



Working with Clients Experiencing FDV

Recognise signs

Identify when someone experiencing family and domestic violence (FDV) might need support. Look for these common indicators:

- Unexplained injuries or bruises.
- Frequently cancelling appointments.
- Inconsistent communication.
- Hesitation answering questions about personal life.
- Anxiety, fear or low confidence.
- Limited access or knowledge about housing, finances or legal matters.
- Limited access to identification or immigration documents.
- Urgency or secrecy when seeking assistance.

Helpful resources

- Yourtoolkit.com: A free online guide to live free from domestic abuse.
- 1800 RESPECT: 24/7 free counselling hotline for survivors of FDV(1800 737 732).
- Familyviolencelaw.gov.au: Online resource to find free legal advice on domestic abuse.
- 13 YARN: Crisis support line for mob to yarn with a trained counsellor (13 92 76).
- Translating and Interpreting Services: Connects non-English speaking clients to services (131 450).

Respond to disclosure with C.A.R.E

C: Connect and listen

Create a safe place. Use positive verbal and non-verbal language to build trust.

“Thank you for trusting me, I’m here to listen”.

A: Acknowledge and validate

Let the victim-survivor know their feelings and experience is valid and isn’t their fault.

“I believe you and I’m sorry this is happening. It’s not your fault”.

R: Respect their choices

Let them decide their next steps. Ask how you can provide support.

“You know your situation best. I’ll respect any decision you make. How can I help?”

E: Empower and educate

Share resources and reinforce the victim-survivor’s ability to make choices.

“There are services that can help. Would you like me to share their details?”

Ways to offer professional support

IF: There is immediate danger, or abuse is escalating rapidly.



THEN: Call police (Triple Zero, 000), remove the victim-survivor from danger, follow a safety plan.

IF: There is no immediate danger, but the victim-survivor wants to take action.



THEN: Encourage the victim-survivor to create a safety plan, and access helpful resources.

IF: The victim-survivor doesn’t want to discuss their experience, and is not responsive to support.

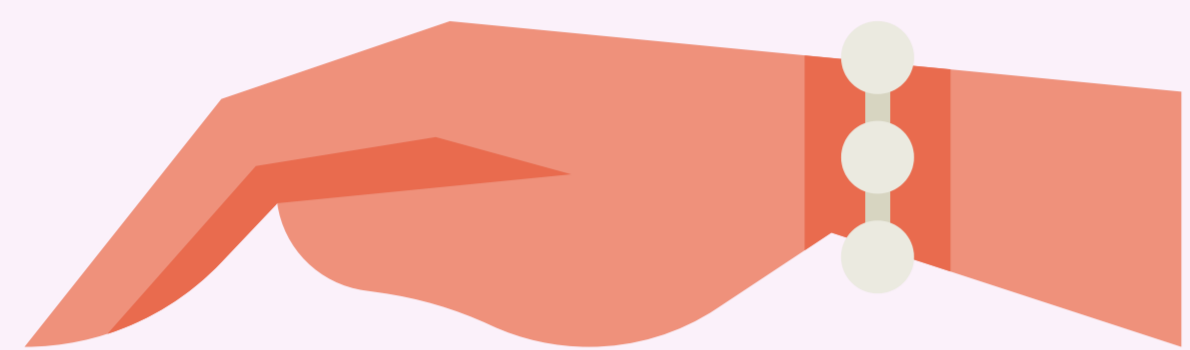


THEN: Respect their decision, follow the fundamentals of working with survivors (page 2).

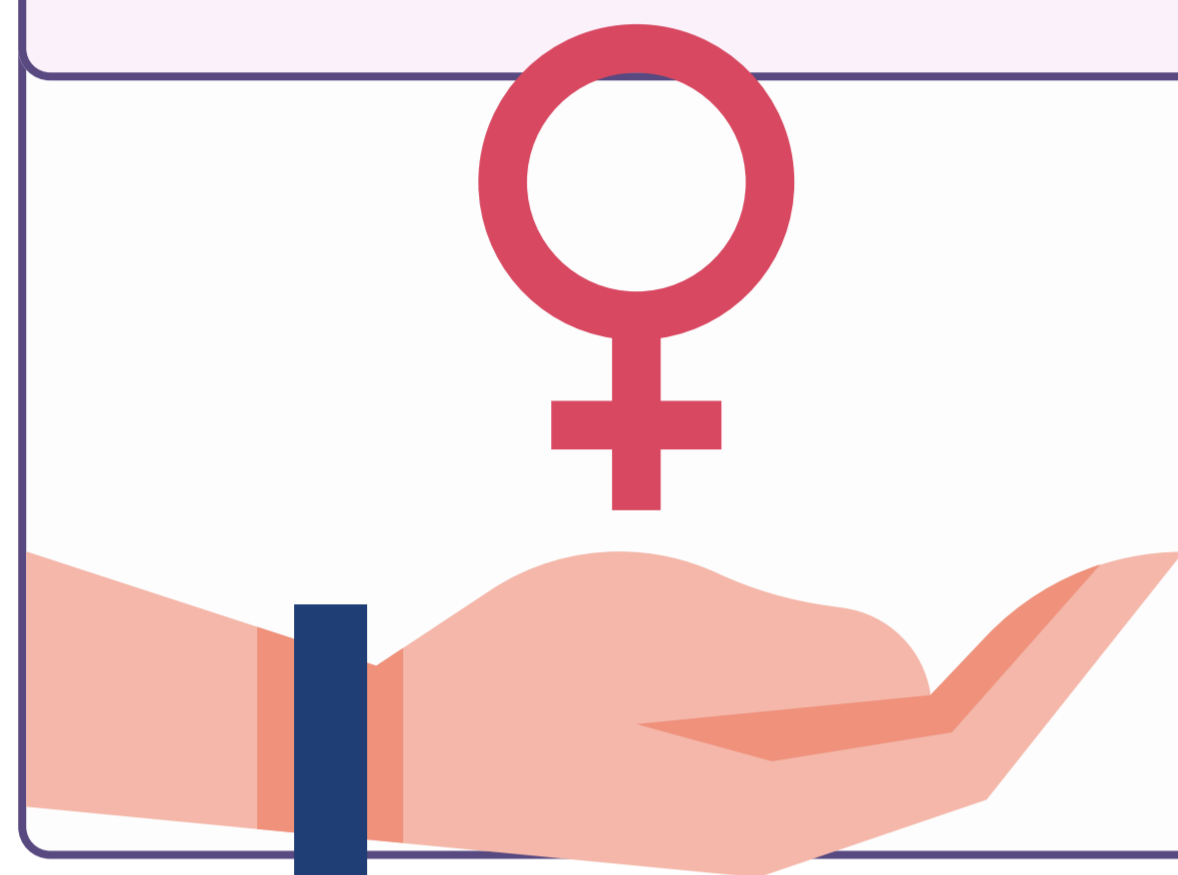
Fundamentals of Working with Survivors of Abuse



Find more practical ways to incorporate these approaches at Yourtoolkit.com/Support-a-client.



Safety First



Prioritise the survivor's emotional and physical safety. Be prepared to create a safety plan together, and discuss a personal safety assessment.

Trauma Informed

Adapt your service to build trust and minimise risk to the survivor. Avoid making the survivor tell their story more than once.

Strength Based

Empower and celebrate the survivor by acknowledging their resilience and capabilities.



Build Autonomy

Build the survivor's confidence in their decision making by respecting their choices without judgement.

Intersectionality and Feedback

Recognise how abuse might be experienced differently. Listen and take on survivor feedback.

