

# Domestic and family violence referral information

Domestic and family violence harms individuals, families and communities.

If an employee seeks help relating to a domestic and family violence matter, the following information will assist your organisation to respond. Examples of what you might say to someone experiencing domestic or family violence have been provided together with helplines and contact details for individuals seeking help.

## What is domestic and family violence?

Domestic and family violence happens when one person in a relationship uses violence or abuse to control the other person. Domestic and family violence is usually an ongoing pattern of behaviour aimed at controlling a partner through fear. It takes many different forms and most commonly happens in relationships within the family or home.

Abuse is not always physical — it can be emotional, verbal, sexual, financial or involve other controlling behaviours that generally cause the person being abused to be fearful.

## How can you help if an individual seeks help relating to a domestic and family violence matter?

### *Respect a person's right to make their own decisions*

When a person speaks to you about their situation, it is important to listen to them without judgement and to take the issue seriously. It is also important to respect the decisions they make and help find ways for them to become stronger and safer.

### *Listen and be empathetic*

This is one of the most important things you can do. Encourage them to understand they have a right to a life free from abuse and affirm that it's a positive step that they are seeking help and that there is help out there.

### *Be open and show you believe what they are telling you*

People who are abused are more likely to minimise the abuse rather than exaggerate the situation. They are also likely to make excuses for the person abusing them.

### *Let them know the domestic and family violence is not their fault*

No one deserves to be abused. You could say: “*The way you are being treated is wrong — it's abuse*” or “*People feel angry but everyone has a choice in how they respond to the situation. Anger is not an excuse for domestic violence*”.

### *Let them know there are support services available*

Legal help and support services are available, for all forms of domestic and family violence, not just physical violence. Domestic violence services can help people consider their options and work out ways to keep them safe.

Offer them the **contact card** listing specific helplines funded by the Queensland Government to assist them. However, not all people will be ready to accept this card.



## Here are some examples of what you might say to someone experiencing domestic or family violence:

- “I don’t think it’s okay for anyone to treat you like that”
- “I believe everyone deserves to be treated with respect, especially by those who say they love us and care for us”.

## What advice to avoid when speaking with an individual relating to a domestic and family violence matter:

- do not provide legal advice
- do not advocate on the person’s behalf, including making further phone calls
- do not guarantee any particular outcomes.

## Emergency Response Triple Zero (000)

If someone is in imminent danger or has been the immediate victim of violence, police should be contacted on Triple Zero (000) immediately. Other emergency services such as ambulance for injuries, or fire services for accidents can also be contacted as needed through Triple Zero (000).

## Further information and resources

A full list of domestic and family violence services is available at

**[www.qld.gov.au/community/getting-support-health-social-issue/counselling-support-advice](http://www.qld.gov.au/community/getting-support-health-social-issue/counselling-support-advice)**

This includes specialist domestic and family violence services, court services, legal services and accommodation support services.

The Queensland Government is committed to helping prevent domestic and family violence. Further information about domestic and family violence and support for victims of abuse can be found on **[www.qld.gov.au/domesticviolence](http://www.qld.gov.au/domesticviolence)**

## Helplines and contact details

The Queensland Government funds a number of helplines to provide immediate support to people experiencing domestic and family violence.

Staff at these services are trained and experienced at working through the often complex issues associated with domestic and family violence and can connect individuals with the right range of supports including counselling, legal and court support, and crisis accommodation.

### DVConnect Womensline 1800 811 811

*24 hours, 7 days a week*

Assists women to obtain safe refuge accommodation, confidential counselling and referral to other services.

### DVConnect Mensline 1800 600 636

*9.00am to midnight, 7 days a week*

Provides confidential counselling, information and referral to men affected by domestic and family violence. Assists both male victims as well as men who are seeking help to stop their abusive behaviour.

### Elder Abuse Helpline 1300 651 192

*9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday*

Provides information and support to older people who experience elder abuse.

### Sexual Assault Helpline 1800 010 120

*9.00am to 5.00pm, 7 days a week*

Provides counselling, information and referral to people who have experienced sexual assault.

The federal government also funds a national helpline:

### 1800 RESPECT 1800 737 732

*24 hours, 7 days a week*

This national service provides crisis and trauma counselling to people affected by domestic, family and sexual violence.

### Policelink 131 444

*24 hours, 7 days a week*

Policelink is the main police contact number for non-urgent matters and can be used to report crimes or if a person feels threatened or in danger.

