

When Domestic and Family Violence Comes to Work

*Recognising and responding to domestic and family
violence in your workplace*



Supported by



Queensland Government



Acknowledgement of the traditional custodians of the land

The Services Union and our partner organisations acknowledge the First Nations peoples who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather for work and to live our lives. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future. We acknowledge the disproportionate impact of domestic and family violence on First Nations peoples and that much remains to be done to redress the impacts of colonisation and intergenerational trauma. At the same time, we recognise the values of kinship and connection to country as important strengths of traditional culture with much to teach us.

Other appreciations

We thank DFV Work Aware Queensland and Basic Rights Queensland Inc. for taking the project lead in developing this and other resources that have been funded by the Queensland Government Office of Industrial Relations.

We also acknowledge the foundational work done by the Working Women's Centres in Queensland, the Northern Territory and South Australia who for over 20 years have provided support and advocacy to women impacted negatively in their working lives by domestic and family violence (DFV). These centres have worked with unions to raise awareness of the issue and the important role that workplaces can perform in supporting employees to enable them to take steps to address the violence and abuse in their lives and to remain employed.

Thank you to the people, many of whom are our members, and organisations that work so hard at the front line responding to DFV. Thank you also to the workplaces who are getting on board with implementing strategies that assist their employees to remain safer while they are at work and in their homes.

Disclaimer

Domestic and Family Violence is a complex issue. This Guide has been developed to support workplaces and their employees to better understand and respond to domestic and family violence when it impacts on people at work. It is not a substitute for specialist victim/survivor support, intervention for persons using violence, risk assessment and safety planning, or harm prevention. Further information and support can be requested from specialist domestic and family violence services - see our Referrals section for more information and contact details.

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Foreword

The Ending Violence Against Women Queensland Inc. (EVAWQ) peak body provides a representative and united voice for Queensland women and children affected by gender-based violence, and the individuals and service agencies that provide specialist support.

EVAWQ does this by:

- facilitating collaboration, skill sharing and partnership building between specialist sector organisations including refuge, sexual assault, women's health and domestic and family violence. We know that united, we are more powerful.
- developing and activating prevention of violence strategies alongside sharing practice knowledge and skills. Primary prevention of violence is key to creating lasting change.
- influencing policy, advocating for women, supporting the sector and creating systems change through engagement with government.
- undertaking community and sector consultation, contributing to research and sharing data. Knowledge makes us stronger and more effective.



EVAWQ believes that violence against women and children is a human rights violation, and that women and children are entitled to safe homes, workplaces and communities. This requires an end to men's violence in all settings where people live, work, learn and play. EVAWQ has partnered with Basic Rights Queensland (BRQ), in support of violence prevention education to create systemic change. Workplaces are key locations for creating lasting change, both in the workplace and beyond.

Domestic and family violence is an issue 365 days of the year - its impacts do not end when we go to work. Workplace policies, programs and practices that promote gender equity and provide a flexible, supportive environment for victim-survivors can create lasting change for women and their families. DFV leave entitlements, flexible work or relocation arrangements and equal employment opportunity practice are just some of the critical approaches to ensuring women remain employed. Workplaces are also key locations to address the drivers of gendered violence through primary prevention programs that reach beyond workplaces and influence change in homes.

EVAWQ and its member organisations are committed to modelling and sharing best practice in DFV-responsiveness and primary prevention of violence across the professional sectors throughout Queensland. Together we can make a difference.

Emma Iwinska

President, Ending Violence Against Women Queensland <https://www.evawq.org>

CEO, Women's Health Queensland <https://www.womenshealth.org.au>



Using this guide

Content note: keep safe

This guide contains information about domestic and family violence and abuse, including sexual violence and case studies. This is a sensitive topic which may sometimes be challenging and uncomfortable to read.

If the content of this guide brings up any challenges for you, please reach out for support, for example, by contacting:

- 1800 RESPECT on 1800 737 732. 1800 RESPECT is Australia's free, national confidential 24/7 sexual assault and domestic and family violence phone and webchat counselling service.
- Domestic Violence Impact Line on 1800 943 539. The Domestic Violence Impact line is a free, national and confidential counselling service for anyone in Australia whose life has been impacted by domestic or family violence.

It is important to care for your wellbeing as you explore the issue of domestic and family violence. The Blue Knot Foundation provides self-care guides for survivors of trauma, and their supporters, here:

<https://www.blueknot.org.au/>

Who should read this guide?

This guide is designed to be read by **employers, supervisors, managers, and co-workers as well as workplace leaders, union and workplace health and safety representatives**. You can all play a role in preparing your workplace to identify and respond to the risks of DFV. The words employee and worker are used interchangeably throughout this guide, and include volunteers and students on placement.

Studies have shown that an employee experiencing DFV is more likely to tell their co-worker than a manager about their situation¹, so promoting widespread workplace awareness about DFV is an important part of a strategic approach. Additionally, management has a particular workplace health and safety duty of care to their workers under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Qld).

¹ Gendered Violence Research Network. (2011). *Gendered Violence & Work: Safe at Home Safe at Work? National Domestic Violence and the Workplace Survey 2011*. University of New South Wales.
https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/sites/default/files/documents/National_Domestic_Violence_and_the_Workplace_Survey_2011_Full_Report.pdf

Overview of this guide

PART ONE outlines how your organisation can take a preventative approach to DFV in the workplace.

PART TWO builds an understanding of DFV to develop skills and knowledge to **recognise** signs that a worker may be experiencing DFV.

PART THREE assists workplaces to **respond** to DFV appropriately, providing information about legislative responsibilities and workplace health and safety, including safety planning. It contains tips on how to approach and talk to a person experiencing DFV and addresses the issue of employees who use violence.

PART FOUR provides important **referral** and **resource** information about where to go or how to refer someone to for assistance to address DFV, including information for diverse groups. It showcases the Union's "We Won't Wait" campaign and how these types of actions can target some of the drivers of DFV.

Information for employees about DFV and work

The Services Union and DFV Work Aware websites have resources for workers experiencing DFV to help them understand their rights and to assist them in approaching their employer to seek assistance. See resources at the end for more information.

Lania

Case Study

Lania was a part time employee at a small social and community service in a regional city.

Lania had migrated to Australia for an arranged marriage 12 months prior to starting her employment.

After arriving late for work on numerous occasions, Lania disclosed to the manager that she was experiencing some difficulties in her new relationship, including that her husband showed little support for her employment and often made it hard for her to leave the house and had threatened to harm her little dog while she was absent.

The manager referred Lania to a DFV support service and over the next 12 months, Lania requested her employer to direct some of her wages into her own bank account and was able to store copies of important documents in the safe at work.

Lania left the relationship for two years and established her independence, but remained in contact with her husband and her community.

After this time, she decided to return with new conditions and has indicated that having her own income and job have been essential in remaining more autonomous in the marriage. Lania continues to receive support from a counsellor accessed through the DFV service.

DFV and COVID-19: the shadow pandemic

Working from home, self-isolation (and other pressures associated with the COVID -19 pandemic or other events such as natural disasters) can change the safety and support needs of people experiencing DFV. With the security, socialisation, and routine offered by attending the workplace disrupted, people who use violence have increased opportunities to use coercive or violent behaviours.

Under 'usual' circumstances, people in DFV situations experience a high degree of uncertainty in their daily lives. With the additional stressors of COVID-19, including working from home, schooling of children, economic uncertainty, isolation from social supports and with people who use violence spending more time in the home, DFV situations have become more complex, stressful and insidious.

