



What is economic harm?

Economic harm is behaviour towards a person that controls, restricts or removes their access to money, economic resources or participation in financial decisions.

Economic harm, often called financial or economic abuse, is recognised as a form of psychological abuse within the Family Violence Act.

It is experienced in many close personal relationships, particularly intimate partner relationships. It may also include forms of elder abuse.

Unlike physical violence, economic harm is less visible and does not leave marks; the impact can be debilitating, and can affect financial security well into the future

Understanding economic harm

Economic harm can impact all ages, socio-economic groups, cultures, ethnicities and genders.

It may also present differently in some cultures due to traditions and beliefs, or the systemic experience of colonisation.

Economic harm is experienced in the context of power and control and is often intentional, but not always.

Like other forms of violence it can be subtle, beginning with the smallest breach of trust, and then build over time.

It can also be a product of intergenerational learning, role modelling, previous trauma, belief systems, limited knowledge, traditions etc.

It is most evident when a specific pattern of behaviours is occurring. Such as coercion, withholding financial access or support, deceptive behaviour or unreasonable control that limits another person's economic or financial involvement – including resources such as accommodation, transport, employment and clothing.

It may also involve limited or no participation in decisions or actions relating to financial and economic wellbeing.



“It was like he had an image of a perfect girlfriend. He would decide what I wore, where I went, who I saw and give me as much money as he thought I needed for the things he agreed that I could do.”

Possible warnings:

- Limited or no access to money or resources
- Child support isn't being paid
- Your employment situation becomes difficult due to constant harassment
- The car is damaged so you can't go anywhere
- Court processes are intentionally dragged out

Individually these warnings may mean very little, however several together could indicate economic harm.

For more information or to find support visit:

goodshepherd.org.nz/economic-harm

Or call: 0800 466 370

