Financial Abuse and Family Violence

This fact sheet is for information only. You

Main ideas

- Financial abuse is a form of family violence.
- It can happen to anyone.
- There are support services to help you work through your finances.
- Financial counsellors can help if you are having problems with debts or dealing with lenders. Their services are free.
- Get free legal advice if you are being chased for a debt you don't recognise or you signed up to under pressure from someone else.

In this fact sheet:

Get help if you feel unsafe

Financial abuse is when someone else controls your money

Financial counselling can help you get back in control

Get legal advice to check you are responsible for the debt

Lenders and debt collectors have special procedures when dealing with financial abuse

Other steps you can take

Get help if you feel unsafe

- 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) (https://eapu.com.au/elde
- 1800 353 374 Elder Abuse Help; Line in different states :
- Womenisthegal Services s L e g g a l S e v v c e e : h h t p p s / / w/w tw spr up tw s Fami by violence and economic abuse can have lo If you are in crisis and having trouble cop



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• 13 11 14 - Lifeline

this is a 24/7 crisis support s

• 13 YARN (13 92 76)

Financial abuse is when someone else controls your money

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Case study

Jay experienced domestic violence and financial abuse in her relationship with her former partner. He ended up in jail. She was left with debts in her name from the financial abuse. These debts would take her years to repay, adding to her trauma. She went to a community legal centre and had some debts waived but one lender was being difficult and demanded most of the debt be paid.

Our financial counsellor reviewed the loan documents. It looked like Jay was on Centrelink at the time, the lender didn't check her income and may have breached their responsible lending obligations. The lender agreed to waive the debt and remove default listings from Jay's credit report.

Get legal advice to check you are responsible for the debt

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Case study



Mary was an elderly client who needed a translator. She had also suffered a stroke that made it difficult for her to talk. Her son lived with her, he did not pay any rent, or help with housework or take care of her. He made Mary feel guilty and threatened to kill himself if she didn't give him money. He took her to a bank branch to get a reverse mortgage over her home. This branch was Mary's usual bank branch, staff recognised her and refused to give out the loan because of concerns over her son's behaviour. The son then took Mary to a different branch of the same bank. That branch granted the loan without any explanation. Her son did all the talking and he later took the loan money.

Our solicitor complained to the bank. The bank did not agree they had done anything wrong, but agreed to release Mary from the outstanding debt, remove the mortgage off her title and refund the payments she had made towards the loan.

Lenders and debt collectors have special procedures when dealing with financial abuse

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- Australian Banking Association Industry Guideline to Preventing and
 Respanding to family and domestic violence i ng. or g. au/wp-content/
- General Insurance Code of Practice Guide to helping people affected by family
 violence: t ps://insurancecouncil.com.au/wp-conter
- Life Insurance Family and Domestig Violence Policy urces/2541-family-

Case study

Rob met Peter when he was 18 years old. Over many years, Rob experienced constant put downs and emotional abuse, financial control and threats to expose Rob's sexual history. Peter pressured Rob into applying for a charge card. Peter used the card for his own purchases, and spent almost all of Rob's total earnings each month. After Rob separated from Peter, Rob reported the financial abuse, but the lender only told him to change his contact details and demanded payment from him.

Our service asked the lender to investigate. The lender did not agree to any wrongdoing, but made an offer to significantly reduce the debt (as Rob would also be getting compensation through a larger share of a family law property settlement).

Other steps you can take

FINANCIAL RIGHTS LEGAL CENTRE

www.financialrights.org.au



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 - o Tenants Union NSW: t ps://www.lhetgtaplsa:i/d/acatnboergraacuo/mno Legal Aid ACT:Canberra Community Law: t ps://www.dcls.org.a
 - NT: Darwin Community Legal Centre: / tenantsqld.org.au/
 - Tenants Queensland: t ps://www.syc.net.au/rentrights
 - SA: RentRight: https://tutas.org.au/
 - Tenants Union TAS t t ps://tenantsvic.org.au/
 - Tenants Victoria: https://circlegreen
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Need more help?

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