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ASK and make sure you are receiving all your entitlements and be aware of your rights.

WHGNE have operated a specific Domestic Violence NILS program since 2007. As a result of this work we recognised that there was a need for resources identifying financial abuse as a form of domestic violence. Women who were separating from a partner were missing out on services available to them because they were not aware that the financial abuse they had experienced in their past relationship was in fact, family violence. We would regularly hear from women "He controlled ALL the money. I had nothing to spend on myself or the kids. But he never hit me. That's not DOMESTIC VIOLENCE is it?"

Financial abuse has been legally recognised by the Victorian Government as a form of domestic violence since 2008. The Family Violence Protection Act 2008 states that women and their children can be protected from the following forms of family violence: physical, sexual, emotional/psychological, racial, economic and spiritual or cultural abuse.

To talk to a Domestic Violence worker call 1800 015 188.

Centrelink provides a crisis payment to people who experience a severe financial hardship due to domestic violence and who are already receiving Centrelink income support. You can be eligible if you are forced to leave your home or if you remain at home and the violent partner is removed.

To be eligible, you must contact Centrelink within 7 days of the crisis event and lodge an application within 14 days of contacting the agency.

You can register an **intent to claim** for Crisis Payment. This will help you get your payment from the earliest possible date. You can also phone Centrelink on 13 28 50. Please refer to **Crisis Payment claim forms and information**

Centrelink Social Worker 13 17 94 www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/dhs/centrelink

Centrepay is a free bill-paying service for people receiving Centrelink payments. You can arrange to pay your bills on line at www.humanservices.gov.au/online services

Social Security Rights 1800 094 164 Provides specialist information, advocacy and case work support in the area of Welfare Rights and Social Security law, policy and practice. www.ssr.org.au

Centrelink Indigenous Call Centre 136 380

Speak to a Centrelink employee in your language by calling 13 12 02

Essential First Steps to re-establishing financial security - a booklet to assist you to re-establish your finances after leaving domestic violence. www.whealth.com.au/work_financial-abuse-project.html

Annual Electricity Concession & Winter Energy Concession for Gas

Be aware that each time your Centrelink Concession Card is re-issued you need to re-notify your utility company that you are still eligible for these concessions - otherwise the concession rates may be dropped off. If you have been entitled, but are not receiving the concession, the utility company can back date the concession for up to 12 months - but you may need to ask them to do this.

For more information call the Concessions Information Line 1800 658 521

The Energy and Water Ombudsman 1800 500 509 has the power to investigate and resolve disputes between Victorian consumers and their electricity, gas and water companies. Remember that you must discuss your problem with the customer service people at your electricity, gas or water company first. www.ewov.com.au



WOMEN'S HEALTH
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Challenging inequality, embracing diversity.