Actions to bring your workplace up to date with DFV risks

Raise awareness about DFV across the workforce

Take workplace safety at home seriously

Review and promote DFV policies, and train managers

Keep in touch with employees and maintain up to date contact details

Promote DFV entitlements such as leave and flexible work arrangements

Encourage employees to seek support and assistance

Remember that the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld) requires that both **physical** and **psychological** risk factors be considered when assessing risk and conducting a work from home Work Health and Safety assessment.

If an employee discloses DFV or you think there is a risk, refer the employee (if appropriate) or seek assistance from a DFV specialist service to discuss how to respond.

As part of their response to COVID-19 Queensland Police have introduced online DFV reporting: <https://www.police.qld.gov.au/domestic-violence>

Part One: Preventing DFV in the Workplace

This section highlights the important role that workplaces play to prevent domestic and family violence. By acting to prevent domestic and family violence from occurring or worsening, workplaces can help keep their workers and their communities safer.

Gender equality

Gender inequality is recognised as one of the key drivers of domestic and family violence.²

In Australia, women are most likely to experience DFV from male perpetrators. Research³ has identified that there are four main drivers of men's violence against women:

1. When attitudes, words and actions trivialise or condone violence against women.
2. When men are in control of all decision making in the home, workplace and community and while women earn less than men and are under-represented in political and leadership roles.
3. Rigid gender roles and stereotypes about masculinity or femininity, including when male power is considered the norm.
4. Men disrespecting women to bond with other men for example in 'boys clubs' or activities that limit women's equal participation.

In the workplace, gender inequality can take many forms, such as a gender wage gap⁴ and an overrepresentation of men in key decision-making positions⁵. Therefore, one of the key steps to preventing domestic and family violence in the workplace is to promote gender equality in the workplace. One of the best strategies to achieve this is to undertake a gender equity audit, such as those developed by Women's Health West⁶ and Women's Health in the South East⁷, and to implement the recommendations. These recommendations may include policies that actively promote gender equality, such as gender quotas, and family-friendly policies, such as parental leave, to support and promote more equitable opportunities for

² Our Watch. (2021). *The issue*. <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/the-issue/>

³ Adapted from Our Watch. (2016). *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*. <https://d2bb010tdzqaq7.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/21025429/Change-the-story-framework-prevent-violence-women-children-AA-new.pdf>

⁴ Workplace Gender Equality Agency. (2020). *Australia's gender pay gap statistics 2020*. Australian Government. <https://www.wgea.gov.au/publications/australias-gender-pay-gap-statistics>

⁵ Workplace Gender Equality Agency. *Women in leadership*. Australian Government. <https://www.wgea.gov.au/women-in-leadership>

⁶ Women's Health West. (2015). *Gender audit guidelines for the government, community and health sectors*. <http://pvawhub.whwest.org.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Gender-Audit-Guidelines.pdf>

⁷ Women's Health in the South East. (n.d.). *A guidance document to gender equality in the workplace*. https://whise.org.au/assets/docs/whise_info/a_guidance_document_to_gender_equality_in_the_workplace.pdf

participation in the workforce. Key to a gender equity audit is the participation and consultation of staff. A workplace that improves gender equity also improves work health and safety, morale and productivity.

Women's Health Queensland can provide training and consultation, including equity auditing, to help your workplace build a domestic and family violence prevention strategy. Email engage@womenshealth.org.au to find out more.



Our Watch, a national leader in the prevention of violence against women and their children, provides a range of [practical workplace equality and respect tools](#) to help your workplace foster gender equity ⁸



© Our Watch Limited 2019

Awareness

While it is safe to assume that there is a degree of community awareness about the issue of domestic and family violence, it is possible that there are workers who may not recognise that they are experiencing DFV or know that help is available or how to find what they need. Other workers may themselves be using violence and assume that this is acceptable behaviour. The following strategies are useful to build DFV awareness in your workplace:

⁸ Our Watch. (2021). *Workplace equality and respect tools*. <https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/tools-and-resources/>

- Provide culturally safe DFV awareness training to staff. Women’s Health Queensland and 1800 RESPECT can provide awareness training to workplaces
- Visible, culturally safe signage: put posters with information about DFV and local services up in the workplace, especially in bathrooms. 1800 RESPECT provides posters and other resources via their website <https://www.1800respect.org.au/promoting-1800respect> and it is helpful to contact your local DFV Service to request resources with their branding
- Get involved with your local DFV service and council to participate in fundraising and awareness activities, and invite staff to participate in these
- Develop a communication strategy: do you have a newsletter for your workplace, and does this include information about DFV awareness and support? Does your workplace provide reminders to staff of the DFV support available to them, and is this part of induction? Is the information available accessible to staff, for example, staff who are blind or have low vision?

Bystander training

Bystander training equips people to recognise the drivers of domestic and family violence and, where safe, to intervene and disrupt those drivers. For example, strategies to respond to sexist behaviour. MATE⁹ provides a range of bystander training programs that can be delivered as lunchbox training sessions to your workplace.

Workplaces are not separate from the rest of a person’s life; the workplace is a part of a person’s life and by extension their family and community. The efforts undertaken by workers and workplace leaders to build a culture of gender equity and respect therefore has flow-on effects for families and communities.



Workplaces are a key setting for the prevention of violence against women and other people experiencing violence, not only because violence can occur within the workplace, but because workplaces significantly influence our attitudes, beliefs and behaviour, in both our personal and professional lives (Our Watch, 2016).

⁹ For more information about MATE’s bystander training, check out <https://matebystander.edu.au/>

Part Two: Recognising the signs of DFV at work

Many people still hold the belief that DFV is a private matter and are hesitant to become involved even though the effects of DFV extend outside the home.

Increasingly, workplaces are recognising that personal problems can affect their employee's job performance and the organisation's bottom line. Many workplaces are proactive in raising awareness about issues such as DFV, naming it as a serious, recognisable, and preventable problem.

DFV can come to work when people who use violence target their abuse through work email, texts, social media, phone or creating other disruptions, such as coming to the workplace.

People who use violence may use tactics to undermine the confidence, employment and financial security of the victim/survivor, so the victim/survivor is more dependent on the person using violence. Violence can escalate when the abuse is challenged or the victim/survivor attempts to leave the relationship.

Such harassment and threats, or perceived threats, can be enough for a victim/survivor to leave their employment through fear or embarrassment as to how their employer and colleagues will react to the situation.

Employees experiencing DFV may experience difficulties at work including:

- Reduced capacity at work, with DFV directly resulting in lateness, absences, and health issues, poor concentration and under performance at work. It can affect overall productivity and increase staff turnover.
- Continuing to experience the abuse at work¹⁰.
- Finding it difficult to disclose the DFV at work and associating this with negative, mixed or neutral sentiments¹⁰.
- Co-workers having to cover for DFV-impacted employees and identifying that they felt worried for the person's or their own safety¹⁰.

Some victims/survivors are forced to resign from their jobs for personal safety reasons, including needing to relocate, or because they were forced to stop working by the person using violence. Loss of job security,

¹⁰ Domestic Violence Service Management – Sightlines Professional Services. (2020). INSIGHTS PAPER: Experiences and perceptions of workplace responses to domestic and family violence. Insight Exchange.

<https://www.insightexchange.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Insights-Paper-Workplaces-and-EAPs-FINAL-web.pdf>

and therefore loss of financial independence, compounds the problems victims/survivors must overcome when dealing with DFV.

