

5. When supporting employees experiencing DFV

Do ✓

- Approach any discussion with sensitivity and in a private location.
- Inform employees that their workplace recognises that DFV can impact on work and that it is safe to disclose.
- Assure the employee that you will respect their wishes and keep the matter confidential.
- Assure them they are not to blame and validate the disclosure (recognising this may be painful or embarrassing).
- Ask what impact this is having on their work life and discuss a support strategy including things the workplace can offer.
- Ask what they would like to do and suggest options such as speaking to appropriate people at work, referral to specialist services or EAP. Listen to their ideas about what would be useful and assist where possible.
- Explain what support is available
- Discuss any concerns about safety or the perpetrator contacting them at work and refer for safety assessment if necessary.
- Keep your discussions with other employees on a need to know basis.
- Do provide useful information such as specialist referrals to legal and DFV services, EAP providers or to state or national telephone assistance services (such as 1800 RESPECT).
- If you are unsure it may be useful to discuss your approach or support strategies with your line manager or contact officer in a confidential manner.
- Take care of yourself and take advantage of workplace supports such as EAP if you feel stressed or impacted by the situation at work.
- Encourage your workplace to display and promote material that takes a stance against DFV.
- If you are the Contact Officer or manager who is responsible for providing support, ensure that you have correct and up to date referral information at hand.

Don't ✗

- Ask for details about the person's private life. The conversation should be handled as a workplace issue and private or domestic violence matters should be referred to specialist services.
- Avoid giving advice (except about workplace entitlements or policies) and let them know the limitations of your role.
- Avoid passing judgements or asking questions about why the violence might be happening. These situations can be complex and dangerous and telling the person they should leave may be inappropriate.
- Don't become personally involved and keep good boundaries while being helpful with information and referral.
- Rumours and gossip can grow quickly in these situations, if you encounter such behaviours speak to the appropriate people (such as contact officer or manager) to share your concerns and to have people informed on a need to know basis.

What are some appropriate questions to ask someone if I am concerned about DFV?

- I've noticed that you seem (distracted or upset, whatever you have observed).
- I've got some concerns that there may be a problem as your work performance is not as good as it usually is.
- Is there a problem at work?
- Is there a problem at home?
- Is anyone hurting you or threatening to hurt you?
- Do you feel safe at home?
- Do you feel safe coming to work or going home?
- How safe do you feel your children are?

Well thought through questions that focus on the workplace and associated safety issues can form part of a safety assessment and provide the basis for appropriate referrals. This can help with safety planning and can include the many things the workplace can easily do to support and assist the person.

Adapted from the Safe at Home Safe at Work Project, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearing House. SDA Union published material.

Note: *Specialised DFV Services are best equipped to handle DFV issues and while EAP Services may be of some assistance, it is never appropriate to refer to EAP when both parties work in the same workplace.*



For enquiries about DV Work Aware training
in your workplace Phone: 1800 358 511
DV Work Aware – www.dvworkaware.org