

Recognising, Responding and Referring



Unsure how to support someone who may be experiencing family violence? Remember the three R's



If someone has taken the difficult step of telling you about their experience of family violence, it is important you respond in a supportive and appropriate way. This is not always easy and at times it's hard to know what to do and what to say.

RECOGNISE

You might be unsure if what someone is experiencing is family violence. Sometimes it's just a sense that something is 'wrong' in their relationship. Sometimes there may be signs that indicate that there is violence, but often there will be nothing obvious. Below are some of the signs that someone may be experiencing family violence:

- They seem afraid of their partner or is always very anxious to please them.
- They have stopped seeing friends or family, or cuts phone conversations short when their partner is in the room.
- Their partner often criticises them or humiliates them in front of other people.
- Their partner often orders them about or makes all the decisions.
- They often talk about their partner's 'jealousy', 'bad temper' or 'possessiveness'.
- They have become anxious or depressed, have lost their confidence, or are unusually quiet.
- They have physical injuries such as bruises, broken bones, sprains, cuts etc.
- Their children seem afraid of the perpetrator, have behaviour problems, or are very withdrawn or anxious.
- After they have left the relationship, their partner is constantly calling, harassing, following, coming to their house or waiting outside.

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RESPOND

Important first steps to take when someone discloses an experience of violence or abuse:

- Believe the person.
- Make sure they understand it's not their fault.
- Listen without judging the person.
- Be supportive, encouraging, open and honest.
- Ask if they need help from a support service and discuss their options.
- Help them get advice and support by calling a support service.
- Offer to go with the person if they meet with a support service.
- Keep in touch with the person to see how they are going.

REFER

The following are useful links to local referral pathways and series for people experiencing family violence.

Referral Options: Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria

<http://www.dvrcv.org.au/prevention/referrals>

Support and Services: Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria

<http://www.dvrcv.org.au/support-services>

1800 Respect:

National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service

<https://www.1800respect.org.au>

Sexual Assault Crisis Line

<https://www.sacl.com.au>

REMEMBER

A victim may be worried that they are putting themselves in greater danger from the perpetrator by sharing their experience with you.

You must respect their concerns and reassure them that they did the right thing by telling you about the violence.

Do not force them into making any decisions and keep all information confidential unless you have a legal duty of care to do so.