Research indicates that victims/survivors of DFV express a desire for their co-workers to be more compassionate and non-judgemental, for workplaces to provide better or more tangible support, and for workplaces to increase understanding and awareness of DFV.

For people experiencing DFV there is often shame, fear and a reluctance to ask for help in the workplace. They may fear the violence may escalate, and they may fear losing their job.

What is domestic and family violence (DFV)?

Being aware of potential signs and risk factors of DFV can assist workplaces to take appropriate measures to prevent it from escalating at work.

As with other wellbeing concerns, early identification that an employee may be experiencing difficulties will more likely lead to appropriate help being offered. This in turn could mean that the employee is able to deal with the situation more effectively; also minimising the impact on the workplace.

Domestic and family violence (DFV) is when one person behaves towards another person in a way that is physically or sexually abusive, emotionally or psychologically abusive, economically abusive, threatening, and/or coercive. It is when the behaviour of one person in any way controls or dominates another person or causes that other person to fear for their safety or the wellbeing of someone else.¹¹

DFV occurs regardless of class, age, ethnicity, race, gender, income, sexuality, religion or ability. It is not limited to current or former intimate partner relationships, and may impact children, elders, and other family members and kin.

People experiencing DFV (victims/survivors) may experience a wide range of physical and emotional consequences.

For some, the abuse greatly affects their lives over a significant period of time and the process of recovery can be long and hard.

¹¹ Adapted from *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012 (Qld)*, section 8(1).

Others may be able to recover and start a new life relatively quickly after leaving an abusive relationship. Employers should be aware that even if a person attempts to leave a relationship, the abuse often continues, and in some cases becomes more severe during and after separation.

DFV can include many different behaviours including (but not limited to):

- Coercive control
- Threats and intimidation
- Harassment and stalking
- Physical abuse, including strangulation
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse, including threats of self-harm and threats to out another person's sexual
- Psychological abuse, including gaslighting
- Financial or economic abuse
- Social abuse, including isolation
- Technology-facilitating abuse
- Image-based abuse
- Exploiting temporary visa status (visa abuse), e.g. telling the victim/survivor they will be deported if they leave the relationship
- Systems abuse
- Elder abuse
- Child abuse

Find out more about these DFV behaviours at
<https://www.1800respect.org.au/violence-and-abuse>

Joanie

Case Study

Joanie worked full time for a community support service in a regional town.

On a Monday morning, Joanie reported to her employer that her former partner had abused and threatened to harm her over the weekend and was worried that he would come to the workplace to try to continue to torment her.

Joanie's employer was concerned about safety and made the on-the-spot decision to terminate her employment. Joanie believed her dismissal was unfair and sought assistance from the Services Union, resulting in an application being made to the Fair Work Commission.

At conciliation her employer recognised that they could have played an important support role by putting in appropriate safety measures instead of the termination of Joanie's employment.

The workplace immediately implemented a policy about supporting their employees in circumstances of DFV and offered Joanie her position back.

The Power and Control Wheel¹² is one explanation of the types of abuse and fear associated with DFV:



¹² Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs. (n.d.) *Power and Control Wheel*. Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs: Home of the Duluth Model. <https://www.theduluthmodel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/PowerandControl.pdf>

DFV can happen to anyone

DFV can happen to anyone. A key statistic is that women are almost three times more likely than men to experience violence from an intimate partner.¹³

1 in 6 women and 1 in 16 men have experienced physical violence by a current or former partner since the age of 15

1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men have experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner since the age of 15

Women are eight times more likely to experience sexual violence by a partner than men

Some groups in the community experience high rates of DFV and face additional barriers to seeking help¹⁴. The data tells us that:

- People with **disability** are 1.8 times as likely to have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from a partner.
- **Young women** aged 18 – 34 are 2.7 times as likely as those aged 35 and over to have experienced intimate partner violence.
- People living in the most **disadvantaged areas** of Australia are 1.5 times as likely to experience partner violence as those living in areas of least disadvantage (ABS, 2018a).
- People **living outside major cities** are 1.4 times as likely to have experienced partner violence since the age of 15 as people living in major cities (ABS, 2018a).
- Indigenous women are 32 times as likely to be **hospitalised** for family violence as non-Indigenous women¹⁵.
- **Women** are more than twice as likely than men to experience fear or anxiety due to violence from a former partner.
- People who have experienced childhood abuse are more likely to experience DFV as an adult.

¹³ Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety. (2018). *Violence against Women: Accurate use of key statistics (ANROWS Insights 05/2018)*. <https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/violence-against-women-accurate-use-of-key-statistics/>

¹⁴ Unless otherwise cited, data is from Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2017 and 2018a). *Personal Safety Survey 2016* (Cat. No. 4906.0). <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/personal-safety-australia/latest-release#data-download>

¹⁵ Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision. (2016). *Overcoming Indigenous Advantage: Key Indicators 2016*. Australian Government, Productivity Commission. <https://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/overcoming-indigenous-disadvantage/2016>; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2018). *Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia 2018* (Cat. No FDV 2). Australian Government. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/domestic-violence/family-domestic-sexual-violence-in-australia-2018/contents/table-of-contents>

Signs of DFV in the workplace

If you have concerns about the safety of any employee, you can confidentially seek advice from a specialist DFV service. This can be done without disclosing the identity of the person experiencing or using the violence.

Signs that an employee may be experiencing DFV

Some signs that an employee may be experiencing DFV include:

Changes in work outputs or attendance

Victims/survivors of violence may be prevented from, or delayed in getting to work, or the person using violence may frequently make contact at work.

This may lead to:

- Noticeable changes in attendance, lateness or leaving work suddenly or early
- Absenteeism without explanation
- Needing time off at short notice
- Reduced quality of work, missing deadlines or poor performance
- Increasing hours at work (to avoid going home)
- Frequent interruptions or harassment at work by the person using violence

Visible physical changes or signs

- Visible bruising or injuries that don't match explanations
- Dressing differently, using scarves or hiding parts of the body that may be injured
- Increased use of makeup

- Evidence of drug or alcohol abuse
- Poor sleeping or eating patterns

Changes in behaviour or wellbeing

- Inconsistent behaviours (anxious, quiet, tearful, distracted, aggressive)
- Signs of possible mental ill health such as obsessive behaviours, depression or anxiety
- Isolating themselves from colleagues
- Being guarded or inconsistent in talking about home life
- Expressing concerns about children's contact with person using violence

Other signs of DFV

- The person using violence seems unsupportive of the victim's/survivor's work role or is attempting to disrupt work capacity
- Victim/survivor is isolated from friends and family
- Gifts such as flowers are sent to work by the person using the violence
- The person using violence controls victim's/survivor's finances

Sometimes there may be no apparent signs even when DFV is severe as both victims/survivors and persons using violence may externally manage their images, symptoms, or disclosures to minimise any attention to the violence.

