

WORKING WITH  
WOMEN FROM  
CULTURALLY AND  
LINGUISTICALLY  
DIVERSE  
BACKGROUNDS

WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED  
DOMESTIC AND FAMILY  
VIOLENCE

THE  
CENTRE  
FOR WOMEN  
& CO.



This resource is a joint project created by  
The Centre For Women & Co. &  
ACCESS: 99 Steps.

We acknowledge the traditional owners  
of country throughout Australia and their  
continuing connection to land, sea and  
community.

We also pay sincere respect to our Elders  
both past and present.



STATISTICS TELL US THAT LESS THAN ONE THIRD OF WOMEN IMPACTED BY DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE DISCLOSE THEIR EXPERIENCE TO PROFESSIONALS.

### **Some reasons why include:**

- shame & embarrassment
- belief the abuse is normal or they are somehow to blame
- fear of the abuser and consequences of disclosing
- belief or hope that the perpetrator will change
- fear of judgement from others
- belief that it is their job to manage the situation and keep other family members safe.

For women and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, the pressure NOT to disclose is even more real. Fears around disclosure can be compounded by the person using violence as a tool for further control and abuse.

For example, many families are totally reliant on the person using violence (e.g. financially and because their English is better) and have great fear about leaving the relationship due to lack of resources.

The person using violence can also threaten to harm family members in the victim's country of origin or to send the victim home without their children to maintain control over them.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY  
VIOLENCE IS NEVER OKAY  
IN ANY CULTURE OR  
RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND,  
ALTHOUGH SOMETIMES  
PEOPLE TRY TO USE THIS AS  
AN EXCUSE.





## CREATING A SAFE AND CULTURALLY AWARE SPACE

**Always speak with clients alone** if you are asking about domestic and family violence.

**Offer an interpreter**, asking them for the language they prefer and for a female interpreter if available. You can contact The National Translating and Interpreter Service (TIS) on 131 450 24/7 within Australia. You can also request an interstate interpreter and withhold the client's name to further alleviate privacy and confidentiality concerns.

**Preface your conversation when you are asking about domestic and family violence** by saying that abuse in the home is common and you often ask your clients these questions.

**Advise victims about confidentiality and its limits**, and reiterate that the person using violence will not be told about the conversation.

**Believe the victim.** Say 'I hear you, I believe you, domestic violence is never okay and you are not to blame for this'.

**Explain that domestic and family violence is a crime in Australia**, and there are options for support including specialist support services, safe accommodation and refuge, applying for Domestic Violence Protection Orders and getting legal advice, if they want this.

**Provide information, options and resources** (in translated languages where available) if safe to do so, and offer referrals to support services (see back page for further information).


**Do not allow your own personal biases or values to impact your work** with people who are culturally different to you.

**Seek to examine and understand the world from the client's perspective**, and accept and value cultural diversity – no one culture holds all the answers to every problem.

**Let the victim know that they can call police on 000 at any time if they are frightened for their safety.** They can also request an interpreter through TIS – from interstate if preferred.

**Ask if the victim is safe to go home**, if the client is unsafe right now and has no safe place to go, contact DV Connect Women's Line who can assist in getting the victim to safe accommodation and refuge.





Sometimes women and their children choose not to leave violent relationships, even when they have been provided with other safe options.

## **Respect their choice.**

Let them know that you will continue to support them and if they do change their mind at some time, you will be there to assist them. DFV Services believe that **women are the experts in their lives** and they know how to keep themselves safe. Providing them with non-judgmental support and validation of their story, together with appropriate information and resources is the most important things you can do.

## **Your client will make her decision in her own time.**

Pushing her to leave may make her regret disclosing and turn away from you.

## REFERRAL OPTIONS

There are many support services in the South East Queensland Region available to people impacted by domestic and family violence who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Offer to support a client by referring them to a service in their local area. Or, if they are not ready, continue to follow up with them and their safety and give them the contact details for services to contact themselves if it is safe to do so.

