

**Plain language summary**

In Australia the extent and nature of violence against people with disability varies by impairment.

This is the third fact sheet in our series on violence against people with disability in Australia. It is based on current data for men and women aged 18-64 years. The data are sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Personal Safety Survey where people have reported on their recent experience of violence in the last 12 months and since the age of 15, referred to here as lifetime experience. The survey invites people to disclose impairments. We report on data using this term acknowledging that disability stems from the interaction between impairments (a limitation in function) and societal barriers created by attitudes, structures and environments. We recognise that not all people with disability are represented in the survey and that rates of violence may be under-reported.

When we refer to **violence**, it includes physical or sexual violence, emotional abuse, intimate partner violence, stalking and harassment.

**Key facts**

Compared to 45% of people without disability:

* 66% of people with a physical impairment have experienced violence since the age of 15
* 68% of people with a **sensory or speech** impairment have experienced violence since the age of 15
* 72% of people with a **cognitive** impairment have experienced violence since the age of 15
* 74% of people with a psychological impairment have experienced violence since the age of 15

Compared to 10% of people without disability:

People with **cognitive (24%)** and **psychological** impairment **(28%)** are three times as likely than people without disability to have experienced violence in the last 12 months.

* 17% of people with a **physical** impairment experienced violence in the last year
* 20% of people with a **sensory or speech** impairment experienced violence in the last year
* 28% of people with a **psychological** impairment experienced violence in the last year

Physical violence

Compared to 34% of people without disability in the last 12 months:

* 53% of people with a **physical** impairment experienced physical violence at least once since the age of 15
* 59% of people with a **sensory or speech** impairment experienced at least one incident of physical violence since the age of 15
* 62% of people with a **cognitive** impairment experienced at least one incident of physical violence since the age of 15
* 59% of people with a **psychological** impairment experienced at least one incident of physical violence since the age of 15

Sexual Violence

**In comparison to 10% of people without disability:**

* 21% of people with a **sensory or speech impairment** are nearly twice as likely to experience sexual violence
* 36% of people with a **psychological** impairment are nearly four times as likely to report sexual violence
* 24% of people with a physical impairment and 26% of those with a **cognitive impairment** are nearly two and a half times more likely to report sexual violence

Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violenceincludes sexual assault, sexual threat, physical assault, and physical threat by a current or previous partner with whom the respondent lived, or current or former boyfriend, girlfriend, or date with whom the respondent did not live.

* 27% of people with physical impairments have reported at least once incident of violence by an intimate partner since the age of 15
* 26% of people with a **sensory or speech impairment** have reported at least one incident of violence by an intimate partner since the age of 15
* 32% with a **cognitive impairment** reported at least one incident of violence by an intimate partner since the age of 15
* 40% of people with a **psychological impairment** reported at least one incident of violence by an intimate partner since the age of 15

Stalking and Harassment

**In comparison to people without disability:**

* 20% of people with **sensory and speech impairments** and 21% with **physical impairments** are twice as likely to report being stalked and harassed, since the age of 15
* 25% of people with **cognitive impairments** are two and a half times more likely to report stalking and harassment, since the age of 15
* 20% people with a **sensory or speech impairment** have reported at least one incident of stalking and harassment since the age of 15
* 31% of people with a **psychological impairment** reported at least one incident of stalking and harassment since the age of 15

A close up of a sign

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**Sexual Violence**

* Women with disability are more likely than men with disability to be sexually assaulted in their lifetime.
* One in two women with **psychological** and **cognitive** impairments has been sexually abused in their lifetime.
* One in three women with **sensory and speech** and **physical impairments** reported experiencing sexual violence since the age of 15.

**Women**

* 33% of women with a **physical** impairment have experienced sexual violence
* 36% of women with a **sensory or speech** impairment have experienced sexual violence
* 47% of women with a **cognitive** impairment have experienced sexual violence
* 50% of women with a **psychological** impairment have experienced sexual violence

**Men**

* + 12% of men with a **physical** impairment have experienced sexual violence
  + 8% of men with a **sensory or speech** impairment have experienced sexual violence
  + 9% of men with a **cognitive** impairment have experienced sexual violence **^**
  + 16% of men with a **psychological** impairment have been sexually assault

^ These estimates are based on small numbers and should be interpreted with caution.

**Intimate Partner Violence**

Women with disability are more likely than men with disability to report intimate partner violence in their lifetime. One in two women with **psychological** and **cognitive** impairments have reported at least one incident of violence by an intimate partner since the age of 15.

Intimate partner violence against **women** by impairment type:

* 37% of women with a **physical** impairment experienced intimate partner violence
* 38% of women with a **sensory or speech** impairment experienced intimate partner violence
* 52% of women with a **cognitive** impairment experienced intimate partner violence
* 51% of women with a **psychological** impairment experienced intimate partner violence

Intimate partner violence against **men** by impairment type:

* 15% of men with a **physical** impairment experienced intimate partner violence
* 17% of men with a **sensory or speech** impairment experienced intimate partner violence
* 17% of men with a **cognitive** impairment experienced intimate partner violence
* 26% of men with a **psychological** impairment experienced intimate partner violence

**Stalking and Harassment**

**Women with disability are more likely than men with disability to report stalking and harassment in their lifetime.**

Stalking and harassment against **women** by impairment type:

* 27% of women with **physical** impairment
* 30% of women with **sensory or speech** impairment
* 31% of women with **cognitive** impairment
* 39% of women with **psychological** impairment

Stalking and harassment against **men** by impairment type:

* 15% of men with **physical** impairment
* 12% of men with **sensory or speech** impairment
* 21% of men with **cognitive** impairment
* 20% of men with **psychological** impairment

**Notes on data and definitions**

Violence against people with disability is a significant human rights issue. We acknowledge the strength and resilience of people with disability who have survived violence. We thank those who have disclosed their experiences for making this work possible.

We have used data from the Personal Safety Survey 2016 for most of this fact sheet. We are aware that there is no support available for people who need assistance to complete the survey and therefore does not represent the experiences of all people with disability.

We report on experiences of violence in the last 12 months which provides an indication of recent experience. We also report on violence across the lifespan from the age of 15, which estimates the total number of people affected by violence.

In this fact sheet we refer to men and women, and not to other gender identities. This is because of the way gender is labeled in the data sources we have reported on.

Estimates are directly age-adjusted to the June 2018 Australian population. Age adjusting is a statistical technique that helps make fairer comparisons between groups with different age distributions.

In the data, violence refers to events and threat. It includes violence used by people who are strangers, and by people who know each other. Violence includes physical or sexual violence, emotional abuse, intimate partner violence, stalking and/or harassment. Intimate Partner Violence refers to a current or previous partner with whom the respondent lived, or current or former boyfriend, girlfriend, or dating partner with whom the respondent did not live.

For more information on how disability is collected in the survey, go to this [website](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4906.0.55.003main+features122016)

**Further information**

The *Violence against People with Disability* Fact Sheets were produced by the team at the Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health (CRE-DH) and funded by the Melbourne Disability Institute.

Data source: ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2017. Microdata: Personal Safety, Australia, 2016. ABS cat. No.4906.0.55.001 Canberra: ABS. CRE-DH analysis of Datalab. Note: Figures are rounded.

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