Signs that an employee may be using violence

Some of the signs that an employee is using violence may be similar to the signs that an employee may be experiencing violence. Some signs that an employee may be using violence include^{16,17}:

Changes in work outputs or attendance

People who use violence may use work time and resources to abuse the victim/survivor. This might be noticed in:

- Changes in work attendance, including absenteeism without explanation and needing time off at short notice
- Changes in work attendance with an explanation, for example, needing to attend appointments related to their use of violence, for example, court hearings and behavioural change programs
- Reduced quality and quantity of work performance
- Spending work time constantly texting and calling the victim/survivor

Visible physical changes or signs

- Injuries that don't match explanations, which could indicate the victim/survivor was attempting to defend themselves or could indicate injuries sustained while using violence against the victim/survivor

Other signs of DFV

- Bullying behaviour towards work colleagues
- Talking negatively about the victim/survivor, including criticising their parenting
- Inviting colleagues to collude in their negative comments or abusive behaviours
- Minimising the violence
- Blaming the victim/survivor for the violence
- Blaming the violence on alcohol, drugs or stress
- Jealousy or possessiveness
- Lack of support for gender equality, including expressing rigid views about gender roles and making sexist and derogatory jokes and comments
- Colleagues may witness the employee using violence against the victim/survivor, for example, in the parking lot outside the office
- The employer may receive reports from other parties that an employee is using violence

¹⁶ The Prince's Responsible Business Network. (2018). *Domestic abuse: a toolkit for employers*. <https://www.bitc.org.uk/toolkit/domestic-abuse-toolkit/>

¹⁷ Male Champions of Change. (2020). *Employees who use domestic and family violence: a workplace response*. <https://championsofchangecoalition.org/employees-who-use-domestic-and-family-violence/>

Part Three: Responding to DFV at work

A domestic and family violence strategy can assist your organisation to prevent and respond to DFV that impacts on employees and their co-workers.

Developing a DFV Strategy

A consistent, cohesive framework for action helps to ensure that responses to DFV are appropriate and not ad-hoc.

Implementing a strategy that promotes a violence-free workplace and reflects current understandings, research and legislation in relation to DFV is an important step towards fostering a culture of equality and ensuring that victims/survivors are supported.

A DFV strategy should start with DFV Policies and Procedures and can include:



DFV Policy and Procedure

Having an effective workplace DFV policy that provides support for victims/survivors can mean the difference between staying in an abusive situation and accessing support to develop safety strategies or leave the abusive situation.

HOWEVER, it is important to ensure that the right support is in place before launching any policy that informs employees it is safe to disclose. Good Policies and Procedures are developed with the involvement of all stakeholders or their representatives, including employees, work health and safety representatives and union delegates.

Once policies and procedures are established, they must be promoted to employees and be accessible by all staff – a brilliant policy is not helpful if staff don't know about it or where to access it.

A good workplace DFV Policy includes information about:

- What DFV is and how to recognise it
- How DFV can impact on the workplace, on those who directly experience the abuse, and on co-workers
- [How the workplace will respond](#) when an employee is alleged to or uses DFV
- A commitment to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy work environment consistent with the *Work Health and Safety Act (2011)*
- How the workplace will raise awareness of DFV and develop response capabilities, including workplace training
- Supports available to employees, including DFV leave and flexible working arrangements
- Roles and responsibilities, for example, identified DFV contact officers, health and safety representatives, workplace leaders, managers and supervisors
- Documentation and confidentiality
- How and when the policy will be reviewed

The Queensland Government provides a model DFV policy template here:
<https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au/workplace-package-domestic-and-family-violence>

For more information and a model policy: [The Services Union Model DFV Clause](#)¹⁸

¹⁸ <https://www.theservicesunion.com.au/?request-download&file=2020%2F08%2FSTU-DV-Clause-reformatted.pdf>

DFV workplace entitlements

All employees should be informed about their workplace rights in relation to DFV so it is important to check and understand the industrial instrument (such as National Employment Standards, Queensland Employment Standards, the relevant award, agreement, and employment contract) that may provide for these entitlements. Visit the [Fair Work Ombudsman](#) website to find your award and agreement.

An estimated two million Australian workers have access to leave and other support entitlements, achieved with union support through enterprise bargaining. Such entitlements aim to protect jobs and increase safety for victims/survivors and are an enforceable workplace protection.

Remaining in paid work and having the option to take time off to address the violence, without losing income, can be crucial in stopping DFV. Time away may assist employees to get a new home, find a refuge, secure children's schools, seek legal advice, attend court, or to get medical or other support and not be concerned about losing their employment.

Family and domestic violence leave

All employees including casuals covered by the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth), National Employment Standards (NES), have an entitlement to five days unpaid Family and Domestic Violence Leave (FDVL). This is available at the start of employment and renews in full every 12-month period of employment.

An employee can apply for FDVL to take time off to deal with the impact of DFV when it is impractical to do so outside of their ordinary work hours. This could include:

- Making arrangements for their safety or that of a child or close relative
- Attending court hearings, or
- Attending or accessing specialist DFV, police or legal services

The employer should be advised as soon as possible of the requirement to take leave and likely length of the leave. It is permitted to ask for evidence to support the request, which can include:

- Statement or documents from police, court or legal advisory
- DFV support service statement or document
- A statutory declaration

Visit the Fair Work Ombudsman website for more information:
<https://www.fairwork.gov.au/leave/family-and-domestic-violence-leave>

Different conditions apply to public sector workers in Queensland, for more information visit: <https://www.oir.qld.gov.au/industrial-relations/qld-industrial-relations-framework/domestic-and-family-violence-leave>

Right to request a flexible work arrangement

Providing flexibility in the workplace can assist employers and employees to make arrangements about working conditions that help them to manage their personal situations in relation to DFV.

Under the Fair Work Act, a permanent or long-term casual employee, with 12 months continuous service, has the right to request a flexible work arrangement if they are experiencing DFV or are the carer of a person experiencing DFV. A request must be made in writing, setting out details of the changes being sought and the reasons for the change. A written response must be provided within 21 days. Employers can only refuse a request on reasonable business grounds and must state the reasons the leave is not granted.

Flexible work arrangements can include:

Changes in work patterns for safety reasons, e.g. patterns of working hours and/or location

Transfer to an alternative work location either permanently or as a temporary safety measure

Change in duties away from public access if this is possible

Flexibility in working hours

Other leave that people experiencing DFV may wish to access can include:

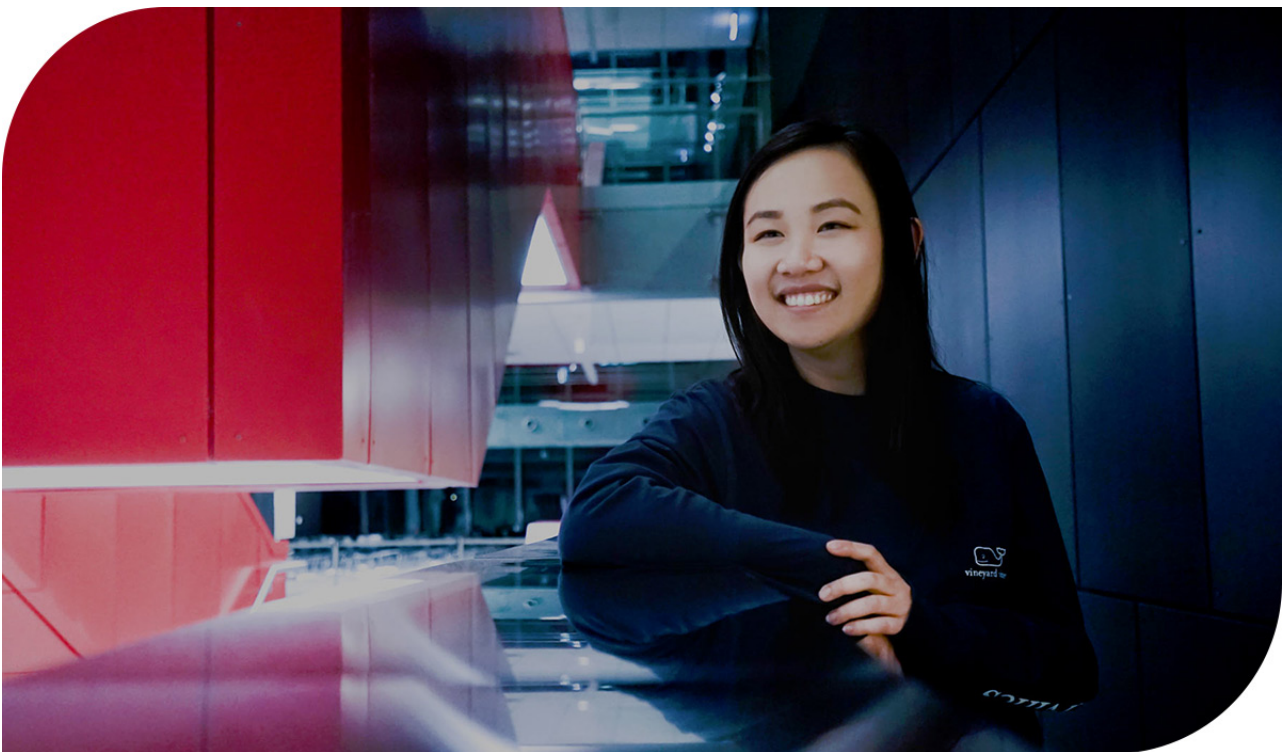
- Personal or carers leave
- Annual leave
- General unpaid leave such as compassionate leave or carer's leave
- Long service leave