Do not hesitate to contact any of the services on this list directly if you have any questions about how best to support your client or wish to refer them for ongoing support:

### **SPECIALIST DFV SERVICES FOR CALD WOMEN IN THE SOUTH EAST REGION:**

99 Steps: DFV support for women from CALD backgrounds in <b>Logan &amp; Beenleigh</b>	07 3412 8282 <a href="http://www.accesscommunity.org.au/99_steps">www.accesscommunity.org.au/99_steps</a>
Immigrant Women's Support Service(IWSS): DFV Support for women from CALD backgrounds in <b>Brisbane and surrounds</b>	3846 3490 <a href="http://www.iwss.org.au">www.iwss.org.au</a>
The Sara Program: DFV support for women from CALD backgrounds in <b>Gold Coast and surrounds</b>	0405 655 544 <a href="http://www.mfo.org.au/domestic-violence">www.mfo.org.au/domestic-violence</a>



<p>The Centre For Women &amp; Co: Regional DFV service for <b>Logan and Redlands</b></p>	<p>07 3050 3060 <a href="http://www.centreforwomen.org.au">www.centreforwomen.org.au</a></p>
<p>Domestic Violence Prevention Centre (DVPC): Regional DFV service for <b>Gold Coast and Beenleigh</b></p>	<p>07 5591 4222 <a href="http://www.domesticviolence.com.au">www.domesticviolence.com.au</a></p>
<p>Brisbane Domestic Violence Service (BDVS): Regional DFV Service for <b>Brisbane</b></p>	<p>07 3217 2544 <a href="http://www.bdvs.org.au">www.bdvs.org.au</a></p>
<p>Domestic Violence Action Centre (DVAC): Regional DFV and sexual assault service for <b>Ipswich and Toowoomba</b></p>	<p>07 3816 3000 <a href="http://www.dvac.org.au">www.dvac.org.au</a></p>
<p>YFS: Regional DFV service in <b>Jimboomba/Beaudesert</b> region along with housing, and family support in Logan</p>	<p>3826 1500 <a href="http://www.yfs.org.au">www.yfs.org.au</a></p>

## **CRISIS TELEPHONE LINES AVAILABLE TO CLIENTS THROUGH THE USE OF The National Translating and Interpreter Service (TIS):**

You can contact TIS on **131 450**, 24/7 within Australia.

TIS can then connect clients with services in the language they speak.

<p>1800RESPECT: National Sexual Assault and DFV counselling service available <b>24/7 within Australia</b></p>	<p>1800 737 732 <a href="http://www.1800respect.org.au">www.1800respect.org.au</a></p>
<p>DV Connect Women's Line: Crisis counselling line for Queenslanders who identify as female and who want to escape domestic violence. Available <b>24/7 within Queensland</b></p>	<p>1800 811 811 <a href="http://www.dvconnect.org/womensline">www.dvconnect.org/womensline</a></p>
<p>DV Connect Men's Line: counselling, referral, information and support, service for Queenslanders identifying as male, and who may be experiencing or using domestic and family violence. Available <b>9am-midnight 7 days a week within Queensland</b></p>	<p>1300 600 636 <a href="http://www.dvconnect.org/mensline">www.dvconnect.org/mensline</a></p>

**If a client is in danger and needs assistance immediately contact Queensland Police Service on 000.**

This document was developed in partnership with The Centre For Women & Co., and ACCESS: 99 Steps.

The Centre For Women & Co. and 99 Steps are funded by the Queensland Government.

**For more information:**

[www.centreforwomen.org.au](http://www.centreforwomen.org.au)  
[loganlocallink@centreforwomen.org.au](mailto:loganlocallink@centreforwomen.org.au) or

[www.accesscommunity.org.au/99\\_steps](http://www.accesscommunity.org.au/99_steps)  
[99steps@acsl.org.au](mailto:99steps@acsl.org.au)



Specialist  
Domestic Violence  
& Women's Wellbeing  
Services

