

# DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE (DFV) – SUPPORT IN THE WORKPLACE



BE WHAT YOU WANT TO BE

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*Domestic and family violence can affect anyone in the community – regardless of gender, age, location, socio-economic and health status, culture, sexual identity, ethnicity, or religion.*

Adapted from the [National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022](#)

CQUniversity promotes a respectful workplace culture and offers support to those whose lives are affected by domestic and family violence. The University aims to create cultures, which support respectful and equitable relationships, promote safety, and foster supportive behaviours.

It is important to be able to provide knowledge and skills to support someone in crisis by learning how to:

- **RECOGNISE** when a colleague, friend or family member is living with DFV
- **RESPOND** in an appropriate manner, and
- **REFER** to suitable support.

It is also important to define personal boundaries and limitations of the supporter's role. Remember that your role is not to be a counsellor or provide long-term support. It is to listen and hear, respond with empathy, and refer on.

## What is DFV?

Domestic and family violence comprises various forms of abusive and violent behaviour (this is not an exhaustive list) -

### Social Abuse

- Isolating from family or friends
- Denigrating family or friends
- Jealousy, accusing of affairs
- Disallowing transport or licence
- Controlling appearance
- Prevent social or employment opportunities
- Monitoring phone calls, internet or messages
- Smashing or removing mobile
- Sabotaging social outlets
- Needing total attention

### Physical Abuse

- Murder
- Strangling, suffocating
- Punching, hitting, slapping
- Throwing objects
- Reckless driving
- Use of weapons
- Hair pulling, spitting
- Trivialising medical problems
- Damage to possessions
- Cruelty to pets
- Forced substance abuse
- Forced diet
- Withholding access to medical help
- Locked inside or outside
- Over- or under-medicating
- Taunting someone in a vulnerable state

## Psychological/Emotional Abuse

- Threat of suicide
- Emotional blackmail
- Self-esteem erosion
- Criticising appearance or body shape
- Scaring
- Undermining character
- Implying mental illness
- Turning children against parent
- Minimising or dismissing feelings
- Private humiliation
- Invasion of privacy
- Denying education
- 'Jekyll and Hyde' personality
- Spreading rumours of mental illness

## Financial Abuse

- Total control of finances
- Restricting earnings
- Unable to buy staff for oneself
- Gambling joint money
- Drinking
- Control of shopping expenditure
- Concealing assets
- Forcing to take out loans or credit cards
- Rationing or placing conditions on money

## Sexual Abuse

- Rape
- Rationing or denial of sex
- Sex on their conditions
- Denying choice in contraception
- Imposing beliefs
- Enforcing sexual practices they are not comfortable with
- Pornography
- Sex in front of children
- Bestiality
- Forced abortion
- Risky behaviours

## Stalking

- Driving past house or work
- Reading or taking mail
- Vandalising property
- Turning up at places where victim frequents
- Following or shadowing in public areas
- Excessive phone calls, text messages, emails, letters or messages on social networking sites

## Spiritual Abuse

- Denying choices
- Demanding you take on their beliefs
- Using beliefs to justify behaviours
- Ridiculing beliefs
- Not allowing negotiation in children's spiritual education

## Verbal Abuse

- Insults or putdowns
- Silent treatment
- Name calling
- Sarcasm
- Fault finding
- Lies
- Public humiliation
- Threats
- Dominating conversation
- Yelling/shouting
- Whispering
- Being indiscreet
- Always correcting

## **Technology facilitated abuse**

- Tracking whereabouts via mobile apps
- Monitoring access via online bank transactions
- Threats via social media
- Sharing intimate photos via emails/social media
- Getting other people to threaten/monitor via social media
- Posting false information via internet
- Limiting access to technology

## **Disclosure and Confidentially**

CQUniversity acknowledges that disclosing that you or someone you know is affected by DFV is not easy. Best practice has shown that a safe and supportive work environment can provide a person affected by DFV with a safe place.

Employees have the right to choose whether, when and to whom they wish to disclose information on DFV. Disclosures need to be treated with sensitivity and confidentiality, except to the extent that further disclosure is required by law.