The Fair Work Ombudsman website can provide more information about:

- Who is entitled to request flexible working arrangements
- Employer obligations in relation to DFV
- The provisions of the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth), requiring certain employers to report on the strategies they adopt to support employees experiencing domestic violence

Remember that confidentiality and privacy are important. Information that is requested and shared should be on a 'need to know basis'. [The Fair Work Ombudsman](#) has helpful information about workplace privacy.

Be aware when communicating with an employee experiencing DFV that the person using violence may have or demand access to their personal or work emails so check with the person what types of communication are the safest and most secure.



Training for workplace leaders, managers and supervisors

Employers – that is, the Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) - should train workplace leaders (including health and safety representatives), managers and supervisors to recognise the signs of DFV and be aware of how it can impact on safety, wellbeing, attendance and productivity at work. Training should include information about:

- A definition of DFV.
- Gender inequality as a driver of DFV.
- How to recognise the possible signs of DFV and how DFV may impact on safety, wellbeing, attendance and productivity at work, including for the victim's/survivor's co-workers.
- Legislative rights for employees, and duties for employers, arising from legislative instruments such as the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth), Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld), Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (Qld) (in particular Division 4 Emergency plans, section 43), and the National Employment Standards.
- Work-related entitlements, supports and referrals.
- How workplace leaders, managers and supervisors should understand their role in providing risk assessment, support, safety planning and referrals to keep everyone in the workplace safe.
- How to complete a DFV risk assessment and a Work Health and Safety assessment.
- How to respond and communicate in a supportive way with the victim/survivor (and/or person using violence) and how to explain the parameters of confidentiality to the victim/survivor (and/or person using violence).
- The role of workplace leaders, managers and supervisors in a DFV emergency.
- The support available to workplace leaders, managers and supervisors if they experience direct or vicarious trauma and/or if they feel unwilling or unable to respond to DFV, and what to do in these situations.
- Stopping violence at work.

In summary, the employer as a PCBU under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld), must identify and manage risks in the workplace.

Training should be done in a way that acknowledges that some participants may be affected by DFV and appropriate support should be offered if issues arise in the course of the training.

Information and training about DFV as a workplace issue should be provided to all employees. Additionally, all employees should also be trained on security procedures including how to avoid inadvertently providing information or contact details of victims/survivors to persons using violence (or any members of the public) and where to go if they receive a disclosure and/or are concerned about a threat to safety.

Responding to domestic violence at work takes a coordinated approach across all levels of your organisation including management, human resources, health and safety representatives and employees.

The employer, as a PCBU, must also as far as is practicable, provide adequate facilities for the welfare of workers, information, training, instruction and supervision.

Training is an effective way to assist your organisation to be compliant with legislation and best practice.

Workplace training can build practical knowledge to address work related issues concerning DFV.

This can help to increase the safety of those at risk of harm and build a best practice reputation for your organisation on this high-profile national issue.



DFV workplace risk assessment and safety planning

DFV can become workplace violence or harassment if it occurs or spills over into the workplace (through abuse, threats or assault). A person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) has a duty of care for the safety of their workplace under the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act). Where a risk of any incident of DFV related violence is identified, the PCBU should take reasonable steps to manage the risk.

WHS Regulations state that to manage risks, a PCBU must:

1. Identify hazards
2. Assess risks
3. Control risks
4. Review control measures to ensure they are working as planned.

Employees must also take reasonable steps to ensure their safety and follow relevant policies, procedures and instructions. That is why it is important that safety guidelines are clear and easily accessible to everyone in the workplace.

This means that employers should understand the legislative and regulatory requirements to consult with workers and apply a risk management approach to issues that could impact on safety at work.



[Safe Work Australia](#) provides a [guide](#) on their website.¹⁹

A recent Workers Compensation case in New South Wales held an employer liable for an employee killed by her partner while working from home. This tragic event highlighted that the duty of care of an employer to their workers extends into the home where it is also a workplace. *Workers' Compensation Nominal Insurer v Hill [2020] NSWCA 54*

¹⁹ <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/family-and-domestic-violence-workplace-information-sheet>

Ensure that information regarding a domestic violence situation is kept separate from the regular employee file to protect the confidentiality of the victim/survivor.

Role clarity for people responding to DFV at work is very important. DFV is a complex issue with the potential for serious harm or death when risk is mismanaged or overlooked. It is important that people at work do not take on roles that should be performed by professionally trained DFV specialists such as counsellors, support workers or legal advisors.

Safety plans

There are two levels of safety planning, the first is a general plan operating across the workplace for any potential situation and the second is a personal plan in response to any particular situation.

- **A workplace safety risk assessment & plan:** This plan can map risks and set out specific actions that need to be taken to keep the workplace and all employees safe from threats of DFV. Content will depend on factors such as the size, type, location, number of workers, and exposure to public access.
- **A personal work safety plan:** This plan is designed to keep the person experiencing DFV safer while they are at work. It should meet their self-identified needs or those recommended by a specialist DFV service provider, with overall safety of the workplace in mind. This plan should establish clear communication processes for the employee to report a threat at work.

Please see the companion booklet Domestic and Family Violence Workplace Safety Planning Tools.

Gather information to assess work safety risks

- Review emergency contact details and keep personal information held by the workplace secure. Up to date details should include who to contact in a situation where the person does not come into work.
- Ask the person if the person using violence knows where they work.
- Ask if the person is worried or frightened about unwanted contact or harm at work, including if the person using violence is able to make contact with them at work.

- Ask the person that any safety concerns relating to work identified by a specialist DFV service be shared.
- Ask the person what they think the workplace can do to enhance safety.

Consider measures that assist with safety at work and while travelling

- Change keys or key pad numbers for entry to workplace, provide alternative entrances or if possible work locations.
- Change email addresses and phone numbers or screen or divert these.
- Update or install safety alarms.

