

FDSV help for someone you know

What can I do to help someone from the military or veteran community experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence?

Family, domestic and sexual violence (FDSV) can be a difficult subject to talk about. It may be considered a taboo topic or a private, family issue—especially in veteran or military families.

Military or veteran families may face the additional challenge of being isolated from their support network as a result of frequent relocations. If you recognise the signs that things are not right, there are ways you can help.

If you or someone you know is in an emergency situation, or in immediate danger, **call 000**.

What is FDSV?

FDSV is conduct that is violent, threatening, coercive, controlling or intended to cause the individual, family or household member to be fearful.

It can include, but is not limited to:

- physical, verbal, emotional, sexual or psychological abuse
- financial abuse, such as controlling money, monitoring or interfering with employment
- legal abuse, such as intimidating, exhausting, exploiting or disempowering someone
- stalking
- harm to an animal or property
- controlling the social, employment or family relationships and/or a person's decision-making power
- controlling spiritual or cultural participation
- exposing children to the effects of this behaviour.

The term 'family and domestic violence' is used because violent behaviour is not necessarily limited to members of families connected by kinship or marriage, but may also include:

- past or current intimate relationships, including people who are dating or living together, regardless of their gender or sexuality
- relationships involving carers, where care is provided to older people, or people with disability or a medical condition
- service providers
- relatives and guardians
- other culturally recognised family groups.



For further information refer to:

Department of Veterans' Affairs *Family and Domestic Violence Strategy 2020-25*.

How do I ask someone if they are experiencing FDSV?

It is important to provide support and safe options to someone who may be experiencing FDSV. Create a safe environment for them to share their experiences. Pick a quiet time to talk, when the violence isn't happening and when the person who is using violence and abuse is not around.

Allow the person to talk at their own pace. Don't push them to say more than they feel ready to. If the person you are talking to doesn't react in the way you hoped, don't take it personally. It's better to talk to them about the things you've noticed that worry you than to give your opinion. Don't judge, blame or ask 'why won't you leave?'.

Here are some questions you can ask:

- I'm wondering if everything is okay at home?
- I noticed you have some bruises. How did that happen? Did someone do that to you?
- I've noticed you seem frightened by your partner (or someone else you suspect is hurting them). Is that right? Is everything okay?
- Give them the chance to speak in private. Be prepared to listen but don't force them to speak if they are not ready.

How can I help?

The way in which you listen and respond to people who are experiencing FDSV can make all the difference to the individual and their family.

It is important to listen and be supportive. It is also essential to allow people to make their own choices when they are ready.


There are a number of ways in which you can provide support:

- Believe them and take their fears seriously. This is important no matter what you think of the person or people who hurt them.
- Listen without interrupting or judging.
- **NEVER** blame the person experiencing the violence for what has happened to them. Violence is never okay.
- Don't make excuses for the person who has hurt them.
- Understand that they may not be ready, or it may not be safe, to leave.
- Don't try to force them to do what you think is best.
- Remember that domestic and family violence is not just physical.
- Help in practical ways, which might include transport, appointments, child minding or a place to seek refuge.
- Help them explore options for support. You, or the person you are supporting, can call **1800RESPECT** or visit the **1800RESPECT** website for more information and support.
- Some people may be reluctant to contact a military/veteran support service. Reassure them that this is okay and advise of the options available.
- Some people may need the help of an advocacy service to explore options. You can find an advocacy service in your area by searching the service directory at **1800respect.org.au/services**.

Who can I refer them to?

Always have information available to help you make informed and appropriate referrals. The following services provide information and support.

Women's Information Service

 **1800 188 156**

The Women's Information Service (WIS) provides information to South Australian women online, over the phone and in person.

The Women's Information Service can discuss:

- ✓ family life and relationships
- ✓ family and domestic violence, sexual assault and safety
- ✓ health and wellbeing
- ✓ accommodation and housing issues
- ✓ financial security and independence
- ✓ women's groups and events
- ✓ education, training and career paths
- ✓ or anything at all.

WIS can be a good place to start if you aren't sure who to contact or what to do.

1800RESPECT

 **1800 737 732 (24/7)**

The national domestic, family and sexual violence support service provides telephone and online counselling for people experiencing violence, their friends and family as well as workers and professionals. 1800RESPECT can help you with safety planning, finding services and information about healthy relationships.

Domestic Violence Crisis Line

 **1800 800 098 (24/7)**

The Domestic Violence Crisis Line (DVCL) provides support and safe crisis accommodation options and services for women and children affected by domestic and family violence. DVCL can also refer women to appropriate services for Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse peoples.

Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling

 **1800 011 046 (24/7)**

The Open Arms counselling service provides 24-hour free counselling and support to current or ex-serving members and their families.

Open Arms also provides a crisis accommodation program to alleviate an urgent situation such as FDSV or an immediate housing crisis. Access may be up to five nights depending on the circumstances. In exceptional circumstances, an extension for accommodation may be given.

ADF Mental Health All-hours Support Line

 **1800 628 036 (24/7)**

The All-hours Support Line (ASL) is a confidential telephone service for ADF members and their families that is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The ASL is a triage line which will help you access ADF or civilian mental health services more easily, such as psychology, medical, social work and chaplain services. When calling the ASL you can expect a qualified mental health professional who has a good understanding of what services are available to you.

Defence Member and Family Helpline


 1800 624 608 (24/7)

 memberandfamilyhelpline@defence.gov.au

The Defence Member and Family Helpline (DMFH) provides a range of practical and emotional support programs for families facing emergency or crisis, including assistance in times of illness, injury, domestic crisis or bereavement. The Helpline is available 24/7 and is staffed by qualified human services professionals including social workers and psychologists.

DMFH can provide temporary 'safe house' accommodation for the dependents of ADF members in situations of family and domestic violence, where the family members cannot remain in the home and have no available alternatives for accommodation.


Yarrow Place Rape and Sexual Assault Service

 1800 817 421

 info@yarrowplace.sa.gov.au

A free and confidential service for anyone aged 16 years and over who has been raped or sexually assaulted.

Qlife

 1800 184 527 (3pm - midnight daily)

 Webchat is also available at:
qlife.org.au/resources/chat

Provides anonymous and free LGBTIQ+ peer support and referral for all Australians.

Where can I find out more about FDSV?

A range of online resources are available to help you better understand FDSV.

They include:

-  **Department of Defence**
defence.gov.au → Defence Family and Domestic Violence Strategy
-  **Department of Veterans' Affairs**
dva.gov.au → DVA Family and Domestic Violence Strategy
-  **Australian Government**
plan4womenssafety.dss.gov.au → Partner Service Pension extension
-  **Break the Cycle**
breakthecycle.sa.gov.au
-  **Our Watch**
ourwatch.org.au
-  **Stop it at the Start**
respect.gov.au
-  **White Ribbon**
whiteribbon.org.au
-  **Women's Safety Services SA**
womenssafetysservices.com.au
-  **Embolden (Peak body for FDSV services in SA)**
embolden.org.au