



DV Support Options and Best Practice Responses During COVID-19

This resource has been developed by The Women's Cottage.
For more information please call 02 4578 4190.

Important: This is a rapidly changing environment. As well as using the referral options below, it is important to call that service directly to find out any new changes that may apply BEFORE referring women.

Service and Contact Details	What to Expect
Police 000	The Government has asked ALL police to pay special attention to reports of domestic violence during COVID-19. If you do not get the support that you need try a different police station or call a specialist DV service to assist you.
Domestic Violence Line 1800 65 64 63	Some refuges are still taking new referrals. If there are no spaces, then extended T.A. (Temporary Accommodation) will be offered. Process has not changed for D.V. Line, but resources and availability are an issue.
1800 RESPECT 1800 737 732	Process has not changed for D.V. Line, but resources and availability are an issue. Some refuges are still taking new referrals if there are no spaces then T.A. will be offered.
LINK2HOME 1800 152 152 (DCJ Housing)	General processes for LINK2HOME are the same. The length of TA has been extended. If TA is not available there are options for women to go to hotels (eg: via registered providers such as West Connect). However, once TA is available women are required to move out of hotels into TA.
Support for Overseas Students (via the COVID Hotline) 13 77 88	New support for overseas students can be used to assist those experiencing DV that may not be eligible for other DV specific support The NSW Government recently announced new support option for International Students during COVID-19. The new package will fund temporary crisis accommodation and other needs for stranded international students. A new 24/7 international student

	<p>support service, through the NSW Government COVID-19 hotline (13 77 88), will offer free advice & information about other measures, including the moratorium on rental evictions and medical, mental health, legal and emergency support.</p>
<p>West Connect 02 47322318</p> <p>(referral must come via LINK2HOME)</p>	<p>West Connect provides temporary accommodation to clients referred by Housing NSW accommodation via the Link2Home home. During current COVID situation there are no new intakes for refuges, however accommodation is being offered in 3 hotels in Penrith, Windsor, and Katoomba. Windsor and Katoomba are small rooms in 2-star motels with no cooking facilities only a kettle and small fridge with no food support included. In Windsor and Katoomba women with children are in one room. Neither option have adjoining rooms for larger families and have guidelines that limit the number of children per room to 6 and prevent 2 rooms being used because each room must have an adult in room with children. Penrith is a newer apartment building with full kitchen in each apartment that can better cater for larger families and includes some basic foods support.</p>
<p>Nurreen Domestic Violence Accommodation and Support Service 02 45748905</p>	<p>Nurreen provide case management and support to women escaping DV. Referral to refuges and other available crisis accommodation (noting that accommodation option is limited). Other areas of support include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety planning, court support, assistance with Centrelink applications, referral s for Start Safely subsidy, Housing Pathways applications and Victims Services applications. • Limited brokerage assistance is available for rental arrears and other needs. • Information, advocacy, and referral for DV Tenancy Legislation, Legal Services, family law, material aid, EAPA vouchers, moving costs, children’s activities, and assistance with parenting.

<p>The Women's Cottage 02 4578 4190</p>	<p>The Women's Cottage provides crisis response and ongoing support, information, referral, and safety planning for women and children that live work or study in the Hawkesbury LGA. (access has been extended to out of area referrals during COVID if needed).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support is available for women fleeing DV and women who are still living in unsafe situations. • Advocacy and support in relation to accessing positive policing responses and legal information. • Support with Victim Services applications. • Responding to WDVCS referrals. • Material aide for food, bills and moving costs etc (limited recourses). Additional support options available for women who are unable to receive assistance from other services). • Counselling for impacts of trauma for women and children. • Internal referral to National Redress Support Services (for women impacted by institutional sexual abuse in childhood). • External referral to specialist services where required/ available.
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Working to Increase Local Accommodation Options:

The DV line and 1800 Respect Line are of the view that women from the Hawkesbury who are fleeing DV should be encouraged to move out of area because of limited accommodation options in the Hawkesbury. Nurreen and The Women's Cottage are strongly advocating for safe and appropriate crisis accommodation options in the Hawkesbury that can be used for an extended period during COVID-19 where casework can be offered to secure longer term accommodation and safety.

If you have any information about local needs and/or if you would like to work together to increase access to local crisis accommodation please contact Mel Olsen:

antiviolence@womenscottage.org.au

Work Practice Tips: Responding to Domestic / Family violence

What are the signs a woman may be experiencing domestic / family violence:

Suddenly stop going out with no reason

Worry a lot about making a particular person angry

Make a lot of excuses for someone's negative behaviour

Have marks or injuries on their body that cannot be explained

Stop spending time with friends and family

Seem scared or wary around a particular person

Seem worried that they are being watched, followed, or controlled in some way

What are the signs of a person whose behaviour may be violent or abusive:

Act in ways that make the other person scared

Put the other person down all the time

Make threats to hurt another person

Control where someone goes, who they see and speak to, what happens to their money

Have rules about how and when they can use their phone, car, or computer or about how the other person is allowed to behave

Get very angry when the other person does not follow these rules

How do I ask someone about domestic and family violence?

How you respond to someone who has been impacted by violence can make a big difference to their safety and recovery:

If you have not had training in this area or do not feel confident the best thing you can do is respond sensitively and refer the person on to a specialist service such as The Women's Cottage or Domestic violence line. Even trained workers sometimes feel unsure about the best things to say and do so get support where needed.

Responding to Violence and Abuse:

Remember it takes a lot of courage to disclose an experience of sexual assault, domestic and or family violence. Responding sensitively can make a real difference to someone's wellbeing and how they approach their situation.

Thinking of safety first. Consider: ***Is what I am doing making it safer for the person experiencing sexual, domestic, or family violence?***

Holding perpetrators responsible. Consider: ***Is what I am doing sending a clear message that the perpetrator is responsible and accountable for their violence, not the person who experiences it?***

How to Respond Sensitively and Safely:

Making sure women have the privacy to be able to tell their story. If possible, take them to a quiet room, where they can more freely.

Taking time, listening to their story. Validating what you are being told and ensure the women feels believed and understood.

Focusing on what is need 'right now' to be a safe as possible

Don't asking too many questions about what has happened - this can be intrusive and re-traumatising

Respecting her right to have control over her choices and actions (eg: explore options and risks but do not pressure her to leave).

When exploring support option check what options are safe from and not connected to the abuser and encouraging them to seek further support

Referring them on to specialist support, such as The Women's Cottage and Domestic violence line.

General Tips:

It is OK to say something to someone, if you are worried they are experiencing domestic or family violence. It is very important that you believe them and taking their fears seriously.

Remember that domestic and family violence is not just physical — it can also be emotional, financial, spiritual, social, legal, reproductive, and can include stalking and neglect

Listen without interrupting or judging.

You can try some questions like:

I'm wondering, is everything is OK 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 another person you suspect is hurting them]. Is that right? Is everything OK?

Help in practical ways—with transport, appointments, child minding, or a place to escape to

Help explore options give information on services that can help.

Never blame the person experiencing the violence for what has happened to them. Violence is never OK.

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.

Creating a Safety Plan:

A safety plan can be created under any circumstances. The aim is to have a plan that will increase safety and create options for accessing support at times of high risk. For example: What will you do and where will you go if you feel unsafe? Who will you call to help you? What do you need to do to keep the kids safe?