- Alert reception, or other screening points (with permission from the victim/survivor) and provide photo ID and car registration of the person using violence and provide advice about how to respond if the person using violence enters/attempts to enter the workplace.
- Remind and instruct all staff never to divulge personal information about employees to callers including whether they are at work, addresses, phone numbers or patterns of working hours.
- Discuss with the employee their needs around changes to working hours or consider a request to relocate to a different location.
- Help the person vary their routes of travel to and from work and or provide escorts to transport.

- With the person's consent inform work colleagues on a need to know basis and agree on the best response if the person using the violence contacts or attends the workplace.
- Link employees to Employee Assistance services.

Provide assistance for the employee to remain engaged with work

- Offer or respond positively to flexible work requests.
- Adjust workloads and support performance.
- Consider additional support or supervision sessions.
- Uphold workplace rights and provide leave or time off when requested to deal with issues associated with DFV.



Talking with an employee about DFV

Your role in responding to DFV disclosures or concerns will depend on your position at work.

While co-workers can show support and make referrals, managers hold a higher level of responsibility for ensuring safety, upholding workplace rights and implementing policies.

Below are some general guidelines:

Maintain confidentiality but act on any safety concerns	Provide help to secure support at work and refer to specialist DFV services	Check emergency contact details are up to date
Believe what they tell you with no judgement	Ask the person what they would like you to do for them	Ask about safety at work
Guide them to key managers or contact officers for safety planning	Do not give advice	Focus on the facts - the impact the DFV is having at work

Common concerns

Some things we may feel uncertain about when talking about DFV

“It’s not ok to get involved in someone else’s private business at work”

- Your action may help to keep the person and your workplace safer.
- Domestic and family violence is everyone’s business.
- Your workplace may have policies to support the person.

“I don’t know what to say”

- Just asking if the person is OK can be a start.
- Listen and show empathy for their situation.

“I might make things worse”

- Doing nothing could make things worse.
- Abuse/violence often escalates over time.

“It’s not serious enough to involve the police”

- Police can assist in obtaining domestic violence orders (DVOs).
- Police have specially trained domestic and family violence liaison officers who can provide information and support.

“I feel upset and angry about what is happening”

- It is normal to feel discomfort or distress when we hear about people’s experiences of violence. Self care and good boundaries are important.
- Take advantage of workplace EAP or ask for help at work if you are feeling concerned or worried.

“If I think it is a DFV situation, should I wait until the person asks for help?”

- The person may be too afraid or ashamed to ask for help.
- Sometimes lives may be at risk.
- Your action in offering support may help the person to find the assistance they need to address the violence.

Responding to employees who use violence

Employees who use, or are suspected of using, violence may be skilled at hiding their actions and convincing themselves and others that they are not responsible for their violence. Some **common excuses or tactics** include²⁰:



Victims/survivors may sometimes internalise, that is absorb or believe, the excuses offered for the violence. Building workplace awareness of DFV that has a strong message that the person using violence is responsible for the violence helps to challenge these blaming tactics. Refer to [Preventing DFV in the workplace](#) for more information about how to build DFV awareness in your workplace.

Sometimes the warning signs for people who use violence against their partners or family members or kin can be similar to those for victims/survivors, including being distracted, reduced productivity or absenteeism.

Misuse of workplace resources

People who use violence can be in any workplace. A Canadian study of male perpetrators of domestic violence suggests that work time and resources (such as telephone, computer or transport vehicles) are commonly used to commit acts of violence or stalk the victim/survivor as well as create workplace safety risks²¹.

²⁰ MensLine Australia. (n.d.) *Common excuses when using violence*. <https://mensline.org.au/family-violence/using-violence/common-excuses-when-using-violence/>

²¹ Scott, K.L., Lim. D. B., Kelly, T., Holmes, M., MacQuarrie, B.J., Wathen, C. N., & MacGregor, J. C. D. (2017). *Domestic Violence at the Workplace: Investigating the Impact of Domestic Violence Perpetration on Workers and Workplaces*. DV@WorkNet. http://dvatworknet.org/sites/dvatworknet.org/files/PAR_Partner_report-Oct-23-2017dl.pdf

If accountability measures are not in place or not enforced at work then there could be reputational damage to the workplace and the violence may continue or accelerate.

Abuse and misuse of work time and resources could constitute a breach of an employment contract or of workplace policies and could warrant disciplinary action.

However, if the DFV has occurred only outside of work hours or away from the workplace, the employer may not be able to intervene, except where it becomes a breach of a specific policy or where it relates to reputational damage of the workplace. It is best for employers to seek legal advice before taking actions such as dismissing an employee for perpetrating DFV.

If the victim/survivor and the person using violence work in the same organisation or in a workplace that may have access to the victim's/survivor's personal information, it may be necessary to eliminate contact or access. In some circumstances monitoring ongoing activities or re-directing the duties of the person using violence may be appropriate.

Domestic violence orders against employees who use violence

DFV conduct may be a breach of a domestic violence order (DVO)²². If an employee is the subject of a DVO, they are required to comply with certain conditions, for example not contacting the victim/survivor. While a DVO is a civil matter, a breach of a DVO becomes a criminal matter. If a DVO is in place, employers should discuss these conditions with the employee and ensure that workplace activities are compliant.

Billie

Case Study

Billie was employed as a security guard in a large industrial complex.

Billie was absent from work for three days without explanation and did not reply to text messages sent by the employer.

The employer telephoned Billie's nominated emergency contact and was told by the person who answered that Billie had left the state. After a week, a co-worker received a message from Billie who indicated that they wanted to return to work if possible, at a different site.

With permission, the co-worker informed the employer who met with Billie to discuss the situation. Billie participated in developing a safety plan with the assistance of a specialist DFV service and was able to continue employment.

²² For more information about Domestic Violence Orders visit: <http://www.legalaid.qld.gov.au/Find-legal-information/Relationships-and-children/Domestic-and-family-violence/Domestic-violence-protection-orders>



Workplace interventions for employees who use violence

It may be necessary for a worker to attend court proceedings, counselling, or to obtain legal advice, or behavioural change programs during work hours. Under the National Employment Standards, FDV leave is not an entitlement to an employee who is using violence.

However, some organisations may provide this type of leave as well as offer support and referral to supportive services.

[Employees using violence who need to take steps to address the violence, may have access to leave such as unpaid leave, annual leave, TOIL or a flexi-time arrangement with approval from their employer.](#)

For men, behavioural change programs can be an appropriate intervention for those who want to stop using violence in their family and relationships and are entry points in the journey to respectful and violence-free relationships.

Support and encouragement from workplaces to access programs could be a consideration when developing a workplace DFV policy or strategy.

Stopping violence at work

Co-workers or other people in the workplace exposed to or witnessing abusive behaviours may become distressed or concerned for the safety of the victim/survivor or for themselves. DFV can be a complicated and often a hidden and unpredictable issue. [The safety of the victim/survivor and relevant others, such as](#)

co-workers, is the first concern of any action that is taken by an employer. This includes the safety of workplace leaders who may be responsible for addressing the issue.

If management or co-workers recognise the signs that an employee may be using violence, a risk management process should also be adopted to address risks arising from these behaviours. If WHS concerns are identified a workplace must act to uphold WHS legislation by implementing appropriate risk management processes.

If the employee is behaving in a way that contradicts organisational policy and procedure, the employer may decide to hold the employee accountable, for example, implementing a performance management process.

Before taking any action, it is recommended that management seek the advice of a **specialist DFV service** (see the **Referrals section** of this guide) about how to proceed, and to seek legal advice, particularly if termination of employment is being considered. In case of immediate or serious risk of harm to any person, the employer should call 000 to request emergency assistance.

