

# SUPPORTING A LOVED ONE

## THROUGH DOMESTIC OR FAMILY VIOLENCE. (DFV)

Developed by Full Stop Australia.

Full Stop Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, sea, and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders both past and present.



Anyone in Australia impacted by sexual, domestic and family violence can access free, 24/7 trauma-specialist counselling.



**1800 FULL STOP**

1800 385 578



[fullstop.org.au](https://fullstop.org.au)

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## Step 1:

**Prioritise your loved one's safety. Look after your own safety. Always keep assessing safety.**

*Remember: your loved one knows their abuser's behaviour best.*

It is *not* as simple as 'just leaving', many victims are put in difficult positions that make leaving hard, or even dangerous.

Essential components to supporting a loved one going through DFV is safety and assessing risk. Even offering support needs to be done in a safe way, avoiding possible escalation and maintaining their **choice**, at their **pace**.

**It is important *not* to share your loved ones information with other friends or family without their permission.**

**Intended or actual separation are risk factors for further violence and domestic violence homicide.**

Read more from: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence information hub.

**Financial insecurity means victims often have to pick between violence and poverty.**

Read more in: Summers, A. (2022). The Choice: Violence or Poverty. University of Technology Sydney

**If you are worried about someone, it is essential you consider the timing for safely having a conversation or offering support.**

Ask yourself - "Is my loved ones electronic device being monitored? Can they speak freely now? Is anyone listening, is the abuser interrupting?"



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## **Safety**

(For them and you)

## **Unconditional Support**

(Never blame the victim)

## **Choice and Self-Determination**

(Your loved one has a right to choose)

## **Accountability**

(Hold abusers solely responsible for their violence)

## **Step 2: Learn more about DFV.**

DFV can remain hidden. Many of the signs may not be obvious at first. Some things to watch out for:

- your loved one stops participating in activities they used to do,
- their partner texts or calls them constantly when you are with them,
- their partner always turns up when you have things planned,
- they withdraw or contact you less,
- they are always worried about money or talk about having to account for or justify all their spending with their partner,
- changes in mood - quiet/flat, anxious/jumpy or hyper vigilant,
- at work: you might notice their partner turning up frequently, constantly ringing throughout the day or high levels of absenteeism,



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## Step 3: Start a conversation.

Never approach from a place of judgment. One of the main tactics abusers use is to make the victim feel like they are to blame for what is happening to them, or their children.

Come from a place of curiosity and caring. For example:

- “You haven’t been out so much lately - I miss our regular catch ups we used to have.”
- “You seem very anxious and jumpy - is something worrying you?”
- “You have missed work a lot - is everything ok?”

When DFV is in the media, you might even use this to start the discussion for example:

- “I read this article the other day, it really made me think how common this is and that I would hate to think of any of my friends living in a situation like that. I would always hope I could help out - there are lots of supports around that I never knew existed.”
- “I noticed the EAP offers DV support, isn’t it great that our workplace recognises DV?”

You might even draw upon previous lived experience as a way of introducing the topic such as:

- “I know when I was in a relationship with X I felt so alone & scared like no-one would believe me - I’d always want someone to know that they are not alone & they aren’t too blame.”

*Note: If you do this and they do disclose - don’t make it about you.*



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## Step 4:

### **If your loved one discloses, support them.**

When someone discloses sexual, domestic or family violence your response is critical to their recovery and decisions about what to do next.

See: Full Stop Australia resource Responding to Disclosures.

**If they do tell you they are experiencing violence and abuse the most important thing is to listen. Make time, give them space to talk through their worries and experiences.**

- Thank them for sharing & trusting you
- Ask them what you can do to help
- Offer to put them in touch with a support service
- Ask if they could talk to their GP about this
- Ask if they have a plan in place for their safety

**If desired, you can suggest a few things to your loved one such as:**

- Help them workshop a plan to get safe.
- Create a safe word that indicates they are in immediate danger.
- If your loved one is seeking support services, or developing a safety plan, suggest using a different phone or computer. Tech facilitated abuse and tracking is a very part of coercive control & DFV.
- Being a support person is important, it is better to also link them with a professional who is qualified to support them and make referrals.
- Encourage them to contact Police if the violence gets worse.

*Note: If you are concerned, unsure what to do or feeling impacted, call services like Full Stop Australia to get advice and support for yourself.*



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# SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE.

## COUNSELLING SUPPORT

**1800 FULL STOP**

1800 385 578

**Rainbow Sexual, Domestic  
and Family Violence Helpline**

1800 497 212

**13YARN**

13 92 76

**1800 RESPECT**

1800 737 732

## LEGAL SUPPORT

**Women's Legal Services  
Australia**

wlsa.org.au

**Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal  
Women's Legal Centre** NSW

1800 686 587

**Willow** NSW  
**Women's Legal on the Go**

willow.org.au

## HOMELESSNESS SUPPORT

**Link2Home**

1800 152 152

**Ask Izzy**

askizzy.org.au

## PET SUPPORT

**RSPCA NSW** NSW  
**Community DV Program**

(02) 9782 4408

## TECH SUPPORT

**WESNET**

1800 937 638

**eSafety**

esafety.gov.au

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

**Centre for Women's  
Economic Safety**

cwes.org.au

**Good Shepard**

goodshep.org.au

## TRANSLATION SERVICES

**Translating and  
Interpreting Service**

tisnational.gov.au

**TTY (Type and Read)**

accesshub.gov.au

Read more resources by Full Stop Australia on our website.

[fullstop.org.au/get-help/resources](https://fullstop.org.au/get-help/resources)



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