

10. Domestic and Family Violence for women from culturally and linguistically (migrant or refugee) backgrounds.

Getting Help for yourself and others Information about support at work for women affected by Domestic and Family violence (DFV).

In 2016, there were over 300 separately identified languages spoken in Australian homes. More than one-fifth (21 per cent) of Australians spoke a language other than English at home. After English, the next most common languages spoken at home were Mandarin, Arabic, Cantonese, and Vietnamese. (1).

It is important therefore that information be provided in culturally appropriate contexts and in relevant languages.

Access translated information through this link <http://www.dvworkaware.org/cald/>

Or see contacts at the end of this infosheet.

For women 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 refugee women, DFV can be correlated with a history of trauma from fleeing violence or in asylum seeking experiences. (2).

Sometimes culture can be used as an excuse for abuse or control tactics in intimate or family relationships. It is understandable that this can seem like an obstacle for women wanting the violence to stop.

For some women it may be more comfortable 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.

DFV support services are available for everyone regardless of culture or language and they may be able to assist with referral or translation services that can support you to seek the help you need at work and to keep your job while addressing the abuse.

Why Domestic and Family Domestic Can Be A Workplace Issue

Women who experience DFV can be harassed or stalked at work either through unwanted visits or the use of email, phone contacts or social media.



The experience of DFV can impact in workplaces through:

- The impact that the abuse has on an employee's physical and mental health.
- Reduced performance.
- Absenteeism.
- Workplace safety risks.
- Concerns from co-workers.

Workplaces can support victims of DFV by creating environments where domestic violence is understood and identified as a concern in our communities and through:

- Clearly communicating the practical supports which can be requested
- Providing entitlements to flexible work arrangements
- Providing entitlements to paid leave for time away from work to address the abuse
- Maintaining strict confidentiality
- Working to ensure safe work environments through safety planning specific to identified safety concerns
- Raising awareness of the issue and implementing clear policies about managing domestic and family violence

Employers have a duty to ensure employees are protected and supported at work, and a responsibility to keep workplaces safe and healthy environments. Laws in Australia can help you stay safe and to address abuse and violence at home.

Ask For Help To Make The Violence Stop

- If DFV is impacting on you at work you can ask for practical support to take the steps you need to address the abuse.
- If you don't feel confident approaching your employer directly, advice may be available from your DFV support service or your union about how to ask.
- If you decide to disclose the violence to your employer your workplace they may ask for the name of the person that is violent towards you, and that you give them that person's photo. This will be so your workplace can keep a lookout and keep the person away from you if they approach the workplace.
- It can be supportive to talk to your doctor or health care provider about what's going on. Ask them for a letter to support your requests at work.
- If you have a support service helping you with your domestic violence matter it can be helpful to tell them if you are worried about your safety at work. You can ask them to help you name your workplace in domestic violence protection orders if you seek them.

Ask For Help To Make New Work Arrangements

- If you tell your workplace about the abuse and your concerns for safety you can ask them to keep your work hours, location and contact details confidential.
- You can ask your workplace for a transfer to another work location if it is possible.
- It may be possible for your workplace to support you with leave to take the actions you need to be safer. This might be to move home, stay in a refuge or with family/friends, to attend court or to recover from the impact of the abuse. Ask what leave they can provide you with or ask for a more flexible work arrangement if possible.
- Your workplace may be able to help you to save some money for yourself by putting some of your salary in a separate bank account that only you know about.
- Tell your workplace you want to keep your job and that you might need their help and understanding while you address the DFV. This can be important to avoid employers thinking that you don't want to be at work because you are absent.
- Your workplace should keep your matter private and confidential. You can ask to deal with just one person in your workplace in relation to asking for what you need. This might be your manager, union delegate or a designated support person.

And remember...

- Keep in contact. Give your contact at the workplace regular updates on what's happening, what you need, and how they can help

Keep records:

- On your dealings with your workplace in relation to the DFV: Make a diary of notes of meetings, discussions and dates for future reference.
- Of any abuse you receive at work from the abusive person via text message, email or social media. These could be needed for evidence if there are any legal proceedings relating to the violence.
- Most DFV services can provide you with counselling and support. This can be done through a translator. This support can help you with planning and decision making about the future and staying safe.
- There is help available and most workplaces will be able assist you if you ask them to.

The violence you may have experienced is not your fault and culture is no excuse for abuse.

IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS CALL 000**Helpful Services for CALD women in Queensland**

1800 Respect – 1800 737 732

Call this number to access counselling delivered by qualified, experienced professionals 24-hours a day, seven days a week. If you are feeling unsafe right NOW, call 000. Learn more about the telephone counselling service.

Online Counselling

Go to 1800 Respect's Online Counselling

Immigrant Women's Support Service – (07) 3846 3490

Working Women Qld (07 32111440)

Women's Legal Service (Brisbane) <https://wlsq.org.au/> (07 3392 0064)

Women's Legal Service (Cairns and Townsville) <https://ngwls.com.au/> 1800 244 504

This information sheet has been adapted from the DV Work Aware Website information for CALD women. For further information including translation into over 100 languages please visit <http://www.dvworkaware.org/>

1. ABS <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/lookup/media%20release3>

2. Allimant A 2005, 'Service pro le: Immigrant Women's Support Service (Queensland)', *Aware: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault Newsletter*, vol. 5, pp. 20-24