May

Case Study

May was employed in a local government regional office when she disclosed DFV to her manager and immediate co-workers.

While the manager referred May to a DFV service, other people at work continued to ask May on a weekly basis how things were going at home and actively suggested that she leave her partner.

May became distressed at the over involvement of a couple of her colleagues and felt that her privacy was being breached. Through the workplace and community grapevine, May's partner discovered that she had told people at work about the DFV and he kicked her out of their home.

May sought assistance from her union, who worked with May's employer to provide her with paid leave and support while she found alternative accommodation and eventually resumed to living at her home.

The union was able to guide the employer about more appropriate responses to the DFV and to develop a policy reflecting this.

Eventually May returned to the workplace and to the relationship and was supported by a designated Contact Officer at work who was trained to understand DFV and how to respond appropriately.

May told union representatives that when she was ready, she planned to leave the relationship, but maintaining her job and contributing to her super was her main priority along with implementing strategies to stay safer at home with the support of the specialist DFV service.

To minimise the risk of DFV being perpetrated at work:

Promote a workplace culture and policies that support gender equality	Develop and implement a policy to manage DFV perpetration	Prohibit the use of work resources to perpetrate DFV
Train all staff in DFV to recognise the signs of DFV at work	Make appropriate referrals for support and help	Enforce a zero tolerance policy to violence and abuse at work
Develop and implement equal opportunity and anti-discrimination policies	Develop and implement family friendly policies such as family flexibility and parental leave policies	Facilitate access to childcare
Develop and implement a sexual harassment policy	Provide sexual harassment prevention training	Provide regular training opportunities to build awareness of DFV, including bystander training

DFV at work is everyone's business and all employees have the right to be informed and provided with sufficient information to clearly understand workplace risks and hazards associated with the work they are required to perform. Raising awareness about DFV and educating everyone at work can help your organisation be better prepared – read more about preventing DFV in the workplace in [Part One](#) of this booklet.

Part Four: Referring to specialist services

The issues associated with DFV are often complex and may require a range of specialist supports and interventions including counselling, legal and court support and accommodation services. The services you refer an employee to will depend on whether they are a person experiencing violence or a person using violence.

DFV is an act to gain power and control, and socio-political contexts can create obstacles for people to obtain the assistance they need. First Nations people, children, people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, people with disabilities and LGBTQIA+ people can experience additional disadvantage through the intersections of discrimination, racism and the ongoing impacts of colonisation.

Most DFV services are equipped to respond to DFV and the impact of broader social issues relating to race, gender, ethnicity, disability and class. Some DFV services provide specialist support for First Nations people, children, people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, women with disability, and LGBTQIA+ people.

It is important not to assume that a person will want to be referred to a specific service, e.g. an LGBTQIA+ service. They may prefer to be referred to a generalist support service – it is helpful to provide more than one referral option so the employee can reach out to the service they feel most comfortable contacting.

Always call 000 if you or someone else is in immediate danger.

Specialist DFV referrals for employees experiencing DFV or using violence:

National helplines for anyone experiencing domestic and family violence

- **1800 RESPECT:** <https://www.1800respect.org.au/>
T: 1800 737 732
24 hr national sexual assault, domestic and family violence helpline – phone and webchat
- **Domestic Violence Impact Line:** <https://www.rape-dvservices.org.au/>
T: 1800 943 539
24-hour national domestic and family violence helpline – phone and webchat

Women's DFV support

- See national helplines above
- **DV Connect Womensline:** www.dvconnect.org
T: 1800 811 811
24-hour Queensland helpline and emergency accommodation service

- **Women's Health Queensland:** <https://www.womenshealth.org.au/>

T: 1800 017 676

Free, trauma-informed and continuity of care counselling for women across Queensland recovering from violence



- **Women's Legal Service:** <https://wlsq.org.au/>

T: 1800 957 957 (Statewide Legal Advice Helpline, 9am-3pm, Monday-Friday) or

T: 1800 457 117 (Rural, Regional and Remote Priority Advice Line, 09:30am-1:30pm every Tuesday)

Statewide community legal service providing free legal advice and support in the areas of family law, child support, child protection, domestic violence and some areas of sexual assault.

- **North Queensland Women's Legal Service:** <https://nqwls.com.au/>

T: 1800 244 504 (Mon-Fri, 9:00am-5:00pm)

Rural regional and remote legal services in North Queensland, Far North and Western Queensland in all areas of law that commonly affect women.

- **To find a domestic violence service anywhere in Queensland:**

<https://www.qld.gov.au/community/getting-support-health-social-issue/support-victim/survivors-abuse/domestic-family-violence/find-local-support>

Men's help and advice

- **DVConnect Mensline:** <https://www.dvconnect.org/mensline/>

T: 1800 600 636 (9am-midnight, 7 days)

A Queensland-wide service providing counselling, referral, information and support for men who are using violence in their relationships, men who are experiencing DFV, and others seeking support for men using or experiencing DFV.

- **Men's Referral Service:** <https://ntv.org.au/>

T: 1300 766 491 (24/7)

A men's family violence telephone and webchat counselling, information and referral service operating around the country and is the central point of contact for men taking responsibility for their violent behaviour.

- **MensLine Australia:** <https://mensline.org.au/>

T: 1300 789 978 (24/7)

Phone, webchat and video chat counselling support for men, including for men using or experiencing DFV

- **Services and Practitioners for the Elimination of Abuse Queensland (SPEAQ)** provides an up-to-date list of men's domestic and family violence behaviour change services here:

<https://speaq.org.au/seeking-help/where-to-get-help/>

- **Caxton Legal Family Law and Domestic and Family Violence Service:** <https://caxton.org.au/how-we-can-help/family-law-and-domestic-and-family-violence/>

T: 07 3214 633 (9am-4:30pm Monday-Friday)

Free legal advice and assistance in relation to DFV

First Nations employees

Misconceptions about violence against Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women and people take the focus away from deeper issues that need urgent attention. Challenging these can help direct attention, effort and resources to the underlying drivers of this violence.

- Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service:
<http://www.qifvls.com.au/>
T: 1800 887 700
Free legal advice and assistance for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in relation to DFV, victim/survivor support, family law, child protection, victims/survivors compensation and witness assistance law
- Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Controlled Health Services provide a range of culturally safe support services, including social work. The Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council provides a list of these services here: <https://www.qaihc.com.au/about/our-members>
- **Changing the Picture** (resource): <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/resource/changing-the-picture/>
- For more information about work rights for First Nations people, please visit <https://www.qld.gov.au/atsi/employment-business/your-rights-work/work-rights>
For more information about supporting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples experiencing DFV, please visit: https://www.1800respect.org.au/inclusive-practice/atsi/understanding_the_issues
- For more information about human rights protections for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees, please visit: <https://www.qhrc.qld.gov.au/your-rights/for-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people>



LGBTQIA+ employees

- **LGBTIQ+ Violence Service:** <https://www.rape-dvservices.org.au/>
T: 1800 497 212 (24/7)
For anyone from the LGBTQIA+ community whose life has been impacted by sexual, domestic and/or family violence. Phone and online counselling available.
- **DV Connect:** <https://www.dvconnect.org/domestic-violence/lgbtiq/>
- If you identify as a woman, please call DV Connect Womensline on 1800 811 811 (24-hr)
- If you identify as a man, please call DV Connect Mensline on 1800 600 636 (9am-midnight, 7 days)
- If you identify as non-binary, please call the service you feel most comfortable contacting and let them know your pronouns.
- **LGBTI Legal Service Inc:** <https://lgbtilegalservice.org.au/>
T: 07 3124 7160
Free and confidential legal advice to Queensland residents who identify as members of the diverse lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex community.