## **Support**

The [Central Queensland University Enterprise Agreement 2017](#), Clause 40 provides employees with access to Domestic and Family Violence Leave. Domestic and Family Violence Leave provides the following support to employees who is affected by violence or abuse –

- Up to 10 days paid non-cumulative leave per year upon request to the Director of People and Culture or nominee.
- Access to sick, carer's annual leave or leave without pay.
- Flexible working arrangements, including changes to working times consistent with the needs on the organisational unit.
- Changing work location, telephone number and email access.

An employee may be required to provide supporting evidence of treatment for domestic violence which could take the form of a document issued by the police service, a court, a medical practitioner, a domestic violence support service or lawyer, or a counselling professional.

All CQUniversity employees and eligible family member have access to the Employee Assistance Program ([EAP](#)) which offers an independent, professional service who have extensive training and experience in counselling. Employees that are affected by DFV should also be referred to professional external agencies for support in their state or territory (see table below).

## **A Safe and Secure Workplace**

If an employee would like assistance while at work, a People and Culture Workplace Relations team member (in consultation with an OHS team member), will work with them to tailor a safety plan which can include but not be limited to:

- Use cards or keys to access staff only areas.
- Use the CQU [SafeZone App](#) on your mobile device
- If possible, use reception desks and a sign-in procedure, providing a photo to reception for identification
- Change work hours, location, phone number and email. TaSAC can remove contact details for staff members on sites accessible to the public.
- Use of personal or fixed alarms (either audible or silent alarms).

- Accompany non-workers in restricted areas
- Support for access to car parks (suggest to your team member that they consider parking in a different spot) and
- Allowing the staff member flexibility to attend to appointments in work hours such as counselling or legal appointments

Such a plan may require the involvement of other relevant parties at the University such as the AVC, Security Officer or supervisor. Such involvement will only occur with the explicit permission of the employee.

**What can a supervisor do if a team member discloses that they are experiencing domestic or family violence?**

If a colleague discloses that they are a victim of domestic and family violence, consider the following –

- Asking the employee what information can be shared with other staff to ensure any changes can be implemented and you can provide an appropriate response to any questions that may be asked?
- Advise your team member that you may need to discuss the situation with your supervisor or Associate Vice-Chancellor to ensure that appropriate support/measures can be given. If you need to do this, remind your staff member that managers are also bound by confidentiality and will not disclose your details unnecessarily.
- Discuss with the employee who their emergency contact is and if this needs to be changed. If so, this can be changed in ESSO.
- Ask if there is a family member or friend that can do a welfare check if they have not attended work and are uncontactable?
- Remind all staff members to NOT reveal personal details or whereabouts to anyone, including family members.
- If you know the abuser, do not contact them to discuss the situation
- Do not force your staff member to accept support
- Do not adopt the role of being their counsellor yourself instead refer them to EAP or an agency listed below.

**When a colleague is experiencing domestic and family violence – what should you do?**

If a colleague discloses to you that they are experiencing domestic violence, then the following may assist you:

- It is important that you listen and are not judgemental or critical. Do not tell them what to do but help them to explore options that are available to them.
- Respect their right to make their own decisions, even if you don't agree with them.
- Remind them of support being available through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Don't blame them for the abuse or ask questions like 'why do you put up with it?'
- Don't offer a solution, but rather take an empowering approach by using empathy not sympathy
- Use language like "What would you like to do" or "What do you think would help you the most". Don't use words like "What can I do to help you?" DFV is about power and control so if you try to resolve issues for the person you can be inadvertently perpetuating this control. Offer options to assist, not solutions.
- When someone is struggling you need to provide relief by listening and engaging with the distressed person.
- Ensure that you are talking with the person about the core/crux of the issue. The respectful thing to do is to ask "What is it that's troubling you the most".

**What do I do if I suspect a colleague experiencing domestic violence, but they haven't said anything?**

If you suspect a colleague is a victim of domestic violence, only try to start a conversation if the person is alone in a place where it is safe to speak with you and there is enough time to talk about the issue.

Your colleague may be willing to talk if they feel safe and trust you to keep their situation to yourself. Questions such as "I am worried about you because ... " or "You look unhappy lately" may help get the conversation started.

If they do not wish to disclose anything, do not pressure them to talk to you but remind them that you are available if they wish to do so, and also remind them of the EAP.

If you are concerned that a colleague is in immediate or serious danger you should contact the [Workplace Relations Team](#) in People and Culture for immediate advice.

