

# SUPPORTING SOMEONE EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



It can be hard to know what to do when someone you care about is experiencing an unsafe or controlling relationship.

You do not need to rescue them or fix the situation. Your role is to listen, believe them, support them and help them connect with appropriate help.

## Start with listening

If you are worried about someone:

- Choose a safe time and place to talk
- Listen without judgement
- Believe what they tell you
- Let them know the behaviour is not their fault
- Remind them they deserve to feel safe and respected
- Let them make their own decisions where possible
- Encourage them to talk to someone they trust or connect with a professional support service

## What helps

- Stay connected and check in regularly
- Be patient — someone may not be ready to talk or take action straight away
- Focus on their safety, not forcing a decision
- Offer practical support, such as helping them find information or offering to go with them to support services
- Respect their privacy unless someone is in immediate danger

## What you can say:

Try:

- "I'm worried about you."
- "I've noticed you don't seem yourself lately. Are you okay?"
- "You don't deserve to be treated this way."
- "I'm here for you."
- "You don't have to deal with this alone."
- "Would it help to talk through some options?"

## What to avoid

- Don't tell them to "just leave"
- Don't blame them for staying
- Don't pressure them to make decisions before they are ready
- Don't confront the person causing harm yourself — this could increase danger
- Don't share their information with others unless safety is at risk

## Look after yourself too

Supporting someone through a difficult situation can feel overwhelming. You can also reach out for advice about how to help safely.

## Seek urgent help if:

- Someone is being threatened
- There is physical violence
- Stalking or intimidation is escalating
- Someone feels unsafe going home
- There are threats involving weapons
- Someone is threatening serious harm to themselves or another person

## Where to get help

If you or someone else is in immediate danger **call 000**

### 1800RESPECT

1800 737 732

24/7 national domestic, family and sexual violence counselling, information & support.

### Kids Helpline

1800 55 1800

Free 24/7 counselling and support for young people aged 5–25.

### Lifeline

13 11 14

24/7 crisis support if you feel overwhelmed or unable to cope.