

Supporting Survivors of Domestic Abuse at Work



Prioritising safety at work

Prioritising safety at work creates a secure environment for all employees and can help reduce risks for those experiencing violence:

- Monitor entry points, parking areas, and common spaces with security cameras.
- Use keycards or codes for controlled entry to the building or sensitive areas.
- Keep parking areas, entrances, and corridors well-lit to reduce risk.
- Offer secure storage for personal items.
- Set up safe zones where employees can go if they feel unsafe or need a moment.

Family and domestic violence (FDV) leave

In Australia, employees experiencing FDV have access to paid leave entitlements, including part-time and casual employees:

- Employees can access up to 10 days of paid FDV leave each year.
- This leave is confidential and can be requested through HR or a manager.
- Employers cannot disclose that an employee has accessed FDV leave.

Workplace culture

A workplace culture built on respect and equality helps prevent family and domestic violence. Actively promote gender equality by:

- Using respectful, neutral language in all communications and avoid gender-based assumptions.
- Speaking up if you notice gender biased comments or behaviours and addressing them respectfully.
- Showing support by actively listening and creating space for underrepresented voices in discussions.
- Acknowledging and celebrating contributions from all team members equally.
- Taking the initiative to learn about gender equality and unconscious bias through workshops, articles, or other resources.
- Modeling respectful behaviour in daily interactions, whether in meetings, emails, or casual conversations.
- Advocating for inclusive practices and policies, such as equal pay and professional development opportunities, to create lasting change.

Practical support from the workplace

Workplaces can take proactive steps to support employees experiencing family and domestic violence. Simple, practical actions can make a significant difference.

- Flexible work adjustments: Provide options like adjusted hours, remote work, and workspace changes to prioritise safety.
- Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs): Offer confidential counselling and support services.
- Safety planning: Work with employees to create personalised safety plans, such as secure parking and emergency contacts.
- Confidentiality protection: Limit publicly available employee details and ensure private discussions are handled securely.

Working Together to End Domestic Abuse

Supporting a Coworker

1 Listen and validate



Listen without judgment. Acknowledge the survivor's feelings with supportive statements like, "I'm sorry this is happening to you."

2 Respect Privacy



Keep disclosure confidential unless required to act for their safety. Let them know you respect their decisions.

3 Share and learn



Learn about domestic abuse and be prepared to share resources like 1800 RESPECT and Yourtoolkit.com.

Supporting an Employee

1 Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)



Highlight Employee Assistance Programs as a free and private way to access counselling and support.

2 Create a safe space



Hold yourself and others accountable to creating a safe, non-threatening workplace for everyone.

3 Encourage balance



Provide flexible support to the survivor, that help them balance their personal and professional needs.

Building Gender Equal Workplaces



1 Speak up against gender bias

Challenge behaviours, jokes, or comments that normalise gender bias or stereotypes. Encourage respectful conversations.



2 Promote women in leadership

Support equal opportunities for women and underrepresented groups through mentoring and development programs.



3 Model respect everyday

Foster a positive workplace by celebrating every contribution and treating all colleagues with dignity and fairness.