

# What can I do to help someone experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence?

**Domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) can be a difficult subject to talk about. It may be considered a taboo topic or a private, family issue. If you recognise the signs that things are not right, there are things you can do.**

### How do I ask someone if they are experiencing DFSV?

It is important to provide support and to help keep someone who may be experiencing DFSV safe. Create a safe environment for them to share their experiences. Pick a quiet time to talk, when the violence isn't happening or the person who may be using DFSV is not around.

Let the person talk at their own pace; don't push them to say more than they feel ready to. If the person you are talking to doesn't react in the way you hoped, don't take it personally. It's better to talk to them about the things you've noticed that make you worried, than to give your opinion. You can try asking some questions like:

- I'm wondering if everything is OK at home?
- I noticed you have some bruises. How did that happen? Did someone do that to you?
- I've noticed you seem frightened by your partner (or someone else you suspect is hurting them). Is that right? Is everything OK?
- Give them the chance to speak in private. Be prepared to listen but don't force them to speak if they are not ready.

### How can I help?

The way in which you listen and respond to people who are experiencing DFSV can make all the difference to the individual and the family unit.

It is important to listen and be supportive, however, it is important to allow people to make their own choices when they are ready. Some ways in which people can be supported include:

- In an emergency or if someone is in danger now, call 000 immediately
- Believe them and take their fears seriously. This is important no matter what you think of the person or people who hurt them
- Listen without interrupting or judging
- NEVER blame the person experiencing the violence for what has happened to them. Violence is never OK
- Don't make excuses for the person who has hurt them
- Understand that they may not be ready, or it may not be safe, to leave
- Don't try to force them to do what you think is best

- Remember that domestic and family violence is not just physical
- Help in practical ways – with transport, appointments, child minding, or a place to escape to
- Help them explore options. You or the person you are supporting can call 1800RESPECT or visit the 1800RESPECT website for more information and support
- Some people may need the help of an advocacy service to explore options or contact 1800RESPECT. You can find an advocacy service in your area by searching their service directory.

## Who can I refer them to?

Always have information available to help you make informed and appropriate referrals. The following services provide information and support:

- **1800RESPECT** (1800 737 732) (24/7)  
The National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service provides telephone and online counselling for people experiencing violence, their friends and family as well as workers and professionals.
- **Australian Refugee Association**  
08 8354 2951  
Provide a range of services to support newly arrived communities and individuals.
- **Domestic Violence Crisis Service**  
1800 800 098 (24hrs)  
Provide support, safe options and services for women and children affected by domestic and family violence. DVCS can also refer women to appropriate Aboriginal and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse services.

- **Migrant Women's Support Service Inc**  
08 8346 9417 or 1800 800 098  
Bilingual, bicultural staff can assist migrant women of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in unsafe relationships and those most at risk of violence. They work with domestic violence services and other service providers, including professional interpreters, and understand the need for client confidentiality.
- **Nunga Mi:Minar**  
08 8367 6474 or 1800 003 308  
Service supporting Aboriginal women and children who are living with or escaping family violence.
- **Yarrow Place Rape and Sexual Assault Service**  
8226 8777 or 1800 817 421  
A free and confidential service for anyone who has been raped or sexually assaulted.

## Where can I find out more about DFSV?

A range of online resources are available to help you better understand DFSV. They include:

**Break the Cycle**  
[breakthecycle.sa.gov.au](http://breakthecycle.sa.gov.au)

**Our Watch**  
[www.ourwatch.org.au](http://www.ourwatch.org.au)

**Stop it at the start**  
[www.respect.gov.au](http://www.respect.gov.au)

**White Ribbon**  
[www.whiteribbon.org.au](http://www.whiteribbon.org.au)

**WSSSA**  
[www.womenssafetyervices.com.au](http://www.womenssafetyervices.com.au)

This is one of 4 Fact Sheets on DFSV. Further information on identifying and responding to DFSV is available in Fact Sheet 1. To find out about promoting gender equality and respect see Fact Sheets 3 and 4.



Government  
of South Australia



**MCCSA**  
Multicultural Communities Council of South Australia



Women's Safety Services SA

**BREAK  
THE  
CYCLE**  
OF DOMESTIC ABUSE