- **Queer Without Fear** (resource): <https://campaigns.premiers.qld.gov.au/dfvlgbtiq/assets/custom/docs/queer-without-fear.pdf>
- **Another Closet** (resource): <https://www.anothercloset.com.au/>
- **Say it Out Loud** (resource): <https://sayitoutloud.org.au/>

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse employees

You can access information about DFV in community languages via this link:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/community/getting-support-health-social-issue/support-victim/survivors-abuse/domestic-family-violence/my-situation-is/how-do-i-help-my-community-understand-domestic-violence/domestic-and-family-violence-resources>

For people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds (CALD) there can be complex issues in addressing DFV when it impacts on the workplace and it may be difficult to speak up and ask for help.

Talking about the abuse and asking for help may be complicated by factors relating to culture, religion, language, current migration settlement experiences, a lack of access to appropriate services and an absence of family or friends for support.

For people seeking asylum or from a refugee background, DFV can be compounded by a history of trauma experiences.

Sometimes people will use culture as an excuse for abuse or control tactics in intimate or family relationships.

It is understandable that this can seem like an obstacle for people wanting the violence to stop. Read more on myths and facts relating to culture and DFV: <http://www.iwss.org.au/myths-facts/>

It may be more comfortable for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to talk to people in their own community or to a specialist migrant support service first to get some advice about what steps to take:

- **Immigrant Women's Support Service:** <http://www.iwss.org.au/>
T: 07 3646 3490
Free confidential, practical and emotional support to immigrant and refugee women from non-English speaking backgrounds, and their children, who have experienced domestic and/or sexual violence.

Employees with Disabilities

There are currently over 2 million women and girls with disability in Australia. Women and girls with disability represent one of the most marginalised and disadvantaged groups in the country.

They continue to experience widespread discrimination and violations of their rights and freedoms and may be 40 per cent more likely to experience DFV than women without a disability²³.

Men with disabilities also experience abuse related to their disability, including institutional violence and denial of provision of essential care.

- **WWILD Sexual Violence Prevention Association Inc.:** <https://wwild.org.au/>

T: [07 3262 9877](tel:0732629877) (Mon-Fri, 09:00am-4:30pm)

WWILD supports people with intellectual or learning disabilities who have experienced sexual abuse, or have been victims/survivors of crime including DFV. WWILD also works with the families, carers and services who support them.

Easy read resources: <https://wwild.org.au/easy-read-resources/>

- **Women with Disabilities Australia** (resource): <https://wwda.org.au/>
- **For Women with Disabilities** (resource): <https://www.dvrcv.org.au/help-advice/women-disabilities>
- **ANROWS Women with Disabilities** (resource): <https://www.anrows.org.au/research-areas/women-with-disabilities/>
- **Violence Against People with Disability** (resource): <https://www.1800respect.org.au/inclusive-practice/supporting-people-with-disability>



Older employees (or where you are concerned an employee is abusing an older person)

Elder abuse is a type of family violence. You can seek support for elder abuse from the national and state domestic and family helplines noted at the beginning of this section, and specialised information from the Elder Abuse Helpline.

- **Elder Abuse Helpline:** <https://www.eapu.com.au/helpline>

T: [1300 651 192](tel:1300651192) (Mon-Fri, 9:00am-5:00pm)

In non-urgent situations, the Elder Abuse Helpline is the first port of call for support, referral and information in relation to suspected elder abuse. Please note this is not a crisis line.

- The Queensland Government provides more information about elder abuse here: <https://www.qld.gov.au/seniors/safety-protection/discrimination-abuse/elder-abuse>

²³ Dyson, S., Frawley, P., & Robinson, S. (2017). "Whatever it takes": Access for women with disabilities to domestic and family violence services: Final report. ANROWS. <https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/whatever-it-takes-access-for-women-with-disabilities-to-domestic-and-family-violence-services-final-report/>

Additional resources and information for workplaces

For employers: This includes a downloadable checklist for employers to prepare and respond to DFV

- <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/leave/family-and-domestic-violence-leave/employer-guide-to-family-and-domestic-violence>

Developing a Workplace DFV Safety Plan: An assessment tool and guide to workplace safety planning for employees experiencing DFV

- DFV Work Aware: <https://www.dvworkaware.org>
- The Services Union: <https://www.theservicesunion.com.au>

Information about the Queensland Government’s Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy:

<https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/campaign/end-domestic-family-violence>

A workplace approach to employees who use violence and abuse:

- A workplace approach to employees who use or may use violence: <https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au/domestic-and-family-violence>
- Employees who use domestic and family violence: https://championsofchangecoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Employees-who-use-domestic-and-family-violence_FINAL.pdf

Information for employees

Your Union can provide information about DFV rights at work.

DFV Work Aware web resources and information about employee rights

- **DFV Work Aware** is a program of the Working Women’s Centres of Australia. The program has been developed to provide training and resources to help workplaces be prepared to recognise and respond appropriately to DFV in the workplace. The website provides information and resources for employers and employees and contact details for Working Women’s Centres to request DFV Work Aware training and consultation.

Bystander support

MATE is an education and intervention program teaching us all to be leaders in the prevention of violence and problematic behaviour.

The bystander approach focuses not on the victim/survivor or the person using violence, but rather what we can all do to prevent violence in our homes, workplaces, schools and communities.



MATE focuses on the prevention of violence against women, and additionally applies a bystander approach to the prevention of racism and discrimination, bullying and harassment, and creating positive workplaces – supporting people to contribute to communities free from all forms of violence.

For more information visit: <https://matebystander.edu.au>

Legal advice and support:

Community Legal Centres in Queensland can be important resources for advice and representation about DFV matters. For a directory of locations visit: <https://communitylegalqld.org.au/find-legal-help/find-centre>

The **Queensland Law Society** has information about DFV and the law and can assist in locating a specialist DFV lawyer: https://www.qls.com.au/For_the_community/Find_a_solicitor

Legal Aid Queensland can provide services including DFV duty lawyers to help with court appearances or when responding to a domestic violence order: <http://www.legalaid.qld.gov.au/Find-legal-information/Relationships-and-children/Domestic-and-family-violence/Domestic-and-family-violence-duty-lawyer>

We Won't Wait Campaign: a rights-based approach

The legislative approach to providing entitlements to workers has been an important tool in addressing issues such as gender inequality and discrimination in the workplace. It has provided support for people to equally participate in work while addressing important social issues in Australia such as pay inequity.

In a submission to the Fair Work Commission in relation to Family and Domestic Violence paid leave provisions in Modern Awards (2016), the ACTU claimed that:

- Two-thirds of women reporting recent domestic violence are in paid employment
- Women who have experienced domestic violence have a more disrupted work history, are on lower incomes and are more often employed in casual and part time work
- The financial effect of domestic violence includes negative consequences for long term health and well-being, poverty and homelessness
- Safe and secure employment is a cost-effective preventative measure that sends a strong message of cultural intolerance towards violence against women
- Providing flexibility around working hours will help make the workplace safer for everyone

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) continues the campaign for 10 days paid domestic violence leave to be included in the National Employment Standards.



Having economic independence and job security is critical to ensuring that any worker experiencing violence can take the steps they need to leave.

Paid family and domestic violence leave may help save lives.