



baptist
care sa

Ways to support a person to living with domestic violence

Brief guide for responding to people living with Domestic Violence

Key principles of working with people living with DV

- Listen to their story
- Believe it
- Ask the person “Are you afraid” and “Are you safe?”
- Support them because disclosure is difficult and scary
- Ensure the person and children are safe
- Refer to appropriate support and follow through on effectiveness of the referral with person
- The person has right to their information remaining private and confidential (NB mandatory reporting requirements in SA if children involved or witnessing violence)
- Without intervention DV escalates (it seldom abates) so don’t ignore it

Step 1: Establish a supporting and encouraging relationship

- **Establish trust and respect** – best done by authentic listening and genuine empathy
- **Listen and learn**– take time to learn, support, encourage, reinforce, genuine compassion
- **Communication style** – open, active listening, reflection, BELIEVE THEM, give them time to trust
- **Maintain boundaries** – if person has learned unhelpful coping behaviours, boundaries will matter
- **Resources** – find or direct the person to quality good resources first. Not too many, check their referral process before and note any important information the person needs to bring

Step 2: Identify issues that are impacting on the person/family

- **Check for indicators:** of harm, neglect, abuse risk [NB in SA children exposed to DV may be reported under mandatory reporting legislation]
- **Assess presenting issue:** your best tool is listen to their story and ask them “Are you afraid?” This may be the best indicator that the person is unsafe
- **Safety:** Are they safe? Are children involved and are they safe? Are you safe?
- **Key referrals:** Domestic Violence Gateway Helpline 1800 800 098 best first point of contact for all DV, CARL 131 478
- **Ensure confidentiality:** Maintain the family’s privacy and keep documentation of your discussion as evidence, (password protected on your computer or in locked filing cabinet).
- **Are there other issues to be considered?** jobs, children, safe exit, finances, etc.

Step 3. Refer the person to coordinated and professional support

- **What support does this person need?** What do they want? Who can provide it? (Use a holistic approach: consider legal, housing, finances, family, support, emotional issues, health, education/work etc.)
- **Procedures for immediate support:** pastoral care team, or professionals in your church with knowledge in this area. Government and NFP agencies – use the resource list provided but check contact details because emails and numbers change quickly). Someone may need to attend with the person as a support person and to write down information if the person is overwhelmed.
- **Cultural issues:** safety, norms, values, religion, family support, shelter are all mediated by culture so be very careful about the cultural norms of the victim because these will come into play in any safety plan
- **Review effectiveness of services:** check in with the person about use and effectiveness of the referral. Document your findings.

Step 4. Safety plan for a planned exit

- **Create an exit plan:** consider having a code word the person can use that they can leave it with a friend so someone knows they are at risk and can intervene. The person should not store exit phone numbers in the phone have them somewhere else where the perpetrator cannot find them.
- **Pack an exit bag and store with a friend** before you leave: this should include some money, credit cards (numbers at the very least), bank details, identification (birth certificates for self and children, marriage certificate, passports), rental agreement or mortgage papers, insurance papers; medications/scripts, children's health record, Medicare card, centre link info, address book, clothing, recent photo of your partner and your house, spare keys to house and car, children's favourite toy, jewellery
- The person may consider asking neighbours to call police if they hear serious commotion
NB the person is at greatest risk from partner's violence after leaving. It is critical that NO phone number or any personal or contact details are divulged in any way (verbal, phone, text, email etc.)

In an emergency

- **Police Emergency:** 000 or Police Assistance: 131 444 required for intervention orders
- **Domestic Violence Crisis Line:** 1800 800 098 – (formerly the DV Gateway service in SA) •
- **Crisis Care:** 131 611
- **Domestic violence 24/7 helpline** 1800 Respect: 1800 737 732
 - Northern Adelaide Domestic Violence Service: 8255 3622
 - Eastern Adelaide Domestic Violence Service: 8365 5033
 - Southern Adelaide Domestic Violence Service: 8382 0066
 - Western Adelaide Domestic Violence Service: 8268 7700
- **Kids Helpline:** 1800 551 800
- **Life Line:** 13 11 14

NB A full list of SA resource and referral details are attached in a separate but related document.

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