sample of the population who are asked about these attitudes and understandings.

Putting data from these two key surveys side by sideⁱ can be a powerful way to highlight the dissonance between what we believe about violence and its actual prevalence. Our beliefs feed into myths, misconceptions, distrust and disbelief of women's reports of violence, and stand in the way of ending violence against women. For example, the NCAS shows us that nearly a quarter of Australians believe that many women exaggerate the extent of men's violence against women, when the PSS shows in fact that one in three women report experiencing violence, perpetrated mostly by males regardless of the type of violence.

Violence by an intimate partner

Intimate partner violence (including physical and/or sexual violence by cohabiting partners and boyfriends/girlfriends) is experienced by approximately 1 in 4 women (23%) and 1 in 14 men (7.3%) since age 15.

Women are **three times** more likely than men to experience violence by an intimate partner.

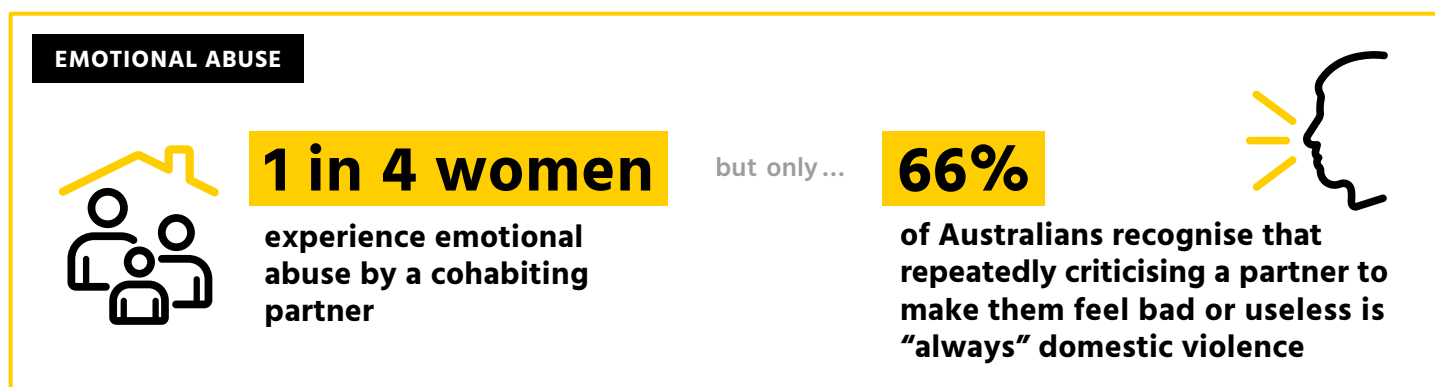


Abuse by a cohabiting partner

The PSS data shows that even when we examine other forms of violence that can make up patterns of coercive control – including emotional abuse and economic abuse – women are still more likely than men to experience them.

- 1 in 6 (16%) women experience economic abuse by a cohabiting partner, which aims to control access to economic resources, compared to 1 in 13 (7.8%) men.
- 1 in 4 (23%) women have experienced emotional abuse by a cohabiting partner, compared to 1 in 7 (14%) men. Emotional violence aims to cause emotional harm or fear by controlling behaviour.

The NCAS shows that Australians continue to be better at recognising physical violence than non-physical violence.




ⁱ Where possible figures in this fact sheet are drawn from 2021-22 PSS data, with older data used when the release schedule means new data is thus far unavailable. Data marked with a * is drawn from 2016 PSS data.

Sexual violence


Sexual violence (assault and/or threat) since the age of 15 is experienced by approximately 1 in 5 (22%) women and 1 in 16 (6.1%) men. Women are more than **three times** more likely to experience sexual violence than men.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE



1 in 5 women
experienced sexual violence

but the real prevalence of sexual violence continues to be undermined, when ...

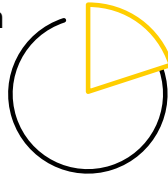
24–34% 

of Australians view allegations as a way of “getting back at men” or because they later regret consensual sex


STRANGER RAPE MYTH


Almost 1 in 5

Australians believe that women are most likely to be sexually assaulted by a stranger



when only ...

6%  of women experienced sexual violence by a male stranger


20%  of women experienced sexual violence by a known male

Sexual harassment


Sexual harassment involves being subjected to one or more behaviours which a person found improper or unwanted, which made them feel uncomfortable, and/or were offensive due to their sexual nature. In the last 12 months, approximately 1 in 8 women (13%) and 1 in 20 men (4.5%) have experienced sexual harassment.

Women are nearly **three times** more likely to experience sexual harassment than men.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

1 in 8 women 

have experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months

yet... **13%** 

of Australians still believe women should be flattered by wolf-whistles or catcalls


Stalking

Stalking – loitering and following which a person believes was being undertaken with the intent to cause them fear or distress – is experienced by approximately 1 in 5 (20%) women and 1 in 15 men (6.8%) since the age of 15.

Women are nearly **three times** more likely to be stalked than men.



The NCAS shows that while our understanding of stalking is high, it is hampered by misconceptions that persistent attention or actions that intend to maintain contact are harmless and flattering.

STALKING



Almost 9 in 10

Australians recognise stalking as violence

yet... **1 in 5 women**  ... 

still reported experiences of being stalked

Suggested Citation

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Sources

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2023). *Personal Safety, Australia*. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/personal-safety-australia/latest-release>

Coumarelos, C., Weeks, N., Bernstein, S., Roberts, N., Honey, N., Minter, K., & Carlisle, E. (2023). *Attitudes matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), Findings for Australia* (Research report, 02/2023). ANROWS. <https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/attitudes-matter-the-2021-national-community-attitudes-towards-violence-against-women-survey-ncas-findings-for-australia/>