

**WARNING!**

If you, or someone you know, are experiencing family and domestic violence and would like to speak to someone, call 1800 RESPECT (737 732)

# How to support a friend or colleague experiencing domestic violence

*Too often victims of domestic violence suffer in silence either through the control of their abusive partner or through feelings of shame, or fear, that forces them to mask their experience. However, work colleagues, friends and family may notice an accumulation of signs over time that indicate abusive behaviour.*

## Signs to look out for

- The person walks on eggshells around their partner, and is anxious to comply
- They become increasingly isolated
- They become more anxious, quiet and less confident, as well as other symptoms of depression
- They have physical injuries and give unlikely explanations for them
- They begin to cancel appointments or activities they would otherwise attend
- They only have access to money when their partner 'allows it'
- They mention their partner is jealous, or quick to anger
- They mention their partner criticises them in public

## What should you do to help?

If you think that your colleague, friend or family member might be suffering domestic abuse try to create an open discussion with them. Avoid texting, and if you cannot physically be out of the presence of the abuser, set up a safe word to change the topic if they start listening in.

## Ask if they are ok?

- Make sure it's a one on one conversation
- Explain why you are worried
- Don't be discouraged if they deny abuse is occurring or get defensive – just tell them you are there if they ever need support
- Don't try and make them talk if they don't want to

## What not to do

- Don't criticise, blame or make excuses for the abusers behaviour
- Don't tell them what to do – the situation is complex and the person must make their own decisions
- Don't pressure them to leave – family violence tends to escalate when a woman is preparing to leave, trust they know their own situation and will know the safest thing to do
- Don't give up on them – on average a woman experiencing family violence will attempt to leave the relationship seven times before separating



## Listen

- If they want to share their experience listen without judgement or criticism
- Admitting to abuse is hard, they are brave to share their story
- Help them understand the abuse is not their fault and they deserve to be treated with respect
- They don't have to do this alone – find out more about family and domestic violence support services in WA at [yourtoolkit.com.au](http://yourtoolkit.com.au)

Phone number for domestic abuse support  
1800 737 732 (1800 RESPECT)

## Look after yourself

Assisting someone experiencing family violence can be overwhelming and it's easy to feel out of your depth. If you need advice or support call 1800 737 732 for 24hr support for people impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse.

# Ways to offer practical assistance and emotional support to a colleague experiencing domestic violence



1

Emotional support of a friend means the world in stressful times - check in regularly

2

Accompany the person to difficult appointments such as police station, lawyer or court

3

Offer safe accommodation, or to look after children to make attending appointments easier

4

Be an emergency contact

5

Help them prepare a safety plan

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT  
[YOURTOOLKIT.COM](http://YOURTOOLKIT.COM)

