



**A violence-free  
Alberta is in  
your hands.**

**Tell us  
YOUR ideas!**

**Alberta**  
GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA



## What is Family Violence?

Family violence happens when a person uses their power in the family to control those with less power by being threatening and abusive. It includes spouse/partner abuse, child abuse and neglect, parent abuse and abuse of older adults.

Alberta has the highest rate of reported spousal assault in Canada at 11 per cent. In 2002, over 6,000 cases of spousal assault were reported to police in Alberta and almost 4,000 charges were laid. Victims and children who are exposed to family violence can be emotionally scarred for life. Tragically, there are a number of deaths from family violence each year. Although much has been done to protect and support those who are affected, family violence remains a serious problem in our province.

Family violence affects all of us, whether we are victims, abusers, family members, friends, neighbours, co-workers, employers, service providers or average citizens. Every Albertan pays for family violence through increased social, health and criminal justice costs.

## What is Bullying?

Bullying happens when a person or group tries to harm or control another person by being physically or emotionally abusive. Children who are bullied often feel frightened, lonely and unsafe. As many as one in four children in Grades 4 to 6 have been bullied. Approximately one in 10 children have bullied others.

The tragic events at Columbine High School and the shooting death of Jason Lang in Taber, Alberta have put bullying and youth violence in the spotlight. But bullying is not new. Neither is it a normal part of growing up or of "kids being kids." Bullying hurts. Children who bully others often become adult bullies and are more likely to commit violent crimes. Bullying can make our classrooms, streets and communities unhappy and unsafe places for many children.

Television, movies, video games and other parts of our popular culture show children that violence is not only okay but is an effective way to solve problems. Children can get this same message at home. Young children who are exposed to violence between their parents are more likely to become bullies in later childhood.

## What is Already Being Done?

In Alberta, there are a number of programs and services for people who are affected by family violence and bullying. These programs and services cover the spectrum, from prevention to outreach and follow-up. Many communities have shelters for people leaving abusive situations. In municipalities small and large, many families turn for help to their local police, Family and Community Support Services and non-governmental organizations such as sexual assault centres, outreach and victims programs, support groups, family and counseling centres, immigration and crisis societies. Treatment programs are available to help both victims and abusers heal. Schools across Alberta have adopted anti-bullying programs. And, in some cases, communities have come together to strengthen their commitment that family violence and bullying will not be tolerated.

Despite all that is being done across Alberta by government and community partners, there is still more we can do. The time has come to take action on family violence and bullying. We all have a role to play in stopping these harmful behaviours and creating healthy families and communities that are violence-free.