



Position Statement

Reproductive Coercion

SHQ (Sexual Health Quarters) acknowledges reproductive coercion as a form of family and domestic violence (FDV), and advocates for improved research, awareness and laws to support people affected by it. Reproductive coercion violates SHQ's core values around human rights, autonomy and choice.

Reproductive coercion is a term used to define a range of fertility-controlling behaviours.

These can include (but are not limited to);

- contraception sabotage
- threats/use of physical violence if contraception is requested
- emotional blackmail around having sex, getting pregnant or accessing a termination
- emotional abuse and manipulation
- obstructing a woman's freedom to seek help without partner's presence
- sexual assault.

While reproductive coercion is an emerging area of research in Australia, what is known is that women have an increased risk of experiencing FDV during pregnancy. If FDV is already present, it is more likely to escalate during this time.

SHQ advocates for;

- Increased research around reproductive coercion, especially in relation to other types of violence
- Improved data collection around reproductive coercion, to allow a wider understanding of the issue and support service providers in ensuring they are responsive to client needs
- Improved confidential access to termination services, emergency contraception and pregnancy tests to increase levels of safety for women experiencing reproductive coercion
- Increased access to contraception that is less susceptible to detection and tampering
- National policies and strategies addressing reproductive health or domestic violence that include reproductive coercion
- National sexuality education programs that address gender, rights and power in intimate relationships
- Reproductive coercion to be considered in domestic violence and ante-natal screening tools
- Reproductive coercion to be considered in termination service delivery models
- People experiencing reproductive coercion having increased access and support to specialist services that support their specific needs
- Increased awareness of the surrounding issues and ramifications of reproductive coercion
- Improved laws to support victims of reproductive coercion

SHQ will continue to monitor emerging information and data around reproductive coercion, and update this position statement accordingly.