**External organisations that can support and/or you can refer to for assistance**

<b>NATIONAL</b> Tel: 1800 RESPECT 1800 737 732 TTY: 1800 671 442 Web: <a href="http://www.1800respect.org.au">www.1800respect.org.au</a>	<b>24 hours, 7 days</b> Confidential telephone and internet counselling, information and referral (to local services) for people experiencing domestic violence or sexual assault.
	<b>24 hours, 7 days</b> Can assist anyone with personal crisis or thinking about suicide
<b>QUEENSLAND</b> DV connect Womensline Tel: 1800 811 811  DV Connect Mensline Tel: 1800 600 636  Queensland Working Women's Service Tel: 1800 621 458 Web: <a href="http://www.qwws.org.au">www.qwws.org.au</a>	<b>24 hours, 7 days</b> Information, referral and counselling for women affected by domestic violence. Includes referral to crisis accommodation.
	<b>9am – midnight, 7 days</b> Information, advice and counselling for men affected by domestic violence.
	<b>Telephone advice 9am – 4pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday</b> Telephone information, advice and referral for women on work-related issues. Advocacy and representation may be available in limited circumstances.
<b>NEW SOUTH WALES</b> NSW Domestic Violence Line Tel: 1800 656 463 TTY: 1800 671 442  LawAccess Tel: 1800 656 463 TTY: 1300 889 529 Web: <a href="http://www.lawaccess.nsw.gov.au">www.lawaccess.nsw.gov.au</a>	<b>24 hours, 7 days</b> Information and referral (including crisis accommodation) for people experiencing domestic violence in New South Wales.
	<b>9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday</b> Government telephone service providing legal information, advice and referral for people who have a legal problem involving domestic violence.

<p><b>AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY</b>  <b>Domestic Violence Crisis Service</b>  Tel: (02) 6280 0900  TTY: (02) 6228 1852  Web: <a href="http://www.dvcs.org.au">www.dvcs.org.au</a></p> <p><b>Women's Legal Service</b>  Tel: 1800 634 669  (02) 6257 4499</p>	<p><b>24 hours, 7 days</b>  Information and referral for people affected by domestic violence.</p> <p><b>Telephone advice:</b>  9.30am – 12 noon Monday to Friday  <b>Face-to-face advice:</b>  9am – 5pm Monday to Friday and  5.30pm – 7pm every second Tuesday,  by appointment only.  Legal information, advice and referral for women. Initial contact is by telephone, face-to-face advice may be available in certain circumstances. Advocacy and representation may be available in limited circumstances.</p>
<p><b>VICTORIA</b>  <b>Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service</b>  Tel: 1800 015 188  Web: <a href="http://www.wdvcs.org.au">www.wdvcs.org.au</a></p>	<p><b>24 hours, 7 days</b>  Information and referral for women affected by domestic violence.</p>
<p><b>SOUTH AUSTRALIA</b>  <b>Domestic Violence Helpline</b>  Tel: 1800 800 098</p> <p><b>Working Women's Centre of South Australia</b>  Tel: 1800 652 697  (08) 8440 6499</p>	<p><b>24 hours, 7 days</b>  <b>Counselling, information and referral for people affected by domestic violence.</b></p> <p><b>Telephone advice:</b>  9am – 5pm, Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday  Information, advice and referral for women on work-related issues. Initial advice is by telephone, face-to-face advice may be available after making telephone contact. Advocacy and representation may be available in limited circumstances.</p>
<p><b>WESTERN AUSTRALIA</b>  <b>Women's Domestic Violence Helpline</b>  Tel: 1800 007 339  (08) 9223 1188</p> <p><b>Men's Domestic Violence Helpline</b>  Tel: 1800 000 599  (08) 9223 1199</p>	<p><b>24 hours, 7 days</b>  Information, referral and counselling for women affected by domestic violence. Includes referral to crisis accommodation</p> <p><b>24 hours, 7 days</b>  Information, referral and counselling for men affected by domestic violence</p>
<p><b>NORTHERN TERRITORY</b>  <b>Crisis Line</b>  Tel: 1800 019 116</p>	<p><b>24 hours, 7 days</b>  Information, referral and counselling for people affected by domestic violence.</p>
<p><b>TASMANIA</b>  <b>Family Violence Response and Referral Line</b>  Tel: 1800 633 937</p>	<p><b>24 hours, 7 days</b>  Information and referral for people affected by domestic violence.</p>