

GETTING HELP & REPORTING DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE IN THE ACT



If you are experiencing domestic or family violence, or you are worried about someone else, support is available.

You do not have to wait until things become an emergency before asking for help.

1 If it is urgent or someone is unsafe

Call 000 (Triple Zero) immediately if:

- Someone is in danger
- Violence is happening now
- Someone has been threatened
- You are worried someone may be seriously harmed

2 If you need advice or support

You can contact a domestic and family violence support service even if:

- You are unsure whether what is happening is abuse
- You are not ready to report to police
- You don't know what you want to do next
- You are worried about someone else and need advice

A support service can help with:

- Understanding what is happening
- Safety planning
- Counselling and emotional support
- Housing and practical needs
- Understanding your options

3 Reporting domestic and family violence to police

If it is not an emergency, you can:

- Call the Police Assistance Line: 131 444
- Attend any police station
- Speak with a police officer (you can ask if a Domestic Violence Liaison Officer is available)

You can also provide information anonymously:

- Crime Stoppers: 1800 333 000

4 What happens when you report

Once a report is made, the ACT Police are required to act:

- Take your concerns seriously
- Speak with you about what has happened
- Take a statement from you and record what you say
- Check immediate safety concerns for you and others affected
- Collect available evidence such as photos, messages or witness information
- Record the incident in their system
- Assess risk and discuss next steps

Depending on the situation, police may:

- Investigate possible offences
- Lay criminal charges
- Apply for protection through a Family Violence Order
- Connect you with support services

5 Family Violence Orders (FVOs)

In the ACT, protection orders for family violence are called Family Violence Orders (FVOs).

A FVO is designed to improve safety by placing conditions on the person causing harm.

Conditions may include:

- Not contacting you or someone else
- Staying away from certain places
- Not threatening, intimidating or stalking
- Being required to leave the home in some circumstances

Police can apply for protection, or you can seek advice about applying yourself through the Magistrates' Court. With Police you can apply for a FVO on your behalf, or you can apply through the ACT Magistrates Court. If you need urgent legal help, free duty lawyers are available through Legal Aid ACT's Domestic Violence Unit at the Magistrates Court, and you do not need an appointment.

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Specialist domestic and family violence support

After a domestic violence report, you may be connected with specialist support services.

The ACT has specialist domestic and family violence services like the Domestic Violence Crisis Service (DVCS).

A specialist domestic and family violence worker may help you:

- Talk about your safety and support options
- Help create a safety plan
- Connect you with local services
- Access housing, counselling or support

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Victim Support ACT

Victim Support ACT provides support for people affected by violent crime, including domestic and family violence.

A case coordinator can help you:

- Understand your options
- Connect you with counselling and therapeutic support
- Access financial assistance if you are eligible
- Help with applications and referrals to other services
- Support you throughout your recovery

Support may be available even if:

- The person responsible has not been charged
- The matter has not gone to court
- You are still deciding what to do next

Free and confidential counselling is available, and financial assistance may be available for eligible expenses such as:

- Safety-related needs
- Medical or counselling expenses
- Loss of income and other recovery costs

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After reporting

Ask for the **police report/reference number** - this is important for follow-up.

- If you did not receive it, you can contact your local police station and request it

Police may:

- Follow up within days
- Keep contact during court processes
- Connect you with support services

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If you're not ready to report

You can:

- Contact specialist support services for advice
- Contact 1800RESPECT for confidential counselling and support
- Seek information about applying for a Family Violence Order yourself

You can ask questions and understand your options before deciding what steps to take.

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Important things to know

- Domestic and family violence is taken seriously
- You can ask for a support person or interpreter
- You can seek support even if you are unsure about police involvement
- Getting support does not mean you have to make decisions before you are ready
- Don't let concerns about your visa stop you from seeking help. A specialist service will explain your options.

You do not have to wait for police to contact you. You can reach out to support services yourself at any time.

ACT Contacts

Emergency: 000

Crime Stoppers:
1800 333 000

Police Assistance:
131 444

Domestic Violence
Crisis Service:

02 6280 0900
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

YWCA Domestic
Violence Support Service:
02 6185 2000

Toora Women Inc.:
02 6122 7070

Canberra Rape Crisis Centre:
Call 02 6247 2525

Message 0488 586 518

Beryl Women Inc:
02 6230 6900

Doris Women's
Refuge Inc:
02 6278 9999

Legal Aid ACT –
Domestic Violence Unit
(02) 6207 1874

Victim Support ACT
Free call:
1800 8222 72
Or: 02 6205 2222

1800RESPECT:
1800 737 732
1800respect.org.au

Kids Helpline:
1800 55 1800
24/7 support for young
people aged 5–25